

Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository

---

3-29-2021 11:00 AM

## Seeking Host Community Perspectives in a U.S.-based Service Learning Program: A Case Study

Vanessa R. Sperduti, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: Larsen, Marianne A., *The University of Western Ontario*

Co-Supervisor: Tarc, Paul, *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education

© Vanessa R. Sperduti 2021

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd>



Part of the [International and Comparative Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Sperduti, Vanessa R., "Seeking Host Community Perspectives in a U.S.-based Service Learning Program: A Case Study" (2021). *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository*. 7792.

<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/7792>

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact [wlsadmin@uwo.ca](mailto:wlsadmin@uwo.ca).

## Abstract

The popularity of service learning and ‘abroad’ experiences continues to grow. Alongside this growth, a significant body of research has emerged on the effects of these experiences on volunteers and sojourners. Much less is known about the impacts on host communities. This thesis research attempts to address this gap, guided by the question “How has one American host community been affected by the presence of service learning volunteers?”

Geographically, my study examined a host community in a medium-sized ‘Rust Belt’ city in the Northeastern United States. The ‘Rust Belt’ refers to states like Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana that were formerly, but are no longer, heavily involved in the manufacturing industry. In this host community, volunteers from within and beyond the United States engaged in service activities, including working with after-school programs, improving food sustainability, and revitalizing neighbourhoods facing continuing disenfranchisement.

To situate this study, I brought together literature across the domains of community service learning, international service learning, and volunteer tourism. This literature informed my approach to illuminate and problematize how service learning volunteers serve a U.S. community as organized by an intermediary organization. My theoretical framework brings together critical concepts from critical race theory to probe and to think more deeply about host community perspectives. From this critical orientation, the project challenged the conventional notion of the United States being an ‘outgoing’ source of

volunteers to also being a 'receiving' destination for students from around the world. It also redirected notions of need beyond the Majority World.

This is a qualitative instrumental case study. Data collection involved conducting semi-structured interviews with the hosting community including community partners, host families, and intermediary organization members. Findings demonstrated that the host community saw benefits of participating in service learning. They also believed a main benefit of 'hosts' was that it provided another avenue to reclaim their own agency by having reciprocal conversations about their wants and needs. In this sense, it improved community morale and enhanced local autonomy. Nevertheless, complexities across race and social class were also made visible and were a source of both tension and reflexive learning.

Keywords: Service learning, Community Service Learning, International Service Learning, Volunteer Tourism, Host Community, Critical Race Theory

## Summary for Lay Audience

The popularity of service learning and ‘abroad’ experiences continues to grow. While people are learning more about the positive and negative effects of those experiences, much less is known about the impacts on host communities themselves. My research asks: “How has one American host community been affected by the presence of service learning volunteers?”

Based in a Rust Belt city in the United States (states formally involved in the manufacturing industry), this particular host community has experience and engagement with participants coming into their city to volunteer on various projects. My study, through the support of critical literature, explores ideas of ‘service’ and ‘need’ and what they mean to the host community.

I interviewed various host community members who believed that the service occurring in their community gave both them and volunteers a more global view. In particular, the host community believed a main benefit to service learning was that it provided a chance for the community to stand up for their own concerns and priorities. In this sense, the service strengthened community morale and enhanced their already-existing neighbourhood independence. In addition to the benefits, the findings also pointed to some of the tensions of service, like around issues of race and class.

## Acknowledgments

It is important to acknowledge that the office in which I work at the Faculty of Education, Western University, the Thames Valley schools in which I teach, and the home where I live are each located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Attawandaron peoples (London Township, Treaty #6). This land, upon which I am a settler, continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples whom we recognize as keepers of the land and vital contributors of our society.

There are certain people without whom this thesis would, simply, not have been possible. I acknowledge them here.

First, a sincere formal thank you is extended to members of the host community, Samstown, who welcomed me with open arms. They so willingly shared their stories and experiences with me, and I am forever grateful.

To my supervisors Dr. Marianne A. Larsen and Dr. Paul Tarc: I extend my gratitude to each of them for their guidance, expertise, and deep knowledge in their fields. They are the *crème de la crème* and, in addition to their incredible academic repertoires, I am incredibly appreciative for their graciousness. Marianne, thank you for sustenance in the form of delicious veggies and herbs from your garden and for tea and cookies in your office. Also, for bringing me into the world of all-things-editorial. And Paul, thank you for being down to earth, like when we watched the Raps play on TV when we were at Congress in Vancouver, and for handing me Kleenex that one time I ugly-cried in your office during a meeting. Both of you are *the* definition of ‘exemplary supervisor.’

To my committee member Dr. Prachi Srivastava, and to examiners Dr. Allyson Larkin, Dr. Michael O’Sullivan, Dr. Goli Rezai-Rashti, and Dr. Melody Viczko: your combined knowledge, experience, and probing questions have continued to instill in me a critical consciousness around service learning and its implications for host communities. Thank you.

To my very special PhD cohort: Despite being comprised of the most uniquely different individuals, it is true that together, we made complete and perfect sense.

To my classmate, turned colleague, turned office mate, turned one of my best friends in the entire universe: Dr. Kenan Omercajjic. What have we not been through these last few years? Between you and I, we have experienced every conceivable emotion in the world (each obviously describable through Britney Spears songs). One thing is for certain: That without you, I would not be here. For everything and more, thank you.

To my ‘people,’ who diligently checked in on me every step of the way in the form of messages, meals, phone calls, and hugs: Noor Bakir, Monica Canazza, Rebecca Carter, Dr. Zheger Hassan, Dr. Jason Ho, Talha Iqbal, Katie MacDonald, Dr. Jack MacLennan and Samantha Małeckki MacLennan, Diana Meza and Peter Iacovone, Dr. Clare Ostle, Leanna Parekh, and Samantha Sabelli Ion. To Dr. Sandra Smeltzer, for always being on

the same page (literally and figuratively) with everything. To Michael and James, for all the adventures.

To my lifelong best friend, Ne: You always know what (not) to say and when (not) to say it. That sort of rare wisdom comes only when a friendship is based on trust, and rooted in an intimate knowledge of the other person's heart.

To my extended family of many zii and cousins: I am grateful you have been with me through life's journey. It is such a nice feeling being surrounded by cheerleaders rooting for me in the background. Special thanks to my Godparents Padena Zi Anna and Padino Zi Johny. Also, to my Zi Ugo who regularly called and asked to "read the thesis"... every single time. Also, to my dear Nonna Maria and Nonna Velia, whose love in the form of fresh pasta, sauce, and Italian pastries kept me going. I wish Nonno Italo and Nonno Serafino would have been around to share this moment. They would be proud, I think.

To my siblings, Paolo and Marco, and their partners, Lucia and Elizabeth. There are no words to express my love for you all (though who needs words when you have "walkie talkies"). To my nieces and nephew, Martina, Stella, Carmelle, and Marlon, and my God babies, Eryk and Elliana: for keeping life fun and playful ooxooXoXXx.

Finally and forever, to my parents Joseph and Mary (yes, like that one famous couple): For everything, always, and without condition. I love you!

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Summary for Lay Audience .....	iv
Acknowledgments .....	v
Table of Contents .....	vii
List of Tables .....	xii
List of Figures .....	xiii
List of Appendices .....	xiv
List of Acronyms .....	xv
Chapter 1 : Introduction .....	1
1 Introduction to the Study .....	1
1.1 Overview of Service .....	1
1.2 Rationale for the Study .....	4
1.3 Key Research Questions and Objectives .....	6
1.4 Local Context, Terms, and Concepts .....	8
1.5 Defining ‘Community’ in Host Community .....	12
1.6 Assumptions and my Struggle for Critical Praxis .....	13
1.7 Organization of the Study .....	17
Chapter 2 : Literature Review .....	19
2 Overview .....	19
2.1 A Background on Service Learning .....	21
2.2 Defining Service Learning Terminology .....	22
2.3 Community Service Learning .....	25
2.4 International and Global Service Learning .....	26
2.5 Volunteer Tourism .....	27

2.6	Benefits of IESL for Students .....	29
2.6.1	Cognitive Learning .....	29
2.6.2	Reflection and Transformation .....	30
2.6.3	Social Justice and Citizenship Outcomes.....	30
2.7	Critiques of Service Learning .....	31
2.8	Research on IESL and Host Communities.....	38
2.8.1	Positive Impacts of IESL on Host Communities .....	38
2.8.2	Negative Impacts of IESL on Host Communities.....	41
2.8.3	Tensions in IESL Impacting Host Communities .....	44
2.9	Gaps in the Research and Summary .....	45
Chapter 3 : Theoretical Framework .....		47
3	Overview .....	47
3.1	Taking a Critical Approach.....	49
3.2	Critical Theory and Socio-Cultural Historical Contexts.....	52
3.3	Critical Race Theory .....	54
3.3.1	Relationship Between Race and Society.....	55
3.3.2	Prioritizing Race .....	58
3.3.3	Race as a Changing Vocabulary .....	60
3.3.4	(Re)Thinking About Identities .....	64
3.3.5	Identities as Shifting .....	66
3.3.6	Privileging the Voices of the Oppressed.....	70
3.3.7	Agency of the Oppressed .....	73
3.3.8	Challenging Master Narratives .....	75
3.4	Criticisms of Employing Critical Theory Approaches .....	79
3.5	Summary .....	80



Chapter 4 : Methodology and Methods.....	83
4 Overview .....	83
4.1 Methodological Framework: Qualitative Research .....	83
4.2 Instrumental Case Study Approach.....	86
4.3 Data Collection Instruments .....	89
4.4 Recruitment Strategies .....	90
4.5 Participants.....	92
4.6 Insights into the Intermediary Organization .....	93
4.7 Analysis of Interview Data .....	95
4.8 Trustworthiness, Saturation, and Data Triangulation .....	97
4.8.1 Trustworthiness.....	97
4.8.2 Saturation .....	98
4.8.3 Data Triangulation .....	98
4.9 Research Site.....	100
4.9.1 The Rust Belt .....	100
4.9.2 Samstown in the Rust Belt.....	103
4.10 Research Ethics .....	110
4.11 Summary .....	113
Chapter 5 : Findings and Discussion .....	114
5 Overview of Chapters Five and Six .....	114
5.1 Story One: Building Relationships and Bridging Divides .....	117
5.2 Story One: Findings .....	117
5.2.1 First Days in Samstown .....	117
5.2.2 Involvement as Host Community Members .....	119
5.2.3 Serving Others and Strengthening Bonds .....	123

5.2.4	Making Emotional Connections.....	126
5.2.5	Reciprocal Teaching and Learning .....	127
5.2.6	Making Connections With Each Other .....	130
5.3	Conceptions of Place and the United States.....	134
5.3.1	Learning About Others .....	139
5.4	Cultural Exchange.....	140
5.5	Story One: Discussion.....	144
5.6	Story One: Summary.....	148
6	Story Two: The Challenge of Hearing Community Voice .....	150
6.1	Class and Privilege.....	151
6.2	Lack of Bridge Building .....	152
6.3	Working Through the Discomfort.....	154
6.4	Workload and Communication .....	156
6.5	Unearthing the Tensions .....	159
6.6	Story Two: Discussion .....	164
6.7	Problematizing Community .....	165
6.8	“You Have to Put in the Work!”: Working Through Tensions for Transformation.....	169
6.9	Understanding the Tensions From and Through Host Community Perspectives	170
6.9.1	Intermediary Organization: Tensions .....	172
6.9.2	Community Partners: Tensions.....	176
6.9.3	Host Families: Tensions.....	178
6.10	Understanding the United States Context .....	183
6.11	Moving Forward .....	186
6.12	Story Two: Summary .....	187
Chapter 7:	Concluding Thoughts .....	191

7 Overview .....	191
7.1 Limits of the Study and Areas for Future Research.....	192
7.2 Key Implications of the Findings.....	197
7.3 No Time Like the Present .....	200
References .....	206
Appendices.....	234
Curriculum Vitae .....	247

## List of Tables

Table 4.1: Study Participants .....	94
-------------------------------------	----

## List of Figures

Figure 4.1: The Rust Belt.....	101
--------------------------------	-----

## List of Appendices

Appendix A: NMREB Ethics Approval.....	234
Appendix B: Letter of Information and Consent.....	235
Appendix C: Verbal Recruitment Script.....	239
Appendix D: Recruitment Poster.....	240
Appendix E: Questions – Community Partners.....	241
Appendix F: Questions – Host Families.....	243
Appendix G: Questions – Intermediary Organization.....	237

## List of Acronyms

<b>Acronym/Abbreviation/Alphabetism</b>	<b>Full Form</b>
AAPF	African American Policy Forum
CAQDAS	Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software
CRT	Critical race theory
CSL	Global service learning
FBC/FCN	Federation of Black Canadians / Fédérations des canadiens noirs
GSL	Global service learning
HF	Host family
IESL	International experiential or service learning
IO	Intermediary organization
IoHE	Institution of higher education
ISL	International service learning
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NCNW	National Council of Negro Women
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SL	Service learning
SNCC	Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States of America

# Chapter 1 : Introduction

## 1 Introduction to the Study

My research is one case study with two stories to tell how members of a racialized community in the United States felt they were affected by the presence of service learning students in their community. The first story provides an account of the many positive benefits of service learning, expressed by 19 participants in the host community of Samstown, the site of my study. The second story, however, shows another more complicated side of service, service learning and who represents ‘the community.’ It highlights the privileged position of my participants who provided the ‘host’ perspective and more critically examines their perspectives about the positive benefits of the program they were involved in situated within larger systems of oppression, as systemic racism. Both stories are relevant; it is however the first story that is often told, with the second, more often, left on the shelf. Thus, this study illuminates the tensions between these two stories and the challenges involved in carrying out research about host communities involved in service learning programs.

### 1.1 Overview of Service

Since March 2020, colossal changes have impacted human beings across the planet as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of education, we have seen instructors from K-12, and especially in higher education, had to ensure students meet learning outcomes through online communication. Students have also had to adapt to new ways of



learning, collaborating, and communicating with their classmates, and in new locales outside of the typical classroom. These ways of learning also include forms of experiential learning outside of the classroom such as service learning (SL), the focus of this thesis. Global shifts such as the pandemic have also had an impact on SL, where the ideas of SL have shifted to “accommodate physical distancing measures and remote learning, and students wrestle with the seismic shifts in their socio-political, economic, and cultural lives” (Smeltzer et al., 2020, p. 101).

Conversations around SL are even more salient now when so many people are limited in terms of their ability to cross borders and to travel abroad, or even within Canada, to live and learn. Yet, service learning initiatives remain more popular than ever. Public schools, institutions of higher education (IoHE), faith and community groups, as well as other volunteers are still eagerly seeking opportunities to contribute to and to engage in various service experiences in communities around the world that are perceived to need ‘help.’ To mitigate some of the restrictions which have occurred most recently, organizations such as the WE charity, for instance, have spearheaded the “*WE Schools @ Home...turn-key program*” with the intention of “assisting students to engage in virtual learning, find community connections, and promote their well-being” (W.E. Charity, 2020). *We Schools*, claim to “bring service-learning into every classroom” impacting approximately 4.5 million students in 18,000 schools in Canada.

Each year, multiple sources cite that around 2 million service learning participants go abroad globally, spending more than USD \$2 billion worldwide (Hartman et al., 2014; Popham, 2015; Wilkinson et al., 2014). In Canadian universities, the growth of community service learning (CSL) grew largely in part by the JW McConnell Family

Foundation, which granted almost \$10 million to ten institutions from 2004 to 2011 (Aujla & Hamm, 2018). Over this period, 70% of Canadian universities expanded their offerings of such programs and the number of participants had quadrupled (Tiessen & Heron, 2012). In 2018, 97% of Canadian universities offered local and cross-border service experiences (Universities Canada, 2019). These various experiences centre on the idea that an individual can ‘do good’ by serving communities ‘in need’ through service projects.

The intention for most participants is to ‘help others’ and to ‘learn’ by travelling to host destinations in the majority world<sup>1</sup> to ‘fix’ local problems. These liberal notions of learning and experience have contributed to the idea of service learning as “an opportunity for self-growth and personal transformation” (Vrasti, 2014, p. 121). There is a lot of buzz surrounding young people today to be involved with and engage in overseas experiences or service work. As an elementary school teacher, I have heard this same buzz in the classroom coming from students as young as 11 years of age. In addition to ‘helping,’ participants may cite reasons for partaking in ‘service’ as their desire to meet new people, learn about other cultures, understand the causes of global poverty, gain new skills and enhance their experience, travel to new destinations, and become involved in the community they visit (Tiessen, 2012).

There are also critics of service learning. Particularly, many have questioned the intention of participants and of programs that claim to be ‘civically-minded’ or ‘social

---

<sup>1</sup> Majority world is a term used to refer to the approximately 80 percent of humanity who live on \$10 USD or less a day. The global extreme poverty rate being around 9.2 percent, equivalent to almost 700 million people living on less than \$1.90 a day. At higher poverty lines, 24.1 percent lived on less than \$3.20 a day, and 43.6 percent on less than \$5.50 a day (World Bank, 2018).

justice' focused (Larsen, 2016a, 2016b; Heron, 2007; Sin, 2009; Vrsti, 2013; Zemach-Bersin, 2007). The finger is often pointed at neoliberalism for both initiating and for continuing the progression of such exploitive programs, with the main intention of making money under the guise of 'helping those in need'. Thus, rather than being motivated by altruism, others such as IoHEs, students themselves, and service organizations claim that young people participate in these service learning programs in order to help develop their social mobility and status through their participation. For instance, it could improve their chances to gain admission to university programs such as to various medical schools looking for extracurriculars, and become more competitive for an uncertain job market where having a university degree simply 'isn't enough' (Tiessen, 2012). It is in this broader international and educational context that this study is situated.

## 1.2 Rationale for the Study

Most international/global service literature on service learning is also written from a post-secondary educational institution perspective, which reflects the fact that most service learning programs are affiliated with IoHEs. Further, most literature focuses on majority world contexts, where people from minority world contexts (e.g. North America) go abroad to provide service or volunteer work within a majority world context. Most are White middle- to upper-class women (Larsen, 2016b, Mostafanezhad, 2013; O'Sullivan, 2019; Tiessen, 2018); Henry (2020) calls it "whiteness in transit". And Arat-Koç refers to it as "new whitenesses....as racialized power," meaning that race is operationalized in a way that continues to yield power to dominant groups in contemporary society, but in a new way (as cited in Mahrouse, 2014, p. 18). However, there are other programs – like

the case I am studying – that are provided through NGOs (See O’Sullivan & Smaller, 2013, 2016; O’Sullivan et al., 2019). We know much less about these types of service learning arrangements, strengthening the rationale for this study. This study is also unique in that it focuses specifically on a racialized host community located in ‘Samstown,’ in the United States of America (a minority world country). The intermediary organization involved, ‘Circolo,’<sup>2</sup> draws in students from the United States and other countries to volunteer within Samstown. My study asks: “*How has one American host community been affected by the presence of service learning volunteers?*”

Although there is a lot of research on or about service volunteers’ perspectives, host community perspectives on volunteers’ presence and impact have been slow to appear in the scholarly literature. This is another rationale for the focus of my study. With the growth of such programs, ongoing and critical reviews are needed to provide a comprehensive understanding of their effects on host communities (Erasmus, 2011). In particular, a review of the critical literature focusing on race and privilege in IESL programming is integrated throughout this chapter. My rationale for conducting this research has been echoed by other scholars, who have expressed the need for research that places the voices of locals at the forefront (Borland & Adams, 2013; Larsen, 2016b; Lincoln et al., 2008; O’Sullivan & Smaller, 2016; O’Sullivan et al., 2019; Heidebrecht & Balzer, 2020; Sin, 2009; Vrasti, 2013).

---

<sup>2</sup> Pseudonyms are used for the names of the city (‘Samstown’) and organization (‘Circolo’) and for all participants in the study as found in Table 4.1.

In response to this call for further service learning research, which privileges the voices of host community members, my thesis research examines the perspectives of an economically-struggling and racialized U.S. host community to better-understand their experiences hosting service learning volunteers from the United States and from abroad. When research explores the ‘community,’ it is important to hear the voices of people in the community. While some research suggests that accessing community to hear voices may be difficult (Larkin, Larsen, MacDonald, & Smaller, 2016; Tonkin, 2011) due to constraints of international travel (O’Sullivan et al., 2019) or difficulties in gaining and maintaining informants (Riese, 2018), it still remains a priority. Therefore, despite these challenges, this qualitative case study studied the Samstown host community perspectives through interviews and informal conversations. My motivation for conducting this study was to illuminate possibilities and limits of service learning to critically inform future programs and practices. Through this exploration, I seek to highlight the agency of community members to define themselves, their needs, and the role(s) they hold and wish to hold in service learning.

### 1.3 Key Research Questions and Objectives

My project was mainly framed by the following question: “How has one U.S. host community been affected by the presence of service learning volunteers?” The supplemental question guiding my study is, “What do members of host communities think are the benefits and challenges of one international experiential and service learning (IESL) program with which they were involved?” Given the growth of service learning programs, my research had three primary objectives: a) to conduct an in-depth case study

to illuminate how one particular community is impacted by an IESL program; b) to privilege the voices of members of a racially- and economically-marginalized host community; and c) to contribute to the research calling for focus on the impact of these programs on host communities.

Musil (2010) posits that it is dangerous to live in a world where “knowing is apart from doing...thinking is apart from feeling, and...academia is removed from the world beyond its gates” (para. 3). Musil’s idea helped me to initially centre the objectives of my study. First, hearing voices of marginalized members of a host community in a ‘developed’ or in a minority world country such as the United States was critically important in bringing attention to an underrepresented and under researched area. By gaining host community insights, as researchers and members of society, we inform ourselves and subsequently, our actions. Second, what is discovered through the findings challenges our own preconceived notions and as well as *how we feel* about people or a place. Third, as the academic literature is explored and is developed through community insights *beyond the gates*, service learning takes on a new meaning. Finally, most of the literature available on service learning is directed toward countries in majority world countries on the African, South American, or East and South Asian continents. However, focusing on the United States provides new insights into service learning by reversing the typical directionality of service learning. Being able to join members of Samstown in a dialogical exchange was an opportunity to formally acknowledge the host community’s importance, to present its stories by concretizing them on paper, and to gain insights into the ways in which they were impacted.

I employ a qualitative approach to answer the research question. In doing so, I intentionally engage in research that helps focus on complex and layered ideas, and in this case, related to host community, service learning, and the host community's position as situated within a broader societal context. Qualitative research is valuable in that regard, and through it, we are able to “[address] matters of equity and social justice” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 1). The methodology and methods chosen for this case study also specifically focus on the host community. Through the 19 interviews of various host community members, the research aims to prioritize their voices over “privileging dominant discourses in education” (Tilley, 2019, p. 160), which typically inform existing research. In challenging this norm, Foucault (1980) talks about the importance of prioritizing local knowledge(s), and as you read on in this thesis, the attempt is for chosen approaches of this study to reflect this priority. For example, by choosing critical theories to frame their work, researchers intentionally choose to question dominant structures, voices, and knowledge(s). In choosing Critical Race Theory (CRT) to frame this study, the study prioritizes history and acknowledges the self-determination of the host community. In the subsequent chapters, the theoretical framework (Chapter 3) and well as methodology and methods (Chapter 4) will be expanded. I outline the local context of my case study in the next section.

## 1.4 Local Context, Terms, and Concepts

Samstown is a medium-sized city located in the ‘Rust Belt’; it is a city that is slowly recovering after the fall of the automotive and manufacturing industries in the Northeastern United States. Within Samstown are many neighbourhoods of varying

cultural backgrounds, but in particular, there is a neighbourhood, which continues to be systematically disenfranchised because of they are a community of colour. I did the majority of my data collection in a predominantly Black neighbourhood in Samstown. More in-depth, necessary, and deserved discussion about the site of the study, but also about the people who live there, appears in the Methodology section (Chapter 4) and in subsequent sections of the thesis.

Here, I define the terms and concepts used throughout this thesis. I am using IESL in this study as a broad umbrella term, which best reflects the work that is done by the organization, which is the focus of my study, Circolo. Circolo is a US-based global service learning organization with sites worldwide dedicated to mutual empowerment through service and learning. The term IESL, which will be further elaborated upon in Chapter 2, brings together different forms of service such as service learning, community service learning, global service learning, international service learning, and voluntourism. The structure of Circolo's programming makes the organization unique, in that they offer, across their multiple sites, a variety of kinds of 'service' opportunities; they traverse lines of (community) (international)(global) service learning, experiential education, and voluntourism. Using the term IESL helps to reflect these wide-ranging but related approaches to service.

As a non-profit encompassing these many different kinds of service experiences, Circolo partners primarily with IoHEs on service learning and experiential learning projects. Circolo volunteer participants are typically high school, college, or university students from many countries around the world – Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Ireland, Pakistan, Peru, Sri Lanka, and the United States to name a few - who may or may not



receive some kind of credit for their participation in the program. Circolo also works with individuals, communities, and religious/faith groups to design and undertake programming as well, with age ranges from youth to adulthood. The length of a participant's stay in the host community ranges anywhere from a few days to a few months. Volunteering activities are community-directed, and have in the past included working with youth at after-school programs, improving food sustainability with local not-for-profits, and revitalizing neighbourhoods by cleaning and refurbishing plots of vacant land.

In terms of a specific program schedule or volunteering site, this can vary greatly between incoming groups depending on the time of year that they participate in programming, or the duration of time spent in the city. For instance, in the winter months volunteers would be useful in a soup kitchen serving meals, rather than outdoors in the cold working with a gardening project. An interesting point to note is that there is no specific program always followed by Circolo with incoming volunteers. There may be overlap in ice-breaker or reflection exercises facilitated with each group, for example, but in terms of the actual programming itself, in addition to the timing and duration, it primarily varies based on community need and depending on with which projects Samstown community partner may want 'extra hands.'

By some definitions, Circolo's programming could categorically fall under volunteer tourism - a paid-for, curated, suitably scheduled, volunteer service experience. As the intermediary organization, Circolo is responsible, then, for working with various groups and/or individuals to set 'goals' and to help 'manage' their integrative learning experiences. And, as they report, Circolo endeavours to ethically work with community

members to develop and sustain these projects using best practices, with community as the centre. Circolo believes in working closely with community partners, and based on community-driven projects, tries to organize diverse volunteer opportunities for those interested in pursuing opportunities to serve communities both in, but primarily outside, of their own city. Circolo also believes that through this process, they can help to create and to strengthen bonds between participants and community, and to build global citizens.

The community partners, which are local non-profits that are well-integrated in and part of the community, are familiar with and responsive to community needs and are connected to Circolo's programming. Each community partner varies in their focus. For example, their reach extends from after-school programs and environmental sustainability efforts to community centres and various accessible healthy food projects. In many cases, the community partners had relationships with Circolo simply from their buildings being located in the same community and in close proximity to one another. In other cases, some of Circolo's own employees lived in the same neighbourhoods as those community partners. So, while the IESL relationship between community partners and Circolo may not have been solidified formally before, many relationships were able to develop as a result of personal connections from the past. In other instances, a 'buzz' around Circolo-affiliated projects had gone around and between community partners, and so community partners sometimes approached Circolo to see if they too could also participate in Circolo's service learning programs.

Host families are those who are involved in providing a home and care for students outside of regular programming hours. They are responsible for providing participants with transportation to and from Circolo, cooking their meals, preparing a bedroom for

their guests, and giving basic amenities to program participants. Furthermore, many of the host families go above and beyond what is required of them. Based on our conversations, many plan evening and weekend activities for students from going out for meals, playing video games at arcades, going to theme parks, shopping at the mall to attending baseball games, going hiking in local nature spots, touring local neighbourhoods, and picnicking in the park. As gestures of ‘being good hosts,’ host families do pay out-of-pocket for participants to engage in most of the activities, and therefore it depends on host families’ personal financial situations regarding the extent of the after-program activities.

## 1.5 Defining ‘Community’ in Host Community

The notion of community is central to my study and thus, it is worth taking some time to explore this concept within the context of my research. A more nuanced analysis of the term will be explored in the subsequent chapter (2), but here I present a preliminary introduction to the term. In her book, *International Service Learning: Engaging Host Communities*, Larsen (2016b) implores readers to always ask questions such as “What or who is the community?” and “What is community engagement?” Meanings of the term ‘community’ are multiple and often contested. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘community’ is generally defined as “a body of people or things viewed collectively” and “a body of people who live in the same place, usually sharing a common cultural or ethnic identity.” It “resonates throughout social policy, scholarship, popular culture, and everyday social interactions” (Hill Collins, 2010, p. 7). In this case study, I approach ‘community’ while thinking about being in a geographically, bounded location, and/or a constructed community that includes some and excludes other (Cruz & Giles,

2000; Erasmus, 2011). I was interested in speaking to members who were connected to the community of Samstown ('community' as *shared geographic location or space*). They also would have worked with Circolo as either a community partner, a host family, or as part of the intermediary organization ('community' as *shared common interest[s]*).

Communities themselves are not homogeneous monocultures (Sandy & Holland, 2006), and it is our responsibility as researchers "to attend to the diverse views and perceptions amongst its members" (Larsen, 2016b, p. 11). Further, Varlotta (1997) warns against "artificial homogenization" (p. 80) when engaging in any kind of service learning and community engagement. Taking these insights into consideration, outsiders of the community, and in particular researchers, must firstly not align themselves with the community nor generalize communities as the same. My definition of what 'host community' is, then, reflects these complex explorations into the term.

The way I think about 'host community' in my research is as *(a) common space(s) and place(s) where ideas and experiences are shared*. I did not expect that everyone's stories would be the same; certainly, everyone brings with them their own lived experiences. But I did expect a common element of shared experience in participating as community partners, host families, or the intermediary organization. I remained and remain open to the shifting definitions and interpretations of 'community'. I also left space in my interviews for Samstown host community members to develop or to express their own understandings of community.

## 1.6 Assumptions and my Struggle for Critical Praxis

Like many other researchers before me, my motivations for the study grew out of my own

life experiences and findings (Enders, 2004; Mack, 2010; Quezada, 2012). Attempting to explore existential and ethical questions daily in my PhD program has helped to consolidate why I carried out the study that I did, what I knew going into the research and what I (did not and do not) know. These reflections have occurred through engaging in conversations with colleagues, reflecting on literature, and weaving through my own life experiences; I have been “tracing the strands of [my] *self*” (Fine, 1994, p. 133), in order to figure out my purpose in higher education. I have tried to locate myself and determine my obligations and responsibilities as a researcher and have done so by reflecting on my own limitations as well as by navigating some of the existing tensions in academia and the world outside of it.

I carried out this study as a White, middle-class, cisgender female. Both my parents worked in white-collar jobs and received post-secondary educations. My mother is an immigrant to Canada and my father was born in Canada to immigrant parents. Certainly this impacted my upbringing, and this thesis journey has been an important exercise in both reflection and exploration of the development of my personal and professional lives. Alongside my reflection, I have been working to express my thoughts in writing and to organize a complicated web of other people’s ideas and life stories. Consequently, this doctoral research, as Pryor (2010) notes, is not only for me as a researcher, but also for other people affected by or involved in the research.

This being the case, I recognize the juxtaposition of focusing on my personal story in the introductory chapter of this thesis, but there is a fine line to tread in recognizing researcher positionality, and the personal journey leading up to the research itself. There is a relationship between a researcher’s positionality and qualitative research. As Franco

and Lundy (2020) note, “students should be able to design and implement research projects that align with their personal positionality” (p. 58).

Part of locating myself is recognizing that I have been privileged to go abroad, outside of Canada, on several different occasions. These experiences have been in varying capacities as a student, a teacher, an intern, and a traveller, and have influenced my desire to continue to ask questions. Apart from travel with family, which already placed me in a privileged position, my first independent experience travelling abroad as an adult was at the University of Wales in the UK in my Bachelor of Arts for a full-year academic exchange. Later, I travelled to Southwest University in China during my Bachelor of Education for a reciprocal learning program, as well as to the United Nations in New York City for an internship in my Masters of Education. In October 2017 as a doctoral student team leader, I led a group of university students to Peru to work alongside a Peruvian NGO through the “Impact Experience” spring break program through my institution, Western University.

This experience in Peru was connected to my initial desire to investigate international service learning in South America, given the exponential growth of programs to destinations such as Quito, Ecuador, and to Lima, Peru. However, due to a number of transportation, communication, linguistic, cultural and other challenges my plans changed. At another point in ‘planning’ my doctoral study, I considered changing the location to a site in a Caribbean country, however, concerns arose with the organizational structure of the program, such as community relations, and concerns for my personal safety due to political strife and violence in the area I would have been. In addition, there were some tensions between two matriarchs in the host community in

terms of who should be responsible for their community centre, and with whom incoming volunteers would work.

As often occurs with research, there was a shift from ‘where I started’ to ‘where I ended up’, reflecting that research is a sometimes messy (Pryor, 2010) but ongoing process (Agee, 2009). Critically, through the twists and turns, I was led to studying a service learning program in a host community in the United States. As a novice researcher, experiencing the challenges of choosing the appropriate site for my study serendipitously pushed me to develop a more transnationally-reflexive understanding of IESL. Thus, in thinking about service, I came to understand that it also occurs in the United States (not just coming ‘from’ the United States), and critically, was able to challenge my own presuppositions of what service is or was. Given how beneficial that process was to me, I immediately identified this area of research as a gap and recognized understanding service from the U.S. perspective as the space for my research.

This process and my own experiences learning abroad helped me to refine my ideas about service learning. One of the critical ideas that has most influenced me is that education can help to achieve a reality that is emancipatory and liberatory (hooks, 1994). In essence, all people can free themselves. They can structure their own thinking to rid themselves of preconceived notions or societal stereotypes of others. To that end, Freire (1970 [2000]) argues that “to affirm that men and women are persons and as persons should be free, and yet to do nothing tangible to make this affirmation a reality, is a farce” (p. 6). Engaging with Freire’s ideas, my role as educator/teacher/researcher is to do something tangible, which sustains the critical idea that members of the host community as individuals who have stories worth telling.

Freire as an educator and researcher himself was known for his ability to embody the *praxis* he described in his work (hooks, 1994) and provides a good example of how to both embody and how to employ theory and pedagogical practices in teaching. Kennedy (2008) continues by discussing this “two-way interaction between knowledge and practice” (p. 264); it does not remain fixed in teachers’ minds after leaving college but rather evolves as it interacts with personal beliefs and teaching experience itself.

## 1.7 Organization of the Study

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter One introduces the study, describes the context in which the study was done, and presents the research questions. I also discuss and acknowledge my own positionality as researcher and thus my approach to the study. Chapter Two provides context with respect to IESL and its impact on host communities. In particular, the chapter outlines the shifts and overlaps of service learning, community service learning, international service learning, and volunteer tourism. It also provides a review of the literature relevant to this study, including a review of higher education internationalization in our neoliberal globalized world. Chapter Three outlines my theoretical framework, within which I look to critical theory to provide a blueprint for answering my research questions. It should be noted, and will be further explored Chapter Three, that CRT was not the original framework for the study, explaining the lack of interview questions specifically about race. However, the importance for CRT as a framework for analysis quickly emerged as the study unfolded. During data collection, participants spoke to or about race in the semi-structured interviews, which illustrated for me the significance of race as a concept for analysis. Chapter Four looks at my



methodology and methods. In particular, it describes the benefit of using qualitative research, and the basis for why I chose case study approach. In addition, I look at how I conducted the study, situate the study site, and explore data collection methods and tools. I discuss trustworthiness and ethical considerations to the study as well. Chapters Five and Six present two stories. Each story includes its own findings related to community members' perceptions about the presence of the IESL students in their community. A discussion immediately follows, summarizes those findings, presents their significance, and within which I make sense of host community perspectives regarding the context and impact of IESL in Samstown but also discuss some of the wider implications of the findings themselves. Finally, Chapter Seven concludes with final thoughts, limitations, recommendations for future research. A list of the sources used to inform this study, along with a set of complementary appendices, are included, along with my curriculum vitae.

## Chapter 2 : Literature Review

### 2 Overview

As noted in the introductory chapter above, the popularity of service learning and ‘abroad’ experiences continue to grow. Youth are encouraged or even pressured by friends, family, educational institutions, and the wider society to have some kind of abroad-experience or to engage in community service at home (Atalar, 2020; Wilson et al., 2018). The notions of volunteering in community and ‘giving back’ comes from a rich history of civic engagement, dating back to the mid-1900s and across many organizations such as churches, unions, social groups, and membership associations (Skocpol et al., 2000). Over time, we have seen a shift in this engagement from ‘local’ to include ‘international’, which can be explained by a number of factors, including changes to transportation making travelling abroad easier and less expensive, and the significant shrinking of ‘space’ between people and places (Harvey, 1989; Massey, 2005), or as Giddens (1990) coined, ‘time-space compression’. As a result, different kinds of programming have been made available on campuses around the world, such as study abroad programs, work-study placements, internships, cross-national or international research collaborations, alternative spring breaks, and other ‘civic-minded’ programs. The work of Circolo is situated within this broader higher education context, but also provided by other educational institutions such as secondary schools as well as other community organizations outside of the formal education sector.

Much of the literature shows insight into the potential opportunities and outcomes that service learning provides participants. Service learning is alleged to make students more aware of the world around them, particularly in different geographical and cultural contexts. It can also provide insights into different education and employment systems or settings, and it can show unique ways of learning, knowing, and doing (Billig, 2000; Boyle-Baise, 1998; Bringle et al., 2011; Carnicelli & Boluk, 2017; Hatcher et al., 2017; Larsen & Gough, 2013). In the literature, there have also been critiques of service learning programming, beginning with the term itself. Particularly in recent years, the critiques have cautioned participants, the academy, and the wider community to be weary of “McService, service bites, quick fix service, happy meal community service, or service in a box” (Edy, 1998, p. 2). The implication here, as Edy (1998) goes on to say, is that

[c]olleges and universities sometimes use service-learning as a public relations device to enhance their reputations...students sometimes use service-learning to make themselves feel good or to strengthen their resumes....or to avoid writing requirements or other course requirements when options are given. Agencies use service-learning to get free labor and to gain prestige. (p. 3)

In addition, despite the growing literature that includes ample condemnation of such programming, we still know little about the impact that service initiatives have on host communities. In particular, literature that provides the host community standpoints remains scant. Like an impressionist painting, it is not possible to understand the larger picture of the impact without taking a step back to gain perspective, which is what I aim to do in my study.

In this literature review, I first describe different forms of IESL, namely community service learning (CSL), international service learning (ISL), and volunteer tourism.

Employing IESL as an overarching term gathers related forms of service together, and shifts primary attention to common features and to the host community itself. In other words, while most research focuses on students and how they themselves are impacted, I focus on the community where programming takes place, and attempt to bring their perspectives to the conversation. I draw on the existing literature to illuminate what discussions have occurred around IESL, including the benefits and critiques. Given the critical objectives of this doctoral study, my focus in the review of the literature is primarily on literature that attends to issues of race and of privilege in IESL programming, and literature that overall adopts a critical approach. It should be noted that most of the research itself draws upon literature from U.S. and Canadian contexts. I do recognize this as a limitation but have tried to be diligent in including voices from other continents, including activists and academics that are persons of colour.

## 2.1 A Background on Service Learning

The evolution of different ‘acts of service’ primarily from US-based Campus Compact as a response to how to best achieve education for citizenship. Its mandate today has not veered far from its origins; its directive is to “advance the public purposes of over 1,000 colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility” (Campus Compact, 2019). In its early years, Campus Connect chose to advance what it termed ‘public service,’ serving meals in soup kitchens, cleaning up trash in local parks, or tutoring children at local schools; these student activities were disassociated from the curriculum and faculty (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2017). Few, if any professors at that time, included community-

based activities into their courses to enhance learning outcomes, otherwise known as service learning. However, the exception to this rule was found in women's studies in institutions of higher education across the United States; by the end of the 1980s, almost 40 percent of women's studies majors reported that their department "required a practicum or internship course applying feminist knowledge to institutions in the community or on campus" (Musil, 2010, para. 7). Also around this time, a large group of experienced scholars and practitioners in this research area came together to develop a set of guiding principles of service learning published as the "Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning" (Honnet & Poulsen, 1989). These principles argued that service learning was "a highly effective (and legitimate) teaching strategy... allow[ing] students to grasp the complexity of real-world problems and to develop skills in collective problem solving" (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2017, p. 114) as it tried to move the focus away from personal charitable acts as before and move it toward helping students understand the root causes of social problems, shared with "a spirit of reciprocal partnership with the community" (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2017, p. 114). This historical long-term framing certainly places students as the central focus, with community on the periphery. This longstanding trend brings me to my research and my attempt to begin a change in focus to the host community where service learning takes place.

## 2.2 Defining Service Learning Terminology

In this section, I define the terminology used throughout the thesis. There is an overlapping of concepts and ideas across each area, and as I discuss below, I explain how I see these overlapping concepts coming together. For instance, various forms of service

have connected elements, including concepts of learning by doing/helping ‘others’, ‘getting out into the world,’ and crossing social divides. Practitioners, researchers, host communities, and participants bring different understandings to the terminology, given their varied experiences. In the academic literature, we also see the individual ‘flavours’ of service. In terms of larger aspirations, there is much in common when looking at the challenges and problematic aspects of service. I want to deepen understandings of the limits and possibilities for educative and mutually beneficial outcomes for IESL and to look at how some of the challenges and problematic aspects might be mitigated going forward.

There are a number of different terms to refer to educational/experiential activities that involve participants, usually students, who provide some kind of service (i.e. ‘an act of helpful activity’; ‘an act of helping or benefitting’), as a part of experiential education (EE). This can include a variety of lenses (Crabtree, 2008, 2013) such as service learning (SL), community service learning (CSL), international service learning/global service learning (ISL/GSL), or volunteer tourism, among others, service learning has been simply used to refer to “an educational philosophy, a pedagogical approach, and an educational experience” (Carnicelli & Boluk, 2017, p. 128). More specifically, however, service learning refers to a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students work with others through a process of applying what they are learning to community problems, and at the same time, reflecting upon their experience as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding for themselves (Eyler & Giles, 1999b, p. 3).

Jacoby's (1996) description builds onto Eyler and Giles' (1999b) widely-accepted definition by adding that service learning is "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development" (p. 5). Even with these widely accepted definitions, universally there is no one totally agreed-upon characterization or "holy grail" definition, as Deeley calls it (2015, p. 18), of service learning. A significant problem around service learning for many in the field, including social science and humanities researchers and practitioners, is that there is no "common language for talking about the engaged learning occurring... in other disciplines, and across our campuses" (Costa & Leong, 2012, p. 173). Thinking into the future, that lack of language can be roadblocks for being able to accurately reflect the concerns and needs of host communities.

IESL is an intentional approach to academic learning, whether through the inclusion of service by course design, or through signing up for extracurricular learning experiences for those who have the opportunity. Robinder (2015) explains it as "build[ing] individual and community capacity by encouraging participants to take action and engage in their roles as community members and leaders" (para. 5). IESL acts as a line of communication between faculty, students, and community by "bridg[ing] the gap between theory and practice" (Deeley, 2015, p. 137). As Howard (1998) notes, it can make classroom learning more hands-on, though "integrating service and learning is anything but simple" (p. 21). The literature shows the potential that service can have for student engagement and learning, but what about for host communities? In the next section, I unpack each form of service.

## 2.3 Community Service Learning

Community service learning (CSL) is part of the IESL umbrella. CSL most generally refers to service learning that takes place in local communities as opposed to communities abroad (or at least ‘abroad’ for the volunteer providing the service). CSL elaborates specifically on the idea that service should focus more on community needs, which are addressed by volunteers *to* the community and should be defined *by* the community. Proponents of CSL believe in an emphasis on reciprocity, by which everyone has the opportunity to benefit in the learning process. It is “a credit bearing education experience ...that meets identified community needs and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996, p. 221). Service could last anywhere from a few hours a week for the duration of a course, include a few weeks placement in community or involve longer programming for over a year. One aspect that is critical in CSL is the reflective component. Various reflection activities could include journal writing exercises, pair or group discussions, or given prompts used to elicit reflection within the individual. Examples of a CSL programs include being a science tutor in a local elementary school and acting as a mentor to students; and being an environmental advocate working with local lobby groups to promote government action on climate change.



## 2.4 International and Global Service Learning

As illustrated above, it has been established that the term ‘service learning’ generally refers to service (and learning) that takes place within local communities (community service learning). The terms ‘international service learning’ or ‘global service learning,’ refer to programs that almost always take place abroad and the period of time abroad can range from a few weeks to months and even a year. ISL/GSL include learning opportunities, which combine experiential learning such as short- and long-term study abroad with an internationalized curriculum. Typically, an ISL/GSL curriculum is “designed to educate globally competent students and global citizens” (Galiardi & Koehn, 2011, p. 2), and to prepare them to live in a more globalized world. There is some element of ‘field experience’ involved in ISL/GSL, which usually includes an international travel component. Like CSL, an ISL/GSL program requires academic context and is designed so that the service and learning goals are mutually reinforcing.

The term GSL has come into usage more recently, and is now more often used in distinction to ISL, given the fact that GSL often engages students in *development* interventions (Crabtree, 2008). Furthermore, while both ISL/GSL forward notions of the benefits and good intentions of service, GSL perhaps more critically takes-up notions of an ecology of education (García & Longo, 2013), acknowledging all stakeholders’ involvement in the ‘web’ of service. According to Larsen and Gough (2013), GSL sheds light specifically on “hegemony, axes of power and privilege, and structural inequities inherent in study abroad”, which “occurs in a growing market of global volunteerism” (p.

87; see also Mogford & Lyons, 2019). In addition to a focus on structural inequity, Hartman and Kiely (2014) frame GSL as a way for students to develop cultural competence and moral and civic mindedness through immersive experiences. An example of an ISL/GSL program would be engineering students travelling to a country in Central America to work with an on-site non-governmental organization (NGO) on access to clean drinking water.

## 2.5 Volunteer Tourism

Another concept falling under the IESL umbrella is ‘volunteer tourism’, also known as ‘volunteerism’ or ‘voluntourism’ (Mogford & Lyons, 2019). Volunteer tourism is a form of tourism where paying tourists travel to a different geographical space to volunteer in local communities. Programming typically lasts one to two weeks, which is generally shorter than ISL or GSL placements (Lyons et al., 2012; Mostanfanezhad, 2014; Sin, 2009; Vrasti, 2012). Wearing and McGehee (2013) describe these experiences as “humanitarian and environmental projects with the intention of serving communities in need” (p. 121). Lyons et al. (2012) imagine it as “a form of alternative tourism that creates the kinds of encounters that foster mutual understanding and respect” (p. 362).

Voluntourism is becoming increasingly available and popular with everyday tourists in different parts of the world (Sin, 2009). Proponents of volunteer tourism believe that “tourism ventures can and should bring about positive impacts to locals in host-destinations” (Sin, 2009, p. 481). The academic literature in favour of volunteer tourism, however, is hard to come by. Examples of voluntourism projects include:

teaching conversational English, participating in environmental projects, building houses/repair jobs and painting, engaging in health care initiatives, partaking in orphanage visits, among many others. Volunteer tourism companies self-describe their work with one-liners such as: “you use your time and energy to help others while exploring a different country and culture” (Projects Abroad, 2020). Or, “offer the ‘extra’ attention at-risk kids crave...contribute to childcare projects abroad aimed at children 1 to 5 years old” (Global Volunteers, 2020). The problematic nature of voluntourism, particularly the commodification and renewed colonization of vulnerable human beings such as children, has been asserted (Bandyopadhyay, 2019; Cowden, 2020).

There are certain limitations with these terms in boxing in an experience as only one of SL, CSL, ISL/GSL, or voluntourism. Butin’s (2006) advice is that we begin to think “*through* service-learning...rather than *about*” it (p. 492). In other words, we cannot get so fixated on terminology without looking at the ‘bigger picture’ of the impacts of the service itself. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the emerging term international experiential or service learning (IESL) is an alternative way to bring varying definitions together. IESL privileges a conceptual approach when thinking about service partnerships and “raises questions and reveals challenges for host communities working in partnership...to provide community-based learning opportunities” (Larkin, 2018, p. 1). As such, using IESL moves the focus of this research from definitional distinctions to the phenomenological features, with an understanding that each discourse (SL, ISL/GSL, CSL) borrows knowledge from the other. In the next section, I will briefly explore the literature on the benefits and value of IESL.

## 2.6 Benefits of IESL for Students

### 2.6.1 Cognitive Learning

Largely, the key themes and findings in the IESL literature tell us that students have many opportunities to think about their learning and about the world around them by engaging in experiential learning activities. Given that this study focuses on the host community, and the fact that there is already a vast and substantial body of literature around student benefits, I only briefly discuss the topic. Through engaging in IESL, student (volunteer) participants may have the chance to immerse themselves in a place and develop their communication skills by speaking and connecting with the local community. Sometimes, this communication is done in other languages and could be an occasion to use some basic language knowledge they may have already had, prior to the IESL program. Other reasons cited in the literature note that students have opportunities to learn more about the connections of culture, environment, history, and politics of a place (Merryfield et al., 2008) by being present and speaking with locals or even by simply living in their homes (Larsen, 2016b; MacDonald & Vostermans, 2016; O’Sullivan et al., 2019). In this specific case, we see how there is a desire to dispel myths surrounding ideas of what America is really like (Mogford & Lyons, 2019; O’Sullivan & Smaller, 2016). Participants are exposed to the cultural norms, or ‘ways of life’ of the community and therefore can glean insight into more authentic understanding of the people and place.

### 2.6.2 Reflection and Transformation

Another strong theme appearing in the literature speaks to notions of self-reflection and reflective practice wherein student volunteers have the potential to look within themselves to better understand the ‘transformation’ they (may) undergo through their participation in the program (Mezirow, 2009). Deeley (2004, 2010), Jacoby (1996), Larsen (2014), Larsen and Gough (2013), Osland, Kolb, and Rubin (1971), and Saltmarsh (1997) believe that reflection and reciprocity are key components of service learning from early on in the experience. The term ‘experiential learning’ in this kind of setting, and from a critical perspective, would view knowledge and action as rooted in experience, and empathy and self-reflexivity together as integral for learning about systems of inequality and power (Costa & Leong, 2012). This form of self-reflection can link to the possibility of more explicit social justice outcomes.

### 2.6.3 Social Justice and Citizenship Outcomes

One of the reasons for participation in IESL programs, as Deeley (2015) and Howard (1998) note, is that it “intentionally involves service to the community and academic study with clear links to concepts such as social justice, citizenship playing” (as cited in Carnicelli & Boluk, 2017, p. 7). Reasons cited are that participating in such programming is important in “the development of critical thinking graduates” (Deeley, 2015, p. 10). There is plenty of research about students (Bringle, 2016; Elliot & Johnson, 2007; Hatcher et al., 2017; Kierns, 2010; Tarrant et al., 2014) achieving varying levels of “success” and/or of students’ transformation as “social agents” (Carnicelli & Boluk,

2017, p. 126).

Empirical claims of the educative and social benefits of IESL still need to catch up to the societal shifts we are seeing. For instance, neoliberal attitudes toward education, as a potential area where money can be made, continue to be in conflict with more critically-focused shifts toward socially just aims of education. The desire for more programming has been reflected in government policy, in IoHEs, and directly from students and parents. The Canadian federal government pledged tens of thousands of “student work placements” to be created in a period of five years (Government of Canada, 2017, para. 2).

One can see a range of orientations, from more instrumental and neoliberal (skill development for the knowledge economy), to liberal (transformative learning of the self), to critical-social justice (critical reflection and agency in relation to structural inequity). As Raddon & Harrison (2015) posit, the neoliberal attitude of SL can be utilitarian for academic programs and for their home institutions. At the basis of each of these orientations, nonetheless, is a notion of the power of experience, experiential education for learning and development, and connection to lived experience.

## 2.7 Critiques of Service Learning

Despite the claimed and potential benefits of IESL programs, there is a growing body of literature debating and critiquing experiential programming. First, a number of researchers have problematized the term ‘service learning’ itself (Pompa, 2005; Vrasti, 2013; Weigert, 1998). Particularly, discussions around the limitations and boundaries of service learning have surfaced, especially in academic settings and with community

leaders and various intermediary organizations. Much of the criticism has focused on the potential of service to lead to new forms of colonialism, othering, and dependency (Caton & Santos, 2009; Cowden, 2020; Guttentag, 2009; Hammersley, 2014; Heron, 2007; Vrasti, 2013) and the related potential exploitation of host communities (Palacios, 2010; Theerapappisit, 2009). “Service” taken up apart from any ‘learning’ or reflection lead to ‘logics’ of service (Flower, 1997) that simply reify positioning ‘others’ as helpless or needy in contrast to their own constructions of self (Clark & Young, 2005, p. 72).

The literature reveals that participants in service learning programs typically involve Western, Euro-White and middle- to upper- class female participants (Butin, 2006; Hammersley, 2014; Larsen, 2016b; Mostafanezhad, 2013; Raymond & Hall, 2008; Soria & Mitchell, 2016; Tarc, 2013; Vecina & Fernando, 2013) who are often “single, without children, un-indebted, and between ages 18 and 24” (Butin, 2006, p. 481). That is to say, even before a program or the service begins, participation is uneven. In *Conflicted Commitments: Race, Privilege, and Power in Solidarity Activism*, Mahrouse (2014) quotes White American activist Rachel Corrie, who says, “I look forward to increasing numbers of middle-class privileged people like you and me becoming aware of the structures that support our privilege and beginning to support the work of those who aren’t privileged to dismantle those structures” (p. 2). However, Mahrouse also equally cautions “the intentions of specifically white, transnational volunteers or activists”...which “may, consciously or not, undermine efforts to build solidarity within communities marginalized by poverty or conflict” (Larkin, 2018, p. 2). From this text alone, we can see some of the tensions existing in service learning programs, alerting us to the deeply complicated relationship of race, civic engagement, and particularly,

between those involved in and with service and the service itself.

Most existing literature describes the privileged social positions occupied by IESL participants are in sharp contrast to those in the communities receiving the service (Mwtawa & Wilson-Strydom, 2018). In racial terms, White people are providing a service to persons of colour. In social class terms, the ‘recipients’, or ‘beneficiaries’ (Heron, 2007) of service are typically less-privileged financially than those providing the service; this social class and racial divide underlies some of the largest critiques of service, which will be discussed later in the chapter. While situated primarily with a development background in the Majority World context, Heron (2007) herself uses the word ‘bourgeois’ rather than ‘white’, believing it “inherently connotes class as well as race and gender—and an implicit heteronormativity” (p. 6). While I use the word ‘white’ throughout this thesis, I still parallel similar ways of thinking in that society implicitly or explicitly upholds ideals of Whiteness, which constitutes what is viewed as ‘normal’ with everything else in relation to that.

Research also shows the rapid increase in the marketization of service, with private companies selling international service experiences as a commodity (Higgins-Desbiolles & Russell-Mundine, 2008; Sharp & Dear, 2013; Kiely et al., 2014). This critique suggests that service learning experiences could be more harmful than helpful. Vrasti (2013) points to the conditions of consumer capitalism, which shape IESL, and wherein participants engage in programming with the conception that they are participating in sustainable tourism, corporate social responsibility, and ethical consumption (p. 9). As she states, these “innovative strategies” are simply guises, “...reflective of contemporary



transformations in capitalist production, consumption and citizenship practices” and a “neoliberal strateg[y] of subject formation” (p. 12).

Attention has also been paid to various programs that aim to make money, rather than centering on the well-being of host communities. It is no surprise then that Meyvis and Yoon (2021) posit that the answer could be ‘solving problems through subtraction’. In this context, adding more programming to ‘meet the needs’ of others may not necessarily be the answer, but in fact, lesser more meaningful programming ‘meeting the needs’ of the host community could be. In particular, much of the economic benefits of such programming do not “trickle down” to the parts of the community, which would benefit from it most (Liburd et al., 2012, para. 61). Even in research directly pointing to the problems of such programming, the respondents *speaking on behalf* of the community have more often than not been either academics working in the field, managers of onsite programs, or NGOs. Host families or community leaders have not always been involved in process, and even when involved, their voices may not be uplifted (Birdsall, 2005; Bose, Horrigan, Doble, & Shipp, 2014; Cruz & Giles, 2000).

In consideration of what the existing critical literature says and of the increasing numbers of IESL programs, the importance of scrutiny of such programs must be at the fore (Sin, 2009). The references here support the idea that people who are recipients of help or service are essentially being commodified and subjugated for the benefit of those who are already in positions of power (Larsen, 2016b; Tiessen, 2018; Vrasti, 2013). It is the voices of those ‘recipients of help’ or those whom I refer to as the host community in my study, who remain under-represented or, to repeat, represented by other stakeholders

in the research literature. While this study is informed by the critique, I want to hear directly from host community members.

Two decades before the growth of critical IESL literature, Eby (1998) wrote a paper that left no room for guessing what his feelings were about SL. Entitled *Why Service Learning is Bad*, he states:

Because of the strong emphasis on learning within service learning, service can be subverted and become a “means to an end” rather than an end in itself. At its best, service should be defined by persons served and should be accountable to them in significant ways. Programs should be managed by local people and agencies controlled by them. Often service learning is organized to respond to the needs of an academic institution which sponsors it, the needs of students, the needs of an instructor, or the needs of a course. The needs of the agency and the community often come last. (p. 2)

For Eby, the focus on programming should start with community. While there has been improvement more recently with growing awareness of the importance of host communities, there is still much to be done. As mentioned above, critical researchers have begun to call attention to the ways in which service still “reinscribes neocolonial relations between privileged youth from predominantly Northern universities” and those in need (Larkin, 2018, p. 2). Even though well-intentioned, the danger, according to Rhoads (1997), is that, “without mutuality, service mimics charity...and charity does not encourage the intimate connections and personal relationships that result from service built on mutuality” (p. 128).

At its core, and how I understand it, IESL should be based on a relationship of dialogue. Pompa (2005) notes that it should be an act of working *with* people who may be in need of it, rather than working to serve them. Conceptions of service involve visiting a

new place and meeting new people, the ‘bringing together’. Gillen and Mostafanezhad (2019) and Tiessen (2018) call this moment *the encounter*, and O’Sullivan et al. (2019) similarly call it *el encuentro* (‘the encounter’ in Spanish).

There is also a realization that the traditional approaches of service tend to emphasize the service or action portion without paying attention to systems and structures of inequality, which still persist “and in many cases have deepened” (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 1). In addition to the neo-colonial and charitable aspects, Taylor et al. (2015) elaborate that “a charity model constructs community as the subject while a social justice model sees it as a partner” (p. 16). In consideration of how the community might ‘speak back’ to these models, as constructed by privileged researchers, the agency of the research participants must also be considered in that the community is also able “to shape what are considered and interpreted as data,” and that must also be recognized (Deliovsky, 2017, p. 5). Certainly, depending on the focus of the IESL program, or the extent to which collaboration and reciprocity occur, the service could actually reinforce social hierarchies and inequalities (Mtawa & Wilson-Strydom, 2018).

In the body of literature that situates service learning within critical pedagogy (Larsen, 2016b; Mostanfanezhad, 2014; Vrasti, 2012; Wearing & McGehee, 2013), researchers and practitioners (Hartman & Kiely, 2014; Pillard Reynolds, 2014) have written about the that role service learning plays in *students’ journeys* from privileged, dominant culture backgrounds to an understanding of the lives people lead in non-dominant communities (O’Sullivan & Smaller, 2013). However, other critical literature points out that although participants are meant to examine the social constructs that create inequalities, instead, as Mitchell (2008) posits, they often end up upholding inequalities in

their quest to ‘implement’ social justice-oriented change (as cited in Tilley-Lubbs, 2009, p. 59). This body of research shows how students’ perceptions and attitudes toward minoritized partner communities can remain the same, despite their ‘experience’ (Cruz & Giles, 2000; Pillard Reynolds, 2014) and in fact, can solidify their positionings in the ‘upper echelons’ of society.

The growth of service learning has thus inspired a tremendous growth in the field of critical IESL literature drawing on fields such as development studies (Cameron, 2010; Heron, 2007; MacDonald, 2014; Tiessen, 2014; Tiessen & Heron, 2012), critical pedagogy (Andreotti, 2016a, 2016b; Roy et al, 2016), and critical race studies (Davis, 1983, 2012, 2016; Hill Collins, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Mahrouse, 2014; Taylor et al., 2009). While this expanding literature unfortunately offers little on the impact of IESL on host communities, more academics are voicing the importance of developing this area of research. Since universities engaged in IESL, most frequently partner with communities in the majority world, issues related to ethical engagement with and representation of ‘the ‘Other’” are critical (Pillard Reynolds & Gasparini, 2016, p. 36). Though some good work is being done in the name of IESL, the “depoliticised rendering of direct services to needy populations” has likened service learning to a “glorified welfare system” (Mtawa & Wilson-Strydom, 2018, p. 251). And while IESL can have a transformative effect on student participants, little has been done to explore the impact of these experiences on host communities (Galiardi & Koehn, 2011; Larsen, 2016b; Pillard Reynolds, 2019), which I explore next.

## 2.8 Research on IESL and Host Communities

In their papers, Eyler and Giles (1999a) and Cruz and Giles (2000) bring up a question often asked by leading service learning researchers and practitioners: “Where's the *community* in service learning research?” Almost 20 years have gone by since their papers were published, and the same question is being asked today. Many other authors have also noted this significant gap in the literature around host community perspectives (Crabtree, 2008; Hartman, 2016a; Kiely & Hartman, 2011; Larsen, 2016b; Maurrasse, 2001; O’Sullivan et al., 2019). And although there still remains a large gap in representation of community voice, there has been some emerging work on the area of ‘host communities’ found in various CSL or ISL/GSL literature, which is reviewed in the subsequent section.

### 2.8.1 Positive Impacts of IESL on Host Communities

Some of the research literature on host communities and IESL illustrates some positive advantages that stem from these arrangements. Tiessen and Heron (2012) and Barnhart (2012) point to the community’s positive perceptions of IESL programs and the value of hosting. For instance, host communities view their participation as an opportunity for learning, for understanding, and for building connections. Tiessen (2018) also cites host community reasons for hosting as those who have a sense of adventure, a desire for volunteers to learn about diverse cultures and landscapes, and also an understanding of the challenges for volunteers as well (p. 46); some participants were “bored with life in Canada” (p. 89) and were adventure-seeking.

The literature also shows that host community members interviewed across various studies and locales focused on relationships (Grain et al., 2019; Heron, 2007; Larsen, 2016b; Smaller & O’Sullivan, 2018). Holland (2005) discusses the possibility for relationships to be built and nurtured between the intermediary organization and community partners. Similarly, Maurrasse (2001) draws our attention to host community perspectives and speaks to the potential for positive relationship building. Building relationships and creating programming that is sustainable are both key elements in creating an environment where all partner are and feel valued (Grain et al., 2019; Kozak & Larsen, 2016). In order for this to occur, as one host community member expressed, “frank dialogue between the organization and the community is very well needed...but takes time” (Smaller & O’Sullivan, 2018, p. 16).

Through their work in Uganda, Grain et al. (2019) speak to the nuances of that relationship building, which observes more closely the kind of relationships that exist in service learning programming - “friendships, educational relationships, and relationships that foster social change” (p. 24). Grain et al. (2019) believe that these varying relationships are not a “precursor to ISL done well, but as the success in itself” (p. 22). I am not aware of other literature on the specificity of these three specific types of relationships in service learning. Moving forward, understanding the nature and power dynamics of these connections is an under-researched but relevant area, which requires more attention.

Tiessen’s (2018) book, which is based on interviews with host organization staff and Canadian learners/volunteers spanning the countries of Guatemala, India, Jamaica,

Malawi, Peru, South Africa, and Zambia, makes some important observations. She posits: “cross cultural communication has the most potential to contribute to enhanced learning and shared understanding required for mutuality and social change” (p. 65). Searle and Larsen (2016) had also made a similar reflection, in that increasing “cross-cultural communication and awareness about local cultural norms and values” (p. 12) would be better not only for volunteers but also for the host community. In other words, “cultivat[ing] meaningful connections...” (Heidebrecht & Balzer, 2020, p. 154) and subsequently good communication is imperative in beginning to decolonize SL experiences.

Overall, Kozak and Larsen (2016) summarize well some positive benefits of ISL programs by drawing attention to economic growth, increase of cross-cultural awareness, development of different skillsets, and general appreciation for their own culture. Based on the research, host communities participate in IESL programming for a variety of reasons, whether for some kind of monetary benefit, to open or to create opportunities for their own communities, or to have a chance to impart their knowledge and experience and teach others. Many of these reasons can depend on whether the host community has been approached by an academic institution or by an intermediary organization, or if a community group is seeking to volunteer or participate in some kind of civic-minded or action project. In other cases, it could manifest from the host community, where they themselves may be the ones to propose to something they want or need, or an opportunity of which they would like to take advantage. These different starting points could be generative research projects in themselves. Whatever the reason, the literature posits (Bringle, Hatcher, & Jones, 2011; Wearing & Wearing, 2006) that programs including

host communities in conversation and as the focus are most beneficial to all stakeholders involved. Unfortunately, as other literature notes, that has not always been the case. Next, I review the literature on the negative impacts of IESL on host communities.

## 2.8.2 Negative Impacts of IESL on Host Communities

Mogford & Lyons (2019) remind us that even with positive change in relationship building to counter the ‘privileged saviour’ dialogue, and even with programming focusing on the co-construction of knowledge (Grain et al., 2019; Heidebrecht & Balzer, 2020), there still often remains an imbalance of power, as both an enabling and constraining condition of relationship building that must be part of the awareness and learning of both service learn and host community. Inequality and power relations cannot be fully eliminated, but indeed, are the grounds upon which relations are built. For instance, programs typically still focus more on student participants as beneficiaries, or, “the global elite” (Mogford & Lyons, 2019, p. 99). And this imbalance is also reflected in the research literature, which continues to focus primarily on the benefits of IESL for the student volunteers, as we have seen above. To extrapolate, looking at the distinctions among service programs helps to illustrate whether the beneficiary is the recipient (e.g., community agency/member) or provider (e.g., student) or, if the focus is on learning, service, or entertainment and leisure. This is often the case, rather than focus being equally (or more) on host communities.

In one of the only books focusing specifically on host communities’ perspectives, Larsen (2016b) discusses the potential negative effects of volunteer and host community “arrangements” (p. 5), and brings to light some of the messiness that is associated with



the field and the too-general nature of the existing literature. Guttentag (2009) also expresses his weariness regarding participants' presence in host communities and the potential consequences and negative impact on the host community, citing some reasons as "neglect of locals' desires... a reinforcement of conceptualizations of the 'other', and rationalisation of poverty" (p. 537). Essentially, the conclusions of his paper indicate that while there are benefits to such programming and the intention of volunteers, the negative impacts are far reaching beyond what we currently know, which is another rationale for this study.

Cameron (2010) also suggests that while CSL "rarely fails outright" (p. 40), he acknowledges that often, it is host communities who end up taking on and left to work through some "toxic elements...chiefly a long history of academic exploitation of the community" (p. 40). Taboada (2011) goes on to mention the problematic nature of engaging with host communities when "it does not ensure long-term sustainable changes or benefits for the host community" (p. 378). And Hollis (2002) talks about how host communities are often left to defend themselves against projected blame for their 'shortcomings'.

In recent years, there has been a growing body of more in-depth literature on the complexities of studying host communities and ISL (Mogford & Lyons, 2019, p. 86). Searle and Larsen's work (2016) acknowledges this complexity in their study in a Tanzanian host community. They assert the importance of seeking insights from host communities themselves, and were specifically interested in gaining an understanding of "host participants' experiences and perceptions" (p. 4). In their study, participants from

the community shared their thoughts and experiences. One key finding is the importance of reciprocity in that host community members, and in their case host teachers, must be viewed as “central to developing relationships” (Searle & Larsen, 2016, p. 12). In other words, the concept of ‘reciprocity’ is relevant, not only by paying lip service, but as we will see illuminated in the authors’ work below, by also acting on and engaging in that reciprocity.

O’Sullivan and Smaller (2019), who have also engaged the host community perspective for some time in their research on IESL, have similar interests in understanding their host community perceptions. They are particularly keen to better understand the potential neocolonial effects of ISL programming on host communities. Based on their work from a multi-year study in rural communities in Guatemala and Nicaragua, they draw attention to the host communities with whom they were able to establish relationships and with whom they spoke to bring valuable lived-knowledge and experience to the discussions (Smaller & O’Sullivan, 2016; 2019; O’Sullivan et al., 2019).

Host community members were also highlighted in Heidebrecht and Balzer’s (2020) recent work where community members spoke of the specific challenges and benefits to hosting. Some challenges highlighted by O’Sullivan and Smaller (2019) were things like volunteers bringing their own food to eat, while being hosted in someone else’s home; volunteers not wanting to be left alone with the families hosting them out of (unfounded) safety concerns; students “[feeling] jealous of other students in ‘better homes’” (p. 645). In Heidebrecht and Balzer’s (2020) case, one finding that came up was

associated monetary or financial concerns. For instance, host community members spoke of issues with the monetization of the experience itself. Further, they found that the host community, in ensuring guests were happy, often added pressure on women and girls of families hosting. Worrall (2007) also sheds light on capital gained by the community through their participation in programming - resources, either material or financial. Toms Smedley (2016) cites Irie, Daniel, Cheplik, and Philips (2010) and adds that the “financial and in-kind resources ...would not otherwise be available to the community” (p. 75) without these programs.

### 2.8.3 Tensions in IESL Impacting Host Communities

Despite some positive experiences noted, research on host communities has illustrated the various challenges or tensions of hosting as well. Most importantly, host community members were interested in understanding what their impact was as a host community on participants, post-programming as Toms Smedley (2016) explores in her study on IESL in Costa Rica. This is an important finding in terms of illuminating the agency of the host community. In other words, the host community is continuously developing curiosity toward the guests and how those guests understand the experience. The host community members are therefore not simply ‘victims’ of the abroad industry, and we see more nuanced stories coming to light. Through developing an awareness and understanding of the aforementioned challenges and benefits, we begin to see a picture of some of the factors that influence ISL arrangements and what make them (im)possible in the first place.

Zahra and McGehee (2013) point to the political and cultural benefits. On the surface, this would appear as an immediate benefit, but on a deeper level, issues of division sometimes result, as mentioned. Sandy and Holland (2006) point particularly to the responsibility that community partners feel for student learning, which can be equally rewarding and difficult for host communities. Finally, even in the best of reciprocal relationships, despite efforts to ‘share power’, projects are typically of “such complexity that academics inevitably assume *de facto* leadership roles” (Ellenbogen, 2017, p. 318). Even with the participants’ or the academy’s ‘best of intentions’, looking through a critical lens reminds all involved that even in mutually agreeable arrangements, serious thought must be given as to how not to reinscribe hierarchies of power in service learning programs. So, even though there are researchers supporting and echoing a critically hopeful perspective, there still remains a lack of research conducted on the direct perceptions of host communities.

## 2.9 Gaps in the Research and Summary

In this chapter, I provided an overview of various forms of service, and many of the connections shared between them. Using IESL to bridge all of these forms has helped to approach the literature, wherein a lack of data reflecting and from the host community is apparent. Despite the emerging literature cited above about host communities involved with various voluntourism/ISL initiatives, there still remains a gap in the research literature on service learning from the perspective of the host community perspective. My study aims to address that gap. My research is also unique in focusing on a program that cuts across the CSL, ISL/GSL divide; and an IESL program that is situated in the

minority (Global North) world, in juxtaposition to most IESL programs that are based in the Global South.

Furthermore, while not generalizable, the hope is that my study can contribute to a broader field of host community literature and eventually accumulate to a wide field of knowledge. Overall, the point of this study is not, as Tarc (2013) states, “to criticize the work of individuals engaging in any number of practices of helping others, many of which do improve the individual circumstances of deserving human beings in profound ways” (p. 119). But it is to try to understand limits and possibilities of IESL given one host community perspective and, in turn, to contribute to the gap in the literature by asking where or what the missing knowledge is and answering it thoughtfully. These contributions are further discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3 : Theoretical Framework

### 3 Overview

With other researchers of IESL and international/global citizenship education (Ahmed, 2000; Andreotti, 2011; Heron, 2007; Larsen 2016a, 2016b; Larkin, 2018; O’Sullivan & Smaller, 2018; O’Sullivan et al., 2019, Tarc, 2013; Tiessen, 2018; Vradi, 2013; Worrall, 2007), I employ a “critical” lens as a framework for my research. More specifically, my framing incorporates concepts from Critical Race Theory (CRT). The chapter is organized by introducing how I approach the research, through a critical lens. With this lens, I consider criticisms and tensions of IESL with attention to questions of inclusion and privilege, human agency, and how host community voice is shaped within broader societal contexts.

Using this critical approach has helped me to “question the hidden assumptions and purposes of competing theories and existing forms of practice...by insisting that thought must respond to new problems and new possibilities for liberation that arise from changing historical circumstances” (Bronner, 2017, p. 1). This interdisciplinary lens provokes asking not only *how things are* in the now, or how they were before, but also “how they might be and should be” in the future (Bronner, 2017, p. 1).

Clearly, we live in a hierarchized world that is gendered, racialized, and class-based. I acknowledge and contend that the Samstown host community remains structured within a societal tradition of having to resist ideas and fight projections of inferiority that have been projected onto them. In my research, I consider the lives of the participants in

this study as complex, and shaped and structured by their gender, race, and class, even if not explicitly stated in the data presented in this project and/or shared by participants.

Through this critically-focused study, I am interested in exploring how host communities think about the emancipatory potential of education (e.g. IESL programs) to inform and to challenge ways of knowing and being.

The way I approach theory is as a blueprint, which is a helpful analogy in visualizing the framework of a thesis. It “serves as a guide for all those who are involved in the construction of the home” (Grant & Osanloo, 2014, p. 12). In other words, theory provides a foundation upon which the house (the study) can be built. Based on discussions with colleagues inside the classroom and equally, in conversation outside of school walls, I have come to better understand how “the absence of theory,” as Ball (1995) states, “leaves the researcher prey to unexamined, unreflexive preconceptions and dangerously naïve ontological and epistemological *a priori*” (p. 266). Essentially, interpretations of my data cannot be made based only on what is already known in the literature. Instead, it is a combination of the relevant literature, and then an introduction of my own data and experience engaging with it through the critical theoretical lens that I use to analyze my data that can help to qualify and create new knowledge.

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, this theoretical blueprint was ‘redrafted’ and modified as I came into the study. I had initially engaged with postcolonial theory, thinking my research study would be in a minority world context. Even as the site of the study changed to being in the United States, it seemingly remained a relevant theory that would be applicable and useful for the framing of my study. However, given the unique

context of the neighbourhood in which I was situated, its demographic makeup, the participants represented in the study itself, as well as the sheer number of instances where race was brought to fore, it would have therefore been negligent of me to continue to engage in the analysis and discussion without the prioritization of race.

### 3.1 Taking a Critical Approach

There are many intersecting disciplinary areas contributing to critical approaches to educational research. The historical lineage is long, but critical studies in education began to advance in the early 1970s (Simmons, 2016). Until the last couple of decades, critical theoretical approaches were still considered “eccentric in mainstream academic circles and somewhat exotic even among progressive intellectuals” (Bronner, 2017, pp. 100-101); being critical is not germane to the systems of oppression, either (Tiessen & Heron, 2012). Through the historical and foundational work – first of Marx in the eighteenth century followed by Kant in the nineteenth – the stage was set for The Frankfurt School (Anyon, 2008). This first-generation of the School included the work of Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, and Marcuse. Habermas, who was part of the second-generation of theorists, still plays an important role alongside other critical theorists. They have helped “forward the social facets of the theory” (MacDonald, 2015, p. 1). For instance, Habermas emphasized the importance of having a more pragmatic relationship of critical theory. He believed in using a rational approach in understanding the world through people’s own words, thoughts, and actions. This approach is particularly relevant today, and particularly in the context of this study, where societies can be seen as becoming more “complex, pluralistic, and globalizing” (Bohman, 2019).



Critical approaches bring in more political forms of questions, by asking ‘how’ and ‘why’ knowledge gets constructed the way it does, and ‘how’ and ‘why’ some constructions of reality are legitimated and celebrated by the dominant culture” while others, unmistakably, are not (McLaren, 2003, p. 72). As Omi and Winant (2014) posit, “assumptions are as much political as they are theoretical” (p. 7). In other words, “both the institutional and ideological nature of race in America, and the systematic entrenchment of racial dynamics in such spheres as education, art, social policy, law, religion, and science” (Omi and Winant, 2014, p. 7). Traditional Western narratives have suppressed diversity, especially regarding gender and race in both content and form, and diminished other knowledges as unworthy of study. As Reagan (2017) explains, knowledge “is always constructed in a particular social context...[Indigenous] knowledges continue to coexist with western constructions of knowledge in many parts of the world, even as they continue to be denigrated and rejected as unscientific... even primitive and backwards” (p. 354).

Scholars like Santos (2014) and Mignolo and Walsh (2018) agree that there is not one way, one definition, one guideline, or one method to develop a framework. Situating my study within a range of critical frameworks primarily draws from critical race theory (CRT) to critical gender theory and post-colonial theory primarily draws from the following set of scholars as follows: Du Bois, Hall, Hill Collins, hooks, Omi and Winant, who bring an understanding as Black or Black-ally scholars and activists on what it means (for them) to embody or understand Blackness; and Larsen, O’Sullivan, Tarc, and Tiessen who bring in critical perspectives to overseas experiential learning. I bring these frameworks together by operationalizing them within the parameters of my study. In

other words, I outline how the theories or ideas connect and work together to understand IESL in Samstown, and from the perceptions of the host community (as embedded in larger social structures).

Critical approaches to research help us to recognize that the voices of marginalized and oppressed peoples must be heard, encourage us to take action to uplift those voices, and to take action showing that their words are valued. In particular, Wright Rigueur and Beshlian (2019) note how “Black people have resisted and challenged their marginalization since their arrival” (p. 267). Specifically, critical race theory as Giles (2010) posits, was birthed out of that very challenging and is about “people of color resisting hegemony while expressing their authentic voice to tell their own stories” (p. 357). Notwithstanding, Baldwin (1953) understands the challenges of telling stories, for he himself attempts to narrate the story of the Grimes family and “address racial issues, but ...also capture...his characters in a way that avoided stereotype...attentive to the power of setting... without losing sight of the agency of his characters” (Buccola, 2019, p. 55). I feel similarly as I approach this study as I understand the role that race plays, but understand that each contributor to the study has their own story and own agency. This is what Martin and Griffiths (2013) echo this notion by bringing our focus to Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009). She cautions the use of single stories, especially when coming from the dominant West. Single stories “have their roots in colonialism” (Martin & Griffiths, 2013, p. 941). Spivak (1988) argues, however, that marginalized voices cannot in fact be heard, because of the “proclivity of dominant discourses and institutions to marginalize and disempower...the subaltern” (as cited in

Kapoor, 2004, p. 627). In fact, she challenges the work of “leftist intellectuals’ lists of self-knowing” so that “canny subalterns stands revealed” (p. 70).

With the recognition of some of those tensions, the theoretical framework employed here is meant to bring focus to the following: a) the structural basis of racism and classism and other forms of discrimination and difference; b) the agency of the oppressed as members of the host community, and their identities as constructed by and through relations and engagement with service learning volunteers, under larger social structures; and c) the manifestation of power.

### 3.2 Critical Theory and Socio-Cultural Historical Contexts

Critical theory problematizes phenomena by situating them in socio-cultural and historical contexts. By thinking critically about IESL and focusing on national, regional, and global contexts, “a geopolitically informed tourism analysis” (Gillen & Mostafanezhad, 2019, p. 71) can then move beyond traditionally defined “impact” definitions toward a narrower reality situated within broader contexts. That said, even working with this lens is confining in its own right. Relative to my study, my reasons for connecting with the host community, by being with and learning from, is to provide essential (and missing) views to add context to the IESL conversation.

Heron (2007) challenges the ‘helping narrative’ and uses critical race theory, alongside her primary theoretical framework of postcolonial theory, to interrogate such imbalances, which I have discussed in the literature review chapter. Tiessen (2018) offers additional perspective into the many ways that “power and inequality are maintained

through the images, norms, practices, and language used in the articulation of international volunteer experiences” and “the language and images of the ‘White, privileged saviour’ helping the ‘Other’...are problematized and analysed in the context of continuities and change” (p. 8). As illuminated by Kapoor (2005), we see elements of the “narcissistic Samaritan” coming to the fore, where one [White person] is caught “between the desire to work to empower the Other while maintaining a claim for her/his own neutrality” (Larkin, 2018, p. 2). Further in this context, Tiessen looks at experiences occurring in former colonies in the Majority World. She also elucidates larger messaging that is applicable in a Minority World context as well. For instance, she draws on the potential of postcolonial *thinking* as it can raise awareness about “structural and systemic inequality, neo-colonial practices, neoliberalism, and paternalism” (Tiessen, 2018, p. 135).

We cannot rely solely on theory “to do our thinking for us” (Anyon, 2008, p. 5). hooks (1994) reminds researchers that, in digging deeper into the inequality, “theory emerges from the concrete, from [our] efforts to make sense of everyday life experiences, from [our] efforts to intervene critically in [our lives] and in the lives of others” (p. 70). And Fine (1994) surmises that the researcher going *into* a place manifests as “Self and Other...knottily entangled” (p. 72); I have an internal awareness of self – coming into this research – and a physical awareness of self – going into Samstown. Taking hooks’ (1994, 2015) and Fine’s cautionary pieces as guiding words, I recognize the confusion and messiness I am experiencing as a novice researcher and use this recognition as an opportunity for thinking, and to embrace ‘the unknown’ as something beautiful, to let the encounter take its own form *while* also being critical. It is a choice to see the messiness as

beneficial and as a way to move forward. In preparation for my work in the field, I acknowledge the role of researcher (with their own biases, prejudices, lenses, etc.) as a formidable layer embedded in critical approaches to research. And with gained experience with case studies over time, it then becomes possible for the novice researcher to engage in more difficult research (Yin, 1994, 2009, 2014).

### 3.3 Critical Race Theory

Despite not being explicitly stated or explored in my interview questions, the topic of race was raised by almost every participant during our interviews or informal conversations. As a White middle-class woman, CRT has given me a way to critically examine emerging themes of “the silencing of race” (Lingard et al., 2016, p. 90), both historically and in the present. This is not far off from West’s (1993) *Race Matters*, which calls on “Blacks and Whites” to understand that racism and race are woven in American history and can never be eradicated without understanding that “race matters.”

The historical roots of critical race theory were foregrounded in a profound collection of literary essays by W. E. B. Du Bois published in 1903. As the first African American to graduate with his doctorate from Harvard in 1895, his seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, showed the collective struggle of Black people in America. It provided a solid base to explore, what he calls, “the problem of the Twentieth Century...the problem of the color line” (Du Bois, 1903 [2008], *The Forethought*). In this text, he was thoughtful in the ways in which he formally showed how Black people constantly have to traverse that line, and he elaborates on their experiences of double-consciousness.

In 1909, DuBois went on to become one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). One year after his death, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 came into effect outlawing “discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin” (§ 7). Du Bois’ work provides a critical foundation to CRT in that it helps to focus in on and to “challenge the narrative of an American history that had been constructed primarily from myth and legend rather than empirical and historical accounts” (Thomas, 2005, p. 4). Finally, CRT provides a legal framework to focus on the ways in which people of colour are adversely affected, by acknowledging history and contemporary experiences (Brooks, 1994). By providing this brief, though atypical narrative, I model a CRT approach by providing a historical foundation for the concepts I employ.

### 3.3.1 Relationship Between Race and Society

A successor to Du Bois’, Cedric Robinson was a professor of Black studies and political science and explored the relationship between race and society. Specifically, in his book *An Anthropology of Marxism*, Robinson (2001) explores capitalism’s excesses and its hostages:

Capital centrism and its privileges... the ‘exaggerated’ importance of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; the ‘dismissive treatment of non-industrial labor’, whether slaves, peasants, indentured labour or women, and their relegation to the ‘dustbin’ of history; the ‘evangelical politics of class struggle’ as the ‘penultimate competition for power’; and the ‘economistic conceit’ which prevented ‘a more comprehensive treatment of history, classes, culture, race-ethnicity, gender and language...and the messiness of human activity’. (Gordon, 2005, p. 30)

We see this inescapable dehumanizing, experienced by Black people painfully depicted in the ‘everyday life’ context in Butler’s (1979) *Kindred*. In the book, we observe the protagonist Dana – a Black woman in her mid-twenties - struggling to understand her place in the world. She struggles with Du Bois’ “veil.” Dana attempts to “free herself from slavery as she fiercely struggles for agency, and for ‘control of her own life’” (Bast, 2012, p. 151). She recounts to her White husband:

You might be able to go through this whole experience as an observer... I can understand that because most of the time, I’m still an observer. It’s protection. It’s nineteen seventy-six shielding and cushioning eighteen nineteen for me. But now and then... I can’t maintain the distance. I’m drawn all the way into eighteen nineteen, and I don’t know what to do. I ought to do something though. I know that. (Butler, 1979, p. 101)

Not unlike DuBois and Robinson, Butler’s ‘Dana’ is the personification of a history of pain and suffering carried on the backs of African Americans; No matter how many years removed from ‘the past’, history’s weight systematically pervades and continues to deepen the welts. Hall notes the reason as two-fold, partly because African Americans imagine how they see themselves, but in spite of this, they must also constantly navigate how others imagine them to be. To this end, West (1993) urges us all to think about the significance of “engag[ing] in a serious discussion of race in America...we must begin not with the problems of Black people but with the flaws of American society — flaws rooted in historic inequalities and longstanding cultural stereotypes” (p. 3). Engaging with postcolonialism is useful here because, as we will see later, it ensures directed “attention to historicity of discursive events by showing both their continuity with the past...and their involvement in making history” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 11).

Developing an understanding of the historical context (Du Bois, 1903 [2008]; West, 1993; Hall, 2017; Robinson, 2000) is more poignant than ever before as critical theorists continue to shed light to the way we look at race today (and what our role in perpetuating the systems, which we created and still enable). In PBS's Interview with Cornel West (1997), West discusses what it means to be an African American in the United States and what has changed since 1967:

We had a much deeper sense of community in '67 than we do in '97. This is important to say that not in a nostalgic way because it's not as if '67 was a time when things were so good. Materially speaking, we were much worse. But culturally speaking in terms of social connection, they were much better.

West's ideas, which were again paralleled in a 2020 interview with CNN, are sometimes considered more radical, given that his leanings have been associated with socialism, or radical democracy. But his notions of that 'shift' are also paralleled by others, who try to understand it. For instance, in a 2010 NPR interview with Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Eugene Robinson, he says:

we really do have to remember what life was like before integration, and those of us who were able to remember any of that time, know that we are not, as a people, worse off by any stretch of the imagination and no one would turn back the clock and go back to those days. But, I think the chances of this abandoned group [those who continue to be marginalized and pushed out of their neighbourhoods as a result of gentrification], the opportunities they have to climb the ladder into the middle class - and perhaps beyond - are diminishing.

The shifting fluidity of identities (Hall 1985; See also Sender & Decherney, 2016) of African Americans is relevant. But it comes across that in some way or another, there is thinking about the disintegration of elements of African American communities. At one time, when African Americans and White Americans lived in segregated neighbourhoods,



and for this reason, “people of different classes lived together - a librarian next door to a labourer, next to a lawyer” (NPR, 2010).

### 3.3.2 Prioritizing Race

Many African Americans, and particularly those who took up positions in academia and in civil service, placed significant value in both understanding what major changes were happening post-desegregation and what it would continue to mean for the future of African Americans, in particular. And so, this led to the creation and strengthening of critical race theory throughout the years to combat a societal paralysis. For example, in the 1980s, Harvard-graduate Kimberlé Crenshaw – lawyer, legal scholar, professor, and civil rights activist - drew attention and helped to advance critical race theory. Through her work, we better understand the salient connections between race, racism, and the law. This manifested in one of the main fora used today, to guide policy in the United States, the African American Policy Forum [AAPF] (2020). The AAPF “connects academics, activists and policy-makers to promote efforts to dismantle structural inequality” and focuses on “advancing and expanding racial justice, gender equality, and the indivisibility of all human rights, both in the U.S. and internationally” (para. 1). Much of Crenshaw’s scholarship was also foundational for intersectional feminism, which is also reflected in the AAPF’s grounding. In addition, Ladson-Billings, an American educator and pedagogue, focuses on bringing CRT and culturally relevant pedagogy into classrooms from kindergarten through higher education because “silence and evasion” (Morrison, 1992, p. 9) can no longer continue to rule. Ladson-Billings encourages better and more critically-informed teacher education programs, which look to actively explore issues of

race, diversity, and to dismantle racialized discourses that extend their reach within and beyond school walls. Moreover, she directs attention to White preservice teachers specifically who, for one reason or another, “gloss over” (Buchanan, 2015, p. 4) or misunderstand race. Reasons could be colour blindness (Glazier, 2003), White teachers’ lacking ability to look at personal privilege and Whiteness (Michie, 2007), or a lacking (but necessary) commitment of White educators immersing themselves in learning and teaching about race and racism (Brazas & McGeehan, 2020) to institute real change.

Part of the recognition of some of the historical basis for critical race theory is my own way, then, of formally recognizing the injustices that Black people (in the United States but also elsewhere around the world) have faced and continue *to* face today across all realms of public life. And in order to move forward (or to take a step back), I think about what ‘race’ actually means. Race, as most critical scholars would agree, is in itself, deeply contentious, both historically and presently. As Nell Irvin Painter (2010) posits, “today we think of race as a matter of biology, but a second thought reminds us that the meanings of race quickly spill out of merely physical categories” (p. xi)”; She also says “...race is an idea, not a fact, and its questions demand answers from the conceptual rather than the factual realm” (p. ix), meaning it is a social construction designed to oppress, as discussed further in this chapter.

Stemming back to the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the 1950s post-World War II era, it began questioning many global dilemmas around the world. Its intent has, for almost a generation, been to move toward society being “unprejudiced, civilized, and scientifically literate” (Bangham, 2015, p. 100). Namely, it placed emphasis on interrogating colonialism in countries

around the world such as “...the Philippines, Brazil, Egypt, India, Panama, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Venezuela...,” while at the same time, there was continued pressing by “lobbyists from the NAACP... for a position on racial discrimination” (Duedahl, 2008, p. 6). In 1945, Montagu and fellow colleagues at the United Nations labelled race as “man’s most dangerous myth.” This central aim of *The Race Question* formalized in July 1950, then, was to clarify and “to fashion a neutral science capable of reforming race” (Bangham, 2015, p. 82) and the way it was socialized globally. “In the contemporary world, racism is the ordinary means through which dehumanization achieves ideological normality, while, at the same time, the practice of dehumanizing people produces racial categories” (Gilmore, 2007, p. 243). Society then continued to follow the rules but as scholars and activists, we are acutely aware of our urgent responsibility to know better, to be better, to do better— especially today with information widely available. Ignorance is not a permissible excuse (nor has it ever been). “We realize that categories always fall short of the social realities they attempt to represent, and social realities always exceed the categories that attempt to contain them. This is why we keep changing our vocabularies” (Davis, 2016, p. 197).

### 3.3.3 Race as a Changing Vocabulary

Hall (1996) breaks down the conversation about a ‘changing vocabulary’. Hall is not a critical race theorist. He is a Jamaican-born sociologist and cultural theorist, and his work originates from the British tradition in the 1960s after World War II. However, through cultural studies and in conjunction with CRT, Hall points to relations of power including

race and gender (Schulman, 1993) that exist within larger societal and historical structures.

For example, similar to many critical race theorists, Hall names ‘race’ and explores ‘*Black*’ as “a politically and culturally constructed category” in a world of “discourses that of Eurocentric, largely White critical cultural theory” (p. 443). What is curious about Hall’s work is that he denotes that the past is viewed through the present and that we cannot step “‘outside’ the means by which things are represented” (p. 443). Our society is not ahistorical, which is an idea that is further supported in this thesis through my engagement with critical race theory. How we got to where we ‘are’ as a society results ‘from’ where we came. Most importantly, Hall (1996) denotes that *race*, like identity, is not fixed rather, shifts as society changes – “from a struggle over the relations of representation to a politics of representation itself” (p. 442). The new ethnicities (*difference* – “*engages rather than suppresses*” p. 446) combat the stereotyping, essentialization, and fetishization of the ‘Black’ experience.

Hall suggests that *Blackness* can rise as a political concept for good, in fact (i.e., Black people grouping together to fight for their rights). We have come to see this is in the past (2016) and current (2020) presidential elections in the United States, where the traditionally democratic-voting African-American community’s rights and needs continue to be pushed aside. One quote widely attributed to Marx, summarizes this idea well: “the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class are to represent and repress them” (Burns, 1970, p. 744). As Bell (1995) posits, CRT is not only about including the voices of those who have been

repressed or marginalized, like BIPOC. It is also about “appropriate action being taken to address the injustices” (Daftary, 2018, p. 1). This includes action from each individual person up to the highest levels of public office and government.

Outside of government are grassroots movements, which remain highly influential (Villarosa, 2012b), in particular as we see a resurgence of such movements today. During the Civil Rights Movement in 1960s, for example, Ella Baker was the founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), called grassroots movements the ‘spadework,’ that is putting in the work even in the smallest of settings to build community and to mobilize people. Black Lives Matters (BLM), for example, began as a grassroots movement in 2013. It too has emphasized local organizing in an effort to bring awareness to the unnecessary brutality experienced by African Americans; and its origins came as a response to the killings of unarmed African Americans. While originally considered “too confrontational and divisive” (Clayton, 2018, p. 448), it gained and continues to gain the support of Black and ally communities. Today, BLM (2020) outlines their three main goals, which fall under the hashtag #whatmatters2020, and what I see as pertinent to my theoretical framework. This is to understand how Black communities 1) coming together in numbers, affirming their power and agency to make change; 2) thinking and exploring what issues affect and impact Black communities most; and 3) being involved in a larger societal shift, particularly Generation Z<sup>3</sup> in both Black and ally communities, whether that be through the electoral process or by other grass

---

<sup>3</sup> A person who is considered part of Generation Z demographic, or Gen Z, would have been born in the mid-1990s and later.

movements. Grassroots movements' best chances for making larger systemic changes, as opposed to smaller and temporary changes, rely primarily on their collaborative efforts with well-established groups like the NAACP for greater organizational capacity and more substantial organized effort, according to race scholar John A. Powell (Villarosa, 2012a).

Even before the recent protests following the tragic death of George Floyd, followers of the BLM Movement were suggesting that the Black voter is futile, and therefore, should withhold their vote for ransom in order to actually be able to achieve their goals (see Cooper, 2020). Others, like Jackson, Mississippi's mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba (see Harris, 2020) aligns with Hall suggesting that African Americans, and their allies, need to be radical and must be their own activists for change. At the same time, however, while everyone is ethnically located, Hall also reveals that this causes the subjectification and generalization of Black individuals, each of whom has their own story and should not be limited to one category. Saying "either all Black people are good or...all Black people are the same" does not combat racism itself, which has "impassable symbolic boundaries" (p. 445). In Ben Carson's (2015) words: "call it what it is – racism" (para. 3). Black identities are "multi-faceted" (Brand, 2017, p. 3). Therefore, there is still work to be done to eradicate *doubling*, and the role of ethnicity. What that means is to decouple ethnicity, as it functions in the dominant discourse, from its equivalence with nationalism, imperialism, racism and the state" (p. 447), which have fixated on White, Eurocentric, English ethnicity.

### 3.3.4 (Re)Thinking About Identities

Hall's work is relatively accessible, which makes it more available to scholars and anyone who is trying to look at and wanting to (re)learn *how* to think about cultural and racial identities in a way that is both mindful and critical. In order to do so, there are two main guiding points. First, by looking at one shared culture, a collective 'true self'; hiding in other artificial 'selves'. This would include reflecting on common historical experiences and shared cultural codes of 'one people' (e.g., truth of the Black experience, which play a role in shared postcolonial struggles). Second, Hall draws our attention to critical points of deep and significant *difference* – 'what we really are' or 'what we have become' according to what history dictates. One of the interesting elements of the second point is that a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being' belongs to the future as much as the past.

Recently, Taylor (2020)'s article about Black Lives Matter poses an important question to readers, which parallels some of Hall's thinking. She says, "Let's take the statement 'Black lives matter' and add one word after it. Black lives matter \_\_\_\_\_. Do you fill in the blank with 'more' or 'equally'?" (para. 2). Taylor (2020) goes on to elicit deeper thinking on the question, positing: "the Black Lives Matter movement is about race, which means it's about our individual identities. And it's because we've had systems of power and oppression in place for centuries that have reinforced win/lose scenarios based on race" (para. 4). In our response as individual members of society, and beyond, we must critically consider double consciousness and understand the roles we play in upholding systems of oppression today. Accordingly, it is important to bring up BLM since it not only provides part of the contextual background for my study, but also is

relevant in that it provokes a larger conversation about what society can do to actively understand the “*we-them*” (McCoy, 2020, p. 464) relationship that pervades. And, to parallel, in understanding the experiences of host communities and how they have been affected by SL participants in their collaborative encounters, we are intentionally interrogating how to move away from the “perpetuation of anti-Black attitudes infused into this [United States] country” (McCoy, 2020, p. 464) toward building bridges and bridging divides.

Acknowledging ‘the colonial experience’ or what critical race theorists might call ongoing plantation practices (Balfour, 1998; Campanella, 2006; McKittrick, 2011), allows us to dig more deeply at the subjectivities experienced both past and present by Black people who have been constructed as “different and other” (Said, 1978). Hall (1990) attempts to break notions of categorization and “framed” identities (p. 436), and looks more closely at the *Présence Africaine* and what that means for individuals. He recognizes the importance of acknowledging context, and how millions of Black people were “dragged into slavery, transportation, colonisation, migration” (Hall, 1990, p. 436). “Everyone...of whatever ethnic background, must sooner or later come to terms with this African presence...black, brown, mulatto<sup>4</sup>, white” (Hall, 1990, p. 437).

The use of the word “mulatto” is, in present-day, considered offensive, outdated, and antiquated; my use of the word is only to quote Hall directly. But if we briefly do

---

<sup>4</sup> A borrowed word from the Spanish and Portuguese: *mula*, meaning ‘mule’ - the offspring of a male donkey and female horse. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it has been used historically throughout the Americas, to refer to people who have descended from both one White European and one Black African parent (See Campion, 2019; OED, 2020).



look at the word, it can also bring in another layered aspect of how society regarded people of colour. Campion (2019) introduces the historical context where in societies like Jamaica, also the context from which Hall (2017) and Heuman (1981) write, offspring that were of mixed White European and of Black African ancestry were considered “potential allies for the whites” (Campion, 2019, p. 199). The term mulatto then therefore characterizes people under the auspices of slavery, who are neither White enough nor Black enough to be able to associate with or as either (Nittle, 2020). Contrasting the *African Presence* is the privileged *Présence Européenne (European Presence)*, where the West collided with Africa, and which has politically, ethically, linguistically, and culturally dominated society, between which tensions remain. However, the *American Presence of ground, place, and territory* (Hall, 1990) is alive and well as the Black diasporas have collided. They speak for themselves, and therefore, people and their agency are alive and well; people/agency speak for themselves.

### 3.3.5 Identities as Shifting

CRT scholars continue to move away from this known hegemony over Black people. Diasporic identities are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and by difference. Thinking about this transformation has me wondering about the community in which I was physically and spatially located. For example, in addition to the aforementioned explanations of how we must be critical of what we produce and consume, Hill Collins’ (2000) scholarship brings in an indispensable Black feminist lens to observe the intersectionality of “race, gender, and class oppression as fundamental causes of Black women’s poverty” (p. 1).

Recognizing the intersections of relevance of race, class, and gender show complexities, and like the term 'Black' itself, cannot be generalized as the same experience for all Black people. According to Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013), intersectionality is useful as “an analytic tool in addressing other marginalized communities and other manifestations of social power” (p. 788). McCall (2005) prompts us to recall: “Social life is considered too irreducibly complex—overflowing with multiple and fluid determinations of both subjects and structures” (p. 1773). Particularly, she looks at the continued “situation of oppression” (p. 4) and most critically, again emphasizes the “social control designed to keep African-American (women) in an assigned, subordinate place” (p. 5). Naming these issues, however, does not mean tensions are “unresolvable” (Cho et al., 2013, p. 788).

To work through the tensions and also through the gender inequality in Black civil society, Hill Collins (2000) notes the importance of activism to reconstruct “Black subjugated knowledge” (p. 13) with the understanding that knowledge is power. For instance, Black women, as a historically oppressed group, are still exploited for their physical labour (i.e., agriculture and domestic work prior to WWII), denied political and educational life (even in recent contexts), and labelled with certain assumed qualities simply for being Black. In addition to the physical labour, Tomlinson (2019) also calls attention and concern to the intellectual labour of women of colour. Their “unmarked” feminism is often delegitimized by White feminism, a process she calls “neoliberal asset stripping” (p. 177). The premise, Tomlinson (2019) explains, is that Black women developed the concept of intersectionality, and White feminist critiques of intersectionality as illegitimate is as a result of these feminists’ blindness to “social and

historical workings of racist power...and the racialized power that scholars wield...” (p. 177). In order for Black women to be able to move forward, it starts with their “discovering, reinterpreting, and analyzing the ideas...of American Black women who have been silenced” (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 13). That can be done intentionally, especially by academics, instructors, researchers, and practitioners through reinterpreting existing frameworks, looking at alternative institutions, and especially for Black academics and also for those outside of academia. Particularly as White allies, it is about supporting Black people in that very quest, by being frontward facing and by honouring and supporting them through our actions, as deemed important *by, from, and through* their words.

As researchers, including me as someone collecting data for this study, the responsibility of academics is to first deconstruct what it actually means to be *intellectual*. In this case, “suppressing the knowledge produced by any oppressed groups makes it easier for dominant groups to rule...” (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 2). And it is therefore through engaging in my own redefined intellectual activity that can be an encouraging step in standing in solidarity with people of colour and their fight to be treated fairly, justly, and with dignity.

In this respect, I felt a certain openness offered by Hall and Hill Collins, for instance, to support and to move toward constructive discussion, especially as a White woman coming into the research. For example, “some U.S. White women...research a range of issues acknowledging the need for diversity, yet omit women of color from their work” (p. 7). In contrast, and aligned with my commitment to emancipation and social

justice, persons of colour were central to this work, and invited to share their *own* stories. Tomlinson (2019), duCille (1996), and Hill Collins (2000) all point to the problem that “[i]ronically, Western feminisms have also suppressed Black women’s ideas” (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 5). It is therefore my intention to hear and to support Black women’s ideas, and Black ideas in general, and to move away from research that is “overly concerned with White, middle-class women’s issues” (p. 5). This intention is salient, in a sense, since IESL typically revolves around that exact archetype of the “White woman...surrounded by Black children” (Tiessen, 2018, p. 111). Again, there are many types of feminism, and not all agree with one another, but each must address on the structures of domination, particularly in context and in relation to gender, race, and class. I acknowledge this demand as only a first level of understanding in the social construction of host community members rather than a simple recognition of ‘diversity’ among women.

It is not up to society to police one another for fighting for justice, in particular with the reinvigoration of the BLM movement. All members of society must instead try to actively understand how aggrieved communities come together through daily acts of resistance and survival (Scott, 1990; Kelly, 1994). Postcolonial scholar Fanon (1952 [2008]) notes that often, Black people feel “there is only one solution: to fight” (p. 174). The “hidden transcripts” (Dolgon, 2017) can help to understand expressions of the oppressed and their refusal to continue to accept structures and cultures of oppression. Gilmore (2007) gives us the ‘bottom line’: “if the twentieth century was the age of genocide on a planetary scale, then in order to avoid repeating history, we ought to prioritize coming to grips with dehumanization” (p. 243). Black, Indigenous or Person of

Colour (BIPOC) communities continue to resist as they have always had to do. White people ‘coming to grips’ means standing by, with, and in solidarity by listening first, then doing.

The literature explored in the previous chapter has shown that IESL programs often claim that their intentions to serve are altruistic. This is often attributed to participants’ aspirations to help others by fulfilling their “ethical desires” (Larkin, 2016), to cultivate their cross-cultural understanding of other people and places, and to develop interpersonal and communication skills (Tiessen, 2012). A critical approach, as outlined in this chapter, assists in critiquing what is accepted as ‘normal’ and explores the asymmetrical histories of domination across nations, races, communities, and people. Specifically, as noted earlier, my study in exploring the asymmetrical nature of IESL through one case study, seeks to understand, from one host community’s perspective, how they themselves view participant ‘help’ directed at them.

### 3.3.6 Privileging the Voices of the Oppressed

Like most who engage with critical approaches, I assert that humans are essentially unfree and inhabit a world rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege. I also contend that it is our responsibility to be skeptical, and this can partially be done by self-reflection; and by bringing together people’s different thoughts and opinions. This localized case study lends to a conversation and strengthens my own understanding concerned with recognizing the larger connections and relationships of people, places, and things as contextually related and embedded in a greater social structure; “the individual, a social actor, both creates and is created by the social universe of which they

are a part” (McLaren, 2003, p. 69). Particularly, human beings come into existing systems (of oppression, of discrimination, of hierarchy, of power, etc.) and are put in positions of being unjustly subjected to the system, extrinsically perpetuating the system, or actively working to critically deconstruct the system. This study is only one opportunity for a host community to speak for itself as for a way for further contextualization of their stories.

In IESL, program participants travel far distances to communities around the world, and in this case study, to the United States, purportedly to *help*. However, Borland and Adams (2013) posit how “odd, power-laden, gift-given ‘service,’ ‘help,’ or ‘aid’” (p. 2) or “help[ing] the rest” (Spivak, 2010) in fact widens inequality. The way in which Critical Race Theory is effective is by working toward deconstructing power relations, and this is where I particularly focus. In a way, program participants, even if unintentionally, affirm unequal positions, creating further domination and interdependencies. I steer away from using the term ‘empowerment,’ as Gore (1990) suggests it presupposes several things, but in particular, that there is an “agent” of empowerment, thereby recognizing power as property to give and to take away. Further, Ahmed (2000) notes the importance in understanding “ethical encounters” as part of power. One of the ethical components of this research is that host communities should have the opportunity to exercise their agency, and are prioritized as the most critical piece to this study. As described in the findings, and which we will further explore, they have asserted their agency in indicating their ‘wants’ and ‘needs’ in terms of programming.

Critical Race Theory has emerged out of the historical and present context of oppression. It has a commitment to developing thought, not only from and within the

academy, but in particular from BIPOC voices and experiences. Some theorists criticize that CRT does not stand-alone and relies too much on intersectionality and working “in concert with” (Hartlep, 2009, p. 15) other forms of inequality and/or discrimination. The implication here is that critics posit that CRT is *too much* about ‘story telling’ but I agree with the reframing provided by Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006); they instead emphasize that CRT’s approach is about lived experience situated within reality as people of colour. Similar to some other critical theories, such as postcolonial theory, CRT helps to look at “the cultural frameworks of storytelling or narrative that inform colonial authority” (Jeffress, 2008, p. 14) as a way to transform social relations (Shahjahan, 2011).

Again, we see CRT’s alignment with my study. First, CRT challenges a society, which is characterized “by a hypervigilance of non-whites” (Meer, 2019, p. 508). In other words, people who are not White are under greater scrutiny in social and political contexts and surveilled by and through existing structures. In that sense, by conducting my research in a community of colour, there is an obvious recognition of where IESL occurs and who the recipients are, which both theories help to critique. Second, both CRT focuses on not only the historical underpinnings of racial injustices but also scrutinize the current climate of “modern day racial terror lynchings” (The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2020). IESL has an opportunity to better understand the role it plays or can play in providing a platform more reflective of the host community. Based on community perspectives as we will further explore in the Findings (Chapter 5), such programs should continue to encourage principles eliciting and encouraging discussion that bring a better understanding on how “illiberal and social ideologies such as racism and colonialism” (Thomas, 2000, p. 26) are maintained. Third,

CRT works, and sometimes in tandem with other critical approaches, to hope, to envision, and to fight for a future society that is more just. In particular, it helps people to recognize that while individual racism may appear to be waning, institutional racism is alive and well, and we continue to see “change and permanence...coexist” (Chin, 2017, p. 1). In other words, White people continue to disproportionately benefit from ‘the system’ over BIPOCs. This is especially evident when it comes to education, income, health care, housing, justice system, and social capital (Trepagnier, 2006).

Through those shared parallels, we are able to better see the pervasive “Western plot” (Said, 1978) of colonialism. The notion of ‘charity’ is just one of the ways the West could/can “assert its power” (Birdwell, 2011, p. 17) and was/is a way for those privileged few to assert their power over ‘everyone else’. My thesis seeks to both challenge naïve representations of intercultural cooperation and helping, and also over-determined critical approaches that under-acknowledge the agency of the host communities. In addition, the final theoretical concept that has guided my study, which is drawn from CRT, is the notion of ‘agency,’ the focus of the next section.

### 3.3.7 Agency of the Oppressed

When I speak about agency, I am referring to it as “humans’ ability to define or interpret a situation and act based on that definition” (Musolf, 2017, p. 4). For communities of colour, there is an understanding in the literature that African-Americans have had to fight against “social science legacies of writing about them as static, unchanging, and without agency” (Reese, 2020, p. 6). We know this to be untrue. Jhally explains, in *Race: The Floating Signifier*, “there is nothing solid or permanent to the meaning of race. It



changes all the time. It shifts and slides” (Jhally & Hall, 1996, 04:45). Agency, therefore, helps us to understand the relationships between “action and resistance” (Musolf, 2017, p. 6), where we are able to see connections “between the individual and society, or between human agency and social structures” (Alinia, 2015, p. 2334). However, this agency still functions within “a variety of institutional arenas that normalize and reproduce racial inequality and domination” (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 128).

For instance, even in the face of historical marginalization, Samstown community members have maintained their agency through their continual strengthening of a community “in which they [feel] safe and nourished by both the business and social relationships” (Reese, 2020, p. 42) that they were able to develop. Through their participation in programming with Circolo, and through hosting students visiting, they created their own opportunities to send ‘their kids’ abroad as well, for example. These were important aspects of the community “resisting racism through self- reliance” (Reese, 2020, p. 42), by, with, and through enacting their own agency. More examples follow in Chapter 5 – Findings.

We are aware that social structures go hand-in-hand with society’s perceptions of culture, race, class, gender, ableism. Musolf (2017) posits: “Consciousness and culture change practical activity, meaningful social action, and, eventually, social structure...they dialectically interact. We can and do overcome and transform ourselves, our social structure, and our culture” (p. 16) when resisting “long-standing power arrangements and discourses” (Gregory, 2011, p. 105).

In one sense, these arrangements have “privileged and elicited ways of thinking about, and acting on, urban poverty and decline that elided their roots in racialized hierarchies of political and economic power” (Gregory, 2011, p. 105). But in another, “as long as humans are alive and in possession of their consciousness, agency exists (Musolf, 2017, p. 5) and so for as long as oppression continues, so will the desire for change and activism (Hill Collins, 2000, 2019).

Intersecting oppressions, as we have explored, take on historically specific forms that change in response to human actions – “racial segregation persists, but not in the forms that it took in prior historical eras— so the shape of domination itself changes” (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 228) and turns into different manifestations of political subjectivity and action. Scholarly and public attention, particularly in recent history then, has reflected this change and moved toward understanding inequities from multiple angles, such as through the lenses of “researchers, policymakers, ... community-based organizations and activists” (Reese, 2020, p. 46) to better understand community agency. This thesis is just one small piece in contributing to the literature.

### 3.3.8 Challenging Master Narratives

My work seeks to challenge the ‘master narratives’ in the academy, which often “erase Africa and the African diaspora, Latinos, Asian Americans and Native Americans from serious consideration, except as subject peoples without history” (Thomas, 2005, p. 3)<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>5</sup> I acknowledge words used in the quote as outdated in some regards. In my own language use, I prefer words ‘Latinx’ rather than ‘Latinos’ to be more gender-inclusive; ‘Indigenous’, though used more in a

So, rather than looking simply at the often-held thought “First World giver and Majority World receiver” (Mostafanezhad, 2013, p. 495), as associated with the Enlightenment, positivism, etc., my thesis flips the dialogue to focus on those in the Minority World as ‘receivers’ as well.

I enter this research without the assumption that the effects of SL programs are positive or negative. The idea of ‘helping’ people in itself does not necessarily change anything about these relationships; the fact of the matter is that the world is not ‘balanced’ in many regards. That includes education, service, and in care and helping industries, none of which are benign, neutral, or outside of these tensions. Ironically, when people think they are ‘helping’ others, they are often further entrenching the issues of subordination and inferiority. So, by and through explorations within this critical framework, I hope to illuminate how the community perceives the contemporary engagements, asymmetries, and power mobilizations that IESL sets in motion within their communities.

Sherraden, Lough, and McBride (2008) speak to the physical flow of volunteers. The movement can be lateral, with movement from one country to another. Bilateral and multilateral flows of volunteers between multiple organizations and countries are much less common, but do occasionally occur. In this case, my research is framed too with a critical lens in order to illuminate this flow of volunteers into the United States, under

---

Canadian context, is preferred rather than the outdated ‘Native Americans’, which is often associated with negative and problematic connotations.

similar conditions, and in a couple programs, a bilateral flow. Focusing on the Samstown context, I explore the tensions to interrupt uncritically accepted knowledges and ways of thinking, seeing, and doing regarding the mental and physical impacts of IESL participants in a host community. While my research was conducted in the Minority World (the United States in this case), the critical approach I employ is still applicable. This is because many parallels such as social, cultural, and economic factors remain relevant in this context where the host community continues to be disenfranchised. Challenging the “hegemonic ‘normality’ to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories, of nations, races, communities, people” (Bhabha, 2004, pp. 245-246) remains crucial and necessary.

Having a critical perspective means unravelling how individuals and communities are embedded in larger contexts. Critical theories press for relational and historical analyses. One must look beyond the ‘individual intentions’ of the IESL participant and redirect their attention to the host community to understand the unintended effects of historical legacies and uneven geopolitical relations, not only between minority and Majority World contexts, but also within the North/South divide in the United States itself. IESL programs do not happen within a vacuum. Their effects within the context of the community are relational to the host nation-state, transnational interlocutors, and neoliberal markets (Tarc, 2013). These interdependent factors and their effects on subjectivities and community allow me as the researcher to move beyond solely looking at the individual program participant and to look at the bigger picture within which they are situated.

To recap, theorizing brings in contextualizing, historicizing, relationally-focused modes of analysis to operationalize my research. It also problematizes, but does not extinguish, the notion of the authentic/non-Western/essential “host” perspectives and voices. I want to be vigilant not to romanticize or to essentialize the prior conditions before ‘contact’ with the host community (Tarc, Personal Communication). Developing this vigilance or “work to affect inward democratic habits of the heart” (Sheffield, 2011, p. 147) then, is important while traversing critical theory and engaging my curiosity and in challenging my own predispositions of which I may not be cognizant. Being able to more-fully understand the impacts on community by and through an IESL program from a critical perspective, Sheffield (2011) posits that we must move away from “maintaining the status quo” (p. 49) and both challenge and radicalize it.” I agree.

In IESL, people or organizations in positions of power can impact Samstown’s “perception of self and reality and legitimizes its cultural supremacy in the (epistemic) violence of creating an ‘inferior’ other” (Andreotti, 2011, p. 39). As such, I pay attention to the agency of those in the host community, and aim not to essentialize or homogenize their experiences. I therefore seek to understand the host community perspective as heterogeneous (from community partner, host family, and intermediary organization) and push back against the complex idea of inferiority and to lift up ideas of reciprocity and independence of the host community, and their ideas about participants’ effects on them. Further, it is relevant to acknowledge that while the case study took place in the United States, a country with ethnic and cultural diversity, the collective experiences of a mostly-Black community were unique to them.

### 3.4 Criticisms of Employing Critical Theory Approaches

Generally, and with other theories, there are potential downsides in using a critical approach. For example, there is a certain partiality that comes with it. That it is to say that critical approaches cannot look to and criticize social issues without a “normative base” (Freundlieb, 2000, p. 96). The normative itself exists through subjectivity, opening up “the possibility of self-descriptions and world-interpretations that allow subjects to see themselves as leading meaningful lives in a meaningful world” (Freundlieb, 2000, p. 96). The argument against it, then, is that there would first need to be a normalized point of reference outside of social forces in order to critique and/or move away from the status quo. Further, another potential down-side to using a critical approach is that it has been criticized for “over extending itself” (Leist, 2008, p. 1), in the sense that there is too much openness in interrogating the world. Certainly, there will always be something to criticize, and of which to be critical because there is too much space within which to do so.

There are tensions existing, showing a reluctance (through lack of literature) of researchers to engage in more critical approaches regarding host community and IESL programs, as Larsen (2016b) notes. Part of this comes through in an honest discussion between Larkin, Larsen, MacDonald, and Smaller (2016), where they ask each other questions about service, including: “is it possible or desirable to engage in a depoliticized practice of ISL?” (p. 25). Larkin responds that a need for “vulnerability” (p. 27) is required of researchers engaging in service learning research and work. Overall, Larkin, Larsen, MacDonald, and Smaller’s (2016) chapter suggests and emulates in its stylistic

approach (a discussion between the authors) that critical ISL research must be less about finding a solution and more about dialogue. Larsen draws attention to Willie Ermine's (2007) ideas around 'ethical space' where "human-to-human dialogue can occur" (p. 202). Service work too, then, must be about embodying discomfort, talking about and through it, and reflecting on those discussions between all involved parties to develop understanding.

One of the ways I have inhabited the ethical space, and mitigated potential concerns, has been to first acknowledge the tensions and contradictions that exist. I also specifically acknowledge that critical approaches intentionally encourage a constant questioning and reworking of both the philosophical and sociological underpinnings of the study. And a way to mitigate the potential "over extension" is to hone in on a variety of critical theories to inform thought, while not relying on any one as a single crutch, and acknowledge that there is room to include others (though perhaps outside the scope of the study). I have tried to remain self-reflexive with my thinking grounded in critical theory, and thus my writing, throughout the thesis.

### 3.5 Summary

In facing the challenges of a constantly changing society, taking a critical approach remains poignant in its ability to question what is considered normal, and what has become part of society from past to present. It helps to challenge the frameworks and ideas of justice, democracy, and the individual circumstances of the most marginalized groups in society. With the acknowledgement of these ideas, every human can be a

change agent (if not equally so) – and every academic and researcher should strive for agency as a priority –as researchers and as intellectuals, we have reached a ‘place’ in society that affords us the privilege and the responsibility to do so. Bohman (2019) posits that we are not at the end but the beginning of truly engaging creative possibilities in making our society better.

The research in preparing for the chapter has deepened my understanding of critical approaches to theory. Drawing on a critical approach has been taken up by a number of IESL writers (see Chapter 3). Certainly, one can always delve more deeply into each concept, piece of writing, and subsequent reflection. Still, I have expanded and explained my position on some main concepts, and have presented the ideas I maintained in my own approach to the research. Conceptions of CRT have been elaborated to support my interpretation and prioritization of the community in IESL programs. Further, I emphasize the host community’s own agency, which they have the ability to mobilize, as well as the importance of shifting societal thought to be in support of all its members. I have also briefly explained some of the tensions that exist in employing these theories. The main premise is that yes, while theory has helped provide a “blueprint” for this study, my understanding is that the most important part of the blueprint is the “stable foundation” upon which my study can be built (i.e., a critical approach fortified by CRT theory provides that solid foundation I have constructed). However, as Luttrell (2010) puts forward, “research is not a linear process—it is dynamic, unfolding over the course of time, and is contingent on multiple and sometimes unpredictable factors” (p. 10). Therefore, my theory-informed interpretations on the reflections of host community members in Samstown represent the knowledge that this study contributes. I will further



elaborate the design of my study in the next chapter on Methodology and Methods.

## Chapter 4 : Methodology and Methods

### 4 Overview

This chapter discusses the methodology and the methods used to conduct my research. It also justifies the employment of case study design. This study consisted of interviews with various members of the host community. My qualitative instrumental case study explored the impact on host communities through the presence of service learning volunteers as part of IESL programming. In this section, I will also look to epistemological and ontological concerns that informed my methodology. Subsequently, I justify my study design, outline details about my participants, and explain how I analyzed my data.

#### 4.1 Methodological Framework: Qualitative Research

The rationale for selecting qualitative methodology is explained by my central aim to develop deep insights into host communities' perspectives that could not be done through thinner or narrower quantitative methods. Figuring out what comes out of these *ingredients* – the community insights coming together – can be, and often is, a messy process but this is where qualitative research is integral, especially *for* social justice work (Fine, 1994).

The 1980s showed an expansion of qualitative research, increasing data collection and the depth of information collected (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Around that time, Miles (1979) praised qualitative data as “full, rich [and] earthy” (p. 590). Interviews

in qualitative research, for instance, “help flesh out more detailed information on aspects of what is happening...that the larger survey might miss” (Adams & Buetow, 2014, p. 104), which is what I have attempted to do in this study. Between 1990 and 2000 there was extraordinary development in qualitative research in the social sciences (Patton, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000), but with this increase, disagreement also arose. For instance, even today, many scholars do not agree on how to assess the quality of qualitative research (Hannah & Lautsh, 2011). In fact, Patton (2008) shows how qualitative data can be inaccurately collected or portrayed, especially in her discussion of feminist policy analysis. In the example she gives, she shows a “betrayal” of qualitative interpretive work by policymakers inaccurately representing women through government-commissioned research, which resulted in the formation of policy that does not reflect women’s actual needs. Fine (1994) elaborates on this phenomenon in her discussion of “the underclass” and the “multiple service learning frames” (p. 74), which continue to categorize and “other” people. In the previous chapter, the theoretical framing matches the qualitative methods employed as discussed here. To elaborate, Fanon’s (1952 [2008]) idea of the Other is the “not me.” In his foreword to Fanon’s book, Bhabha (1986) states, “it is always in relation to the place of the Other that colonial desire is articulated: that is, in part, the fantasmatic space of possession” that no one subject can singly occupy which permits the dream of the inversion of roles (p. xxviii). In other words, in Fanon’s words, “a ‘we’ talking about or talking to ‘them’, but a ‘them’ talking back to an ‘us’” (Al-Saidi, 2014, p. 95).

As a qualitative study framed through ‘talking back to an us,’ my work focuses on the experiences of the host community participants in my study and the meanings they

attribute to those experiences. Thus, with the employment of qualitative research, host communities as co-constructors of knowledge provided me, the researcher, with direction as to “how the final story gets told” (Lynn, 2006). This research journey, as Motha (2009) describes, is a commitment “call[ing] to question...ideas about the relationships among representation and voice, objectivity and objectification, power, humanity and the nature of being human, praxis, connection and community, context and situatedness, validity, agency, and the politics of telling other people’s stories” (p. 103).

As an interpretivist, I understand individuals to be capable to form their own reality of the world and in different contexts through interactions with them (Carson et al., 2001). Thus, they should be understood from that reality. By living and by being embedded in communities’ natural settings, I aimed at negotiating my position as a “newcomer” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), to build meaningful relationships with host communities, and to gain “insider” access (Chawla-Duggan, 2007) through *deep* “hanging out” (Geertz, 1998).

Larsen (2016b) quotes Bringle and Hatcher’s (2011) well-cited definition of ISL. The definition, which focuses solely on the student and their own experience as learner and as reflexive participant in service learning, can actually “Other” the host community further. For instance, she in elaborates that in service learning contexts (i.e., Samstown), the depiction of the “Other” is often “without subjectivity, illustrating the asymmetrical nature of the relationships where only students are positioned as ones who learn and serve” (p. 14). My work seeks to challenge this idea by illuminating the subjectivities and agencies of members of the host community. This case study looks at international

experiential or service learning (IESL) in a medium-sized city in the Northeastern United States.

## 4.2 Instrumental Case Study Approach

In educational research, a dominant methodological approach is case study (Miles, 2013). Case study provides an intensive, in-depth method of inquiry and focuses on a real-life case using a variety of sources of evidence. It often involves a variety of methods for data collection such as interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc. Case study is largely interested in understanding the “how” questions and gaining a better more in-depth understanding of a specific contemporary event in context, over which the researcher has no control (Yin, 2009). In this sense, case study fits as an appropriate methodology for my research. As Yin (2009) notes, case study involves “direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the events” (p. 11). Stake (2005) adds that case study “draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned about the single case” (p. 443) or particularization.

In selecting instrumental case study, then, I draw on Yin’s (2003) view that “empirical inquiry...investigates contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). In this sense, the “researcher, participants, and readers play a role in reconstructing experience” (Mills et al., 2010, p. 2). Further, Flyvberg goes on to say that [they] “compromise more detail, richness, completeness, and variance (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 301). The ability to do thicker research is possible through instrumental case study. Since the major focus of this study is to understand host

community perspectives with volunteer participants of IESL, it was critical to be immersed in the community, to spend time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), compared to simply ‘going in’, ‘getting what I needed’, and then leaving immediately after.

Stake (2006) elucidates that case study helps the researcher to produce and to interpret knowledge in context (time, space, place). This study is an *instrumental* case study as it studies a particular site that has broader implications to the larger phenomenon, in this case community perspectives on IESL (Stake, 1995; 2005). Further, in my words, I am interested in understanding how one racialized host community in the United States perceives IESL program participants in the community for developing insights into IESL more broadly. This instrumental case study does not require me to generalize or to “defend its typicality” (Harling, 2002). Rather, according to Stake (1995), instrumental case study is

used to accomplish something other than understanding a particular situation. It provides insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed, and because it helps the researcher pursue the external interest. The case may or may not be seen as typical of other cases. (p. 549)

As such, it is my hope that this case will help glean insight into host community perspectives, in conjunction with other (future) studies. Within a larger context, my study might also shed light on host communities’ perspectives in other communities where volunteers go to serve.

In alignment with instrumental case study methodology, I also chose my specific case carefully in that I was particular about the parameters of the case as described below (Mills et al., 2010). More specifically, the host community in my study is part of a

medium-sized rustbelt city in the Northeastern United States. I am particularly interested in understanding how the host community feels based on their experiences with various IESL program participants coming into their community. The transferability, or “fittingness” can move across other ‘sites’ based on the methodology and methods outlined (see Amankwaa, 2016; Byrne, 2001; Lub, 2015).

This particular case study is one that explores the lived experiences of host community members in Samstown who have engaged with a particular intermediary organization facilitating service learning experiences, with the intention of understanding their perspectives. Patton (2002) argues that individual cases “permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomenon in depth” (p. 46). Therefore, through my case study, I obtained a rich description of one host community in context, and thus, contribute to the fields of CSL, ISL/GSL, and voluntourism more specifically, and to international education knowledge more generally. My goal is not to oversimplify but rather, to more closely examine the perspectives of one host community in the United States and to provide a comprehensive understanding as exemplified through this one case.

I consider case study methodology and critical theoretical approaches to be most suitable for my study. The study sample is intentional in that participants were approached through their participation in various capacities within IESL programming in one U.S. city. By speaking to, and drawing insights, various community members such as host families, community partners, and the intermediary organization in the host community, I built a more holistic and accurate representation of the participants and thus, of their contexts and knowledges.

Stake (2005) calls for a required vigilance, however, acknowledging that even with this awareness, “the case to be studied is a complex entity located in a milieu or situation embedded in a number of contexts or backgrounds. Historical context is almost always of interest, but so are cultural and physical contexts” (p. 449). Garnering an understanding of the place and space and where participants are situated is integral to gaining understanding of each person. Finally, while Yin’s (2009; 2014) work aligns more closely with postpositivist thinking, its descriptions of the realist perspective helps researcher focus on maintaining as much objectivity as possible and situating the research within broader contexts to generate understanding.

### 4.3 Data Collection Instruments

The study focused on programming facilitated by Circolo, a non-for-profit service learning organization, which has around 20 programs worldwide as outlined in the introductory chapter of this thesis. This organization was chosen because it is recognized within the field of international education as being exemplary in terms of building relationships with local members of the host community through their local and overseas programming. Specifically, this study involved Circolo’s Samstown location in the United States where service learning volunteers engaged in service at various locations within the community. As the focus of this research was on the perspectives of the host community, it was essential that as the researcher, I established a trusting relationship with community members prior to the start of data collection. Thus, prior to data collection, I spent one month in the community so that members of the host community could become more familiar with my presence and to allow opportunities to build positive



relationships. After one month, formal data collection began and took place over the subsequent month. Data collection instruments involved semi-structured interviews, which are typically used in qualitative research, and in particular regarding areas such as community development and public education.

Each participant was asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that lasted between 45-60 minutes. Some of the interviews went over this time limit, but this flexible approach was necessary in order for participants to share at their own discretion. The time commitment for data collection varied from participant to participant, but most stayed within range. Interviews were all audio-recorded and later transcribed. Interviews took place at a location chosen by the participant, such as neighbourhood coffee shops, local parks, their place of business, or in their homes. See Appendices E, F, and G for a list of the interview questions.

#### 4.4 Recruitment Strategies

To recruit participants, I began by placing posters in highly visible areas in Circolo's Samstown office. From living and spending time in the community, I frequently visited various community partners and built rapport with various individuals through visits and casual conversation. As I became more familiar to people, they were very much willing to participate and had offered to do so.

As an example, after a formal interview as part of the data collection, one interviewee offered to bring me for a tour around the community, and to introduce me to other people they knew working, volunteering, and participating in community life in

various capacities. We had arranged an agreeable time to meet later in the week. Little did I know, when I showed up on the specific dates and time I would be taken on a full city tour! When I arrived, the community partner, said, “Okay, so where’s your car?” I was a little surprised, and slightly taken aback. It was not in a bad way, but I had envisaged walking through the neighbourhood for a short period of time, particularly because it was in the middle of their work day. Instead, this person trusted my driving (not knowing if I was even a good driver), and we ended up touring around the city for almost four hours. They gave my directions for each turn, when to stop, where to park. I got a full narration and passionate history of the city, right from the passenger seat. Occasionally we would get out of the vehicle and visit notable sites, citing the history and the context of those places. This was just one powerful example of how I was invited into the community to experience the city as they wanted me to see and feel it. Perhaps a residual effect from that was rapport building, and connecting with others, which leads into recruitment of other participants in the data collection.

As part of the formal data collection, I also used snowball sampling. This type of sampling is beneficial as it harnesses participants’ already-formed relationships and social networks. It also coincides with my strategy in helping to build rapport with participants; participants would have already spoken with someone known to them (Crouse & Lowe, 2018). I did not solicit the names of those potential participants from existing participants, but participants did mention my study to others, and provided my contact information (i.e. a business card or letter of information) to them. Potential participants who had an interest contacted me through e-mail. All participants were recruited by me through the various strategies listed above, and all methods and tools used were approved by the

Human Research Ethics, on behalf of Western's Non-Medical Research Ethics Boards (NMREB).

## 4.5 Participants

Participant inclusion criteria were members of the host community who had engaged in the previous year (or longer) with Circolo participants. The aim was to select from a wide base of members of the host community including community partners, host families, and those working in the local, Circolo intermediary organization. There was a range of participants in terms of affiliation, race, gender, and age. There were 19 participants in total, eight men and 11 women. The age range of participating members of the host community was from 28-63. Five were community partners (CP), eight were members of host families (HF), and six were from the intermediary organization (IO). Table 4.1 below shows participant codes that help distinguish each participant by their group. For instance, ‘Felix-CP’ refers to a participant with the pseudonym Felix, who is a community partner. Participants came from a variety of backgrounds. It should be noted that at both the beginning and end of the interviews, I invited participants to include any information about themselves they wanted me to consider or include (i.e., preferred pronouns, name pronunciation, titles, accessibility accommodations). Two participants asked for me to refer to them by their professional and/or honorific titles (e.g., Dr, Ms) when conversing in our interviews, but also stated they were okay for me to use their first names only if quotations were included in the thesis.

Throughout the interviews, five participants identified as BIPOC, constituting about one-quarter of the total participants (including 2 Black community partners and 1 Black member of the intermediary organization). The only person of colour who was a host family member was East Asian. The others were all White. Acquired education is also included in the chart. These descriptive data try to show information regarding the people interviewed, which will be expanded upon in the discussion chapter. To summarize briefly here, a salient observation shows that only 25% of participants interviewed as part of the participant criteria are racial minorities, a point which will be expanded upon in the discussion chapter.

Acquired education is also included in the chart. All participants interviewed were highly educated (89% have a *Bachelors degree or greater*). Overall, in Samstown, while the high school dropout rate is low (~7%) and relatively in line with the nation's the average (~5.5%), the city overall of those attaining a *Bachelors degree or greater* is only about 44% in the city, and only 21% for African Americans. This information about the participants in this study already points to some disparities in understanding whose voices are represented or heard, and whose are not. See Table 4.1 below for details about each of the participants in the study.

## 4.6 Insights into the Intermediary Organization

While not considered primary data, there were many available documents on Circolo's website that were helpful in understanding the overall organizational structure of Circolo as I moved into the data collection phase. Circolo's website is informative and transparent

in terms of their mandate and mission, their financials and distribution of funds, as well as the information regarding the various programs offered through them. Again, the observation of their website, and other physical advertising documents I gathered onsite, did not constitute as part of the primary data analyzed in the study, but did provide insight into the overall image they would like to portray to people looking at their website and/or to potential future participants.

**Table 4.1: Study Participants**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Education</b>
Patricia-CP	Woman	63	Black	Community Partner & Host Family	Yes	College (3 Year)
Vicky-CP	Woman	57	Black	Community Partner	No	Masters
Marcus-CP	Man	25	White	Community Partner	No	Masters
Scott-CP	Man	32	White	Community Partner	No	Bachelors
Joseph-CP	Man	-	Black	Community Partner	Yes	Masters
Grace-HF	Woman	59	White	Host Family	Yes	Masters/ Law
Charlie-HF	Man	61	White	Host Family	Yes	Bachelors
Linda-HF	Woman	61	White	Host Family	Yes	Bachelors
Ron-HF	M	63	White	Host Family	Yes	Bachelors
Michelle-HF	Woman	37	East Asian	Host Family	Yes	Bachelors
Kimberly-HF	Woman	33	White	Host Family	No	Masters
Roberta-HF	Woman	29	White	Host Family	No	Associate Degree
Rose-HF	Woman	57	White	Host Family	Yes	Bachelors
David-IO	Man	36	White	Intermediary Organization & Host Family	No	Masters (2)
Paulo-IO	Man	34	White	Intermediary Organization & Host Family	Yes	Masters
Sabrina-IO	Woman	32	Black	Intermediary Organization	No	Masters

Melanie-IO	Woman	34	White	Intermediary Organization	No	Masters (2)
Christie-IO	Woman	28	White	Intermediary Organization	No	Masters
Bobbie-IO	Man	33	White	Intermediary Organization	No	Masters

Note: CP = community partner; HF = host family; IO = intermediary organization

## 4.7 Analysis of Interview Data

For my analysis, I examined how host community members including host families, community partners, and intermediary organization were affected through an IESL program. In addition, I also looked at the broader picture of SL, CSL, ISL/GSL, and voluntourism as well as other related areas to gain better insight into these volunteer initiatives, which overlap. I wanted to understand what themes emerged from participant interviews and look at them in respect to one another.

I first transcribed verbatim all 19 interviews through the use of the transcription program Trint. Another doctoral student in my PhD program had recommended the program to me. It was affordable, accessible, and importantly, was accurate in the transcription of participant interviews, subsequently increasing productivity in the completion of data composition and analysis. After this initial transcription, I then subsequently listened and went through each interview manually myself to ensure not only accuracy of the transcription but also to maintain deep familiarity and intimacy with the data. All transcripts were transcribed verbatim. Once transcribed, I used “traditional tools” for analysis such as coloured markers, a notebook to jot down ideas, Bristol board, sticky notes to ensure the analysis process was “rigorous and productive” (Maher et al.,

2018, p. 1). I began by coding emerging concepts and themes manually. This was my primary method, which helped me to start more broadly and then begin to narrow down those concepts and themes. I opted not to use a qualitative data analysis software package as I did not believe using “code words” would provide as accurate a picture as ‘massaging’ the data manually would. Keeping a reflexive journal was helping in working through this process, as well as useful in keeping my own epistemology in check.

The coding used was open, axial, and selective. With open coding, I read through my data several times, line by line (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) and then started to create tentative labels by highlighting and making notes by hand on printed transcripts. This allowed for me to look at chunks of data, and subsequently summarize what I was parsing. When ideas repeated more than twice across all participants, they were jotted down in anticipation of an emergent theme. This was not based on existing theory – rather more inductively based on the meaning that emerged from the data. Then, recording examples of participants’ words and establishing properties of each code, I began to see a pattern in certain thematics coming through, and clustered those data together. Hsiung (2010), in her discussion of the analysis of data, notes this as “a process of interpretation, of surfacing meanings in the data, bringing them forth, showing how these meanings link together, and how they are layered on one another” (para. 2). Charmaz (2006) argues that the purpose of this approach is to help preserve the action and meaning embedded in participants’ responses. Then, I used axial coding, which meant identifying relationships among the open codes. Then, finally, I used selective coding to look at the core variable that includes all of the data (Gallicano, 2013), then

reread the transcripts and selectively coded any data that related to the core variable identified.

## 4.8 Trustworthiness, Saturation, and Data Triangulation

### 4.8.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness means achieving “validity through data generation... evaluated through the researcher’s ability to articulate data collection decisions, demonstrate prolonged engagement and persistent observation, provide verbatim transcription, and achieve data saturation” (Cypress, 2017, p. 261). While some researchers point out that using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) is necessary to be able to work through and document data, and to make easier the real-world qualitative research (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012), I would argue differently. As Hesse-Biber (2010) notes, it depends on the researcher. For instance, using manual analysis is just as effective, but particularly based on the researcher’s own positionality.

My goal was not to analytically reduce my data, which would benefit from CAQDAS. The amount of data was manageable. Furthermore, as a driver of the data analysis, I contend that relative to my research questions, I wanted to immerse myself in the participants’ experiences and massage the data myself, or what Van Maanen (1983) would call “checking out bits of information across informants and across situations” (p. 51). This approach to qualitative analysis is also what Hsiung (2010) refers to as “steeping oneself in the data to discover its significance” (para. 5). I further strengthened the trustworthiness of my study by employing semi-structured interviews, which has the



aim of not steering the participants' in a specific direction by being either too broad or too narrow. Furthermore, it reflects my underpinnings as a constructivist falling in the “narrative and participatory projects built on critical/ideological paradigms”, which helps to build trustworthiness (Williams & Morrow, 2009, p. 578).

#### 4.8.2 Saturation

Saturation is the part of qualitative data analysis the “signals that the data collection is complete” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 318) or to look at themes or categories as fully flushed out. Until this point, the researcher must continue to conduct research until no new themes emerge (Khan, 2014). However, these themes must reflect the depth and complexity of human life and “when one focuses on the incredible diversity of human experience, one might ask whether true redundancy is ever possible” (Williams & Morrow, 2009, p. 577). Throughout the study, I found many similar themes that continued to arise until no new themes came up. Manual analysis assisted with ensuring saturation.

#### 4.8.3 Data Triangulation

Stake (2005) notes that in qualitative case study triangulation (e.g., drawing upon multiple perceptions/sources of data) is a common means through which researchers increase the trustworthiness of their representation of the case (Mills et al., 2010, p. 2). These data collection strategies follow common recommendations for conducting qualitative inquiry in educational settings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Data triangulation can be achieved by using the same questions in interviewing multiple people. Yin (2012)

states that when “all sources point to the same answer” (p. 104), then triangulation is successful. However, my work would better align with Stake’s views of data collection, rather than Yin’s (Yazan, 2015).

To clarify, and relative to the section on my epistemology (Chapter 1), Stake claims that we have absolute responsibility as qualitative researchers. Responsibility to me in relation to this case study specifically means acknowledging the agency of host community members and representing their words as accurate as possible, while also noting that I am the deciding factor in whose voices are heard or represented (and how) and whose are not. For example, in the interviews themselves, I practiced strategies like prolonged engagement (e.g., being engaged, or having long-lasting engagement with participants; and investing sufficient time into the setting and context of Samstown).

Thus, I engaged in Stake’s strategies, which can be used in any combination, to triangulate data such as data source (i.e., interviews), investigator (i.e., me as researcher), theory (i.e., epistemologies framing/grounding the study), and methodological triangulation (i.e., using more than one method to study the case). In my study, I have triangulated data by interviewing multiple groups of people (i.e. community partners, host families, intermediary organization) involved with the same program to gain their insights and to ‘build the case.’ I also triangulated my data by sharing my preliminary thematic analysis with my supervisors, who through their knowledge and experience, validated the work as credible (Patton, 1999). Then, I went back to the data and thematization based on their respective feedback. For instance, they asked probing questions about how I came to my assertions. We participated in various activities such as mind mapping and talking through the data to help with the grouping and organization of the themes. Thus, this is a

form of triangulation in that they helped with coding and analysis, lending to credibility of the study.

Data triangulation is used to minimize the misrepresentation of data, since all data are “de facto constructed and subject to the researcher’s way of construction” (Srivastava, personal communication). Therefore, the subjective nature associated with qualitative case study methodology means this is also a limitation, as the researcher still relies on their own knowledge and experience (Stake, 1995). Despite the methodology used, the “interpretations of any given social phenomenon may reflect, in part, the biases and prejudices the interpreters bring to the task” (Cypress, 2017, p. 261). Therefore, every human would interpret the data somewhat differently (which is what interpretative research is all about, after all), case study design or other. In the next section, I discuss the research site in more specific detail to further contextualize the case.

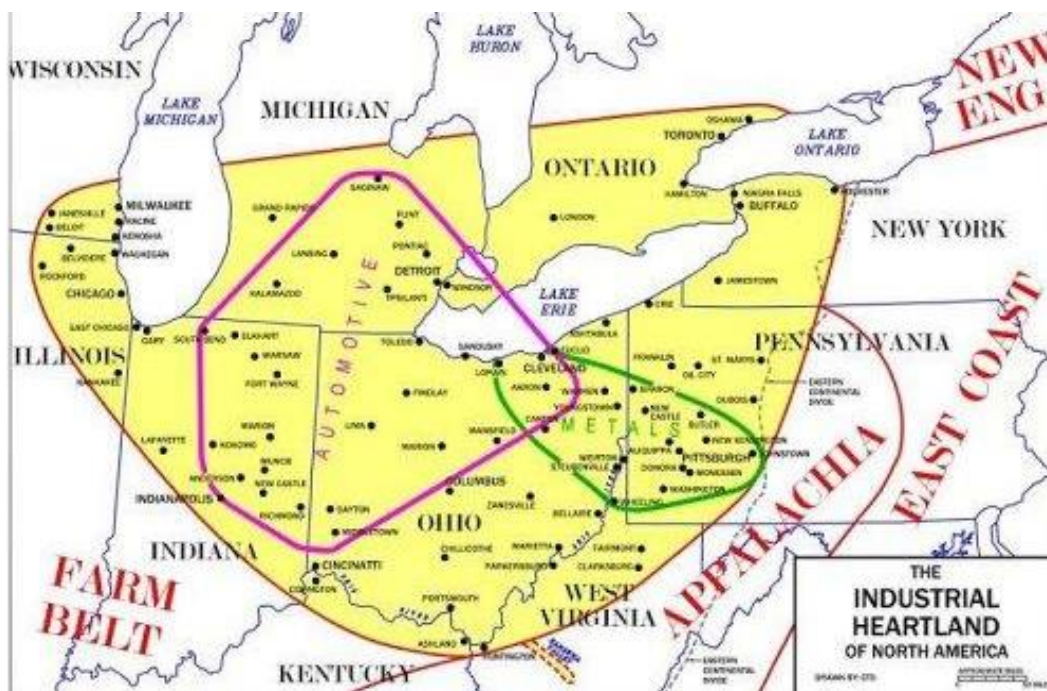
## 4.9 Research Site

### 4.9.1 The Rust Belt

As noted in the previous chapter about the critical theoretical framework of my study, it is important to engage with the socio-historical contexts shaping the phenomenon that a critical researcher studies. Thus, I outline here that context of Samstown, the site where my study took place. My site was an appropriate location to address the goals of my study because in addition to the Rust Belt being one of the United States’ newest regions as explained below (and thus, less-researched), there is also minimal research about IESL programming in the United States.

The name Rust Belt was largely popularized in the mid-80s by vice-presidential candidate Walter Mondale (Trubek, 2018). States like Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, as well as parts of New York and Wisconsin are included (Mitra et al., 2008). Essentially, the prerequisite to be included as a ‘member’ of the Rust Belt is to be a city that was formerly heavily involved in manufacturing, and is either no longer or is not to the same extent, and that has had a significant decline in population as a result (Hackworth, 2016; Kaida et al., 2019). See Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: The Rust Belt**



*Source: Treasures Photography. A Forgotten America, 2011.*

The most basic and popular explanation for the formation of the Rust Belt is deindustrialization. In its prime, the region experienced economic prosperity from the American Industrial Revolution around 1800 until the mid-1970s. A combination of

increased production, increased transportation of raw materials (and people) all attributed to a market revolution (Shackel, 2019; ushistory.org, 2020). However, many shifts that have since occurred in more current times have also caused the decline. These include shifts in the geography of manufacturing industries; outsourcing of labour to majority world countries, which tend to pay workers much less and which typically do not have the same rigour in labour standards as the minority world; and technological advances in computer and digital systems, requiring less ‘person power’ where computers and machining can do the same work, without error, and faster. These have all disrupted the Rust Belt region’s economy resulting in plant closures, massive layoffs, and substantial decreases in standards of living.

Furthermore, the stagnant U.S. regional economies and reduction in economic opportunities caused large segments of the population in those regions to decline, and those cities then eventually experienced high and persistent levels of unemployment, an increase of crime, acceleration of urban decay, and a reduced tax base to fund social services (Roundy, 2019). From the 1970s until the mid-2000s, the region also experienced “a systematic withdrawal of institutional, state, and financial investment” (McQuarrie, 2017, p. 131). Automobile assembly plants and steel mills had a visible impact on the landscape when abandoned, particularly when companies moved their operations to other parts of the United States, to Canada, and eventually, to cheaper labour locations globally as a result of opening trade regulations (Hackwork, 2018).

As people in the area, including residents, the media, and people around the country, attempted to make sense of the changing economy and to understand the economic and social conditions, the Rust Belt narrative emerged. According to Neumann

(2016) and Sardar (2010), this narrative painted a picture of the region as “dying” and “hallowed out,” a “wasteland,” devoid of economic opportunity. In the context of this study, it sets the stage for one of the historical and present-day struggles of Samstown.

#### 4.9.2 Samstown in the Rust Belt

The Samstown neighbourhood where I did most of my interviews has a rich history. Over the course of the early-to mid-twentieth century, millions of people, including many African Americans came from the south, migrating to Rust Belt cities like Samstown (Wilkerson, 2010). By the early 1900s, many of these cities were on the United States’ ‘Top Ten List’ of largest cities; over a quarter of their population was foreign-born, with many people immigrating from Africa, Eastern and Southern Europe, and of many faith backgrounds. Today, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s (2020) *Quickfacts*, between 2014 and 2018, the number of foreign-born people in Samstown was around 7%, noting then that many people living in Samstown were in fact born there. This is contrasted with other cities, like Miami and New York City, whose population as foreign-born residents sits at nearly 60% and 40%, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Today, the African-American population in the Samstown’s neighbourhood where most interviews were completed is ~94%, as per data collected by the city on each of its neighbourhoods.

One of the common misconceptions of the United States, as Omi and Winant (2014) discuss, is that people believe in “evolutionary models that optimistically predict the gradual absorption of racially identified groups into the (implicitly white) mainstream of American political, economic, and cultural life” (p. 7). So even with an influx of immigrants, or even people who were born in the United States or whose land it was

before the arrival of White people, we know this façade of acceptance to be false. Concrete examples of racism toward different groups of people are greatly evidenced in the case of the Native populations, which “faced removal and genocide, Blacks were subjected to racial slavery and Jim Crow, Latinx were invaded and colonized, and Asians faced exclusion” (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 8).

Many of the people who made the Industrial Revolution possible, particularly in the late 1800s, were “Atlantic immigrants” who “were not WASPs and not considered white” (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 25) and had to essentially compete amongst themselves, as Roediger (2005) posits, “for the coveted status” (as cited in Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 25). This structural thinking about race pervades society today, where immigrants continue to “default to Whiteness” (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 29). Contrastingly, many African Americans who had already been in the country for hundreds of years as a consequence of enslavement, and subject to the same or harsher labourious roles, are still subject today to these structural inequalities. In citing Shapiro et al. (2013), Wright Rigueur and Beshlian (2019) discuss the implications of such structural inequalities and how they continue to manifest in the present day toward African Americans, who are more likely than other racialized groups, to experience discrimination

...in hiring practices, wages and salary, promotions, and job benefits; they are also more likely to work in industries that lack comprehensive retirement plans, health benefits, and administrative organization and support, all of which impact the ability of African Americans to acquire savings and assets. (p. 269)

Rust Belt cities then, including the Samstown neighbourhood where I did my research, are known for their growth in times more prosperous, such as in the Industrial Revolution

discussed above. But they have also been known for their decline and for their struggles. Much of this stems from the decades following World War II, where as mentioned above, flows of people, capital, power, and ideas remade the urban landscape. For instance, starting in the 1940s, period-defining folk migrations flowed into midcentury “America’s two promised lands: Black southerners to the northern inner city, predominantly white urbanites to the suburbs. At the same time, public and private capital flowed from city to suburbs” (Rotella, 2003, p. 6). Through this movement from urban growth to urban decline came a slew of ensuing issues, as explored below.

However, in decades since, the ability for such cities to bend, to adapt, and to come up with creative solutions to insidious problems is an important characteristic of their “adaptive resilience” (Cowell, 2015, p. 102) and has manifested in many forms. This resilience is why Rust Belt cities like Samstown are also for their “comeback narratives” (Bowen et al., 2017, p. 214). One way the resilience can appear is in shifts to other industries as an attempt to incite or encourage new business activity throughout the entire rustbelt region. Examples include the introduction and advancement of healthcare, urban farming, technology, and green energy industries among others. Still, as Roundy (2019) discusses, there is often pessimism and lack of confidence toward new business in the Rust Belt; many believe they are “destined to fail” (p. 107). For many photographers or documentarians (Kinney, 2016), Rust Belt cities are often touted as cool backdrops and considered artsy sites for “ruin porn” or for Instagrammers looking for their next story or reel. But for people who live in these cities, these ‘backdrops’ and derelict abandoned buildings continue to be “visual sore spot[s] for current residents and deterrent to future investors” (Hackwork, 2018, p. 54); they must live with seeing the blight and



abandonment, both physically and emotionally, every day.

Many organizations, start-ups, and even universities have gone into various communities in and around Samstown to ‘help’ revitalize them, but many communities have noted their concerns about such initiatives. For instance, the pervasive whiteness of many of these organizations contributes to reinforcing racialized exclusion through the creation, cultivation, and protection of White spaces. This further enforces notions of struggling neighbourhoods, and particularly African American neighbourhoods. On one hand, there is a need for developers and for the state to revitalize the neighbourhoods, but on the other, with this development comes “normalized processes of black dispossession” (Pettygrove & Ghose, 2018, p. 594).

Communities have felt encouraged when other non-profits in the area, some affiliated with local universities or high schools, work on development projects focused on specific community needs and based on reciprocal relationships (Peters, 2020). For instance, there are some groups in Samstown who have made greening efforts such as (re)building parks in the area. Other projects have included plotting gardens and planting vegetation in vacant lots in Samstown. In other Rust Belt cities, vegetation on vacant lots has even been used for biofuel production and thus provides an example for Samstown as they look ahead to the future, in other ways they can improve their city. Green projects such as renewable energy stations could result in green-collar jobs focused on deconstruction and recycling of materials from the demolition of abandoned buildings (Leigh & Patterson, 2006; Schilling & Logan, 2008). However, as mentioned, these kinds of ‘community projects’ do not come without concerns.

As part of revitalization efforts, students from a nearby university in one Rust Belt city “took the neighbourhood, simmered it in the juices of their ‘creative minds’ and turned it into a hip new destination” (McCarthy, 2019, p. 1). This is an example of how using development of marginalized neighbourhoods, or how gentrification efforts, exploit marginalized populations, as there was “a suddenly vibrant strip of land” (McCarthy, 2019, p. 1) available for development. Often, the vision created for the neighbourhood comes from a place of priority from the “privileged white-collar worker” for “middle class residents” over “social democratic goals” (Neumann, 2016, pp. 2-3). Physical and economic restructuring occurring at the expense of residents, in the name of urban renewal or revitalization “is so deeply embedded in urban power relationships that no one bats an eye” (McCarthy, 2019, p. 8).

Another example, which also came up in my study, looks at food justice organizing. This could manifest in forms such as bringing in a grocery store to a low-income neighbourhood or bringing in produce to corner grocery stores. As Small and McDermott (2006) note, “black neighborhoods are less likely than comparable white neighbourhoods to contain commercial establishments that are necessary for day-to-day living, such as banks or grocery stores” (as cited in Garrow & Garrow, 2014, p. 328). Consequently, research indicates that these efforts may be beneficial, but they might also serve to reproduce neoliberal governmentalities (Pettygrove & Ghose, 2018) and economic policies by encouraging reforms centered on volunteerism and consumer choice, rather than on neighbourhood needs or wants. Today, ‘creative solutions’ always seem to be arising – i.e., service learning programs in host communities – which play a role in this study.

Setting a more recent and perhaps more relatable context for the present study, there were reforms and a re-envisioning of Rust Belt neighbourhoods in the 1990s. For instance, an increase of white-collar workers, much like where I lived during my time in Samstown, began to ‘appear’. However, many White people still revealed then that they “would not feel comfortable even visiting such a neighbourhood, much less residing there” (Hackworth, 2018, p. 56). In his study, Hackworth (2018) looked at the relationship of race and the production of extreme land abandonment in the American Rust Belt and supported it with “100 years of evidence suggest[ing] White racism against African Americans” (p. 56). But even if, hypothetically, one did not go back into the history books to look for ‘racist evidence’, there are visible and notable attributive factors to date showing and discussing racist policies and racist sentiments toward these neighbourhoods.

Revitalization efforts did not begin in the 1990s with gentrification, or in the 1970s after industry ‘fell apart’. They actually started to appear in the 1950s. For these reasons among others, African Americans in such cities have been disproportionately affected by processes of land abandonment, primarily because of their race, and as such, were the most disadvantaged group when the economic conditions reached their lowest. It was even the case that some politicians and people in positions of power engineered the movement of ‘Whites’ to the suburbs away from urban centres for political advantage with the promise of better jobs and better schooling in suburban areas (Garrow & Garrow, 2014).

Unfortunately, some of the ‘urban renewal efforts,’ or ‘gentrification included the construction of buildings in Samstown, which displaced over thousands of residents and

resulted in a substantial loss of economic infrastructure and a depletion of the population. Today, that same geographic area is one of the most distressed neighbourhoods in Samstown, with about 23% of residents with household incomes below the poverty line (United States Census Bureau, 2020), with some neighbourhoods in the same county with levels as high as 40% (Circolo, personal communication; United States Census Bureau, 2020). In addition to economic devastation, cited Fullilove (2005), recent data show the long-term traumatic stress this displacement could cause for someone's lifetime, including grief, social isolation, and depression (as cited in Flórez et al., 2016).

The rebuilding of the city or disassembling (depending on who you talk to), then, can be viewed differently. For instance, a railroad built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and which had been operating for almost 100 years is particularly relevant, as it ferried passengers and freight between neighbourhoods. It is relevant because the (little existing) literature about it suggests that one line connecting one neighbourhood (predominantly African American) to another (not African American) neighbourhood was disassembled due to its age and that it was being outmoded. However, many residents in the neighbourhood who grew up, lived through, or whose parents lived through this time, shared with me a different story. They noted that it was strategically disassembled in their neighbourhood around the time of the Civil Rights Movement, while other transportation lines in the city (in worse shape) remained for much longer. Residents themselves claimed it was due to the continual disenfranchisement and marginalization of their neighbourhood from others in the same city, simply on the basis that their neighbourhood was/is comprised almost entirely of African Americans. Arguably, this disenfranchisement can be given a name, and attributed to what Omi and Winant (2014) call "containment," which is the intent to

“disrupt, demobilize, and destroy” any potential for racial movements (p. 186). In fact, many residents still rely on jitneys<sup>6</sup>, as regular cabs are unreliable and will not pick up African Americans, and there is a substantial lack of public transportation. To this point, during an informal conversation with a community member, they had expressed to me that transportation, goods, housing, and public services usually become even harder to access, dependent on ‘how one fares’ on the *brown paper bag test*<sup>7</sup>. Kerr (2005) elucidates that this “de facto belief system” of “‘complexion lore’ in black communities - tales about inclusion in or exclusion from organizations, institutions, and social groups based on hue or African facial features” (p. 271). And as Hervé Télémaque’s art reminds, “[the test] invokes for peoples of African descent in the Americas an historical, intraracial, colour caste system in which one’s social mobility and communal value is recognized, based on phenotypically approximating, or certainly not being darker than, the light-to-middle brown tone one sees in kraft pulp shopping bags” (Powell, 2018, p. 247). Even within communities of colour, there can be disparities.

## 4.10 Research Ethics

This thesis followed and adhered to the guidelines as outlined by the research ethics board. The office of Human Research Ethics, on behalf of Western's NMREB, which manages the approval and monitoring process for the use of humans in research at the University and its affiliated hospitals and research institutes. This doctoral study was

---

<sup>6</sup> A jitney is a for-profit private (and sometimes illegal, when without appropriate licensing) cab service, typically serving low-income African American neighbourhoods.

<sup>7</sup> A form of discrimination used to compare African Americans’ skin tone to a brown paper bag, and either ‘allow’ or ‘deny’ them privileges, if lighter or darker than the bag.

approved by the Western NMREB and any ethical considerations or concerns were highlighted by the Board, reviewed by me, and subsequently amended accordingly..

The office of Human Research Ethics, on behalf of Western's Research Ethics Boards (REB) requires the research to provide a Letter of Information and Consent (LOI/C). See Appendix A. Potential participants were asked to read the LOI/C if they chose to participate in the study. Participants were informed that if they had any linguistic challenges regarding giving written consent, the researcher would give oral explanation. No other reading was required of the participant.

My first priority was that participants remained unharmed throughout the duration of my study. Participants participated through their own free will, and therefore, few ethical issues arose. Once participants read through the LOI/C, if they agreed to participate, they signed the forms, knowing they could stop participation at any point. There were no foreseeable physical, psychological, emotional, social or economic risks associated with this study. In addition, they participated at a time that was agreeable to them, and were inconvenienced minimally for their time spent contributing to the study. Despite the actual geographic location and intermediary organization being permitted to be identifiable as per ethics, community partners, host families and members of the intermediary organization were given still pseudonyms to protect their identities. Ultimately, in addition to protecting participants' anonymity through the use of pseudonyms, I also decided to give organizations, geographic setting, anything associated with the location that could lead to its recognizability, pseudonyms as well.

Intentionality was a major component at the planning stage of my study (Creswell, 2011, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 1998), where undercurrents of Freire's *conscientização* were crucial in all my decision-making. Freire (2005) states that ignorance is key to maintain oppression, and so my research tries to push back against the convention by situating the present with historical knowledge of the past. This is why in the theoretical framing of the study, I chose to bring in broad historical knowledge on race and racism. Further, I also deliberately investigated the historical background of my site, Samstown, itself and related race literature of the area. The intent was to show a developing contextual knowledge and burgeoning critical awareness related to African American history.

In order to do so, I employed critical consciousness by focusing on

gaining knowledge about the systems and structures that create and sustain inequity (critical analysis), developing a sense of power or capability (sense of agency), and ultimately committing to take action against oppressive conditions (critical action). (El-Amin et al., 2017, p. 20)

As a researcher and teacher, I want to be a better person *for* others (Fine, 1994). In other words, my research needed to embed critical consciousness into how and in what ways I thought about each individual and participant in this study. The intent was to acknowledge their life experience and to do something that better-supported what hooks (1994) calls *the whole person*.

In this chapter, I provided an explanation of my choice to use qualitative research. I explained my rationale for employing a case study approach, which was to gain a better understanding of the host community perspective. The research site as I have described – Samstown - is situated in the unique context of the Rust Belt in the Northeastern United

States. Participants from a variety of backgrounds in the host community contributed meaningfully to this research through their accounts. I have also discussed the process by which data was collected and retained. Methodology and methods were guided by principles of trustworthiness, data triangulation, and saturation. As in any study, limitations were present and discussed, as well as and other ethical considerations related to the study. The important role of qualitative research in this case study has been the opportunity to more-deeply explore complex ideas about IESL by and through host community perspectives. A critical approach has been taken with the hope of contributing a more socially aware and critically conscious view in IESL.

#### 4.11 Summary

No matter the methodological, the notion of *how we know* what we know is important in any form of research (Trainor & Graue, 2014, p. 270). As Reyes Cruz (2008) experienced, this can be done in “grounding our theories, anchoring them, on the reflections non academics make about social life as they live it, elaborating theory with them instead of about them” (p. 656). In the next chapter, I present the findings of my study as two stories and discuss them.



## Chapter 5 : Findings and Discussion

### 5 Overview of Chapters Five and Six

This is a study with two stories, marked by the represented and un-represented voices of Samstown community members. This and the next chapter, show those two parallel stories and the research journey that revealed them to me. They reflect my intention to keep the community of Samstown at the heart of this research. They also reflect how my participants represent a more privileged slice of the community of Samstown, one somewhat removed from the conditions that made Samstown the site for my inquiry. Stories One and Two will be presented individually in Chapters 5 and 6, with each story including its own findings and discussion.

Story One weaves a tale of the many benefits and positive impacts that the host community experienced from hosting IESL volunteers. Story Two is a shorter, but more nuanced story of the structural and racial concerns in Samstown as related to community, need, service, and IESL programming writ large. Thus, the second story leads the way to a more critical discussion of deep thinking about and reflecting upon what I have found and not found through my research.

In each story, I present the community perspectives on an IESL program in Samstown by discussing the reflections of community partners, host families, and members of an intermediary organization. A housekeeping note: readers will see participant accounts in this chapter and denoted by their name followed by 'HF' for host

family, 'CP' for community partner, and 'IO' for intermediary organization. This and the next chapter seek to describe what my participants thought, felt, said, and did with respect to their experiences as a host community.

To reiterate, the length of programming, number of service learning volunteers, institutional affiliations of volunteers (high school, college, university, independent group), and incoming destinations varied greatly. Some service learning volunteers came from abroad (e.g., Bolivia, Brazil, Ireland, Pakistan, Peru, Sri Lanka) and others were from the United States. The most common programming included groups of ~10 participants from faith or community groups who are hosted in Samstown for around one week. Longer programming, including only a few people at a time who might have been hosted in Samstown for up to six weeks, was less common. Some participants were from higher education institutions nearby who participated in day programming, though again this variant was not typical from my interviews. Other service learning volunteers, in some cases, travelled internationally to Samstown and stayed for approximately two weeks.

The findings in this and the next chapter are organized into themes based on the study's research questions and on the narratives that emerged from the participants. Like the variation in program length, the host families were just as broad in terms of the number of times and the number of students they have hosted. There was less variety among the host family participants in terms of class or race. Of the eight host families, all were middle-class, and with one exception, all were White. Two host family members were also members of Circolo and both of these individuals were also White. Based on

the interviews, two separate host family members mentioned having hosted for the first time in the summer prior to my interviews, and hosted one or two students in their home. Two host families have hosted over 10 times, and most other host families fell somewhere in between having hosted on around three to five occasions with around the same number of students.

There was slightly more diversity among the community partners and members of the intermediary organization, Circolo. Three of the community partners were Black, and two were White. And of the Circolo participants, five were White (including the two individuals noted above who were also host families) and one was Black. All participants as noted in the previous chapter, were well-educated with post-secondary degrees. I return to the significance of these identity markers in the discussion in chapter 6.

As reflected in my research questions, I was interested in hearing my participants' perspectives and the perceived benefits and challenges of IESL programming. I used the data to analyze, code, and look for patterns and themes that surfaced. The findings, derived from the host community interviews, tell their stories. Many emergent themes cross harmoniously with one another. I have tried my best to interpret participant accounts and experiences as they were told to me, but as an interpretivist researcher, I understand that there is also room for (re)interpretation through each person's own lens.

The aim of the discussion sections, which immediately follow the findings of each story, is to make sense of my participants' perspectives. The findings sections helped draw attention to the perspectives of some, but not all, members of one American host

community, and to explore their varied experiences with IESL, including what they perceived to be benefits, challenges, and tensions of associated programming. The findings are mostly descriptive, with rich participant voice woven throughout. That was the key to the study: to use the words of community and their voices to give perspective (Borland & Adams, 2013; Larsen, 2016b; Lincoln et al., 2008; Pillard Reynolds & Cezar Gasparini, 2016; Sin, 2009; Vrsti, 2013), but as we will discover – some voices were missing. The discussion in each chapter (5 and 6), within the larger context of my study, connects the findings to the literature and to the critical theoretical framing of my study, with relevant literature on service learning and host communities integrated throughout.

## 5.1 Story One: Building Relationships and Bridging Divides

*“It's never every person, it's never all, but if you are making a difference, it has to be one person at a time.” Vicky-CP*

## 5.2 Story One: Findings

### 5.2.1 First Days in Samstown

I recall my first days in Samstown before conducting interviews. I was nervous. Despite having previously moved to many cities over the last decade, I found myself in a new unknown place with unfamiliar surroundings. Regardless, I was happy to secure a lovely furnished loft room *and* for a reasonable rate – the latter being the most relevant for a

frugal student on a budget. The neighbourhood where I was located was formerly working class, and in the last two decades or so, became a blend of working class, white-collar workers, and young adults. But much of the neighbourhood was still home to long-standing, family-owned and operated shops, outdoor street markets, mom-and-pop restaurants. It provided a welcoming setting for residents and for newcomers, like me. There was a constant vibrancy down the tree-lined streets, as people did their daily errands or sat on benches enjoying their coffees.

But, things did not start out so smoothly for me when I had arrived. My housemate, whom I had not yet met in person, was (in)conveniently on a road trip when I had managed to lock myself out of the house on my very first day. Without phone service or the Wi-Fi password, I had to be creative, and decided breaking into my house was *obviously* the best solution. I managed to get into the first-floor by climbing on to a garbage can, and pushing the old, creaky window frame upward until eventually, it was wedged open enough for me to be able to slip through both the window and all of Charlotte's webs. I laugh at the moment now as I look back, and am so happy to report that this little fiasco did not foreshadow larger problems in the research experience to come. In fact, my time in Samstown was quite uplifting. As I adjusted to my new home by exploring and becoming more acquainted with the neighbourhood, I became even more excited about the work I was about to undertake. And as time went on, I began to spend time with community partners. First, I met with various partners and introduced myself. As we got to know each other, we became more comfortable with one another.

One afternoon, a community partner was busy preparing for an intimate evening mini-fundraiser they had organized. In preparation of the event, they put together a simple but thoughtfully planned food-and-drink spread for their guests. The room was decorated with local women artisans' hand-made crafts and goods for sale, making it both a bright and curious space, and provided room for rich conversations sparked by its warmth. While I was 'hanging out' for the day, one of the organizers had asked me to walk with them to their home to help them to pick up glassware for the set-up. On the walk, we just talked; about life, about our journeys, about our struggles and hopes, about what was important to us. It was amazing to me, and still is as I reflect on how natural and how open we were with one another. We were practically strangers, but the vulnerability and trust we shared, by that certain eye contact, was just *there*. By the time we had arrived at their apartment to pick up the glasses, they were eager to give me a tour of the home they had worked so hard to build. They were proud, and I was humbled. It was such a marked moment for me.

This moment was very much reflected in many of the other community members who came in contact with program participants with Circolo. As we explore further below, many community members felt that these connections – the trust, the vulnerability, the openness –were the true essence of *building relationships* and *bridging divides*, which often happened in the simplest everyday life activities.

### 5.2.2 Involvement as Host Community Members

Before the inaugural Samstown-based receiving program had even begun, many host families were volunteering their homes without even being approached or asked to do so

by Circolo. My participants felt excited about the potential to be involved, particularly because their own children had participated in one of Circolo's service learning programs in the past, having gone abroad to various countries. Through their positive experience, the host families' sense of responsibility to the intermediary organization, to community partners, and more broadly to a wider global family, was evident; their sense of solidarity was apparent as was their eagerness to give back. "*If Circolo asks or if they need help,*" said Rose-HF, *'I'll volunteer'...I really felt that it was my duty to reciprocate and it was something we could and wanted to do.*"

Rose's involvement with hosting has been extensive, more than any other participant. In two years alone, she had hosted approximately eight students for this program. She was also involved with another unrelated program where she had hosted students for full year-long exchanges. Similarly, Linda-HF's teenager had also participated in one of Circolo's programs previously. The notion of "*paying it forward*" inspired them both. "*We wanted to give back because our child got the chance. I thought it was only fair...we would do it again in a heartbeat.*" In a sense, my participants said they were ready to receive people from around the world and to open their homes as willing host families. They were self-aware in their involvement in the program, and felt it was their responsibility to build bridges with those who had been willing to do so with their own children. Most of the children who did go abroad also reflected similarly with the families that hosted: White, middle-class people.

The interviews I conducted with each host family members happened early in the research process. In the back of my mind, I thought about people in the Samstown

community who may not have necessarily been involved with Circolo, community bystanders (e.g., people who were residents of Samstown who were not interviewed as CP, HF, or IO). What role do they play and would they be willing to build those bridges and with a similar sense of responsibility? In this study, community members were sometimes spectators, witnessing people come into their neighbourhoods, without even knowing about the programming in some cases. Marcus-CP, a now long-standing community partner involved with Circolo, spoke to this point. He had expressed in his interview with me that he had some initial skepticism when meeting service learning volunteers for his first time and hosting them on a selected project with his organization. However, after a positive experience, to this day he welcomes volunteers resoundingly and continually. Part of his initial hesitation in getting involved with Circolo went back to the relationships that he had taken great efforts to build in and with the community as the community; he mentioned that the community itself had, demonstrably, often felt left out of the conversation for decades given the context of the city.

As one of the leaders of a non-profit community partner, which has existed for more than thirty years in the community, Marcus-CP was really invested and wanted to make sure that anyone ‘coming in’ would not jeopardize the relationships with community that had been built over decades, long before his time with his organization. His organization’s work focused on orchestrating various food sustainability projects in Samstown and surrounding areas, helping to bring food into the community. He shared with me that a startling 50% of African-American children in the jurisdiction within which he works live in poverty. His organization, then, also works to not only bring in food but to ensure access to healthy food options into their ‘food desert’. An example he



offered was making fresh local produce accessible to residents in already-existent corner stores so that residents need not travel far.

While canvassing with Circolo service learning volunteers on a program to promote this new food service, community residents were surprised, not only that such changes were happening in their stores, but also particularly by the presence of ‘outsiders’ telling them about those changes. *“Overwhelmingly, people in the neighbourhood were really positive,”* Marcus-CP said. He added,

*A lot had the reaction of, ‘Where are you from?’, ‘How did you get here?’, ‘What are you doing right now?, and “Wow. People from another country are coming into our town to tell us about the produce in our store!’. There is something really powerful and unique about that.*

Marcus-CP helped to shed light on several ideas, but on this one in particular where he draws attention to the residents living in the community as an important part of the IESL dynamic, regardless of whether or not they are directly involved in the programming. In this case, residents felt seen, recognized, and shown care. Sabrina-IO added that, in and through those types of interactions, unexpected connections formed between service learning volunteers and community partners and with those not even involved in IESL programming. *“It makes people feel like their story matters,” she said, “and it changes how the community sees people. It allows a level of acknowledgment.”*

The relevance of maintaining long-standing relationships in the community, both before and after program participants come in to volunteer is critical, if the real intention is to keep community ‘first’. It is the validation of and respect for people’s stories that must remain a priority, because that is where the real bridge building occurs. Sabrina-IO further elaborated on her ideas of building community relationships by expressing the

support felt by the host community: *“I think of words like ‘inspired’ and ‘empowered’.*  
*The community working with us just feels more encouraged that their opinions are valid,*  
*the fact that people care about what's going on with them.”*

In these initial findings from host community members, we begin to see a picture of what they perceive to be as benefits of having service learning volunteers in Samstown. Community members feel important, validated, and prioritized. With these feelings of empowerment, it provides a springboard to continue discussions between residents, the participating host community members, and program participants.

### 5.2.3 Serving Others and Strengthening Bonds

Like many other towns and cities around the world, Samstown is always looking for ways to move forward. Specifically, some community members more directly sought opportunities to make their city better for themselves and for their networks and the people/groups they support, by taking their own initiative and through providing services. *“The intertwining and fellowshiping of others just helps everybody...it should be the norm pouring into our lives as leaders so young people have an educator, or a social work, or probation officer doing and giving their best.”* Joseph-CP powerfully shared the idea of example setting and personal investment in one another, simply by doing the right thing and living their life’s purpose. On the surface, we see the benefit of a partnership being developed between the community partner and intermediary organization, but the benefits also happened on deeply personal levels. Community insights like Joseph-CP’s shine a light on the impact of IESL, when community is directly involved in the process. In his case, he had been approached by the intermediary organization to create a

partnership. He had also expressed that he wanted his ‘kids’ to be able to go away, as well. In that way, he exercised his own agency in the conversation with Circolo, and was able to play an active role in the programming of both incoming and outgoing program participants.

As I continued to interview participants, I began to gain some clarity as to what those benefits were for each person. Community members expressed that they found purpose by developing personal relationships with community-based family and friends, gaining introspection, reflection and change, as well as building their own knowledge about cultural and racial diversity. Roberta-HF, for instance, was a young professional, married woman, without children but was often home on her own while her husband was away on business. She enjoyed the new structure that being a host family provided for her life. It was “*super beneficial...I found myself flailing in life...and I didn't have that sense of purpose where I needed to be both on the receiving and giving end of providing care.*” An opportunity to put others before herself was prevalent in her experience in that it gave her purpose in “*taking care of someone besides a dog.*”

Kimberly-HF also spoke to benefits in her life as a result of participating in the programming. She has been involved in international development and the non-profit sector for many years, and brought her professional and personal experiences to programming in the numerous times she has hosted, which helped to expand her professional relationships. For instance, because both Kimberly-HF and her professor were able to draw some more commonalities – their work and research experiences in South America – they became closer.

*The experience catalyzed our relationship...we've always been friends but me hosting has stepped it up a little bit because when they (participants) come here, she [the professor] always hosts them for dinner. It just gives us a new point of connection. She speaks Spanish and Quechua and I think [the participants] are always shocked that some really petite little White lady speaks perfect Quechua.*

In these cases, we see a deepening of relationships, first between program participants being able to connect with someone in Samstown who has a pre-existing connection to their home and making them feel comfortable. This enables intertwining new and familiar countries, languages, and contexts. In particular, we see that already-existing interpersonal connections continue to be reinforced through IESL programming. This sentiment was shared by other host family participants. *“I definitely strengthened or re-upped bonds with people I'm close to already...It was like nice to see people I know very well. You grow closer to people, seeing them in different situations and seeing how they'll interact.”*

Michelle-HF shared similar insights about her immediate family. A full-time stay-at-home mom of two young children and a first-time host family, she talked about the smaller communities like her faith community that existed in Samstown and the impact of volunteers on her and the faith community. She felt like the service learning volunteer's *“time here made us closer with people at church. It strengthened our bonds. In an indirect way, he facilitated communication.”* The benefits to my participants of having volunteers in their city and in getting more united to people in Samstown, *“was almost like having an excuse to connect and start to meet really cool people in the city, learn about their story, the work they're doing...that extends beyond the volunteers being here.”* Christie-IO's reflections show the lasting impact that IESL can have on individuals from the host communities and extend into their other circles, long after program volunteers

leave. In a way, having service learning volunteers in the host community was like having “catalysts of opportunity,” particularly for those who are permanent residents of the community to connect and to relationship-build with each other.

#### 5.2.4 Making Emotional Connections

In addition to strengthening their already-existing relationships, we see an immeasurable growth in the emotional connection and new relationships that community members formed with the service learning volunteers. We see this manifested in many ways. For instance, participants in this study commented on how often IESL volunteers and community partners were drawn to each other, simply by sharing with and learning from each other’s life stories. Through various icebreakers and with the guidance of community partners, they were able to quickly build rapport and relationships with one another. At the end of their programming, those icebreakers had often transformed into hugs, as expressed by community members such as Patricia-CP, Grace-HF, and Paulo-IO

The host families alluded to the immense impact of having program participants in their homes and were grateful for the emotional connection fostered by their time together. Linda-HF and Ron-HF recalled the participants who had stayed with them. “*One had drawn beautiful pictures in a book and gave me a banner from his city. They were such sweet kids, I wanted to keep them and didn't want to let them go.*” Rose-HF also expressed a similar emotional connection about the supportive role she played regarding one of the students she hosted. The participant seemed to be going through a deep and difficult mental health journey and together, they worked through some of those challenges. Rose-HF mentioned that the experience of participating in something “*bigger*

*than themselves*” like this program was transformative for the participant, but in particular, for Rose-HF who was able to act as a crucial support and unpack the participant’s life challenges between them – the trust has been built between them and forged their relationship. While the contact was not constant or consistent after the program, she mentioned that they sometimes chatted with one another on Facebook. Recently, they spoke about the participant being interested in attending post-secondary school in the city, and asked Rose-HF for help with the application process. She had also offered up her place for a few weeks so they could get settled if they did decide to move to Samstown.

For Patricia-CP, having service learning volunteers in their community was life-changing: “*...to know the benefit that this has been to me, I can't imagine the benefit that has it been to others...There are individuals who I'm being impacted by and hopefully who I'm impacting.*” She felt that the essence of the programming could be captured with the idea of “*when I'm giving, I'm getting back.*” The unprecedented opportunity for her strengthened her own sense of purpose. From the dinner table to evenings in front of the TV, to Facetime with families back home, resoundingly, community members were emotionally impacted by the presence of program participants.

### 5.2.5 Reciprocal Teaching and Learning

Conversations that came up between host families, community partners, and the intermediary organization often brought opportunities for reciprocal teaching, learning, and growth. Rich reflections came from Patricia-CP, who works, lives, and volunteers in her own community. She has an interesting role in that she has both hosted and has been

a community partner for various Circolo programs, bringing a unique and multi-faceted perspective to the table. She knows everyone who walks through her neighbourhood, as I witnessed while spending time with her. She does not let anyone pass by her without acknowledging them. There is always a hello, and if she has more time, an additional follow-up question about ‘the doctor appointment last week’ or ‘your daughter in her new apartment’, letting anyone know she intimately cares for each of them. Her visible investment in the place and people is perhaps why she took particular attention to the various backgrounds of the visitors coming in, not as much as a ‘screener’, but as someone who is particularly curious and deliberate with her thoughts and actions.

She went on to say, *“the stars are aligned and the ancestors have placed me in the place of a readiness to do what I'm doing and the community that I'm serving right now...I don't walk past any person.”* And so, when given the opportunity to work with young people, she revelled at the chance to *“unpack and explore difference.”* In the context of her role as a community partner working with IESL participants, she talked about how participants were usually partnered with young people from the community fitting in the same age groups, which provided a *“commonness, in terms of just being teenagers, or just being young people...and a lot of times, people are transformed. What our hope is to simply enlighten.”*

Conversations about “enlightenment” were not always ‘light’, however. Working against stereotypes was a common theme in the group reflections. For instance, discussions around the typical stereotype of what teenagers ‘may be like’. Some host families picked up on the same idea that teenagers are similar, no matter where you go,

which was helpful in getting some of the difficult conversations going. Ron-HF added, *“across the world teenagers are teenagers. It's not a country thing, it's an age group.”* Other host families also went on to fight stereotypical ideas of what teenager ‘are like’: *“they aren't terrible, some just need a little guidance and love...they helped me rekindle caring about young people again... I'm sure they are moody and rebellious at home, but they were acting as visitors here and affording those kindnesses.”* What the host community told me was that even having one thing in common, such as age, helped bridge other differences, such as race or class, and led into richer and deeper conversations.

Repeatedly, participants of my study talked about also having to navigate through those other differences. *“We generally have a lot to learn about humanity because of having to work with so many different people and personalities”*, expressed Sabrina-IO, leaving room for continued growth and a continuation to bridge divides. Even with local residents not directly involved in the experience, the divergent effects of such programs through encountering participants happened in other areas of the community. For example, one host family was heavily involved in their faith community and had a fright night around Halloween, where they went to a local theme park. Michelle-HF talked about some teenage girls from Samstown in their group who had opened up to the visiting service learning volunteers about inappropriate behaviour from one of the boys [from Samstown] in the youth group. *“The girls were comfortable with the participant,”* she said. The fact that local residents of Samstown felt that they could open up to the incoming volunteers who were practically strangers, speaks to a greater vulnerability and a greater trust that was quickly built between them and then, turn into real friendships as a



result. The divide being mended was between Samstown community members, through the intervention of a program participant.

### 5.2.6 Making Connections With Each Other

*“As a human citizen or global citizen, a global human, I feel more connected to the world around me... I feel less small. Now, I have connections beyond what I even realize...I had the wonderment of what it's like to be a human in the world, and to know other humans in the world. We are all part of the same global family.” Roberta-HF*

The opportunity for youth in the community to be exposed to people from other places was an important piece of the puzzle, as was an often-discussed topic in interviews. Joseph-CP talked about his experience as a leader in the community who works with many youth. He was especially interested in partnering with Circolo to provide community youth an opportunity to engage with experiences they might not otherwise have. When *“he was their age”*, he himself did not have opportunities to meet others outside of their community, let alone international visitors. In his efforts of keeping youth in Samstown focused on school, prioritizing mutual respect, and embracing others, he touched on the notion of *“exposure...the more you have, the more focused and well-rounded you are because it takes blinders off.”*

Scott-CP also works with youth just outside of Samstown, specifically as a director of after-school programming, and had the same aspirations for the kids in his program. The group of youth he works with are in a slightly different situation from others involved in Circolo programming because they are in a neighbourhood isolated from other towns. In fact, within their own town, youth are even isolated from each other with no form of transportation available to them; they do not even receive publicly-funded

transportation to and from school and often walk up to 10km to travel between home, school, and the after-school program each day. This is not the norm in all areas of the city, but due to cut funding to the district's budget, was their reality.

Scott-CP reflections of youth interaction and the value of exposure to one another, echoes

Joseph-CP's sentiments:

*Personally, I just enjoyed seeing the interaction with our kids. The positive experience came in seeing our kids react to their [participants'] positivity and the enthusiasm. They exhibited that and it rubbed off on our kids, who were trying to kind of mimic that back. I liked seeing our kids really respond to having outsiders come in, a little bit differently than they would with their peers.*

He saw the benefit of having volunteers come to Samstown and setting a positive example for young people in the community. It helped him and the children develop a sense of global connection, while also strengthening their local community in ways that had not existed before. *"Ours is a close-knit community but there are a lot of racial dividing lines within it as well. Having that international aspect and that just having high school and college students from other places come in and interact with them broadens their horizons."* In Scott-CP's view, he believed that participants from other cities and countries coming into their community was the equivalent of travelling and an opportunity for him to give back to his kids without having to physically go anywhere.

Sabrina-IO drew ideas akin to Scott-CP. *"When they interact with the kids, that, in some cases, come from similar neighbourhoods and similar economic backgrounds who have been for the most part made it to college... that can be extremely impactful."* Not only are these opportunities beneficial to experience care and compassion from other human beings, she said, but also for the opportunity to engage with others with whom my

participants from the community could relate helped to bring a sense of inner hope that people should (continue to) have. They can be optimistic for themselves, for their own lives, and confident in the potential they have to achieve their goals – going to college or other. This quote speaks to the broader idea of social class. Expanding one’s horizons beyond their local social class locations to consider university is one of those examples.

Host families also found value and prevalence in being able to provide their own children by exposing them to a broader sense of the world. *“Spanish language or South American culture will come up... and my daughter will have this point of contact that’ll be in her memory and that she’ll be able to hold on to...who knows maybe when my kids are 15, they’ll go visit him [the participant].”* The chance for cultural exchange for their children was an opportunity to engage in these experiences, mainly because they themselves regretted never being able to participate in anything similar. *“I didn’t do any sort of study abroad and I wish I had.”* Again, the theme of being able to provide their children with experiences they were never able to have was an important finding that was uncovered.

Interviewees felt that bringing in international visitors or service learning volunteers provided an opportunity to build divides not only during the duration of the program but also far into the future. It was indicated as one of the most poignant factors for community members engaging with programming. *“Participants are going to come in, they may look a little bit different, they may talk a little bit different, they may have different customs but giving our kids that exposure...like ‘Oh yeah, I’ve dealt with people that country before’...throughout their life they’ll remember that; it will be stamped in*

*their brain.*” The value in the experience was not only temporary but long-term into the future, as described by Scott-CP.

This was especially relevant for some, due to the racial segregation in the Samstown area overall, as Scott-CP discussed. *“Generally, we are not a very diverse...anything like that program really broadens our kids' horizons in interacting with people from different places and countries”*. Essentially, African American and White residents in the community do not typically ‘mix’, which I also observed and experienced in my time there. Participants felt that the presence of newcomers helped in bridging the divide. Beyond the community itself, my participants brought up wider ideas of being connected to a larger world and their place within it. Host families, like Roberta-HF and Grace-HF, also felt close to the participants staying in their homes. Grace-HF, a professional in the community who works in higher education, kept talking about the connections she was able to make over the course of the program. *“When my guest was Facetimeing, she said, ‘Come here. I want you meet my parents’. It was the nicest way to welcome me into her home as she was staying at my place.”* Furthermore, in many of the participant interviews, like that of Patricia-CP, they described their experience about connecting on the simplest, common element: that they are all human beings. She went on to describe what this meant for her:

*To me what I have experienced are the common denominators. What happens is because of the global aspect of living, when you're not familiar with persons from other countries, when they're not familiar with us. What we are learning very clearly these messages are often steeped in half truths, and continued to circle around...things that people have assumed...and so we come to understand that in some situations that the common experiences that we have.*

The point of striving to connect with others, then, is not only to find out about one another, but to also combat misconceptions that are projected on to their own communities or countries. In the words of the intermediary organization, *“interacting with people from outside really allows us to look more broadly about how we're offering our own curriculum to youth from Samstown. We've gotten a lot more focused on how we can try to broaden everyone's mindset.”* From the host community perspective, one of the elements of programming is not only simply to benefit the participants, but also to benefit how they think about and interact within their own community as well as about the wider world.

### 5.3 Conceptions of Place and the United States

*When people from abroad come to Samstown...we want to show them that this idea of the United States as this 'perfect place where everybody's rich and everybody has a car and everybody's okay' isn't really true. There are people who need help here as well, and we have to break down that stereotype. And then, for people from other parts of the United States coming here, it's to combat this existing stereotype of Samstown that they have and show different ideas of what's going on in this city. Sabrina-IO*

Several participants felt that showing an accurate representation of Samstown was critically important, as well as the United States as a whole. They believed Samstown to be a representation of the ‘real America’, to which they felt responsible to uphold. Michelle-HF drew on notions of what a typical exchange in the United States might look like if service learning volunteers went to a large city, like New York or Los Angeles, where that might give off the wrong impression of the United States. *“They're such big cities. They have their own culture where Samstown is the average, 'typical day in*

*America'. It's a healthy economy but nothing too crazy. The cost of living is fairly average...and Samstown has strengths in industrial diversity. We have tech, education, health care and a lot of different industries that are doing well here. We have a strong cultural scene and lots of art. It puts Samstown on that level of 'We're not a small town. We are a city and we have this much to show! Bring Samstown to the world!'"*

Michelle-HF's reflection was poignant in showing that, for many service learning volunteers, it was their first visit to the United States and what they may have imagined the United States to be could potentially be vastly different. Other community members felt this, too, and had an "obligation" to reflect Samstown and the United States accurately. As Carol-HF said, and as Grace-HF explained, their obligation was *"to show participants what the United States and Samstown are like...to take them around, to show them, and also to learn about them...their families, their lives, their countries, to get a sense of what they're like, too."* According to Rose-HF, the United States *"is not what participants read about in newspapers or magazines or hear about on TV. My partner is a refugee so when he came here, his ideas of what America was laughable. I think it's the same for these kids....they only see celebrities. Really, average life here in Samstown and the United States overall is pretty similar."*

Further, the purpose of having participants in Samstown was not only to show them an accurate representation of place, but according to Melanie-IO, it was also about the city's own sense of self. It is *"to show our place, to show to the city and to the community that what we do can affect them and involves them."* She felt a strong sense of being a community member herself, and also about getting residents and the community involved

with the idea of global connections and global citizenship. These kinds of experiences reinstalled ideas of “pride of place” (see Noonan & Bristol, 2020) and its “perceived benefits and positive association with community development and civic participation” (Noonan & Bristol, 2020, p. 3).

The notion of being more “*global*” was equally important in Samstown as it would have been going to some more “*exotic destination*” outside of the United States. For example, another member of the intermediary organization, who has been a resident of Samstown practically their whole life, felt not only personally invested in changing the trend of people’s conceptions of their city, but has also been able to see the transformation of the city over many years. Paulo-IO mentioned the negative connotations that came with his city Samstown. “*Now, it's getting a better reputation but 10, 15 years ago, you said the word 'Samstown', and people were like, 'Samstown? That dirty town?!'*” Everyone who touched on the theme of ‘conceptions of place’ emphasized that people came to Samstown to explore, to find commonality, and to join the community, and for Vicky-CP,

*it was an important lesson for the neighbourhood...because in some regards, we are the 'scary space' that some White Samstowners don't even come, don't want to visit, or they hear rumours about it. To me, that's troubling. One, because you can't always believe what people tell you or what you see on the news. But two, 25 different nationalities landed in this neighbourhood. So that means a lot of Samstowners' family roots are here. Why would you not want to follow your family roots of your family coming to Samstown...why would you not want to come and look around?*

Being involved with programming in Samstown was then, on one hand, an opportunity for volunteers to see what the United States was really like in its own unique context. On

the other hand, it was also about dismantling personal perceptions of place and a feeling a sense of responsibility for themselves and to the people who lived there.

Some interviewees moved beyond simplistic ideas of place and focused on Samstown as part of a larger picture by exploring notions of patriotism, which they felt has particularly increased in the recent past. Specifically, community members felt a civic responsibility of representing the United States, not just Samstown, through this programming. They wanted service learning volunteers to understand the United States as a complex place with different kinds of people. *“Like every other country in the world, it’s one of...racial diversity, socio-economic diversity, class diversity...to see the United States for what it is,”* said Kimberly-HF.

Others, like Charlie-HF, felt a responsibility to offer an example and model what it means to be a *“reasonable American”*...*“we were very clear we did not like Donald Trump and I felt like we had to ‘be good’...especially in these political times. And I felt that responsibility even before Trump was on the scene...but it's even more so now. You want to create a positive impression of your country for them.”*

Christie-IO added another layer to Charlie-HF’s comments, and that was the purposeful oblivion or isolation that some people have. She said

*Americans have their nose to the ground and think that everything everywhere is like it is in America and then are quite disappointed when they find that it's not. So I think it's just reinforcing that not everybody is exactly like you. People live in other parts of the world. They have lives. Things go on. They do things. We're not those people that think ‘everyone is like an American’.”*

My participants were keen in creating a more accurate and more positive picture of Samstown, and of the United States. They felt that their participation in the program was



a way to provide a more realistic description of their city and country rather than what appeared in the media or in popular culture. Importantly, they were proud to create spaces for engagement between the host community and participants to learn from and with each other. The general expectation for participants from the perspective of community members was to simply “*see things for themselves.*” Patricia-CP detailed her expectations:

*to help participants gain an understanding... in a safe space. And we encourage that by being open ourselves because we put ourselves out there and we show you that this is our everyday living. One of the things even about doing a homestay is that they're in the community that I live in. They live as I live. They eat what I eat and then they get a sense of this community by being able to walk up the street...And one of the beautiful experiences that I have is sharing my friends' homes, who open their homes freely to allow others to just simply be a part of what it is we do in our community on an everyday basis...We want young people to walk away empowered to think about what they can do from where they are because it is global.*

The ability to simply ‘live’ in this way was also experienced by Bobbie-IO, who was first a service learning volunteer from a visiting country. His experience shows how that empowerment can manifest itself. He is now a resident of Samstown, along with his partner. “*We had this amazing life changing experience. And now, when we have people coming here to our new home ...we want to open up and show them everything to try to provide the same experience.*” They both felt the desire to be part of an ongoing reciprocal conversation with Samstown residents and with volunteers coming into it. To build off Bobbie-IO’s point, other community members like Kimbery-HF specifically refer to some of the reasons service learning volunteers come to Samstown: “*It’s dual purpose...the first purpose is I think helping them to see us. The other purpose is just the reverse of that, and also simply having help. Americans of all kinds, young and old, experience another culture and also welcome in other cultures.*” Importantly, as my

participants pointed out, one of the most meaningful aspects between host community members and volunteers was the interaction and ‘coming together’ they experienced.

### 5.3.1 Learning About Others

Community partners, host families, and the intermediary organization all commented on wanting to hear about participants’ lives; the “*minutia of how life is different*” for volunteers in their home countries compared to the United States. Michelle-HF enjoyed just hearing of “*some of the little details about how their family live.*” In the exchange of other aspects of culture and diversity, all community partners commented on the use of technology to learn more information about where various service learning volunteers were from. “*I could see his house...there's an archaeological dig site close to his home... They're digging up artefacts from before the Mayans. Living in America, we don't have that old history.*” Roberta-HF joyfully shared that Dominica’s family had even invited her to come for a visit. “*“Anytime you come to Peru, you always have a home here’. There was a strengthening of those cross-cultural bonds. I didn't know anything about Peru and now I know more... and I know that if I went to visit, I can have a place to stay.”*”

Connecting with and learning from the volunteers not only in Samstown, but also extending beyond space to include their families around the world, was hugely impactful for some of my participants.

From a community partner perspective, Marcus-CP shared that he believed that the purpose of having service learning volunteers in the community was also two-fold. “*From a non-profit partner perspective, the ability to have students come into the community and do this type of work is phenomenal for us because we very infrequently get these types of*

*large groups who can do a project in a day. That's a huge benefit to the non-profit organization."*

The benefit of volunteers as 'people power' (i.e., their physical assistance) was mirrored in the intermediary organization by Sabrina-IO, who discussed a local food bank where participants also volunteer. It runs on 75 to 80 percent volunteer work. According to her, the food bank

*simply couldn't function...without volunteers most of these things can't get done. In that sense, the participants coming to Samstown are extremely helpful to organizations that rely so heavily on them and then provide everyone else with an opportunity to really share in those experiences, which seems to benefit both the community and the students.*

In this sense, we see host community members grateful for the logistical help of service learning volunteers. Because of the influx of relief, an already-identified essential service, like the local food bank, is able to function and to serve people who may require that assistance in the community.

## 5.4 Cultural Exchange

*"It was a constant exchange...it was just that always back and forth of figuring things out." Marcus-CP*

Another benefit of having service learning volunteers, according to my participants in the host community, is that cultural exchange usually occurred. Upon volunteers being welcomed into the community, a lunch is usually held as an opportunity for host families, community partners, and the intermediary organization to connect and meet each other for the first time. Roberta-HF talked about bringing her younger brother to meet her guests to talk with them at the welcome lunch:

*They also got to meet my grandparents, my mom and dad, and a little bit of the extended family at a family event. I told the participants, 'If this gets overwhelming at any point, just raise your hand and we'll get out of here'. But they loved it. They had a great time and...it was really sweet.*

Linda-HF talked about hosting guests in her family's home, and the integration and dynamic of the volunteers with their own children. *"It was awesome. Our kids were enamoured of them. They wanted to know about us, and my kids wanted to know about them and their family, where they lived, what they did...There was never a quiet time or moment of boredom."* Community partners all discussed the opportunity to learn facts and information about different countries where the various students were from but also being able to find joy in the experience of learning itself:

*When they were showing me photos, I had never even imagined it could be so beautiful. But I think more than learning facts about a country, it reminded me that I'm still able to learn and still able to find joy in new experiences." Overall, community members liked being able to exchange and to learn more about each other's cultures, "...what it's like to grow up there and what people do. People are so much the same in some aspects but the outer layers are all the different things.*

This again reflects the reciprocity component of learning about each other and challenging preconceived notions. Volunteers being in the community has provided *"huge benefits"* for the intermediary organization, as was the case with Marcus-CP.

*Good relationship building with organizations that we want to be partners with, creating a good opportunity to do some publicity and create a little bit of buzz around the work that we're doing, both in terms of the community directly and also talking about having this interacting, having this experience, has been beneficial.*

The community itself has been open and supportive to hosting, to receiving other cultures, and has come to expect volunteers to be making their way around their community on tours or working with community partner. In Patricia-CP's words,

*the interesting dynamic...is you're wary of people you don't know; you just stop. But because we've been doing it in the way we've been doing it, there's an openness that has happened and people have been supportive... the community has been opened out to receive multicultural experiences from many different places and people. So I think that by itself has been of benefit across the board.*

Many community members participating in my study discussed how overall, this programming has had them learn more things about their own community, taught them skills in community building, and developing a deeper understanding of how it takes a lot of energy and commitment on all accounts to create spaces where people have authentic opportunities to share experiences and to connect.

\_\_\_\_ While it may be the motivation of one member in a household to become involved in programming, families, friends and neighbourhoods were certainly also effected through having the presence of volunteers in the community. Kimberly-HF noted how much her family had grown:

*from those exposures to all the kids wherever they're from...our friends down the street also look forward to the kids coming down. They've had all of them over before, from Circolo, down to their house and their son has Down Syndrome. He loves having the company, asks them where they're from... it's definitely impacted us socially.*

The opportunity to bring neighbourhoods and families together through the volunteer was expressed as a benefit to my participants. Where neighbours may have not previously spoken, or been as close, now have a curious opportunity to connect with one another by way of participant-as-social catalyst. Simple acts of sharing a meal or just chatting with each other at the table generated feelings of happiness and fulfillment. Grace-HF, Rose-HF, and Linda-HF all mentioned how much they loved to see their guests' smiles, seeing them eat their food, or getting to meeting people outside of the program.

Patricia-CP, who held the roles of both a community partner and host family, mentioned the strong sense of individual physical and mental balance gained through this experience because they were able to be true to themselves.

*I would not be as open if I had not had these experiences. Not that I don't love multicultural experiences, I do and, not that I don't have my own reservations, I do, but it has allowed me to just become a lot more receptive. And that is the biggest impact.*

A member of the intermediary organization echoed this sentiment by stating that their own positionality has changed in terms of their own participation in programming, of the organization itself, and of the general execution of programming. To pick up on my discussion before, the opportunity to engage or to be involved in such programming was only one aspect of exploring positionality. The other part was creating space that allowed for reflection and committed critical consciousness, during and after programming as shown here:

*Participating in experiences alter one's sense of their place in the world. The volunteers and all the community partners interact in a way that translates into feeling, a feeling of being more connected to our world, more compelled to explore, more confident and intrigued by the place where we live, and more engaged with the people who are present and far away to us.*

Community partners show that there is an opportunity to become closer to people in their communities, but also with those outside of it. They also often talked about their involvement with the program not only as an opportunity for youth in the community to learn, but for them as leaders to learn and grow as well. Joseph-CP believed in learning through doing. *“We learn every day from every experience. I've learned that. Close your eyes and overall, the inner-city stories of experiences, of struggles and poverty, the disadvantages that we start off with, that is not just germane to us but others also have*

*similar experiences to us. I've learned, again like the kids, not to take so much for granted."*

This continuing theme of being able to connect and empathize with others presented throughout the research. Joseph-CP pointed out how simple interactions could still be meaningful. *"It was cool to watch them go across to the basketball court and to watch that exchange, and how seamless it was. From the rooftop deck, I was able to look over and just glean and it felt good."* He went on to recount that exchange of kids simply wanting to understand how each other plays, is their way of wanting to learn about each other was a learning experience, *"as innocent as that was."*

In hosting, some families discussed the sometimes-shifting dynamics within their personal relationships and the opportunity to see their loved ones in a new light. As Michelle-HF, a married mother of two explained,

*It was interesting to see how my husband was. Our relationship is complicated in our family life so it was interesting to see how he interacted with the teenagers that were in our care. It didn't change things between us but it gave me a nicer perspective of him that I didn't have before and that did change.*

On the whole, host community members were very supportive of the work that Circolo was doing by trying to *"make the world a better place."*

## 5.5 Story One: Discussion

To recap, in Chapter 1 of this thesis, I explored the growth of service learning initiatives and the many reasons why volunteers around the world get involved with such programming, including 'helping' others (Heron, 2007; Huish, 2018), adding to their CVs

(McGloin & Georgeou, 2016; Tiessen, 2012), and/or intending to become better global citizens (Abdi et al., 2015; Andreotti, 2006; Lyons et al., 2012). Despite some good work happening, much less is known about the host communities themselves and their perspectives (Larkin, 2018; O’Sullivan & Smaller, 2018; Larsen, 2016b). What we do know from the existing research literature is that there are a number of positive effects related to the presence of service learning volunteers in communities, largely in majority world or Global South contexts.

For the most part, Story One showed that participants in my study, had many positive and hopeful experiences to share about their experiences with IESL volunteers and working with the intermediary organization Circolo. This was evident in the findings and parallels the existing literature on host communities and service learning. As will be discussed here, no participant expressed any overtly negative feelings toward the intermediary organization itself or for the current people who worked there. Often, Circolo was praised as being trustworthy, mindful, ethical, and reciprocal in their work and in their interactions. And for the most part, community partners and host families said that volunteers associated with Circolo were almost always open-minded and willing to engage in a conversation. It is difficult to be critical of an organization, which does its best to be mindful of the work they do (Ahmed, 2000; O’Sullivan et al., 2019) and follows principles of ethical engagement. Through the exploration of host community experiences, the divide and the lack of more critical engagement between the intermediary organization toward community partners and host families is illustrated. As was elucidated by one member of the intermediary organization whom I interviewed, there is still room for change within Circolo.



Above, it is evident that we saw many rich examples of the positive impacts that IESL had on the host community in Samstown as elucidated by participants interviewed for this study. Many of these findings align with findings from other research studies that examine the impact of IESL programs on both student volunteers and host communities. For instance, as Tiessen and Heron (2012) discuss, the value for hosting was also relayed by my participants in Samstown. Furthermore, notions of relationship building (Grain et al., 2019; Larsen, 2016; Smaller & O'Sullivan, 2018) as well as value building and cross-cultural awareness (Larsen & Kozak, 2016) were similarly present in my findings. Many proponents of service learning claim that it has the potential to result in personal and social transformation. Thus, good service learning work is measured by substantive growth and transformation (Mezirow, 2009), which can be related to behaviour, but also can refer to heightened awareness of knowledge, attitudes, and values of both volunteers and of community members over time (Taylor, 2009). That requires host community and participants being open and receptive to conversation, and being able to engage with that new knowledge in the ways that we live in the world, and the way we outwardly act toward others. For example, critical reflection activities in which both host community members and program participants should engage as an exercise “more about ideological critique, where learners develop an awareness of power and greater agency to transform....their own reality” (Taylor, 2009, p. 5). Thinking back to examples in the findings above, these characteristics are evident in Patricia-CP, who emphasized how she was transformed and became a more open person through her experiences with IESL in Samstown, or Rose-HF, who expressed that her engagement in the programming made her understand the world was “bigger than herself”. It was clear that my participants’

thinking, and even their sense of sense, was evolving.

The host community in Samstown is a good example of how growth and transformation have occurred, and the hopeful direction in which it is moving. We see a lessening of the ‘burden of acting White’ and the ability of people to come together with tandem goals of giving everyone an opportunity to engage in SL; in Joseph-CP’s words, “*Global is good!*”. And Fisher-Yoshida (2009) extends this thinking theoretically:

In the socializing way of knowing, we involve more internalized processes, consider our values and purpose, and our interactions with others are more complex based on our relationships. In the self-authoring way of knowing, there is a much stronger sense of ownership in determining how we will structure our framing for understanding and making meaning of the world around us. (p. 152)

In ways, through being involved in this IESL program, host community members, and in particular community partners, have become effective, assertive, strategic, and collaborative contributors in the determination of their partnerships with one another.

Collectively, the interviews helped me see the essence of what many host community members had experienced in being involved in the Circolo IESL program. The benefits were prominently expressed in the interviews, and many of my participants were eager to share their positive attitudes toward their participation as members of the host community. Each of the 19 participants illuminated that their experiences engaging with IESL volunteers were positively impactful for them, their families, and the community at large. Many had also expressed their personal appreciation in being able to talk about their engagement with the programming and recounting their unexpected realizations about race and privilege with volunteers. These findings aligned with what others (Grain et al., 2019; Heron, 2007; Larsen, 2016; Larsen & Kozak, 2016; O’Sullivan

et al., 2019; Tiessen, 2018; Tiessen & Heron, 2012) have concluded are the positive benefits accrued to host community members when service learning volunteers spend time in their communities. This was truly an opportunity, as participants had communicated to me, to foster fellowship, to build bridges with one another, further reflecting similar findings in existing IESL host community literature.

## 5.6 Story One: Summary

Host communities are the core inspiration of this research. Understanding their perceptions of what it means have IESL volunteers in their community was the focus of this study. Story One explored more deeply themes of building bridges, and building relationships, as well as benefits and challenges of hosting service learning volunteers in Samstown. Story Two will show the implications of such programming, in particular related to race and privilege and how they play out through IESL programming existing within larger systems of oppression. What I interpret is that, even with engagement with community partners in different ways, and in varying capacities, they all see some benefit of participating in IESL programming. That said, they also have their own reasons for participating, which was further explored in the data, and also where we saw some of the challenges unearth themselves.

Through these interviews, I see a picture of host community perceptions as illustrated through their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Each elaborated on not only their involvement with the program, but also shared their own stories, which helped to gain a better sense of how they got to ‘where they stood.’ Host families provided plenty of personal background influencing their decisions to participate in this program. Some

members from the intermediary organization talked about their personal experiences, but also focused on the professional aspect of participating. They felt they were able to learn more information about volunteers, but also logistically about the programming and their own community of Samstown. Through learning more, they are now much better facilitators for the groups, and citizens in general because “now [they] really know what [they’re] talking about.” They had to become informed about cities and countries with which they worked as they often knew only about them, and generally, they also learned more about Samstown itself, since most staff were not from there originally.

We see from the findings that host community members’ lives were certainly positively impacted by their involvement in the program. Through an exploration of the findings from host community voices, various themes surfaced, including benefits and challenges of IESL programming as well as remaining tensions, which we will observe in Story Two. The data illustrate that for the majority of host families, members of community partner organizations and the intermediary organization, the benefits of participating in this IESL program far outweighed the challenges. But further critical reflection tells us that this assertion is not that simple.

## 6 Story Two: The Challenge of Hearing Community Voice

In this chapter, Story Two, similar to Story One, follows a similar format. I will first present the findings and then follow with a discussion. The findings that came out of Story Two did not come forward as prominently as the benefits as shown in the previous chapter, where the host community's participation in IESL programming reflected many of the positive findings from other research literature on host communities and IESL programs. However, using a critical lens presses us to fully engage questions of representation and community voice; also when one looks below the surface, one finds that with benefits also come various challenges and adversity. In this research, my intention in aligning my research goals and objectives was to let the community speak on behalf of themselves and to collect some evidence detailing their own experiences with IESL in the community. First, as already mentioned, I did not hear from working class Black participants who could have better reflected the 'heart' of the community. Second, while it appeared relatively easy for my participants to share positive experiences they had with their involvement with Circolo programming, they did not, however, as easily express the challenges they faced. Based on our conversations, when probed whether there were any challenges, very few were articulated to me.

The lack of interview findings around the challenges in participating in the Circolo IESL program was not entirely unsurprising to me. I do not think that this was a result of host community members being dishonest or intentionally deceitful. Rather, they were quite open, but cautiously and politely so. Likely the reticence was simply out of recognition that volunteers coming into the community are different and therefore comes

to Samstown with their own diverse lived experiences. To me, the lack of challenges was more of an indication of the host community's openness to accept others from outside of their community. They had respect for all who had come to their neighbourhoods and were able to meet participants 'where they were' in order to be able to engage in a conversation. It was also an acknowledgement that the host community members were also learning. That being said, a few negative points about their involvement with the IESL program were raised in the interviews, which I summarize next.

## 6.1 Class and Privilege

One community partner discussed the challenge of volunteers being from different (i.e., more privileged) social classes than those in their neighbourhood in Samstown. One community partner was cautious in expressing how program participants "clearly had the benefit of living well." They spoke specifically to the fact that often the community had challenges that the service learning volunteers simply did not have. This observation became clear and obvious in their conversations, as the service learning volunteers *"couldn't see the disparity because they were they were generally children of privilege."* In addition to the conversations themselves, community partners also noted that service learning volunteers' privilege was visible based on the clothes they wore and the type of cell phone or tablet they carried. One community partner reflected that: *"You become very well aware that money makes a difference,"* illustrating the mental and material distance at times felt between the community partners, host families, and service learning volunteers.

In some cases, community partners, who were invested in positively affecting volunteer participants, felt like they were not able to reach some of them, even those service learning volunteers who were only from the neighbouring community. Patricia-CP shared that *“We have that challenge where it was difficult in the conversation to get across. Like, ‘Listen this is your life and this is your every day. We hear you, we understand you, but look over here - in the community that's just a few miles away from you. This community deals with all these issues and they're right here next to you!’”* This conversation challenges the whole notion of programming, and in particular addressed domestic students that were from nearby affluent neighbourhoods. The community felt that they could not make the kind of impact they needed or wanted to for some young people, and importantly, they could not fulfill their own purpose of making that impact, especially with American volunteers. As one participant noted, *“Maybe it was that lack of sensitivity to it or [the volunteers] weren't able to see outside of the bubble.”* This was clearly a sore spot for community partners and host families who believed it was their mission to tackle class and privilege.

## 6.2 Lack of Bridge Building

Other bridging that did not occur was also on personal levels. Some host families were disappointed they could not participate in more activities rather than simply host. One host family articulated this disappointment and wished there were opportunities to be able to further connect with their participant and with the organization at large by being able to attend the various activities in which participants engaged. Michelle-HF talked about an opportunity that IESL participants had to meet with the mayor of the city.

*I was like, 'Oh, I kind of want to go.' Circolo could, say, put a star next to things that are open if a family member wanted to join 'cause that would make a greater connection between us, and the other participants in the program.*

Being able to connect with house guests was clearly important, but so was connecting with them over something. Another interesting point that arose in many of the interviews was the city's gentrification story. In the recent past, as in a present context as well, there has been a struggle going on about economic and structural development of the city. Generally, there was an optimistic, but cautionary demeanour that people of the city assumed. Many of the community members, while embracing the gentrification and new opportunities for their neighbourhood, walk a fine line in also recognizing the past and the very real struggles they have experienced. That translates into the walking tours, or meeting with local leaders, talks with different activists about issues around how that gentrification process has is affecting people's lives. Circolo also takes students into a nearby neighbourhood that houses a major university. A member of the intermediary organization said, "*we're proud of that, too...and we're trying to resist the idea that 'There's one story here'.*"

As we see above, while many community members did believe this programming allowed for an opportunity of diversity and cultural exchange, concerns with lacking diversity from a community standpoint also came up. Kimberly-HF noted the challenge the program has in actually achieving one of its goals as she saw them: "*to demonstrate that the United States is a diverse place and to put people in diverse homes.*" This related more to the host families that participated in the Circolo program, with the majority being middle- to upper- class White, postsecondary-educated, backgrounds, and not representing the community at large, a topic I analyze further below.



This was also something the intermediary organization noticed as well in discussions of creating an authentic experience, representative of and with the community for the student volunteers. As David-IO noted:

*It's a real challenge to work as a group and create opportunity for people to lower their guards enough to just build a real, new friendship. Lots of human-to-human interaction is made possible for volunteers when they come to Samstown from different places because of way that we design the program. But we have a lot to learn about how to create opportunities for more unpredictable interaction.*

David-IO's account speaks to the struggles that many intermediary organizations face in trying to create authentic spaces for students to both live and engage within a diverse community setting (i.e., providing learning opportunities through thoughtfully organized activities).

### 6.3 Working Through the Discomfort

Discomfort manifested in a couple different ways, ranging from personal and professional boundaries to wondering if the experience being offered was authentic. The examples below draw some brief but important considerations to some of the internal conversations happening in host families, community partners, and the intermediary organization.

Beyond the programming itself, part of personal growth was about testing boundaries, with families having to figure out what they were comfortable with in terms of welcoming a volunteer into their homes and integrating them into their daily lives and routines. Michelle-HF spoke of the person staying with them, and how he would try to help with their children all the time.

*He overstepped his bounds a little bit and we would have to say 'No, we need to do this for Jenny because she is a little kid...we're going to do it this way'. It wasn't a*

*bad thing but it would just feel a little bit awkward... Like, 'Thanks for the help but we've got this', but he had good intentions.*

Being able to work through these kinds of challenges, as she and others saw, was also an opportunity to grow culturally, where the way for caring for children in other places could differ from that of Samstown and vice-versa. It is about an awareness that comes out of the experience, and working through the difference to bridge that divide.

Another area of discomfort was not necessarily personal, but from a professional standpoint. For instance, some community partners, while confident in their own work roles, saw the chance of connecting with outsiders as uneasy and simply not possible. Thus, engagement with the intermediary organization was crucial and necessary for the functioning of gaining access to program participants. Being able to move beyond the logistical challenges, through collaboration with Circolo, made participating in programming doable for them.

Marcus-CP, for example, specifically talked about how he would have never considered accessing or working with international volunteers before. *"It's not like I'm just gonna call up whatever university in wherever and invite them over. Working with a group like Circolo made it very accessible to reach international volunteers...and to bring some unique programming to the area."* And Scott-CP discussed the local issue of access and proximity of his neighbourhood, which is just outside of Samstown. *"We're a little bit away in a place that's untouched sometimes. If other programming would happen in Samstown, they would go to a different neighbourhood than ours, within closer travelling distance...our neighbourhood is usually left out."* They saw their challenges of being untouched or inaccessible solved through their collaboration with Circolo.

Some interviewees talked about the scepticism that communities (including host families, community partners, and intermediary organization) initially felt as ‘first-timers’. As discussed by Paulo-IO,

*sometimes communities that host volunteers or students are overly nice, like you were being placated to, or told like stories to make you believe that you were having more power, or more help than you actually were. And then we started hosting programs in Samstown, and, we ‘get it’ now...it's a very different experience.*

Now that they have begun hosting themselves, they realize that part of ‘being so nice’ is actually more about wanting participants to love their city, to have a good time, especially given that participants have often travelled a far distance to be there. *“I want you to leave Samstown thinking that this is one of the coolest places on earth...I want to be a good host.”* Overall, in addition to those above, most of the discomfort is simply because community members wanted and figuring out how to be “good hosts” and to make guests feel comfortable and welcomed in their community.

## 6.4 Workload and Communication

*“That's what's challenging for me, it's hard work.”* Kimberly-HF

Another topic that seemed to come up substantially was the amount of work that goes into hosting, which seems to be particularly stressful for host families. While they were not directly involved in the programming during weekday work hours, their responsibility to ensure the well-being of service learning volunteers was stressful. Of note is that host families are not paid to host. The only form of reimbursement they had received was a one-time \$25 grocery card, according to a couple of participants. In Kimberly-HF spoke of some of the added pressures she experienced from hosting:

*Every day, you're doing more because there are more people in the house and I feel such an obligation to make sure that they're comfortable and happy. But being solicitous for two weeks is tough.. all the time...maybe if I wasn't working...I have a really demanding job and so you can't come home and relax because you're cooking dinner and you're trying to make sure their needs are met and wanting to, you know, talk with them.*

Roberta-HF emphasized the importance of wanting to make sure they felt like they were part of a family during their stay, so they could feel connected to more than one person in Samstown. *“But it was exhausting,”* she said. *“I didn't realize just how much attention and care and food they would need. With that being said, I'm glad that it was two weeks, they were wonderful and also that the two weeks are over.”* However, they were also quick to add that she would absolutely host again, and was looking forward to doing it again the following year, and that the exhaustion was *“worth it.”* Another host family noted some of the same challenges, and again that they would be happy to do it again. *“It's fun while they're here. It's a lot of work but I'm always grateful that I did it and I'm always grateful for the relationships.”*

Hosts and community partners did also experience some anxiety or feelings of worry in preparing their homes and spaces for their guests. As Grace-HF explained:

*I used to clean the house so because I wanted to make a good impression. This year, I told my husband, ‘I'm making their beds, I'm changing their sheets, vacuuming their floors, and that's it. I don't care what the living room looks like. I don't care that you know the dining room is dusted.’ They never notice that your house is dusted. And I thought, ‘why am I doing this?’, because this is the way we live. We don't live in filth but we're not totally dust-free people.*

Optimistically, while some acknowledged that hosting was hard work, the time commitment did not seem to affect all families in the same way. Others seemed less worried about the workload itself, and more concerned with ensuring that the IESL participants were simply enjoying themselves. Rose-HF said, *“it's nice because it's two*

*weeks, which isn't long, it's really not a lot of prep time with the kids except for the weekends...the fear that they're not having a good time is what's challenging for me."* So, even though the period was overall short and not a huge time commitment, host families more or less so felt an obligation to ensure participants were comfortable and that each of their needs were met or surpassed during their time spent in Samstown.

What is often the case with IESL programming is a difference of language, and what to do or how to communicate when community and participants do not speak the same language. In my case study, this tied in directly with ensuring participants were having a good time, or that they feel satisfied with their experience. For instance, Linda-HF and Ron-HF, who hosted student volunteers who did not have English as their first language, talked about a language gap that was present in terms of understanding each other, and also how they worked to overcome this linguistic barrier in their home.

*There was a language gap for me. I didn't understand Spanish. But our son would translate and one night, our son told us, 'they want to talk to you'. And I went, 'Oh my God. Are they uncomfortable?' But instead, the participants came down and they brought us presents.*

These kinds of stressful moments were reported by other host family participants, as well.

*"I'm so worried that they're having a good time; that they're able to communicate to us if there's a need. And kids are also often shy or uncomfortable. And I want them to feel comfortable saying 'I need to do this. Can you help me with that?'"* Grace-HF and Charlie-HF shared this as well and both felt stressed and worried that participants were having a good time, and able to communicate their individual needs to them.

Several members from the intermediary organization did not believe that participants needed to have English at all. Paulo-IO elaborated,

*I don't care if you don't speak English... I don't care if you have little understanding of American culture, or anything like that. There's almost no preparation for that as long as you're respectful and open to safety and healthy, rules were open to being changed or transformed.*

Roberta-HF echoed this sentiment and found that being able to interact and trying to hear volunteers' perspectives on different things, despite language barriers:

*It was just very cool...to relate to somebody who doesn't have English as a first language, who is from a different continent and yet, we have so many things in common. Unearthing those commonalities and differences was a really fun, joyful benefit to the whole experience.*

Thus, we can see from the participants that there were workload and language concerns that negatively affected their experiences being involved in the Circolo program.

## 6.5 Unearthing the Tensions

From Story One in the previous chapter, we can see that data collected for this study tell an overwhelmingly positive story of service learning in Samstown. While some challenging aspects of programming were shared by participants as elucidated above, but those challenges simply did not come through as prominently as the benefits did.

Thinking about why this may be so, I first look to the three main players (community partners, host families, intermediary organization) in this study to better understand the tensions inherent in having IESL volunteers visit Samstown. I then observe how they more broadly fit into a larger system of oppression.

Through the interviews, I developed a better understanding of the nuances of programming, even if not stated explicitly by the participants. The intermediary organization made concerted efforts to organize meaningful programming and to continue

to establish and develop relationships with members in their community. They had continued conversations with community partners along with host families, and tried to engage everyone in the programming process. Furthermore, Circolo's work has been formally recognized by organizations on an international stage for their commitment and competence related to service learning.

Host families, as we saw, were also committed to programming and were often eager and willing to host program participants; at times, they spoke with the intermediary organization to offer up their homes in advance of programming. And community partners were also equally eager, constantly looking for their own ways to contribute by including their unique missions intertwined with that of Circolo's. All three groups' motives for being involved varied at some points, but the overall evidence substantiates that in spite of some challenges, each group (IO, HF, and CP) benefitted through their participation, as we saw clearly through the findings in Chapter 5.

For instance, a number of participants hinted at existing racial and class divisions within Samstown. Scott-CP talked about the fact that, despite having-a close-knit community, racial dividing lines still remained. According to him, it was important to be able to bring Black and White youth and their families together through his organization's partnership in the IESL program. For him, he expressed that the opportunity for his 'kids' to connect with people outside of Samstown was one layer, but the program was about more than that. It was a catalyst of bringing people together in his *own* community. Similar findings surfaced from others such as David-IO, who mentioned:

*this [programming] is about challenging all people to understand the African Diaspora. And community partners were also interested in creating a culture of volunteerism that could inspire local people to be as involved as maybe outsiders might be. So, if you have folks working in your community, inspire others in Samstown to do the same.*

Being able to show a sense of care and investment from outsiders in Samstown sparked interest in local residents to have a sense of respect and dignity for their home. Vicky-CP, a long-time resident of the community and a leader of one of the local community partners, added, “as a city, we struggle with issues...of segregation. But there are some things that transcend those challenges, that sense of people [host community] having a pride of place, creating these things by bringing people [program participants] to this neighbourhood.” It is evident then that racial diversity and racism appear everywhere near and far, but have different manifestations, dynamics, and contexts as critical race theory accentuates. It is perhaps through IESL, however, that there is an opening up of conversations under the ‘encounters’ (O’Sullivan et al., 2019). For instance, as mentioned earlier, the context of Samstown is that it is a working class Rust Belt community, recovering from the fall of the manufacturing industry

*but poverty still exists...When hearing ‘low income’, for the most part, the first thing people think about are brown communities, communities of colour, immigrant communities, refugee communities...they’re not thinking ‘poor White’...even though I’m aware that the majority of people in poverty in this country are White people.*

Sabrina-IO went on to explain that the “wonderful opportunity” for international SL volunteers visiting Samstown is that they do so without being jaded or without knowing what it means to also be in a community of colour. She explained that service learning volunteers are: “coming here for this experience. They come here, and then they realize, ‘Oh sh\*t. I’m in this space surrounded by people of colour and now I’m the ‘other’” and



*to explore what that's like is...imparts a really meaningful conversation.*” But even with this potential, we still see the underlying tensions. David-IO described his feelings about how he believed this meaningful conversation could happen, within the current set-up of the community:

*Like so many things in life, allies need to be made and in the rolling back systemic-oppression space, that makes for good global service learning. But you can't get a critical mass of young people from our neighbourhood involved in this stuff if our city remains as racist as it is.*

David-IO clearly identifies his belief that the city itself is racist. What stands out here then is the necessity to question how those meaningful conversations might happen within the community itself, let alone bringing in volunteers and attempting to engage in reflective and meaningful conversations with them. The inference is that perhaps those conversations need to first happen in Samstown itself.

Similarly to other participants, David-IO talked about the segregation and racism felt in Samstown. He felt that, as a White man, the relationships he would be able to build with African Americans in Samstown would be limited if he just left the neighbourhood he lived in. In mitigating some of the tensions surrounding the racist and systematically oppressive nature of the city, he felt it was his responsibility to be proactive. So, to show what he believed through action, he chose to move into and live in the neighbourhood. Not only was he showing his efforts to invoke change through relationship building, but he also showed his personal affirmation in the most outwardly way possible. As a result, people in the host community trusted him, and grew in fellowship with him. Patricia-CP mentioned of the relationship built between David-IO and the leader of one community partner: *“He's at the helm so to speak... and between the two of them, the education, the*

*life experiences, and the work itself that they both do has just created an amazing partnership.*” It was through words and actions that the relationship continued to strengthen, and thus, created the access and the opportunities for participants to come into Samstown more easily.

Finally, Sabrina-IO’s assertion about the lack of diversity in the staff left a lasting impression on me. She explained the problems associated with the lack of diversity among the staff at Circolo:

*Based on the kind of issues we are addressing, and the kind of communities we go into domestically, is a problem because we don’t have enough people that represent the communities. Unfortunately, and it’s not like they [the staff] are bad people, they’re great people, but at the same time, they represent exactly what the communities are struggling with, because they’re for the most part, gentrifiers... So when those are the people leading the conversation on gentrification, it can be a little strange. And there’s nothing wrong with it, if there are more voices there.*

This is such an incredibly powerful quote about who represented in the community and who gets to speak on behalf of the community. Sabrina-IO’s reflection of the systemic exclusion that many members of Samstown have and continue to face further explicates:

*When you have a community that systematically has been cut-off, having been a food desert, there is a distrust there. But when you have people coming in to see what’s going on... and they ask questions...it changes how the community sees people. (Sabrina-IO)*

To understand the relevance of the quote requires further context. In the Black community in the United States, there is a level of sustained distrust due to centuries of maltreatment toward them regarding criminal justice, healthcare, and civil rights (Nunnally, 2013). With continuing inequality and inequity, including in recent history of police violence against African Americans, as I further discuss below, it is understandable

that trust will take time to rebuild. There *are* opportunities to rebuild, however, and, as Sabrina-IO elucidates, IESL is one of the new ways of intentionally working toward rebuilding that trust, as shown in the previous section. Therefore, beyond all of the positive impacts of IESL, there are clearly ongoing tensions associated with IESL programming that exist within broader systems of oppression, which I analyze in further detail here.

## 6.6 Story Two: Discussion

As recounted in Story One, benefits of participating in IESL programming are cited as new ways of learning, understanding different cultural contexts, building one's own marketability, and importantly, the opportunity of building relationships with others. Story Two allowed for a deeper examination of some of the surrounding challenges emerging from such benefits. Therefore, in addition to the positive benefits explored in Story One, Story Two has committed to show the challenges facing those who host these volunteers, which largely stem from broader socio-economic gaps and power imbalances between host community members (many of whom are marginalized) and those who travel to their communities to provide volunteer service. For instance, as Coghlan and Gooch (2011) posit, perhaps there needs to be a push toward pedagogy that goes "beyond a simple rhetoric of doing something worthwhile, to a life-changing experiences that benefit the volunteer, the host community, the environment and the society at large" (p. 724). In other words, understanding the impact and context of IESL experiences needs to move beyond just thinking about simply involving community partners, host families, and

the intermediary organization in a collaborative conversation. The findings of this study have shown what is needed is more than ‘sharing voices.’

Here I use critical race theory (as outlined in Chapter 3) to provide an explanation of what I learned and observed from the participants in my study regarding issues of race, power, and privilege. I will return to some the themes discussed in Chapter 5 and again, deconstruct them with support of CRT. The stories of host community participants in Samstown are not always straightforward, but always multi-dimensional (as are all of our stories), and through which I was able to gain first-hand insights. Each community partner, host family, and intermediary organization members participating in this study voiced their experiences, which thus critically help to inform and to contribute to future responsible research and practice. The topics I bring to the fore include the importance of problematizing what community means in the context of this study, the need for everyone to work hard towards transformation, and how my host community participants including community partners, host families, and the intermediary organization understood the tensions they experienced in being involved with the Circolo program.

## 6.7 Problematizing Community

First, I begin by problematizing the term ‘community.’ As reviewed in the introductory chapter to this thesis, the use of term ‘community’ means different things to different people. If not used carefully, however, it can continue to preserve unequal power relations that particularly impact and “construct racial, ethnic, and religious communities” or “less powerful groups” negatively (Hill Collins, 2010, p. 9). But keeping the focus on agency, as Hill Collins and Hall suggest, enables people (and in this case of IESL, volunteers) to

understand community “as a dynamic dimension of lived experience, rather than as a simple taxonomic category” (Hill Collins, 2010, p. 13). So, if conceptually, ‘community’ is flexible, how do people come together to make meaning? In *The Long Revolution*, Raymond Williams (1961) posits: “the offering, reception and comparison of new meanings [lend] to the tensions and achievements of growth and change (as cited in Hall, 1993, p. 352). Reflective of my doctoral study, I explore in further detail here how community was operationalized in my study through the participants I chose to interview.

As mentioned earlier, participants who contributed to this study were predominately White. Specifically, out of the 19 participants in this study, 14 were White (~ 75%), four identified as Black and one as East Asian. Keeping in mind that some participants serviced in multiple roles (e.g. as a community partner and a host family member), we can break down the racial demographics of the participants in my study even further. Of the intermediary organization (Circolo) staff interviewed, five were White and one was Black. Of the five community partners interviewed, three were Black and two were White. And of the host family participants, nine were White, one was East Asian, and only one host family member interviewed was Black (this latter person was also a community partner). Moreover, all participants interviewed were highly educated (89% have a *Bachelors degree or greater*). Specifically, of the 19 participants, 17 had BA degrees or higher; one participant had an Associate’s degree, and the other had a three-year college degree.

As a group then, it was revealing to see that participants in my study were not reflective of the broader demographics of the Samstown neighbourhood where my study

took place, which was 94% Black. Residents there earned an average yearly income of \$24,000 (City Data, 2020). In terms of unemployment, the rate of African American men (~12%) is over twice as great as that of White men (~5%) in the city at large. Minimally available labour statistics specifically on or about the neighbourhood itself have been difficult to find, but the disparity is presumably even larger than that, given other widely available data in the area showing disparities for communities of colour (City Data, 2020).

100% of my participants had a post-secondary degree, almost twice the amount of people in Samstown neighbourhood, including the surrounding suburbs (US Census Bureau, 2020). Most students graduate from high school, but not many study beyond Grade 12 (i.e., do not attend institutions of higher learning). Furthermore, in an urban setting such as site for my study, even fewer people were likely to have a post-secondary degree. Thus, while I did listen to host community voices for my study, I did not actually hear the voices of the most marginalized in Samstown. For the most part, many of those who participated in the study from community partners, host families, and intermediary organization were themselves privileged members of society. That is to say, noting their privilege does not mean the stories of benefits and challenges cannot co-exist. In fact, being able to explore both in tandem provided a broader lens for looking at IESL and a more thorough understanding of its impact on host communities. Dividing the findings into two stories helps to illuminate these findings.

Hill Collins and Bilge (2017) speak to this relational dimension in understanding complexities of both social movements and multi-dimensional aspects of peoples' lives

(in their case, Afro-Brazilian women's lives). Larsen (2016a) speaks to the relational dimension of IESL work, as well, but in the context of students and communities. From the related IESL literature, we better understand the idea that "responsibility is interpreted from the centre in terms of the agency of a privileged few toward distant others" (p. 72). To move forward in a critical and cognizant way, then, we must flip the conversation and have "better dialogue" (Larkin, 2018, p. 25).

To emphasize, if IESL is in fact based on dialogical relationships based on working *with* people in need instead of serving them, then the focus of IESL programming should be bringing people together for the *encounter* (Gillen & Mostafanezhad, 2019; Mahrouse, 2014; O'Sullivan et al., 2019; Tiessen, 2018). O'Sullivan and Smaller (2019) also explain this in their work. They argue that international service learning has the potential to challenge and to transform both the visitors and the host community members. However, in order for that to happen, all members of the host community must exercise agency with respect to defining the behavioural and learning expectations of their visitors, but also of each other. Positive work can result then, as Tiessen (2018) posits, but that must happen through "improved cross-cultural understanding, solidarity-oriented goals, and global citizenship identities" (p. 44).

The critical IESL literature tells us that certain voices are privileged over others in terms of race and class, but also in particular related to nuanced power dynamics often involved in such programming (d'Arlach et al., 2009; hooks, 2014; Kristensen & Ravn, 2015; Nordentoft & Olesen, 2018). Knowing that, I approached my research with concerted efforts to engage the host community, and to uplift their voices in my research.

However, the main points based on my findings and on existing data have been illuminated: the participants in this study were not representative of the whole community; and there are difficulties in recruiting participants in this kind of research who are more representative of the community as a whole. That is not to say that the voices of those interviewed do not matter. Indeed they do, and they shed light on the many positive and challenging effects of IESL on the host community. But those voices, comparatively, were still privileged in terms of race and education compared to the most marginalized people in Samstown.

## 6.8 “You Have to Put in the Work!”: Working Through Tensions for Transformation

One particular quote that illustrates the overarching and often unspoken tensions of the study frames the next part of the discussion. Sabrina-IO, a woman of colour and the only African American employed at the intermediary organization, said: *“You can’t just walk into communities of colour as an entirely White organization and think you’re going to save everybody...you have to put in the work.”* What she is saying here is that organizations working in communities of colour can be better through their own diversity practices and ways in which they engage in service work. So how then *have* community partners, host families, and the organizations uplifted the community and pushed back against the currents, both in terms of their roles within IESL but also in terms of their awareness and engagement in service work?



Host community reflections indicate that community members viewed their own participation in the programming not only as an opportunity to engage with incoming participants but again, also as an opportunity to uplift their own community's participation and agency (Reese, 2020) in neighbourhood care and pride. From the host community perspective, the racial divide was made more complex through the presence of volunteers and the hypervigilance of race, which in addition to the scrutiny of BIPOCs in public life, at times can be a delegitimization of the community's own experience (Meer, 2019). There cannot be one final goal, as Hall and Hill Collins note, given that we all have shifting and fluid identities.

What Sabrina-IO provides is a roadmap for the intermediary organization, Circolo, and for anyone else who might be considering involvement with service work in Samstown in the future: the diversity of the organization must reflect the diversity of the community, and it must also include people of and from the community in that very work. So while Circolo may be doing some proactive work to collaborate and to include host community members in conversations around programming (such as with community partners and host families), it must do more in its position of power. In the next section, we will look at the ways in which IESL work was realized by the three groups of participants in this study, and the ways in which it was not.

## 6.9 Understanding the Tensions From and Through Host Community Perspectives

From and through the findings associated with Story Two, we also see the ways in which

participation in IESL programs (as host community members) is still divided along racial and class lines. Critical theorists would argue that there is not only a history of power structures that have marginalized BIPOC in society, but also it specifically notes the continued burden of those structures (de Souza, 2017; Rizvi, 2007; Tiessen, 2018). The suggestion here is that often communities of colour, through their disenfranchisement, are struggling and in need of service or some kind of 'help'. This was in fact the case, as expressed by participants and shown in my findings (e.g. the need for support with healthy food options, food banks, after school programming). But there still remains pressure surrounding the needs for that very service or help. "In negotiating the tensions of reporting qualitative research" (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009, p. 82), I iteratively ask: How does race play into systemic disenfranchisement and construct certain groups of individuals (low-income, African Americans in my case) as being in need of help?

The findings associated with Story One do indeed reflect and show that service opportunities do bring together host community and service learning volunteers to connect with and learn from one another in a locale, which in this case study was Samstown. However, those IESL experiences continue to happen within broader systems of oppression related but not limited to race and class. The systems of oppression (See Ahmed, 2000; Costa & Leong, 2012; McLaren, 2003; Robinson, 2000; Spivak, 2010) are significant in understanding the contexts within which my study took place.

### 6.9.1 Intermediary Organization: Tensions

As presented in Story Two findings above, Sabrina-IO, explained the problems associated with the lack of diversity among the intermediary organization staff and their board of directors. To reiterate, she noted that Circolo represents

*exactly what the communities are struggling with, because they're for the most part, gentrifiers... So when those are the people leading the conversation on gentrification, it can be a little strange. And there's nothing wrong with it, if there are more voices there.*

In understanding why this is significant, in particular why it might matter to communities of colour, Sabrina-IO offered that

*it matters a lot if you have someone who is running program, who grew up in Samstown, went to a local university, and who is now back in the community doing something. That is the ideal person to run a program like this...to sit on the board...a person we could go to, to think about diversifying programs.*

In other words, host families and community partners need to be able to see that the intermediary organization reflects the diversity of the community within which it exists, and cares about and is invested in the host community as much as residents are.

These quotes speak for themselves and so perfectly encapsulate existing critiques about service learning programs. As Bocci (2015) supports, the people often at the table making decisions about service programming are often reinscribing White normative practices and reinforcing power dynamics between White people and everyone else. As elucidated in the findings of Story Two, Sabrina-IO felt that the intermediary organization struggled with that. She considered the lack of diversity in the organization as being unintentional, given that Circolo is a non-profit with limited funding and a small staff.

Nonetheless, she attributed part of the struggle for diversity to the fact that having conversations about race and about diversifying made people nervous. She went on to say, *"You might have to take that step out of that comfort zone and have the most awkward conversation outside of your life if we want to move forward"* (See also Birdwell, 2011; Gregory, 2011). These findings illustrate the recognition and necessity of an intentional redistribution of power (Mitchell, 2008), where all groups being able to come together and "work to be effective talkers and good listeners" (as cited in Strand et al., 2003, p. 55). And in my analysis, the talking and listening starts with the intermediary organization, whose responsibility in a position of power, is not only to solicit and to advance the conversations of the community but also the power and control of the community.

Again, this can be further unearthed by digging 'under the surface' of these words. Upon first glance, there are not necessarily any immediate issues or conflicts between community partners, host families, and the intermediary organization. In fact, from the findings presented in this study, everything appears to be going smoothly in the work of this organization. But as elucidated in the quotations above, when working with communities of colour, the community must be able to see themselves reflected in the organization itself (Bringle et al., 2011; Hartman, 2015, 2016b; Larsen, 2016b). Moreover, this critical approach seems to be even more vital in a service learning context, whose entire purpose and priority is about learning and about service in specific community contexts (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996, 2011; Miron & Moely, 2006; O'Sullivan, et al., 2019).

Furthermore, some host community members found it difficult to engage in certain conversations based on the contexts from which the service learning volunteers themselves were coming. As iterated in the Story Two above, tensions were raised regarding the specifics of reflection activities, as facilitated by the intermediary organization with volunteers. The intermediary organization and service learning volunteers may have conversations about oppression, for example; an area of friction that David-IO identified, as he challenged what it meant to talk about oppression with the Brazilian service learning volunteers who understood race differently. Guilherme and de Souza (2020) describe further that some of the tensions could be a result of the “particular cultural fabric of miscegenation that is evident in the Brazilian society and that responds to its specific colonial history” (p. 8). In other words, as a result of a different cultural fabric in the Brazilian context, compared to say the United States or elsewhere, navigating and speaking to ‘race’ as perceived in one context, may not make sense in another. But by focusing on the historical contexts (Brooks, 1994), we are able to bring a better understanding to present and future contexts, and we can thus move toward making IESL more thoughtful and meaningful for host communities and for volunteers with whom they may engage.

Other reflections from interviewees at the intermediary organization, such as Christie-IO’s and Melanie-IO’s, confirmed the same discord as David-IO when they spoke to a particular need for some curriculum reform in their programming. While they believed that overall, the curriculum was thoughtful and relevant, they believed there could be a further refining of content. They believed that programming could be more

relevant if they, themselves as an organization, were more deeply informed about the incoming volunteers/groups and their respective contexts, as reflected in David-IO's thoughts regarding Brazilians, for instance (Hartman, 2016b; Hartman et al., 2014). Ultimately, the hope was to perhaps make more relatable bridging and cross-cultural connections. Therefore, this would require a learning process for the intermediary organization to also become more cross-culturally aware.

Finally, as illuminated above, some of the most insightful findings came from Sabrina-IO, who was working at Circolo. Given that she was the only African American on staff, and thus easily identifiable based upon her race, she told me that I could include any of her reflections in my doctoral work because she believed they were important. She had conveyed in our interview that much of what she had shared with me was paralleled in conversations she had also shared with her colleagues. It was important for her that I include her reflections because she had expressed often feeling like the "*token Black person*." She elaborated that she attended meetings, often for grants or for funding, with other Circolo colleagues, which she believed to be an extra effort on the part of the intermediary organization to reflect its diversity. She had repeatedly emphasized to me that she believed in the positive work of the organization; again, this was echoed across host community interviews in the previous chapter. But while she did not speak negatively of Circolo in an explicit way, she did iterate the need for more work to be done on the organization's behalf to amp up their diversification (e.g., internally represent the diversity on their staff and on their executive board).

Ultimately, if the intent of intermediary organizations facilitating IESL is to encourage people to cross frontiers of difference, and to build bridges, then there must be ways for the organization itself to work against the ‘whiteness’ of the programming on its end (Ahmed, 2000; Bocci, 2015; Vrasti, 2014). The findings presented above further illustrate the need to involve host community members in all of the planning of service learning programs, a point documented in the IESL host community research literature (Kozak & Larsen, 2016). Next, I turn to analyzing and problematizing the ways in which community partners experienced tensions regarding their participation in the IESL programming.

### 6.9.2 Community Partners: Tensions

As we have seen above, the combination of race, class, and gender backgrounds of the community partners was not reflective of the broader Samstown community. We know from CRT that the various ways that race, class, and gender, and other social identifiers intersect with one another contribute to each individual’s identity (Crenshaw, 1995; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2017). Many members of Samstown have different elements of each that construct the layers of their identities. There has long-been an interconnectedness of different social categories which apply to certain groups and people, such as race, class, gender – popular referred to in the 1980s as “the holy grail” (Romero, 2017), and also includes sexual orientation nationality, disability, even before the term ‘intersectionality’ came to be.

There were five community partners interviewed. The organizations they worked for focused primarily on the needs of the African American community. All community partners expressed the benefit of their partnership with Circolo and in hosting IESL volunteers as reviewed in Story One. However, some tensions also surfaced in the findings associated with Story Two. Racial and wealth gaps persist in Samstown. Campion (2019) illuminates, “in contemporary racist, heterosexist, patriarchal societies, women of colour continue to be implicated by interlocking systems of oppression that are legacies of these colonial histories” (p. 200). I garnered a sense from community partners of some the concerns they had for members of the community. In particular, Black women in Samstown experienced the “situation of oppression” (McCall, 2005, p. 4). That is the exploitation of Black women in laborious and underpaid work, in which they undertake to try to support themselves and their families, is real.

To extrapolate, Joseph-CP expressed the situation of one middle-aged Black mother he knew, whose story had an obvious impact on him. Joseph-CP supported her son through the youth programming he led in Samstown. The mother felt that she wanted more opportunities to be available to her son that she had never had. And in order to be able to participate any kind of service experience, which became available to him through the community partner’s relationships with Circolo (a ‘benefit’), other issues arose as a result. As an example, in order for her son to participate in the program, the mother had to continue to work multiple jobs so she could have financial stability and save enough money to be able to obtain a passport for him. To put this in perspective, the cost of a US passport is approximately USD\$150, with associated costs of international travel much



greater. She wanted for him to one day be able to travel somewhere, even though she had never gone anyway herself. It was the only thing she could control, in Joseph's words. This issue was not limited to this one mother. Her desire to 'want more' for her son for his future represented a larger societal issue of lack of opportunities for Black youth, as well as their families.

### 6.9.3 Host Families: Tensions

This section analyzes some of the tensions surrounding host family accounts of their experience with IESL. Patricia-CP, who in addition to being a community partner had hosted service learning volunteers before, wanted those volunteers to experience the community "*as she lives in it.*" She believed that she could empower these volunteers and help them to develop cross-cultural knowledge in a way that would be useful to them, and thus beneficial to their own communities long after they had gone "*back home.*" But even with this positive outlook, she acknowledged a challenge in being able to effectively "*get through to some participants.*" This problem was partly because volunteers largely came from positions of privilege, she said. Paulo-IO also mentioned that despite volunteers' privilege and even other Americans' preconceived notions, he was proud to show the strength and resilience of the city, and was happy to share in its comeback narrative.

But when reflecting further on those similar ideas, David-IO, who had a developed and trusting relationship with community partners, still saw the disparities when thinking about *who* hosts volunteers. Long before our interview, he had asked African American residents in the Samstown community if they would be interested in hosting a service

learning volunteer. He noted that the response he received from people with whom he spoke

*became complicated. Like, 'Hmm...how much space would you need, it'll be a challenge to struggle to find families to do that.' That was very different from the mostly wealthy, White neighbourhoods that were living in 5 bedrooms home and could fairly easily throw a bedroom in someone's direction.*

What we see clearly is that certain members of the Samstown community are unable, due to structural inequalities they face, to host service learning volunteers. This demonstrates how host families unwittingly may reinscribe existing power relations as service learning volunteers are not able to fully experience the diverse community (i.e., African American). Volunteers were instead mostly hosted in homes of wealthier or more well-off community members. The main ideas that aligned in the interviews with community members was that host families are, in large part, White and do not entirely reflecting the makeup of the community itself. As noted earlier, of the 11 host family members interviewed, nine were White (82%); 1 was Black and 1 was East Asian (18%). Thus, we can see that there is a clear lack of representation of those hosting, compared to Samstown's demographic makeup, which is 94% Black (City Data, 2020).

The challenge here is two-fold. First, there is a lack of diversity among host families. Second, when looking more closely at the architecture of the community, not everyone has access or the ability to be host family members. Even when potential host families were presented with opportunities to host service learning volunteers, various members of the intermediary organization expressed having difficulty finding and/or securing more diverse (i.e., not White) host families, even though diversity was important to Circolo, as they had expressed.

This study reveals that there are many reasons why racialized families choose not to host service learning volunteers. The idea of hosting from some was financially strenuous since families are not paid to host, therefore making it unaffordable for them to feed participants or being able to bring them on extra outings in the evenings or on weekends, outside of Circolo's programming. Other community members expressed the lack of space in their homes, with some mentioning that they were not homeowners, but instead rented. They also could not risk any potential damage being done to their homes.

The lack of Black families hosting, while not intentionally excluded from doing so, represents a larger structural issue related to race and class. In order to be able to include more Black or BIPOC families, the organization needs to provide assurances to those families to mitigate what they perceive to be the risks of hosting. While the IESL host community research literature has demonstrated that sometimes negative issues result from payment to host families such as jealousy in the community or increasing inequalities between host families (See Larsen, 2016b; O'Sullivan et al., 2019), this case study better aligns with Tom Smedley's (2016) results on the impact of ISL on three rural communities in Costa Rica. She posits that providing funds to host families, which could be an important source of income for those hosting. In the case of Samstown, providing host families with adequate funds to compensate them for the costs of hosting service learning volunteers, could also address existing, structural inequalities, and allow for more diversity in host families.

The lack of financial reimbursement for host families is worrisome. The findings from this study confirm that the majority of host families do not get financially

reimbursed from Circolo, and if so, it is only through the receipt of a small grocery card to mitigate the cost of additional food purchased in their homes for service learning volunteers. Regardless (and likely due to their class status), all of the host family participants in the study said they would continue to host volunteers. But this again shows a position of privilege of those hosting who did not have to think twice about not being reimbursed for having to buy extra groceries for the week. The lack of reimbursement or financial support created more disparity in being able to expand host families from mostly White to include more BIPOC families for whom that reimbursement would be critically important (and whose average median household incomes is around ~\$24,000) (City Data, 2020).

If the intention of the intermediary organization is to work toward diversifying the families who host service learning volunteers as they say it is, it should be Circolo's responsibility to mitigate, to reduce, or to eliminate as much as possible the barriers preventing those families from hosting. The added layer of this being a minority world context brings the assumption that families may not need the same level of financial support to host as majority world countries. Often, it is typical that hosting countries in majority world contexts receive some kind of reimbursement for hosting students, such as in the case of Nicaragua/Guatemala (O'Sullivan et al., 2019) or of Tanzania (Larsen, 2016b). If it is the case, in majority world countries, for the intermediary organization to reimburse host families, iteratively I asked: Why are host families in Samstown not reimbursed? The key here is that there remains an unstated assumption that host families in minority world contexts do not need financial support to host, when in actuality they do. And if given the support, would perhaps be more likely to host service learning

volunteers and in particular more lower income, racialized families would be more likely to host service learning volunteers.

If we take some time to read between the lines, there is an undercurrent of latent and likely inadvertent racist behaviours on behalf of the intermediary organization. By protecting volunteers within the security and/or stability of White, middle class homes, and bringing students in to speak with community partners to engage in ‘authentic’ experiences, Circolo achieves a supposed ‘balance’; That is: protecting White people from Black people. In a way, it is the White middle-class family that can show the volunteers ‘a good time’ and a ‘safe’ time, compared to Black or BIPOC families without those extra funds or the desirable home to do so.

This is to say – perhaps the data collection methods I used were problematic as I myself unintentionally used this intermediary organization also as the intermediary for my research. Perhaps, then, rather than gaining access to certain people and groups through the posters used at the intermediary organization or through snowball sampling, for example, I could have instead spent more time in the community and collaboratively discussed the project with residents over coffee or a meal. I could have also had an open house or public inquiry into the work, where residents could drop-in at their convenience to chat. Or through such experiences, reaching more people, at various times of the day, and gained knowledge beyond that of what was associated with the programming itself might have been possible. The opportunity to gain additional insight into other sites or places that were part of the programming, or ‘hosts’ to incoming volunteers, would have been beneficial and broadened the pool of participants who were involved in my study,

rather than simply connecting with individuals from the partner organizations facilitating such programming.

It is difficult to make such assessments, both about the intermediary organization, and about my own work, but it is important to be able to think critically about the findings and come to such conclusions. The tensions in the findings of this study provide a sense of the ‘way forward,’ directed through the agency of individuals in Samstown.

Conceptually, critical researchers have emphasized the power of individual agency and its transformative power in the potential for society to move ahead (Abdi, Shultz, & Pillay, 2015; Ahmed, 2000; Butler, 1999/2000; Hall, 1990, 1993, 2017; Larkin, 2018; Mahrouse, 2014; Miron & Moely, 2006; Taylor et al., 2015). Host community insights from all three groups illuminate that agency still exists within social constructs, cultural forces, and embedded norms. Clearly, we can also see through this study how some community members were structurally excluded from participating, and this points us towards some possibilities for improvement within this program, a topic I return to in the concluding chapter. Before doing so, I explore the relevance of the broader US context within which the Circolo program exists and where my study was conducted in order to illustrate how even with programming that is critical, the larger and historical contexts of the United States matter more broadly.

## 6.10 Understanding the United States Context

This study was unique in that it looked at a city in the United States, a minority world country, which is both an incoming and outgoing destination for service learning volunteers. This shaped my study as I will now discuss.

Most IESL literature focuses on the majority world context. While this was a minority world context set in a U.S. city, there are parallels that can be drawn. The parallels could be in terms of the structural organization of the program such as: having an intermediary organization come up with an itinerary and curriculum for volunteers; having host families host those volunteers in their homes; and collaboration occurring between the intermediary organization and community partners to organize activities for volunteers that are mutually 'beneficial'. However, in the findings, we see some slight differences between those contexts, as I now discuss.

With volunteers coming into the host community, community members had opportunities to connect with program participants in impactful "tactile, vestibular, kinesthetic, and visual" (Fanon, 1952[2008], p. 84) ways; host community members expressed having a chance to change volunteers' perceptions of Samstown based on what was true rather than what was believed to be true. In the words of a community member, participating in the programming was about dismantling "half-truths" in messaging that service learning volunteers may have previously received about the United States, and specifically, what it means to interact with Black people in Samstown. However, in the findings, this observation came up more often in respect to volunteers from other American cities or states, rather than the international visitors. For instance, the findings illustrate that the international volunteers were less jaded than American volunteers about what it means to live in a community of colour. The international service learning volunteers were viewed by the host community as being less 'stuck' in and around racial stereotypes. This was quite different from the domestic service learning volunteers who appeared (to the host community) to adopt a view of the inner or urban city as deficit.

This distinction between local and international volunteers was generally not made by the participants I interviewed, with the exception of those mentioned here, however in further massaging the data, it would be important to distinguish between the experiences of community members hosting local and international volunteers in the future.

The findings of my study make clear that the host community members took seriously their work/responsibility to educate the incoming service learning volunteers about Samstown and the people who lived in their community. Stereotypes (or ‘half-truths’) about Samstown were partly dismantled through the IESL program. For instance, volunteers coming into Samstown were challenged to see Samstown – a community of colour - differently than what they might have heard in the past.

Dismantling predisposed beliefs of local students, then, was an additional challenge for community members. This raises two issues. The first is the incorporation of some type of community engaged learning component by bringing students to a local neighbourhood, and the implications of that (i.e., failing to prepare students for engagement and “doing the work” before-hand, by looking more deeply at and exploring resources to better understanding systemic issues (See Larsen, 2017; Liou, 2019), which is not often the case for domestic students). The second more critical issue was that even with domestic volunteers, we see issues with the host community having to dismantle those long-ingrained stereotypes, including flawed notions of “the black body... circumscribed as dangerous” (Butler, 1993, p. 18).

The immense onus and responsibility placed on the community partner to dismantle projected descriptions and depictions of their neighbourhood of colour is an added dimension to ‘service’ and causes us to ask ‘who is serving whom’ in service learning



programs. Through service learning programs, the responsibility to teach, educate and learn is everyone's. As Grain et al. (2019) and Gazley, Bennett, & Littlepage (2013) argue that there is a shared responsibility for all groups to collaborate with one another, with those responsible for the design to "be especially attentive to achieving reciprocal relationships" (p. 561). There must be an emphasis on reciprocity, even if that means one group (i.e., the intermediary organization) has to put in more effort to intentionally seek out historically marginalized people in the community to hear, honour and value their voices.

## 6.11 Moving Forward

At a broader level, and through a critical theory lens, our responsibility as academics is to use our individual agency and effort to move toward a changed society that is more just and cognizant of different life stories. Writing about the U.S. context, despite the challenges that African Americans often continue to experience, West remains hopeful that we can have a "deep human coming together...that uses our differences as a way of deepening communion and community, rather than deepening domination and subordination" (Blakeley, 2020). I adopt the same perspective and approach.

What I understand from the findings is that in order to be effective, the first priority of IESL should always be to meet the needs of the host community. This can happen through "deepen[ing] relationships, address[ing] challenges, and develop[ing] a strong sense of how to work in the context of unique community challenges, opportunities and strengths" (The Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement [CFICE], 2020).

Yet, how can this be accomplished, if many of the community voices, as in this study, are outside of the main IESL actors?

The need for structural and systemic change to address spaces of [racial] oppression in programming in the United States is an important line of thought that must continue, while understanding that “*we have strong institutions to be aware of*” (Kimberly-HF). Everyone involved in IESL programs from the intermediary organization, to community partners, and host families must have a seat at the decision-making table. Further research and subsequent action need to follow from this study, which is just one small piece adding to IESL literature. However, through this study, and with the support of the critical literature, we are able to note the significance and wider implications of such programming. We therefore need to more closely interrogate the true purpose of such programming and the underlying structures that fundamentally cause injustice to and within host communities in the first place.

## 6.12 Story Two: Summary

In order to be effective, the first priority of IESL should always be to meet the needs of the host community. This can happen through “deepen[ing] relationships, address[ing] challenges, and develop[ing] a strong sense of how to work in the context of unique community challenges, opportunities and strengths” (The Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement [CFICE], 2020). Yet, how can this be accomplished, if many of the community members, as in this study, are outside of the main IESL actors?

What is the work that must be done to minimize broader racial and class divisions in communities such as Samstown through IESL programs? How might the broader contexts

of systemic racism challenge the emancipatory hopes in IESL? These are important questions to ask. One starting point is through dialogue. As one of my participants noted, “*Now is the time to have these conversations, and people need to be open to them.*” There are difficult conversations that need to take place, “not only...restructure society, but also...reshape consciousness” (Nursey-Bray, 1980, p. 140).

What was challenging for me, like so many other critical researchers doing service learning research, was that many host community members has resoundingly positive things to say regarding their experiences with hosting participants in their towns and cities (Larsen, 2016; Smaller & O’Sullivan, 2018). But looking into where the discrepancy lies has largely to do with the nuances of conducting interviews, dissecting what host community members expressed, and also distinguishing what remained unsaid, and whose voices were not heard at all. So while the challenges host community participants faced were fewer, they were powerful and spoke volumes about the tensions and challenges associated with IESL programs even in a minority world context.

At the beginning of this research project, I defined ‘host community’ as *(a) common space(s) and place(s) where ideas and experiences are shared*. The intent of doing so was to be able to provide a framework for readers to follow. The definition of this “warmly persuasive word” (Williams 1976, p. 66, as cited in Larsen, 2016b, p. 10) stands, but what strikes me now is that through the research, ‘community’ has developed into something more multidimensional, layered, and complex in undertone. I now understand two meanings of community. First, the ‘community of community service,’ receiving support - that is, the working-class, Black inner-city community. Second, there is the ‘community most directly involved in the IESL architecture,’ and therefore the community represented

in my study - that is, mostly White middle class IESL stakeholders. Therefore, in preparation for conducting my doctoral work, my theoretical framing assumed the first community would be highlighted, but my participant profiles and findings are centred on the second sense of community. Consequently, while both of these communities interact with one another and represent Samstown, how I originally thought about community has changed.

Both Story One and Story Two allow space for further thinking about how my own position as a novice, white, middle-class, cisgender female researcher and how I fell into a quagmire around who can represent the community, despite my best efforts not to. All of this to say, reflecting on both stories allows me and my readers to think more about one's actions and decisions as a critical researcher, which are often rooted within larger systems of oppression. This reflection aims to provide insights on how IESL stakeholders might work alongside one another more meaningfully and for host communities to continue to exercise their own agency in deciding what makes sense for them.

As I have learned from my experience engaging with this IESL work, and exploring issues of race and power, I recognize that my study is not only about programs themselves, nor is it only about understanding their impact. It is about '*putting in the work*' to bring about change in the thinking and actions of leaders, politicians, and members of society who maintain and uphold imbalanced structures. Community partners, host families, and members from the intermediary organization each illuminated their varying and individual experiences with hosting students in Samstown. We have

been able to bring their reflections together to understand that there is space to transform programming in productive and more equitable ways that will benefit each person involved, including having more diverse families hosting, providing more opportunities for youth in Samstown to participate in programming, or enhancing curricular materials of the intermediary organization by involving host community members in meaningful and reciprocal ways, in the planning of the IESL program. In the subsequent and final chapter, I provide my concluding thoughts.

## Chapter 7: Concluding Thoughts

### 7 Overview

This case study was an opportunity for me to speak with 19 people in Samstown about their experiences engaging with service learning volunteers in their community. They took time to share their thoughts and ideas and I am truly thankful to them for their insights. What I gathered for this doctoral work was not simply ‘data’, but rather, perspective and insight into their worlds. In trying to understand “How one U.S. host community has been affected by the presence of service learning volunteers,” I tried to prioritize host community voice in asking them about their perceived challenges, benefits, and tensions associated with their experiences with IESL. Community partners, host families, and members from the intermediary organization each expressed many positive aspects that the program afforded them: building relationships with each other, learning about one another, and being able to find a sense of purpose were all common themes. But despite the positive aspect came some challenges and unspoken tensions, as explored in the previous chapter.

My conceptual framework allowed me to explore and to speak to some of the more nuanced aspects of the research, and in particular, exploring the complex understandings of what ‘community’ means in the context of IESL through observing the a) the structural basis of racism and other forms of discrimination and difference; b) the manifestation of power; and c) the agency of the oppressed as members of the host community, and their identities as constructed by and through relations and engagement with service learning

volunteers. Through this framework, I had hoped to reach the objectives of my study, which were: a) to conduct an in-depth case study to illuminate how one particular community is impacted by an IESL program; b) to privilege the voices of members of a racially- and economically-marginalized host community; and c) to contribute to the research calling for focus on the impact of these programs on host communities.

However, there were some limitations to my study that made achieving these objectives difficult. I outline them next.

## 7.1 Limits of the Study and Areas for Future Research

There are a number of limitations to this study. First, the generalizability of the results to other situations is not possible given the small scale of this case study. Thomas (2010) points that some researchers may refer to case study as “methodological second best” (p. 575), because of a lack of generalization able to be built out of the single case in a statistical sense (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Mills et al., 2010). However, it is the context-dependent knowledge of case studies that contributes both to the experiences of the researcher and reader (Miles, 2013), becoming an example for others to gain insight and resulting in the possible transformation of practices of others (McGloin, 2008; McGloin & Georgeou, 2016). Essentially, while case study can sometimes be referred to as a limiting because it is not generalizable, it does contribute to generating theory when cases are brought together. Indeed, my study provided rich and detailed data about the experiences of the host community members in Samstown that can help to provide insight about host communities and IESL programs, particularly if paired with other related studies.

Another perhaps obvious limitation could be that that I did not ask participants directly about issues concerning race, class, and gender. I would in future or as part of a longitudinal extension of this study, ask more explicitly about class, gender, and race. And I believe that have more than one interview may have provided participants with further opportunities for opening up and discussing difficult knowledge and lived experience, such as those surrounding/encompassing class, gender, and race. On one hand, this could in some way have been a limitation in the current study given the personal nature of the questions. On the other hand, it could have provided a different conversation that was more direct. Either way, having semi-structured interviews, there was still a chance for the research to have opened up holistically and naturally, which encouraged other ways of knowing (Taylor, 2009).

Further, my understanding of the community, as discussed in the previous chapter relied solely on the voices of the above host community participants who were centrally involved and so my study represents a partial but still vested set of perspectives. When employing qualitative research, Kristensen and Ravn (2015) posit that it “easily includes the most known voices but is less likely to include lesser known voices that could expand our scientific understanding of the field” (p. 729). The voices, then, which are not heard is another limitation of this study and a form of exclusion, “circumscribing the voices which can contribute to the production of new knowledge and to making some participants the “different other” (Nordentoft & Olesen, 2018, p. 56).

But there was a shift in what the thesis accomplished. These shifts actually often occur in research (Pryor, 2010), and I therefore did not however accomplish all the objectives I set out to do, in particular hearing a ‘fuller’ host community voice. However,



even as I went along in the research process, and reflected upon the work I was doing, it would not have been appropriate to shift the objectives of my study. As Yin (1994) cautions,

if these, rather than the cases themselves, are changed, the investigator can correctly be accused of exercising a bias in conducting the research and interpreting the findings....the point is that the flexibility of case study is *in selecting cases different from those initially identified*...but not in changing the purpose or objectives of the study to suit the case. (p. 52)

Furthermore, Stake (1995) importantly discusses that when we engage in qualitative case study work, “we seek greater understanding of the case. We want to appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of it...goal statements sharpen the focus” (p. 16). Sometimes, he goes on to say, we come across issues in our case study work. So rather than think about issues negatively, issues instead help to draw us “toward observing, even teasing out, the problems of the case...and expand upon the moment, help us see the instance in a more historical light, help us recognize the pervasive problems in human interaction” (p. 17). The focus for me on host community was apparent and one I tried to make clear from the start, but an issue I came across was how more members and residents of the host community needed to be involved with Circolo’s programming, in particular in respect to those being ‘served.’ For example, my participants should have included Samstown residents who may have been considered beneficiaries of the service provided by the volunteers (e.g. those who frequented soup kitchens, or those who benefited from the corner stores with newly formed produce programs). This doctoral study was a learning experience for me as a novice researcher and will make me a better researcher moving forward. Finally, as Gin and colleagues (2018) posit, student researchers need to be given the space to “navigate...obstacles” (p. 2) where obstacles can actually be viewed and

“broadly recognized as a valuable skill and even a necessary disposition” (p. 2).

Relative to service learning itself, I was brought back to thinking about Heron’s (2007) work in her discussion of how women volunteers made sense of their development experience, she focuses particularly on “the relations of power in which they/were positioned” (p. 12). So much in the same way, what emerged for me in a parallel fashion was that, even with efforts and intentions of careful story telling, the study revealed how “domination is perpetuated” (Heron, 2007, p. 12) through the desire to help, which Heron argues is about the making of the self in ways that are highly raced, classed, and gendered.

In this context, I have more deeply realized that achieving such objectives is actually quite layered. However, through this work, I hope that is study is simply one layer, a sort of anthropocene, which now brings me closer to achieving this missed objective. In other words, now that I have done the research, and reflected upon it and its certain limitations, I hope to return to Samstown and spend more time with/in the host community and to connect with members of the host community who are being served within it. It is imperative to hear their perspective, since that was not only the goal of the study, but importantly and in a long-term sense, more broadly aligns with my epistemological and ontological leanings in terms of my obligation as a responsible researcher.

On a macro level, my study was conducted through critical theory lens, which provided a foundation for the kind of questions I asked, the ways in which I asked them, and the manner in which I looked at and analyzed the findings. Critical theory helped me to look beyond the surface and think more deeply about questions surrounding race, class,

gender, and wider socio-political structures. This led to further macro level of thinking, and in this case study, the importance of talking about race became evident, particularly in the US context, which has its own distinct history of race relations. If I had to do the study again, I would think more broadly about questions that I could pose. For instance, I would specifically ask my participants questions around race much more. In the case of White families, I could inquire more direction into questions about race. Further, I could have also asked how residents in Samstown, not involved directly with programming, might have faced an experience with race and/or racism with incoming volunteers and how that might have shaped their experience with IESL.

Further, my positionality as an outsider to Samstown, and as outlined in the Introduction (Chapter 1) and Findings/Discussion (Chapters 5 and 6) chapters of this thesis, could also be considered limitations of my study. To address the limitation of researcher subjectivity, one might suggest that quantitative methods might first appear as the ‘objective’ answer to the subjectivity that a qualitative researcher brings to her research. However, “[p]ure objectivity is not a meaningful concept if the goal is to measure intangibles [as] these concepts only exist because we can interpret them” (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 340). In other words, qualitative researchers acknowledge that attempting to be without a lens or position coming to the research is neither reasonable, nor possible.

Vicky-CP’s provided some words of wisdom in one of my first interviews: “*Common human experience eases anxiety.*” And so even with certain limitations, I approached my study with an openness to share and to making meaningful connections

with host community members. It is because of these limitations that I took time to get to know people and to spend time in the community “in everyday settings” (Taylor et al., 2015, p. 106). Although the number of participants was appropriate for this case study, there were certain factors distinguishing the participants in my study from the typical Samstown resident. As discussed in the *Methodology* (Chapter Four) chapter, the educational achievement of the participants in my study was twice as much among participants than Samstown residents at large, and three-quarters of the participants were White (in a predominantly Black neighbourhood). In this respect, the participants in my study were largely White, middle-class residents, and not necessarily reflective of others in the broader Rust Belt Samstown community. This is a limitation of the study and speaks not only to the need to recruit members of the host community for future research whom are more reflective of the community within which they live, but also the need for IESL organizations such as Circolo to consider ways of diversifying host families, community partners, and individuals working within the intermediary organization itself so they better reflect the overall demographics of the community.

## 7.2 Key Implications of the Findings

Fanon (1952[2008]) says, “I can recapture my past, validate it, or condemn it through my successive choices” (p. 178). The traditional intention of service learning has been to increase civic engagement in students and to narrow the distance between universities and communities (Carnicelli & Boluk, 2017). Here, we know that it is the more privileged student that goes to disenfranchised communities to provide service through volunteer work. However, there are programs - like the one I studied – that are provided through

NGOs, and we know much less about those types of service learning arrangements. This provided more reason for my own thesis study and a motivation to encourage future similar studies to be undertaken. The findings from this study suggest a number of areas of improvement for IESL programs in general. Beyond the fact that the community members might have responded positively to the IESL activities, I would also like to comment on some of the difficulty of reading my findings through an anti-racist lens.

Honesty provides a solid foundation for research. Honesty must act, in a way, like a reverent, passionate, and delicate love, one we should yearn for as researchers. But truth does not, in itself, stand alone. Like most everything else, there are intertwining connections between truth and reality. Donmoyer (2001) proposes that there is no single way to characterize qualitative studies but rather they should be defined by their purpose by being *truth-seeking*. This idea of *truth-seeking* really resounds with me. My interpretation of ‘finding the truth’ is more about how certain truths come to be accepted as correct, true, right, or okay and less about what is ‘true, right, or okay’. By looking at critical theories, we can better understand how things ‘are’ regarding our own individual lives, situated within broader societal contexts.

Throughout this study, I have been challenged to be honest with myself, my participants, their stories, and to be critical of the world around me. But, as is known, that takes energy and vulnerability. Enloe (2007), a feminist writer and academic, calls this skepticism of common assumptions in society engaging in *feminist curiosity*. Developing this *curiosity* “involves exploring, questioning, and refusing to take something for granted...it takes energy...is political... cultural...personal” (p. 1). This orientation influences good research and good writing, both of which need to develop *organically*,

thoughtfully molded on to pages. Throughout the research process, I was continually re-evaluating, reassessing, and reflecting on my own experience, positionality, and practice as I have attempted to represent here.

In the end, perhaps the research has a small piece of recognition in the form of a physical piece of writing, which one could hold in their hands. Or possibly, it could come in another invisible form - knowing that you have been true not only to yourself but to others by accurately sharing their stories. I use “story” in the way Charmaz (2005) explains it: “as metaphor and ...as concrete reality, rather than a construction we place on these data” (p. 526). We must question “whose story we tell, how we tell it, and how we represent those who tell us their stories” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 526). hooks (2014) satirically states:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer the speaking subject and you are now at the center of my talk. (p. 152)

When I reflect on this quote, I think about the critical theorists I have cited and the participants who have informed and who are central to this work. They have shared their own stories. In positioning myself and acknowledging that I come from a position of privilege, I *can* be cognizant. I *can* hear, listen, and use everyone’s *own words* to describe *their own* experiences. I *can* be active in learning about how this privilege asserts itself in society today, generally, and in my study, specifically. I *can* be aware of how my words and actions impact other humans and how their story is shared. Malcolm X (1992) illustrates in his *Autobiography*

People are always speculating- why am I as I am? To understand that of any person,

his whole life, from birth, must be reviewed. All of our experiences fuse into our personality. Everything that ever happened to us is an ingredient. (p.150)

Each of us has a story, shaping our identities and those embodied identities influence how we think, what we say, and what we do. Understanding privilege also shows how we situate ourselves to others, and in relation to inherent dynamics of power and structural inequities. By engaging in this type of critical thinking, that ruminating therefore becomes a way of living; it is part of the analysis of life and a way to be forward-thinking. There is never an end to the conversation.

### 7.3 No Time Like the Present

In this section, I contextualize the findings of this thesis even further with some recent relevant events, which in my opinion must be discussed. First, even with the United States Supreme Court rulings formally ending segregation and discrimination based on race in many aspects of life (i.e., *Brown v. Board of Education* [1954]; *Heart of Atlanta Motel, Inc. v. United States* [1964]; *Loving v. Virginia* [1967]; *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke (California)* [1978]), discrimination very much persists to this day in the United States. In the past year, there have been numerous tragic, violent, and senseless deaths of African Americans. There are undoubtedly many more than what are seen in the headlines, in addition to a history filled with gross injustices of abuse, neglect, maltreatment, and disenfranchisement. In the milieu and rise to public attention of the BLM movement, my work takes on a new urgency in its responsibility to provide a platform for African Americans to tell their stories - the stories of their lives, the importance of their community, and what the envisage for the future. African Americans and their allies across the globe are saying, “Enough is enough!”.

Ahmaud Arbery was a 25 year-old Black man who was jogging down the street. Shortly after, he was chased down by a White father and son in their truck. Both had armed themselves and raced after Ahmaud, whom they slain by firing multiple gunshots at him, point-blank. Breonna Taylor, 26, was a celebrated Emergency Medical Technician and was in bed sleeping before three White police officers raided her home on a failed sting operation. They fired 25 blind shots, fatally wounding her eight times. The official four-page incident report released by the police report was nearly blank. Despite the gruesome killing that had occurred, under the “injuries” section, police had written “none.” And George Floyd, 46, was buying cigarettes at the grocery store with an allegedly fake \$20 bill. Four police officers were involved in his murder. The officer choked him for almost nine minutes by pressing his knee into George’s neck, killing him. The three other officers stood by watching as George repeatedly gasped, “I can’t breathe.”

As if the details are not horrific enough, one of the most disturbing facts connecting all of these events is that it was only because of public outrage and a push for inquests into the deaths that the offenders were subsequently arrested and charged; two of the alleged killers of Breonna Taylor remain employed<sup>8</sup> and one officer was fired June 23, 2020. None were charged in Breonna’s death. On April 20, 2021, the officer responsible for the death of George Floyd was convicted of murder and manslaughter, but as the BLM movement posted on their Instagram page immediately following the verdict:

---

<sup>8</sup> On December 29, 2020, two of the officers responsible for Breonna Taylor’s death were given pre-termination letters from the Louisville Metro Police Department, with the intent of full termination. They are currently on administrative reassignment as investigations are ongoing (Bogel-Burroughs, 2020).



330 day to confirm what we already knew. 330 days of reliving the trauma of George's murder, fearing that the system would let us down again, and mourning so many more that we lost. For a murder witnessed by millions. This isn't proof the system works. It's proof of how broken it is. Because it took us this long, and this much attention. Until we have a world where our communities can thrive free from fear, there will be no justice.

In Angela Davis' (2012) *The meaning of freedom*, she recounts a story similar to that of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor, and concludes that 'we have to talk about systemic change.' I cannot help but draw scarily similar parallels with respect to my own study.

A young man by the name of Jonathan Ferrell, who was killed by the police after he had an accident with his automobile and attempted to get help by knocking on someone's door. The person apparently claimed that he might have been a burglar and called the police, who immediately killed him. Now in that case the policeman was not initially indicted; however, the persecutor persisted and eventually the grand jury did indict him. I guess the point I'm making is we have to talk about systemic change. We can't be content with individual actions. (p. 32)

People around the globe have very intentionally come together in a New Civil Rights movement (Murphy, 2020) in support of BLM and of ongoing protests against disproportionate police brutality toward African Americans and people of colour. "The recent history of African Americans and citizenship" as Wright Rigueur and Beshlian (2019) note, "is a fraught and tense one, made all the more so given that black [sic] people have been fighting for freedom and equal rights, for centuries" (p. 267).

At this time, there is an added layer of concern with disparate numbers reflected in the Black and Latinx communities related to COVID-19. BIPOC communities suffering with health issues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are twice as likely to die (and up to six times greater) than White people as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] (Ford et al., 2020).

What is particularly disturbing for me is how some police officers feel justified in treating Black people with brutality, knowing full well there likely will not be consequences. Today, we see a reinvigorated fight to end to slavery's vestige, to bring an end to police brutality, and to reform of policing and the criminal justice system. But this kind of behaviour has become normalized over time (Murphy, 2020; Strauss, 2020) or, in Denby's (2014) words, behaviours that have become "generational orthodoxies." Think about that for a second. Similar to the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s, "the protests unfolding right now are a referendum on the glaring inadequacies of American democracy" (Waxman, 2020, para. 17). The protests are also rooted in a strong history of continued oppression, a racist legacy of slavery and subjugation, and a constant fight for freedom against bigotry and violence. Octavia Butler's *Kindred* is a "simple reminder that all that history is not so very long ago" (Crossley, 1979, p. xxiii).

As a White person, I think about what I can do to not only address but to also contribute to bringing an end to systematic racism? The answer comes in many forms. First, in order to discover the injustices, it requires a personal reflection and affirmation into how and in which ways my 'belonging' to White/White-passing communities has consciously and unconsciously maintained racist policies and practices. White people in particular must speak out against those very policies and practices, which benefit Whites, but not BIPOCs. If White people remain silent, they therefore also remain complicit in maintaining injustice.

Forgive my moment of reflection. At this point in my life, I am only now getting to a place where I more-fully understand the privileges I have, simply from being born

White and into a middle-class family. I grew up pretty sheltered in the sense that, in my world, my family and I were friends with everyone. And in all my encounters from childhood, there has always been diversity. I grew up happy in the world my family had created for me, which has always been diverse, but had no idea how different it was ‘outside.’ So even with all purposeful and positive exposure I received as a kid about affording simple kindnesses and respect to *all* people, I still wonder how all of that has translated into my adult life, which is still ridden with privilege. Did it make a difference, or am I still just White, living in, and benefitting from a White system? (yes) But what I am supposed to *do*?

That brings me to ‘the now’. I am learning about being an ally to Black people every day. I am reading and learning from the NAACP, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), and the Federation of Black Canadians/Fédérations des canadiens noirs (FBC/FCN). My Black friends engage in conversation with me, when they want to do so. But I certainly do not believe it is fair for me to ask because it is not justifiable to place the onus on them to answer my questions. They are being patient and are willing to meet me ‘where I am.’ I have a long way to go (even though I may not always know where I am going). And I also know that whatever ‘White Guilt’ I am feeling is *my* problem and must not get in the way of acknowledging the injustices of racism and keeping the focus on Black people, and also Indigenous people, and persons of colour. Garnering this basic understanding of ‘what to do’ (Bastian, 2020), is or ought to be a question for a lot of people. Wright Rigueur and Beshlian (2019) further ask the question: “Where does this leave us?” (p. 274). They conclude that this leaves the United States where they currently are, simultaneously trying to solve problems such as mass

incarceration, education and political participation. It is one thing, then, to think about the philosophical or theoretical nature of oppression and what my role is in either continuing or condemning it, but finding actionable ways (which are supported and encouraged by Black communities) to engage in anti-racist behaviours is more difficult and some would argue, much more important.

Relying on Black organizations like (but not limited to) the NAACP, NCNW, and the FBC/FCN to lead the conversations has proven helpful in garnering a better overall understanding of their critical concerns. The NAACP, for example, calls attention to concerns, naming them their “game changers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century”; for the NCNW, they are “The Four for the Future.” While each organization is unique in their history, and prioritizes each concern differently, many of their overall priorities providently align. Specifically, these organizations constantly, but especially now, are fighting for economic stability and financial literacy, health equality, expanding community through youth and adult engagement, quality education K-16, and sound democratic public policy, including voting rights and political representation for Black people.

Real ways I envisage contributing to their goals are through examples in my own life. For instance, as an elementary school teacher, I could continue to maintain a library of diverse books. Other examples I can think of in my position as a sessional instructor in higher education would be to include a variety of readings on course syllabi. I could also volunteer in various community groups, by reaching out to members of local and national government on issues impacting BIPOC communities, by searching for and supporting Black-owned businesses, and by donating to organizations that support BIPOC communities. Actions must accompany words. Because we know based on the decades

since the Civil Rights Movement that many top-down policies and approaches in racial inequality have not worked. “We don’t simply need a radical rethinking of justice, but also of public policy and the framing of public policies and institutions. The challenge is not to reform the system, but to change the entire way of doing things and change the way that the broader American public thinks about structural inequalities and solutions”

(Wright Rigueur & Beshlian, 2019, p. 274).

My data collection was completed before the protests George Floyd happened, but I would be heedless if I did not speak to these troubling events. It is telling to think about Alexis de Tocqueville’s words in *Democracy in America* (1835), as quoted by Cornel West (1993):

I do not imagine that the white and black races will ever live in any country upon an equal footing. But I believe the difficulty to be still greater in the United States than elsewhere...and it may be foreseen that the freer the white population of the United States becomes, the more isolated will it remain. (p. 95)

Now, 185 years later, communities of colour and critical theorists tell a story whose lessons are of urgency: as a society, we have a responsibility and a role to play in the fight against (and our own perpetuation of) injustice against our Black and BIPOC brothers and sisters. We each must commit to “ending racism, bigotry, violence, and subjugation against Black people to ensure [their] survival *as* Black people” (NAACP, 2020). Only when we as entire societies truly reflect on what Black voices are saying - voices unheard and unsought - and when we make concerted efforts to make and be change through words *and* actions, can we challenge the broad and deeply-ingrained prejudices and discrimination in our society. As we move forward from this study, I hope you (the reader) are able to keep at least one hopeful idea in mind of the potential and necessity for

systemic change, and to think about actionable ways in working toward that change. We must all consider one another and our tremendously complex life stories.

### References

- Abdi, A., Shultz, L., & Pillay, T. (2015). Decolonizing global citizenship: An introduction. In A. Abdi, L. Shultz, & T. Pillay (Eds.), *Decolonizing global citizenship education* (pp. 1-11). Sense.
- Agee, J. (2009). Developing qualitative research questions: A reflective process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(4), 431–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390902736512>
- Ahmed, S. (2000). *Strange encounters: Embodied others in post-coloniality*. Routledge.
- African American Policy Forum (AAPF)*. (2020, 22 February). *Our Mission*. <https://aapf.org/ourmission>
- Alinia, M. (2015). On *Black Feminist Thought*: Thinking oppression and resistance through intersectional paradigm. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(13), 2334-2340. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1058492>
- Al-Saidi, A.A.H. (2014). Post-colonialism literature the concept of self and the other in Coetzee's 'Waiting for the Barbarians': An analytic approach. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 5(1), 95-105. <https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.5.1.95-105>
- Amankwaa, L. (2016). Creating protocols for trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 23(3), 121-127.
- Anyon, J. (2008). *Theory and educational research*. Routledge.
- Atalar, A. (2020) Student Exchange: The first step toward international collaboration. In A. Al-Youbi, A. Zahed, & Tierney W. (Eds.), *Successful global collaborations in higher education institutions* (pp. 63-71). Springer, Cham.
- Andreotti, V. (2006). Soft versus critical global citizenship education. *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*, 3, 40–51.
- Andreotti, V. (2011). *Actionable postcolonial theory in education*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Aujla, W. & Hamm, Z. (2018). Establishing the roots of community service-learning in Canada: Advocating for a community first approach. *Community Service-*

- Learning in Canada: Emerging Conversations*, 4(1), 19-37.  
<https://doi.org/10.15402/esj.v4i1.306>
- Baldwin, J. (1953). *Go tell it on the mountain*. Grosset and Dunlap.
- Balfour, L. (1998) A most disagreeable mirror. Race consciousness as double-consciousness. *Political Theory*, 26(3), 346–369.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591798026003004>
- Bangham, J. (2015). What Is Race? UNESCO, mass communication and human genetics in the early 1950s. *History of the Human Sciences*, 28(5), 80–107.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0952695115600581>
- Barnhart, E. L. (2012). Engaging global service: Organizational motivations for and perceived benefits of hosting international volunteers. Portland State University Thesis and Theses.
- Bast, F. (2012). “No.”: The narrative theorizing of embodied agency in Octavia Butler’s *Kindred*. *Extrapolation*, 53(2), 151–181. <https://doi.org/10.3828/extr.2012.8>
- Bandyopadhyay, R. (2019). Volunteer tourism and “The White Man’s Burden”: Globalization of suffering, white savior complex, religion and modernity, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 27(3), 327-343.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2019.1578361>
- Bastian, R. (2020, June 2). *What Black Americans Want Their White Friends To Know Right Now*. Forbes.  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebekahbastian/2020/06/02/what-black-americans-want-their-white-friends-to-know-right-now/#202320455312>
- Bell, D. A. (1995). Who’s afraid of critical race theory? *University of Illinois Law Review*, 1995(4), 893–910.
- Berg, B., & Lune, H. (2012). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Pearson: London.
- Bhabha, H. K. (2004). *The location of culture* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1986[2008]). Foreword - Remembering Fanon: Self, psyche and the colonial condition. In F. Fanon, *Black skin, white masks* (C. L. Markmann, Trans.) [pp. xxi-xxxvii]. Pluto Press.
- Billig, S. (2000). Research on K-12 school-based service-learning: The evidence builds. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(9), 658–664.
- Birdsall, J. T. (2005). Community voice: Community partners reflect on service learning. Retrieved from <https://www.mesacc.edu/community-civic-engagement/journals/community-voice-community-partners-reflect-service-learning>

- Birdwell, J. (2011). "This is the big society without borders...": Service international. Demos.
- Blakeley, G. (2020, October 26). *Cornel West: We Must Fight the Commodification of Everybody and Everything*. Jacobin. <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2020/10/cornel-west-commodification-spirituality-race-oppression-democratic-socialism>
- Bocci, M. (2015). Service-learning and white normativity: Racial representation in service-learning's historical narrative. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 22(1), 5-17.
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.). Pearson Allyn & Bacon.
- Bogel-Burroughs, N. (2020, December 30). *Louisville officer who shot Breonna Taylor will be fired*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/29/us/louisville-officer-fired-jaynes-breonna-taylor.html>
- Bohman, J. (2019). "Critical Theory", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. E. N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/critical-theory/>.
- Borland, K., & Adams, A. E. (2013). *International volunteer tourism: Critical reflections on good works in Central America*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bose, M., Horrigan, P., Doble, C., & Shipp, S. C. (Eds.). (2014). *Community matters: Service learning in engaged design and planning*. Routledge.
- Boyle-Baise, M. (1998). Community service learning for multicultural education: An exploratory study with preservice teachers. *Equity & Excellence*, 31(2), 52-60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1066568980310207>
- Brand, A. (2017). The duality of space: The built world of Du Bois' double-consciousness. *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space*, 36(1), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775817738782>
- Brazas, C., & McGeehan, C. (2020). What White colleagues need to understand: White supremacy doesn't stop at the teachers' lounge door. *Teaching Tolerance*, 64.
- Bringle, R. G. (2016). *Service learning in psychology: Enhancing undergraduate education for the public good*. American Psychological Association.
- Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1996). Implementing service learning in higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 67(2), 221-239. doi:10.1080/00221546.1996.11780257



- Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (2011). International service learning. In R. G. Bringle, J. A. Hatcher, & S. G. Jones (Eds.), *International service learning: Conceptual frameworks and research* (pp. 3-28). Stylus.
- Bringle, R. G., Hatcher, J. A., & Jones, S. G. (Eds.). (2011). *International service learning: Conceptual frameworks and research*. Stylus.
- Bronner, S. E. (2017). *Critical theory: A very short introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Brooks, R. (1994). Critical race theory: A proposed structure and application to federal pleading. *Harvard Blackletter Law Journal*, 11, 85–114.
- Buccola, N. (2019). *The fire is upon us: James Baldwin, William F. Buckley Jr., and the debate over race in America*. Princeton University Press.
- Buchanan, L. B. (2015). “We make it controversial”: Elementary preservice teachers’ beliefs about race. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 42(1), 3-26.
- Burns, E. (1970). *A handbook of Marxism* (2nd ed.). Haskell House Publishers Ltd.
- Butin, D. (2006). The limits of service learning in higher education. *The Review of Higher Education*, 29(4), 473–498. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2006.0025>
- Butler, J. (1993). Endangered/Endangering: Schematic racism and white paranoia. In R. Gooding-Williams (Ed.), *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising* (pp. 15-22). Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1999[2002]). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Butler, O. E. (1979). *Kindred*. Beacon Press.
- Byrne, M. M. (2001). Evaluating the findings of qualitative research. *Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) Journal*, 73(3), 703-706. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-2092\(06\)61966-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-2092(06)61966-2)
- Cameron, S.D. (2010). *Getting wisdom: The transformative power of community service-learning*. The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.
- Campanella, R. (2006). *Geographies of New Orleans: Urban fabrics before the storm*. Center for Louisiana Studies.
- Campion, K. (2019). “You think you’re Black?”: Exploring Black mixed-race experiences of Black rejection. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, 42(16), 196-213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1642503>

- Campus Compact. (2019, June 25). *Who we are*. <https://compact.org/who-we-are/>
- Carnicelli, S., & Boluk, K. (2017). The promotion of social justice: Service learning for transformative education. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 21*, 126-134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2017.01.003>
- Carson, B. S. (2015, June 24). *Ben Carson: Call it racism*. USA Today. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/06/22/ben-carson-south-carolina-shooting-column/29074387/>.
- Carson, D., Gilmore, A., Perry, C., & Gronhaug, K. (2001). *Qualitative marketing research*. Sage.
- Caton, K., & Santos, C. A. (2009). Images of the Other: Selling study abroad in a postcolonial world. *Journal of Travel Research, 48*(2), 191-204. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287509332309>
- Charmaz, K. (2005). Chapter 20: Grounded theory methods in the 21st Century. In N. Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 507-535). Sage.
- Chawla-Duggan, R. (2007). Breaking out, breaking through: Accessing knowledge in a non-western overseas educational setting-methodological issues for an outsider. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 37*(2), 185-200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057920601165538>
- Chin, W. Y. (2017). The age of covert racism in the era of the Roberts Court during the waning of affirmative action. *Rutgers Race and the Law Review, 16*(1), 1-38.
- Cho, S., Crenshaw, K., & Mccall, L. (2013). Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 38*(4), 785–810. <https://doi.org/10.1086/669608>
- Civil Rights Act of 1964 § 7, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq* (1964).
- Clark, C., & Young, M. (2005). Changing places: Theorizing space and power dynamics in service learning. In D. W. Butin (Ed.), *Service learning in higher education: Critical issues and directions* (pp. 71-88). Palgrave Macmillan
- Clayton, D. (2018). Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement: A comparative analysis of two social movements in the United States. *Journal of Black Studies, 49*(5), 448–480. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934718764099>
- Community [Def. 1]. (2017, February). In *Oxford English Dictionary (OED) Online*. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/37337?redirectedFrom=community#eid>
- “Community Projects to Help Children and Families Thrive.” Global Volunteers. Accessed January 6, 2020. <https://globalvolunteers.org/community-projects/>.

- Cooper, W. L. (2020, April 18). 'I ain't voting till black lives matter': what does an activist's radical strategy mean for 2020? <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/apr/18/i-aint-voting-till-black-lives-matter-what-does-an-activists-radical-strategy-mean-for-2020>
- Costa, L. M., & Leong, K. J. (2012). Introduction critical community engagement: Feminist pedagogy meets civic engagement. *Feminist Teacher*, 22(3), 171-180. doi:10.5406/femteacher.22.3.0171
- Cowden, J. (2020). New colonialists of Africa? Tackling the white saviour complex in contemporary voluntourism. *Critical Student Reflections on Contemporary Society and Social Futures*, 8, 1-4.
- Crabtree, R. D. (2008). Theoretical foundations for international service learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 15(1), 18-36.
- Crabtree, R. D. (2013). The intended and unintended consequences of international service learning. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 17(2), 43-66.
- Crenshaw, K. (1995). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity, politics, and violence against women of color. In M. A. Fineman & R. Mykitiuk (Eds.), *The public nature of private violence: Women and the discovery of abuse* (pp. 93–118). Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2011). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Crossley, R. Introduction. In O. E. Butler, *Kindred* (pp. ix-xxvii). Beacon Press.
- Crouse, T., & Lowe, P. A. (2018). Snowball sampling. In B. B. Frey (Ed.), *The Sage Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation*. Sage.
- Cruz, N. & Giles, D.W. Jr. (2000). Where's the community in service learning research? [special issue], *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 1, 28-34.
- Cypress, B. (2017). Rigor or reliability and validity in qualitative research: Perspectives, strategies, reconceptualization, and recommendations. *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*, 36(4), 253-263. <https://doi.org/10.1097/DCC.0000000000000253>
- Daftary, A. (2018). Critical race theory: An effective framework for social work research. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2018.1534223>

- d'Arlach, L., Sánchez, B., & Feuer, R. (2009). Voices from the community: A case for reciprocity in service learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 16(1), 5-16.
- Davis, A. Y. (1983). *Women, race & class*. Vintage Books.
- Davis, A. Y. (2012). *The meaning of freedom*. City Lights Books.
- Davis, A. Y. (2016). *Freedom is a constant struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the foundations of a movement*. Haymart Books.
- Deeley, S. (2004). The impact of experience: a comparative study of the effects of international partnership service learning students within welfare agencies in Scotland and Jamaica. In H. Tonkin (Ed.), *Service learning across cultures: Promise and achievement* (pp. 197-232). International Partnership for Service Learning and Leadership.
- Deeley, S. J. (2010). Service learning: Thinking outside the box. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 11(1), 43-53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787409355870>
- Deeley, S. J. (2015). *Critical perspectives on service learning in higher education*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137383259>
- Deliovsy, K. (2017). Whiteness in the qualitative research setting: Critical skepticism, radical reflectivity and anti-racist feminism. *Journal of Critical Race Inquiry*, 4(1), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.24908/jcri.v4i1.6369>
- Denby, G. (2014, December 31). *The Birth of a New Civil Rights Movement*. POLITICO Magazine. <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/12/ferguson-new-civil-rights-movement-113906>
- DiCicco-Bloom, B. & Crabtree, B.F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education*, 40, 314-321. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x>
- Dolgon, C. (2017). Introduction to part I. In C. Dolgon, T.D. Mitchell, & T.K. Eatman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of service learning and community engagement* (pp. 15-19). Cambridge University Press.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (2008). *The souls of Black folk*. Urbana, IL: Project Gutenberg. Retrieved February 14, 2020, from <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/408/408-h/408-h.htm>
- Duedahl, P. (2008). 'UNESCO Man: Changing the Concept of Race, 1945-65', paper from American Anthropological Association 107th Annual Meeting, San Francisco, accessed online.

- Eby, J. W. (1998). Why service learning is bad. *Service Learning, General*, 27. Retrieved May 4, 2019, from <http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceslgen/27>
- El-Amin, A., Seider, S., Graves, D., Tamerat, J., Clark, S., Soutter, M., Johannsen, J., & Malhotra, S. (2017). Critical consciousness: A key to student achievement. *Kappan*, 98(5), 18-23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721717690360>
- Ellenbogen, S. (2017). An alternative model of community service learning. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*, 7(3), 315-330. <https://doi.org/10.1108/HESWBL-08-2016-0060>
- Erasmus, M. (2011). A South African perspective on North American international service learning. In R. G. Bringle, J. A. Hatcher & S. G. Jones (Eds.), *International service learning: Conceptual frameworks and research* (pp. 347–371). Stylus.
- Ermine, W. (2007). The ethical space of engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal*, 6(1), 193-203.
- Eyler, J., & Giles, D. E. (1999a). *Where's the learning in service learning?* Jossey-Bass.
- Eyler, J., & Giles, D. (1999b). Identifying the learning outcomes of service. In J. Eyler & D. Giles (Eds.), *Where's the learning in service learning* (pp. 1-22). Jossey-Bass.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Fanon, F. (1952 [2008]). *Black skin, white masks* (C. L. Markmann, Trans.). Pluto Press. [http://abahlali.org/files/\\_\\_Black\\_Skin\\_\\_White\\_Masks\\_\\_Pluto\\_Classics\\_.pdf](http://abahlali.org/files/__Black_Skin__White_Masks__Pluto_Classics_.pdf)
- Federation of Black Canadians (FBC)/Fédération des Canadiens Noirs (FCN) <https://fbcfcn.ca/about>
- Fisher-Yoshida, B. (2009). Coaching to transform perspective. In J. Mezirow & E. W. Taylor (Eds.), *Transformative learning in practice: Insights from community, workplace, and higher education* (pp. 148-160). Jossey-Bass.
- Ford, T., Reber, S., & Reeves, R. V. (2020, June 17). Race gaps in COVID-19 deaths are even bigger than they appear. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/06/16/race-gaps-in-covid-19-deaths-are-even-bigger-than-they-appear/>
- Foucault, M. (1980). Prison talk. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Power/knowledge, selected interviews, 1972-1997* (pp. 37-54). Harvester Press.
- Franco, S., & Lunday, E.B. (2020) Empowerment through understanding the interaction between philosophical stance (positionality) and qualitative research. In J.C. Richards & W.-M. Roth (Eds.), *Empowering students as self-directed learners of qualitative research methods: Transformational practices for instructors and students* (pp. 58-77). Brill.

- Fine, M. (1994). Working the hyphens: Reinventing the self and other in qualitative research. In N. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 70-82). Sage.
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. Bergman, Trans.). Continuum.
- Freire, P. (2005). The banking concept of education. In D. Bartholomae, & A. Petrosky (Eds.), *Ways of reading* (pp. 255-267). St. Martins Press.
- Freundlieb, D. (2000). Rethinking critical theory: Weaknesses and new directions. *Constellations*, 7(1), 80–99. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.00171>
- Galiardi, S., & Koehn, J. (2011). Strategies to mitigate the negative and accentuate the positive impacts of international service learning on host communities. *Partnerships: A Journal of Service learning and Civic Engagement*, 2(1), 1-12.
- Gallicano, T. D. (2013). Relationship management with the millennial generation of public relations agency employees. *Public Relations Review*, 39(3), 222-225. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2013.03.001>
- García, N., & Longo, N. (2013). Going global: Re-framing service learning in an interconnected world. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 17(2), 111-136.
- Garrow, E. E., & Garrow, S. H. (2014). White flight and the presence of neighborhood nonprofit organizations: Ethno-racial transition, poverty, and organizational resources. *Race & Social Problems*, 6, 328–341. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-014-9129-y>
- Gazley, B., Bennett, T. A., & Littlepage, L. (2013). Achieving the partnership principle in experiential learning: The nonprofit perspective. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 19(3), 559-579. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15236803.2013.12001751>
- Geertz, C. (1998). Deep hanging out. *The New York Review of Books*, 45(1), 69.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Giles, M. (2010). Howard Thurman, Black spirituality, and critical race theory in higher education. *Journal of Negro Education*, 79(3), 354–365.
- Gillen, J., & Mostafanezhad, M. (2019). Geopolitical encounters of tourism: A conceptual approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 75, 70-78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2018.12.015>
- Gilmore, R. W. (2007). *Golden gulag: Prisons, surplus, crisis, and opposition in globalizing California*. University of California Press.



- Gin, L., Rowland, A., Steinwand, B., Bruno, J., & Corwin, L. (2018). Students who fail to achieve predefined research goals may still experience many positive outcomes as a result of CURE participation. *CBE Life Sciences Education*, 17(4), 1-18.
- Glazier, J. A. (2003). Moving closer to speaking the unspeakable: White teachers talking about race. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 30(1), 73-94.  
<https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.18-03-0036>
- Gordon, A. F. (2005). Cedric Robinson's Anthropology of Marxism. *Race and Class*, 47(2), 23–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396805058079>
- Gore, J. (1990). What can we do for you! What can “we” do for “you”? Struggling over empowerment in critical and feminist pedagogy. *Educational Foundations*, 4(3), 5-26.
- Government of Canada (2017). [https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2017/08/government\\_of\\_canada\\_launches\\_student\\_work\\_placements.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2017/08/government_of_canada_launches_student_work_placements.html)
- Grain, K., Katumba, T., Kirumira, D., Nakasiita, R., Nakayenga, S., Nankya, E., Nteza, V., Ssegawa, M., Warren, K. (2019). Co-constructing knowledge in Uganda: Host community conceptions of relationships in international service-learning. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 42(1), 22–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053825918820677>
- Grant, C. & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in thesis research: Creating the blueprint for your “house.” *Administrative Issues Journal*, 4(2), 12-26. <https://doi.org/10.5929/2014.4.2.9>
- Gregory, S. (2011). *Black corona: Race and the politics of place in an urban community*. Princeton University Press.
- Guilherme, M., & Souza, L. M. T. de (Eds.) (2020). *Glocal languages and intercultural critical awareness: The South answers back*. Routledge.
- Guttentag, D. (2009). The possible negative impacts of volunteer tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 11, 537-551. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.727>
- Hackworth, J. (2016). Demolition as urban policy in the American Rust Belt. *Environment and Planning A*, 48(11), 2201-2222.  
doi:10.1177/0308518X16654914
- Hackworth, J. (2018). Race and the production of extreme land abandonment in the American Rust Belt. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 42(1), 51-73. doi:10.1111/1468-2427.12588
- Hall, S. (1990). Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference* (pp. 222-237). Lawrence & Wishart.

- Hall, S. (1993). Culture, community, nation. *Cultural studies*, 7(3), 349-363.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09502389300490251>
- Hall, S. (1996). *New ethnicities*. Routledge.
- Hall, S. (2011). The neo-liberal revolution. *Cultural Studies*, 25(6), 705–728.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2011.619886>
- Hall, S. (2017). *Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands*. Penguin Books.
- Hammersley, L. A. (2014). Volunteer tourism: Building effective relationships of understanding. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22(6), 855-873.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2013.839691>
- Hammersley, M., Atkinson, P. (2007). *What is ethnography? Ethnography, principles in practice* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Harling, K. (2002, July). *An overview of case study*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Agricultural Economics Association, Long Beach, California.
- Harris, A. (2020, March 11). Bernie Sanders Reached Out to Black Voters. Why Didn't It Work? Retrieved from  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/03/bernie-sanders-black-voters/607789/>
- Hartman, E. (2016a). Decentering self in leadership: Putting community at the center in leadership studies. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 2016(150), 73-83.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20172>
- Hartman, E. (2016b). Fair trade learning: A framework for ethical global partnerships. In M. Larsen, *International service learning: Engaging host communities* (pp. 215-234). Routledge.
- Hartman, E., & Kiely, R. (2014). Pushing boundaries: Introduction to the global service-learning special section. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 21(1), 55-63.
- Hartman, E., Morris Paris, C., & Blache-Cohen, B. (2014). Fair trade learning: Ethical standards for community-engaged international volunteer tourism. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 14(1-2), 109-116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358414529443>
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The condition of postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of social change*. Basil Blackwell.
- Hatcher, J. A., Bringle, R. G., & Hahn, T. W. (2017). *Research on student civic outcomes in service learning: Conceptual frameworks and methods*. Stylus Publishing.



- Heidebrecht, L. & Balzer, G. (2020). Colonial experimentations in international service learning research and practice: Learnings from Mayan Indigenous host communities. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 26(1), 143-159. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mjcsloa.3239521.0026.109>
- Henry, J. (2020). Whiteness in transit: The racialized geographies of international volunteering. *Social & Cultural Geography*. doi:10.1080/14649365.2020.1861642
- Heron, B. (2007). *Desire for development: Whiteness, gender, and the helping imperative*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Hesse-Biber, S. (2010). Analyzing qualitative data: With or without software [Powerpoint slides]. Retrieved from <https://www.bumc.bu.edu/crro/files/2010/07/Hesse-Bieber-4-10.pdf>
- Heuman, G. J. (1981). White over Brown over Black: The free coloureds in Jamaican society during slavery and after emancipation. *The Journal of Caribbean History*, 14, 46–69.
- Hill Collins, P. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.
- Hill Collins, P. (2010). The new politics of community. *American Sociological Review*, 75(1), 7-30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122410363293>
- Hill Collins, P., & Bilge, S. (2017). *Intersectionality*. Polity Press.
- Hill Collins, P. (2019). *Intersectionality as critical social theory*. Duke University Press.
- Holland, B. (2005). Reflections on community-campus partnerships: What has been learned? What are the next challenges? In P. Pasque, R. Smerek, B. Dwyer, N. Bowman, & B. Malloy (Eds.), *Higher education collaboratives for community engagement and improvement* (pp. 10-17). Ann Arbor, MI: National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good.
- Hollis, S. (2002). Capturing the experience: Transforming community service into service learning. *Teaching Sociology*, 30(2), 200–213. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3211383>
- Honnet, E. P., & Poulsen, S. J. (1989). *Principles of good practice for combining service learning*. Johnson Foundation.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.
- hooks, b. (2014). *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics*. Routledge.
- hooks, b. (2015). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics* (2nd ed.). Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781315743189

- Howard, J. P. F. (1998). Academic service learning: A counternormative pedagogy. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 73, 21-29. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.7303>
- Hsiung, P. (2010). *Lives and legacies: A guide to qualitative interviewing*. University of Toronto. <https://www.utoronto.ca/%7Epchsiung/LAL/home>
- Huish, R. (2018). Going where nobody should go: Experiential learning without making the world your classroom. *Journal of Global Citizenship and Equity Education*, 6(1).
- Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE). (n.d.). Retrieved January 11, 2020, from <https://carleton.ca/communityfirst/tools-and-resources/ensuring-community-comes-first-actions-cce-practitioners/>
- Interview with Cornel West (1997). *The Two Nations Of Black America*. Frontline (1997). PBS. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/interviews/west.html>
- Jacoby, B. (1996). *Service learning in higher education: Concepts and practices*. Jossey-Bass.
- Jeffress, D. (2008). *Postcolonial resistance: Culture, liberation and transformation*. University of Toronto Press.
- Kaida, L., Howard, R., Singh, D., Pritchard, P., & Wijesingha, R. (2019). Can Rust Belt or Three Cities explain the sociospatial changes in Atlantic Canadian cities? *City & Community*, 19(1), 191–216. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12424>
- Kapoor, I. (2004). Hyper-self-reflexive development? Spivak on representing the majority world 'Other'. *Majority world Quarterly*, 25(4), 627-647. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590410001678898>
- Kapoor, I. (2005) Participatory development, complicity and desire. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(8), 1203-1220. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590500336849>
- Kerr, A. E. (2005). The paper bag principle: Of the myth and the motion of colorism. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 118(469), 271-289. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jaf.2005.0031>
- Khan, S. N. (2014). Qualitative research method: Phenomenology. *Asian Social Sciences*, 10(21), 298-310. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n21p298>
- Kiely, R. & Hartman, E. (2011). Qualitative research methodology and international service learning. In R.G. Bringle, J.A. Hatcher & S.G. Jones (Eds.), *International service learning: Conceptual frameworks and research* (pp. 291-318). Stylus Publishers.

- Kozak, J., & Larsen, M. (2016). Conclusion: ISL and host communities – relationships and responsibility. In M. Larsen, *International service learning: Engaging host communities* (pp. 263-276). Routledge.
- Kristensen, G. K., & Ravn, M. N. (2015). The voices heard and the voices silenced: Recruitment processes in qualitative interview studies. *Qualitative Research, 15*(6), 722-737. doi:10.1177/1468794114567496
- Ladson-Billings, G. (Ed.). (2003). *Critical race theory perspectives on the social studies: the profession, policies, and curriculum*. Information Age Pub.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (Eds.). (2006). *Education research in the public interest: Social justice, action, and policy*. Teachers College Press.
- Larkin, A. (2016). I am because we are: Rethinking service learning and the possibility of learning from Ubuntu. In M. A. Larsen (Ed.), *International service learning: Engaging host communities*. Routledge.
- Larkin, A. (2018). Fair trade learning in an unfair world. *Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education, 6*(1).
- Larkin, A, Larsen, M.A., MacDonald, K., & Smaller, H. (2016). Epistemological, methodological, and theoretical challenges of carrying out ISL research involving host communities. A conversation. In M. Larsen (Ed.), *International service-learning: Engaging host communities* (pp. 19-34). Routledge.
- Larsen, M. A. (2014). Critical global citizenship and international service learning: A case study of the intensification effect. *Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education, 4*(1), 1-43.
- Larsen, M. A. (2016a). *Internationalization of higher education: An analysis through spatial, network, and mobilities theories*. Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Larsen, M. A. (2016b). *International service learning: Engaging host communities*. Routledge.
- Larsen, M. & Gough, R. (2013). Personal and political transformation: Two case studies of a university based international service learning internship. *International Journal of Education for Social Justice, 2*(2), 109-129.
- Leist, A. (2008). The long goodbye: On the development of critical theory. *Analyse Und Kritik, 30*(2). <https://doi.org/10.1515/auk-2008-0201>
- Liburd, J.J., Benckendorff, P., & Carlson, J.C. (2012). Tourism and quality of life: How does tourism measure up? In M. Uysal, R. Perdue, & J. Sirgy (Eds.), *Handbook on tourism and quality of life research* (pp. 105–132). Springer Business.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & González y González, E. M. (2008). The search for emerging decolonizing methodologies in qualitative research: Further strategies for liberatory

and democratic inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(5), 784-805.

- Lindlof, T., & Taylor, B. (Eds.). (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods*. (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Lingard, B., Martino, W., Rezai-Rashti, G., & Sellar, S. (2016). 'Gap talk' and 'failing boys' in Ontario. In *Globalizing educational accountabilities* (pp. 90-145). Routledge.
- Liou, C. P. (2019). Launch out into the deep: a psychotherapist's view of an international service-learning experience. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 1-10.
- Lub, V. (2015). Validity in qualitative evaluation: Linking purposes, paradigms, and perspectives. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 1-8.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406915621406>
- Luttrell, W. (Ed.). (2010). *Qualitative educational research: Readings in reflexive methodology and transformative practice*. Routledge.
- Lynn, M. (2006). Dancing between two worlds: A portrait of the life of a black male teacher in South Central LA. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(2), 221-242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390600576111>
- Lyons, K. D., Hanley, J., Wearing, S., & Neil, J. (2012). Gap year volunteer tourism: Myths of global citizenship? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39, 361-378.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.04.016>
- MacDonald, K. (2019). Toward a transnational feminist methodology of encounter. *Qualitative Research*, , 146879411984757. doi:10.1177/1468794119847578
- MacDonald, K., & Vostermans, J. (2016). Struggles for mutuality: Conceptualizing hosts as participants in international service learning in Ghana. In M. Larsen (Ed.), *International service learning: Engaging host communities* (pp. 131-144). Routledge.
- Maher, C., Hadfield, M., Hutchings, M., & Eyto, A. d. (2018). Ensuring rigor in qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918786362>
- Mahrouse, G. (2014). *Conflicted commitments: Race, privilege and power in transnational solidarity activism*. McGill-Queen's Press.
- Martin, F. & Griffiths, H. (2013). Relating to the 'other: transformative, intercultural learning in post-colonial contexts. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative International Education*, 44(6), 938-959.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2013.841029>

- Massey, D. (2005). *For Space*. Sage.
- Maurrasse, D. (2001). *Beyond the campus: How colleges and universities form partnerships with their communities*. Routledge.
- McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs*, 30(3), 1771-1800. doi:10.1086/426800
- McCoy, H. (2020). Black Lives Matter, and yes, you are racist: The parallelism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 37, 463-475. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00690-4>
- McGloin, C. (2008). Recontextualising the award: Developing a critical pedagogy in indigenous studies. *International Journal of the Humanities*, 6(4), 81-88. <https://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9508/CGP/v06i04/42405>
- McGloin, C., & Georgeou, N. (2016). ‘Looks good on your CV’: The sociology of voluntourism recruitment in higher education. *Journal of Sociology*, 52(2), 403-417. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783314562416>
- McKittrick, K. (2011). On plantations, prisons and a black sense of place. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 12(8), 947-963. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2011.624280>
- McLaren, P. (2003). Critical pedagogy: A look at the major concepts. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 69-96). RoutledgeFalmer.
- McQuarrie, M. (2017). The revolt of the Rust Belt: Place and politics in the age of anger. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 68, S120-S152. doi:10.1111/1468-4446.12328
- Meer, N. (2019). The wreckage of white supremacy. *Identities*, 26(5), 501-509. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2019.1654662>
- Merryfield, M. M., Lo, J. T. Y., Po, S. C., & Kasai, M. (2008). Worldmindedness: Taking off the blinders. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, 2(1), 6-20. <https://doi.org/10.3776/joci.2008.v2n1p6-20>
- Meyvis, T., & Yoon, H. (2021, April 7). *Adding is favoured over subtracting in problem solving*. Nature News. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-00592-0>.
- Mezirow, J. (2009). Transformative learning theory. In J. Mezirow & E. W. Taylor (Eds.), *Transformative learning in practice: Insights from community, workplace, and higher education* (pp. 18-31). Jossey-Bass.
- Michie, G. (2007). Seeing, hearing, and talking race: Lessons for White teachers from

- four teachers of color. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 9(1), 3-9.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15210960701333633>
- Mills, A., Durepos, G., & Wiebe, E. (Eds.). (2010). *Encyclopedia of case study research*. Sage.
- Miron, D., & Moely, B. E. (2006). Community agency voice and benefit in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 12, 27-37.
- Mitra, D. L., Movit, M., & Frick, W. (2008). Brian drain in the Rust Belt: Can educational reform help to build civic capacity in struggling communities? *Educational Policy*, 22(5), 731-757. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904807310038>
- Mogford, E., & Lyons, C. (2019). The impacts of international service learning on a host community in Kenya: Host student perspectives related to global citizenship and relative deprivation. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 31(2), 86-104. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v31i2.456>
- Morrison, T. (1992). *Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination*. Harvard University Press.
- Mostafanezhad, M. (2013) 'Getting in touch with your inner Angelina': Celebrity humanitarianism and the cultural politics of gendered generosity in volunteer tourism. *Majority world Quarterly*, 34(3), 485-489.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2013.785343>
- Motha, S. (2009). Afternoon tea at Su's: Participant voice and community in critical feminist ethnography. In S. G. Kouritzin, N. A. C. Piquemal & R. Norman (Eds.), *Qualitative research: Challenging the orthodoxies in standard academic discourse(s)*(pp. 103-120). Routledge.
- Mtawa, N., & Wilson-Strydom, M. (2018). Community service learning: Pedagogy at the interface of poverty, inequality and privilege. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 19(2), 249-265. doi:10.1080/19452829.2018.1448370
- Mulatto [Def. 1]. (2020, September). In *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from  
<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/123402?redirectedFrom=mulatto#eid>
- Murphy, C. (2020, June 25). *A new Civil Rights Movement is a foreign policy win*. Foreign Affairs. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2020-06-12/new-civil-rights-movement-foreign-policy-win>
- Musil, M. (2010). Educating civic activists: An academic mandate for the twenty-first century. *On Campus with Women*, 38(3).

- Musolf, G. R. (2017). *Oppression and resistance: Structure, agency, transformation* (G. R. Musolf, Ed.). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). (2020, June 22). *NAACP Strategic Plan: Game Changers for the 21st Century*. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. <https://www.naacp.org/about-us/game-changers/>
- National Council of Negro Women, Inc. (NCNW). (2020, June 20). *Our Mission*. National Council of Negro Women, Inc. <https://ncnw.org/ncnw/mission>
- Neumann, T. (2016). *Remaking the Rust Belt*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc.
- Nittle, N. K. (2020, October 31). *Why You Should Avoid These Racial Terms*. ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/avoid-these-five-racial-terms-2834959>
- Noonan, J., & Bristol, T. J. (2020). "Taking care of your own": Parochialism, pride of place, and the drive to diversify teaching. *AERA Open*, 6(4), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858420964433>
- Nordentoft, H. M., & Olesen, B. R. (2018). A critical reflexive perspective on othering in collaborative knowledge production. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 18(1), 55-66. doi:10.1108/QRJ-D-17-00007
- Nunnally, S. C. (2013). *Trust in Black America: Race, discrimination, and politics*. New York University Press.
- Nursey-Bray, P. (1980). Race and nation: Ideology in the thought of Frantz Fanon. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 18(1), 135-142. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X00009484>
- Omi, M., & Winant, H. (2015). *Racial formation in the United States* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Osland, J, Kolb, D., & Rubin, I. (1971). *Organizational psychology: An experiential approach*. Prentice Hall.
- O'Sullivan, M., & Smaller, H. (2013). Challenging problematic dichotomies: Bridging the gap between critical pedagogy and liberal academic approaches to global education. *Canadian and International Education*, 42(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.5206/cie-eci.v42i1.9221>
- O'Sullivan, M., & Smaller, H. (2016). Solidarity or neo-colonialism? The challenges of understanding the impact of ISL on Nicaraguan Host Communities. In M. A. Larsen (Ed.), *International service learning: Engaging host communities* (pp. 49-64). Routledge.



- O'Sullivan, M., & Smaller, H. (2019). ISL programs and neo-colonialism: The response of one Nicaraguan village. *Comparative and International Education*, 47(2), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.5206/cie-eci.v47i2.9328>
- O'Sullivan, M., Smaller, H., Heidebrecht, L., & Balzer, G. (2019). A Nicaraguan/Guatemalan encuentro: Villagers hosting international service learning groups reflect on their experiences. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 42(3), 635-663.
- Painter, N. I. (2010). *The history of White people*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, 34(5), 1189-1208.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods (3rd ed.)*. Sage.
- Patton, C. (2008). Finding “fields” in the field: Normalcy, risk and ethnographic inquiry. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 1(2), 255-74. <https://doi.org/10.1525/irqr.2008.1.2.255>
- Peters, D. (2020, February 26). *Universities are helping to shape city development*. University Affairs. <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/feature-article/universities-playing-big-role-development-cities/>
- Pettygrove, M., & Ghose, R. (2018). From "rust belt" to "fresh coast": Remaking the city through food justice and urban agriculture. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 108(2), 591-603. doi:10.1080/24694452.2017.1402672
- Pillard Reynolds, N. (2014). What counts as outcomes? Community perspectives of an engineering partnership. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 21(1), 79-90.
- Pillard Reynolds, N. (2019). Participation orientation in GSL research to hear the community: Who and how matters. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 25(2), 63-81. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mjcsloa.3239521.0025.204>
- Pillard Reynolds, N., & Gasparini, J.C. (2016). Saying it doesn't make it so: Do we listen and act when the host community tells us what they want? In M. A. Larsen (Ed.), *International service learning: Engaging host communities* (pp. 35-48). Routledge.
- Pompa, L. (2005). Service learning as crucible: Reflections on immersion, context, power, and transformation. In D. W. Butin (Ed.), *Service-in higher education: Critical issues and directions* (pp. 173-192). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Popham, G. (2015, June 29). Boom in ‘voluntourism’ sparks concerns over whether the industry is doing good. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-travel-volunteers-charities-idUSKCN0P91AX20150629>



- Powell, R. J. (2018). The brown paper bag test: Hervé Télémaque's exploded discourse. *Journal of Contemporary African Art*, 42-43, 234-249. <https://doi.org/10.1215/10757163-7185905>
- Projects Abroad. (2020, January 5). *Projects Abroad: Voluntourism opportunities*. <https://www.projects-abroad.ca/voluntourism/>
- Pryor, J. (2010). Constructing Research questions: Focus, methodology and theorisation. In P. Thomson & M. Walker (Eds.), *The Routledge doctoral student's companion: Getting to grips with research in education and the social sciences* (pp. 161-171). Routledge.
- Raddon, M.-B., & Harrison, B.A. (2015). Is service-learning the kind face of the neo-liberal university? *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 45(2), 134-153. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v45i2.184393>
- Raymond, E., & Hall, M. (2008). The development of cross-cultural (mis)understanding through volunteer tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16, 530–543. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802159610>
- Reagan, T. (2017). *Non-western educational traditions: Local approaches to thought and practice*. Taylor and Francis.
- Reese, A. M. (2020). *Black food geographies: Race, self-reliance, and food access in Washington, D.C.* The University of North Carolina Press.
- Rhoads, R.A. (1997). *Community service and higher learning: Explorations of the caring self*. SUNY Press.
- Riese, J. (2019). What is “access” in the context of qualitative research? *Qualitative Research*, 19(6), 669–684. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794118787713>
- Rizvi, F. (2007). Postcolonialism and globalization in education. *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies*, 7(3), 256-263. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708607303606>
- Robinder, K.E. (2015). Service-learning as civic pedagogy: Lessons learned from students' stories. In O. Delano-Oriaran, M. W. Penick-Parks, & S. Fondrie (Eds.), *The SAGE sourcebook of service-learning and civic engagement* (pp. 429-434). SAGE Reference.
- Robinson, C. J. (2000). *Black Marxism: The making of the Black radical tradition*. The University of North Carolina Press.
- Robinson, C. J. (2001). *An anthropology of Marxism*. The University of North Carolina Press.
- Romero, M. (2019). *Introducing intersectionality*. Polity.

- Rotella, C. (2003). *Good with their hands: Boxers, bluesmen, and other characters from the Rust Belt*. University of California Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520938441>
- Roundy, P. T. (2019). Rust Belt or revitalization: Competing narratives in entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Management Research Review*, 42(1), 102-121.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-01-2018-0019>
- Treasures Photography. A forgotten America. (2011, June 3). Retrieved from  
<https://aforgottenamerica.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/rustbelt.jpg>
- Saltmarsh, J. (1997). Ethics, reflection, purpose, and compassion: Community service learning. *New Directions for Student Services*, 77, 81-93.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.7705>
- Saltmarsh, J., & Hartley, M. (2017). A brief history of the civic engagement movement in education. In C. Dolgon, T.D. Mitchell, & T.K. Eatman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of service learning and community engagement* (pp. 112-124). Cambridge University Press.
- Sandy, M., & Holland, B. (2006). Different worlds and common ground: Community partner perspectives on campus-community partnerships. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 13(1), 30-43.
- Santos, B. d. S. (2014). *Epistemologies of the south: Justice against epistemicide*. Paradigm Publishers.
- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books.
- Shackel, P. (2019). *An archaeology of unchecked capitalism: The American Rust Belt to the developing world*. Berghahn Books.
- Schilling, J., & Logan, J. (2008). Greening the Rust Belt: A green infrastructure model for right sizing America's shrinking cities. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 74(4), 451-466. doi:10.1080/01944360802354956
- Searle, M. & Larsen, M.A. (2016). Host community voices and community experiences: Tanzanian perspectives on a teacher education international service learning project. *Partnerships: A Journal of Service learning and Civic Engagement*, 7(2), 1-16.
- Sender, K., & Decherney, P. (2016). Stuart Hall lives: Cultural studies in an age of digital media. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 33(5), 381-384.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2016.1244725>
- Shahjahan, R. (2011). Engaging the faces of 'resistance' and social change from decolonizing perspectives: Toward transforming neoliberal higher education.

*Journal of Curriculum theorizing*, 27(3), 273-286.

- Sheffield, E. (2011). *Community service learning: Philosophical perspectives*. Peter Lang.
- Sheffield, E. C. (2015). Toward radicalizing community service learning. *Educational Studies*, 51(1), 45-56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2014.983637>
- Sherraden, M., Bopp, A., & Lough, B. (2013). Students serving abroad: A framework for inquiry. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 17(2), 7-42.
- Simmons, R. (2016). Liberal studies and critical pedagogy in further education colleges: ‘Where their eyes would be opened’ (sometimes). *Oxford Review of Education*, 42(6), 692-706. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2016.1226790>
- Sin, H. L. (2009). Volunteer tourism - “Involve me and I will learn”? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36(3), 480-501. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2009.03.001>
- Sinkovics, R. R., & Alfoldi, E. A. (2012). Progressive focusing and trustworthiness in qualitative research: The enabling role of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). *MIR: Management International Review*, 52(6), 817-845. doi:10.1007/s11575-012-0140-5
- Sium, A., Desai, C. & Ritskes, E. (2012). Towards the ‘tangible unknown’: Decolonization and the Indigenous future. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), I-XIII.
- Skocpol, T., Ganz, M., & Muson, Z. (2000). A nation of organizers: The institutions origins of civic voluntarism in the United States. *American Political Science Association*, 94(3), 526-546. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2585829>
- Smaller, H., & O’Sullivan, M. (2018). International service learning: Decolonizing possibilities? *Journal of Global Citizenship and Equity Education*, 6(1), 1-23.
- Smeltzer, S., Leon, C., & Sperduti, V. R. (2020). You can’t throw snowballs over Zoom: The challenges of service learning reflection via online platforms. *Revista Iberoamericana de Aprendizaje-Servicio (RIVAS)*, 10, 101-112.
- Soria, K. M. & Mitchell, T. D. (Eds.). (2016). *Civic engagement and community service at research universities: Engaging undergraduates for social justice, social change, and responsible citizenship*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Spivak, G. C. (2010). “Can the subaltern speak?” from the “History” chapter of Critique of Postcolonial Reason. In R. C. Morris (Ed.), *Can the subaltern speak?: Reflections of the history of an idea* (pp. 21-80). Columbia University Press.
- Srivastava, P., & Hopwood, N. (2009). A practical iterative framework for qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), 76-84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800107>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.

- Stake, R. E. (2000). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 435–454). Sage.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 443–466). Sage.
- Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. Guilford.
- Strand, K., Marullo, S., Cutforth, N., Stoecker, R., & Donohue, P. (2003). *Community-based research and higher education*. Jossey-Bass.
- Strauss, V. (2020, June 6). 'This is my generation's civil rights movement.' Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/06/06/this-is-my-generations-civil-rights-movement/>
- Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. (2020, July 14). *Ella Baker organizes NAACP chapters in the South*. SNCC Digital Gateway. <https://snccdigital.org/events/ella-baker-organizes-naacp-chapters/>
- Taboada, A. (2011). Privilege, power, and public health programs: A student perspective on deconstructing institutional racism in community service learning. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, 17(4), 376–380. <https://doi.org/10.1097/PHH.0b013e3182140c63>
- Tarc, P. (2012). How does “global citizenship education” construct its present?: The crisis of international education. In V. Andreotti & L.M. de Souza (Eds.), *Postcolonial Perspectives on Global Citizenship Education* (pp. 105–123). Routledge.
- Tarc, P. (2013). *International education in global times: Engaging the pedagogic*. Peter Lang.
- Tarrant, M., Lyons, K., Stoner, L., Kyle, G., Wearing, S., & Poudyal, N. (2014). Global citizenry, educational travel and sustainable tourism: Evidence from Australia and New Zealand. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22(3), 403–420. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2013.815763>
- Taylor, E. W. (2009). Fostering transformative learning. In J. Mezirow & E. W. Taylor (Eds.), *Transformative learning in practice: Insights from community, workplace, and higher education* (pp. 3–17). Jossey-Bass.
- Taylor, S. (2020, July 13). *What Does Black Lives Matter Mean? How You Answer Reveals More About You Than The Movement Itself*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/07/14/what-does-black-lives-matter-mean-how-you-answer-reveals-more-about-you-than-the-movement-itself/#206466c4487c>

- Taylor, A., Butterwick, S., Raykov, M., Glick, S., Peikazadki, N., & Mehrabi, S. (2015, October). *Community service learning in Canadian higher education*. Report produced for SSHRC knowledge synthesis grant. Ottawa, ON.
- Taylor, E., Gillborn, D., & Ladson-Billings, G. (Eds.). (2009). *Foundations of critical race theory in education*. Routledge.
- Thomas, C. (2000). Critical race theory and postcolonial development theory: Observations on methodology. *Villanova Law Review*, 45(5), 1-26.
- Thomas, D. (2005). The Black radical tradition - theory and practice: Black studies and the scholarship of Cedric Robinson. *Race and Class*, 47(2), 1-22.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396805058077>
- Tiessen, R. (2012). Motivations for learning/volunteer abroad programs: Research with Canadian youth. *Global Citizenship and Equity Education Journal*, 2(1), 1-21.
- Tiessen, R. (2018). *Learning and volunteering abroad for development: Unpacking host organization and volunteer rationales*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Tiessen, R., & Heron, B. (2012). Volunteering in the developing world: The perceived impacts of Canadian youth. *Development in Practice*, 22(1), 44-56.  
doi:10.1080/09614524.2012.630982
- Tilley, S. (2019). The role of critical qualitative research in educational contexts: A Canadian perspective. *Educar em Revista*, 35(75), 155-180.  
<https://doi.org/10.1590/0104-4060.66806>
- Tilley-Lubbs, G. A. (2009). Good intentions pave the way to hierarchy: A retrospective autoethnographic approach. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 16(1), 59.
- Theerapappisit, P. (2009). Pro-poor ethnic tourism in the Mekong: A study of three approaches in northern Thailand. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 14(2), 201-221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941660902847245>
- Tomlinson, B. (2019). Powerblind intersectionality: Feminist revanchism and inclusion as a one-way street. In C.W. Crenshaw, C. H. Luke, D. Martinez HoSang, & G. Lipsitz (Eds.), *Seeing race again* (pp. 175-199). University of California Press.
- Toms Smedley, C. (2016). The economic circle: Impacts of volunteerism and service learning on three rural communities in Costa Rica. In M. Larsen (Ed.), *International service learning: Engaging host communities* (pp. 65-79). Routledge.
- Tonkin, H. (2011). A research agenda for international service learning. In R. G. Bringle, J. A. Hatcher, & S. G. Jones (Eds.), *International service learning: Conceptual frameworks and research* (pp. 191-224). Stylus.
- Trepagnier, B. (2006). *Silent racism: How well-meaning White people perpetuate the racial divide*. Paradigm.

- Trubek, A. (2018, April 3). Rust Belt Stereotypes Are Misleading and Dangerous. Retrieved from <http://time.com/5225497/rust-belt-history/>
- UN experts condemn modern-day racial terror lynchings in US and call for systemic reform and justice. (2020, June 5). The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights) [ONCHR]. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25933>
- United States Census Bureau (2020). *Quickfacts*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>
- ushistory.org. (2020). *Economic Growth and the Early Industrial Revolution*. U.S. History Online Textbook. <https://www.ushistory.org/us/22a.asp>
- Universities Canada (2019). *Facts and stats*. Retrieved from <https://www.univcan.ca/universities/facts-and-stats/>
- Van Maanen, J. (1983). The fact and fiction in organizational ethnography. In J. Van Maanen (Ed.), *Qualitative methodology* (pp. 37-55). Sage.
- Varlotta, L. E. (1997). A critique of service learning 's definitions, continuums, and paradigms: A move towards a discourse-praxis community. *Educational Foundations*, 11(3), 53.
- Vecina, M. L., & Fernando, C. (2013). Volunteering and well-being: Is pleasure-based rather than pressure-based prosocial motivation that which is related to positive effects?: Volunteering and well-being. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 43(4), 870-878.
- Villarosa, L. (2012a). Mobilizing for racial justice: A current snapshot. In Critical issues forum: Mobilizing community power to address structural racism (pp. 3-5). *Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity*. <<https://www.wkkf.org/-/media/pdfs/2013/michigan-convening/community/mobilizingcommunity-power-to-address-structural-racism-pre-critical-issues-forum-volume-4.pdf?la=en>> (Accessed April 4, 2021).
- Villarosa, L. (2012b). Strengthening the movement: Voices from the field - Talking about structural racialization and community organization with Deepak Bhargava and John Powell (pp. 26-30). *Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity*. <<https://www.wkkf.org/-/media/pdfs/2013/michigan-convening/community/mobilizingcommunity-power-to-address-structural-racism-pre-critical-issues-forum-volume-4.pdf?la=en>> (Accessed April 4, 2021).
- Vrasti, W. (2013). *Volunteer tourism in the majority world: Giving back in neoliberal times*. Routledge.
- Waxman, Olivia B. "10 Experts on How the George Floyd Protests Fit Into History." *Time*, Time, 4 June 2020, [time.com/5846727/george-floyd-protests-history/](http://time.com/5846727/george-floyd-protests-history/).



- Wearing, S., & McGehee, N.G. (2013). Volunteer tourism: A review. *Tourism Management*, 38, 120-130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.03.002>
- Wearing, S.L., & Wearing, N. (2006). Rereading the subjugating tourist in neoliberalism: Postcolonial otherness and the tourist experience. *Tourism Analysis*, 11(2), 145-162. <https://doi.org/10.3727/108354206778001512>
- W.E. Charity. (2020, April 3). *WE Schools @ home virtual program launched to support student learning across Canada*. Newswire. <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/we-schools-home-virtual-program-launched-to-support-student-learning-across-canada-884741954.html>
- Weigert, K. M. (1998). Academic service learning: Its meaning and relevance. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 73, 3-10. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.7301>
- West, C. (1993). *Race matters*. Beacon Press.
- Wilkinson, B., McCool, J., & Bois, G. (2014). Voluntourism: An analysis of the online marketing of a fast-growing industry. *The International Journal of Communication and Health*, 4, 10-15.
- Williams, E. N., & Morrow, S. L. (2009). Achieving trustworthiness in qualitative research: A pan-paradigmatic perspective. *Psychotherapy Research*, 19(4-5), 576-582. doi:10.1080/10503300802702113
- Wilson, J. R., Yates, T. T., & Purton, K. (2018). Performance, preference, and perception in experiential learning assessment. *Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 9(2), n2. <https://doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcacea.2018.2.5>
- World Bank. 2018. *Nearly Half The World Lives On Less Than \$5.50 A Day*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/10/17/nearly-half-the-world-lives-on-less-than-550-a-day>> [Accessed 11 June 2020].
- Wright Rigueur, L., & Beshlian, A. (2019). The history and progress of Black citizenship. *Du Bois Review*, 16(1), 267-277. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X19000158>
- Yazan, B. (2015). *Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake*. Nova Southeastern University, Inc.
- Yin, R. (1994) *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage.

Zahra, A., & McGehee, N. G. (2013). Volunteer tourism: A host community capital perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 42, 22-45.

doi:10.1016/j.annals.2013.01.008

Zemach-Bersin, T. (2007). Global citizenship and study abroad: It's all about U.S.

*Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices*, 1(2), 16-28.



## Appendices

### Appendix A: NMREB Ethics Approval



Research Ethics

#### Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board NMREB Delegated Initial Approval Notice

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Paul Tarc

**Department & Institution:** Education\Faculty of Education, Western University

**NMREB File Number:** 109397

**Study Title:** Voluntourism and Essential Perspectives From One Host Community - A Case Study

**NMREB Initial Approval Date:** September 20, 2017

**NMREB Expiry Date:** September 20, 2018

**Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:**

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Western University Protocol	Received September 20, 2017	
Recruitment Items	Recruitment Poster	2017/09/05
Recruitment Items	Verbal Recruitment Script	2017/09/05
Letter of Information & Consent		2017/09/05
Instruments	Interview Questions Intermediary Organization	2017/09/05
Instruments	Interview Questions Community Members	2017/09/05
Instruments	Interview Questions Host Families	2017/09/05

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

  
Ethics Officer, on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair or delegated board member

EO: Erika Basile  Grace Kelly  Katelyn Harris  Nicola Morphet  Karen Gopaul  Patricia Sargeant  Kelly Patterson

## **Appendix B: Letter of Information & Consent**

### **Principal Investigator**

Dr. Paul Tarc, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Western University, [REDACTED]

### **Additional Research Staff**

Vanessa Sperduti, PhD Student, Faculty of Education, Western University, [REDACTED]

My name is Vanessa Sperduti and I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at Western University (Canada). I am currently working on a research project entitled “*Voluntourism and Essential Perspectives From One Host Community - A Case Study*”. You are being invited to participate in this research study. The purpose of this letter is to give you the information you need to make an informed decision about whether or not you would like to participate. It is important that you understand what the research involves. Please take the time to read this carefully and ask questions if anything is unclear. You should feel free to ask the research staff, Vanessa Sperduti, any questions you may have about the study at any time.

### **Why is this study being done?**

You are being invited to participate in this research study on the effects of volunteer tourism on your community because you have been involved with the [REDACTED] voluntourism program in the past. The aims of this study are to understand local community experiences of voluntourism and the effect of the program on the local community participants. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an individual one-to-one interview to help us further understand the affect of the voluntourism on your community. This interview will involve you and I, if you agree to provide further feedback on the main themes and ideas that emerged during the individual interviews, in which you participated.

### **What are the study procedures?**

The individual interview will be no longer than 1 hour in length and will take place in your community at a place that is convenient for you. It will be audio-recorded (mandatory) and later transcribed into written text. In total, approximately 1 hour of your time will be required.

### **What are the risks and/or harms of participating in this study?**

There are no known or anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study. The activities can be stopped at any time if you experience any discomfort or

fatigue. You may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your academic status. If you decide to withdraw from the study, any information collected prior will not be used. No new information will be collected without your permission.

### **What are the benefits?**

This study sees the voices and experiences of members of the host community, like yours, as being valuable and important for looking at the effects of voluntourism in your community. You may not directly benefit from participating in this study but the information gathered may provide benefits to society as a whole, which include the potential of the research to highlight both gaps in the literature and in practice. Also, the empirical data has the potential to help not only researchers but also communities better understand voluntourism by relying not only on theoretical models, but also by looking at real-world experiences of the host community.

### **How will the participant's information be kept confidential?**

The researchers will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data. The audio-recordings will be transferred to the laptop as soon as possible and encrypted. Also, the laptop is encrypted as well as password-protected. The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and information will not be used in any reports, publications or presentations of the study results. Assigned numbers for each participant will be used instead of participants' name.

Only representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to the study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research. Other people/groups/organizations outside the study team will not have access to information collected. Any personal information about you in a form of a hard copy will be kept for 5 years in a locked cabinet at the researcher's (Vanessa Sperduti) home. A list linking your assigned number (instead of your name, each participant will be given a number) for the research study with your identifiable information will be encrypted and kept in a password-protected file, separate from all other files, in the hard-drive of the researcher's (Vanessa Sperduti) laptop, which is encrypted and has personalized lock system. Only Vanessa Sperduti has access to this laptop. All the data will be securely destroyed using industry-standard shredders and data-deletion software after the retention period of 5 years.

### **Are participants compensated for their participation in this study?**

You will receive no compensation for your participation in this study.

### **What are the rights of participants?**

Participation in this research is voluntary and not mandatory in any way. You may decide not to be in this study. Even if you consent to participate, you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose not to

participate or to leave the study at any time, this decision will have no effect on your academics. You do not waive any legal right by consenting to this study.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Human Research Ethics, Western University at [REDACTED]. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Paul Tarc at [REDACTED].

If you know of any other individuals whom you think would like to participate in this study and meet the participant inclusion criteria as outlined in this Letter of Information, please have them contact me by email or by phone at my information directly below or by using the information available on my institution card.

<p><b>Principal Investigator:</b>          Dr. Paul Tarc          Associate Professor          Faculty of Education          Western University          Email: [REDACTED]          Phone: [REDACTED]</p>	<p><b>Research Staff:</b>          Vanessa Sperduti          PhD Student          Faculty of Education          Western University          Email: [REDACTED]          Phone: [REDACTED]</p>
---	--

This letter is yours to keep for future reference

**Project Title:** Voluntourism and Essential Perspectives From One Host Community – A Case Study

**Principal Investigator**

Dr. Paul Tarc, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Western University, [REDACTED]

**Additional Research Staff**

Vanessa Sperduti, PhD Student, Faculty of Education, Western University, [REDACTED]

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to the use of unidentified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research

YES  NO

I consent to the use of unidentified photos obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research

YES  NO

I agree to be contacted for a follow-up interview if clarification is needed about my initial interview responses

YES  NO

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

This signature is of an impartial witness to confirm that the LOI was read by the researcher and comprehended by the participant.

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

My signature means that I have explained the study to the participant named above. I have answered all questions.

**Name of Person Obtaining Consent** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Person Obtaining Consent** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

*You will be given a copy of the Letter of Information and the Consent Form once the Form has been signed.*

### **Appendix C: Verbal Recruitment Script**

Hello,

My name is Vanessa Sperduti from the office of Dr. Paul Tarc at Western University in Canada. I am speaking with you today to ask if you are interested in a research study we are conducting. The study is being conducted by Dr. Paul Tarc and will look at the effects of volunteer tourism on your community. We are approaching you because you have been involved with the [REDACTED] voluntourism program in the past.

You will be asked to participate in an individual one-to-one interview to help us further understand the affect of the voluntourism on your community. These interviews will help us to gather your feedback, main themes, and ideas that emerge.

Would you be interested in hearing more about this study?

*\*If no, thank them for their time and say good-bye*

*\*If yes, continue to explain study details to them based on the letter of information*

I am now going to read you the letter of information and give you a copy of the Letter of Information for your reference.

Do you have any questions?

**[Answer any questions they may have]**

Do you agree to participate in this study?

*\*If no, thank them for their time and say good-bye*

*\*If yes, continue with the study*

## Appendix D: Recruitment Poster

### PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH IN VOLUNTOURISM

*Are you a community member between the ages of 18-70 who has engaged (at least 1 day/week) over the past year with [REDACTED] voluntourists?*

If so, I am looking for you to be a participant for a research study being conducted by researchers from Western University in Canada.

You will be asked to participate in an interview (up to 1 hour).

For questions about the study and to volunteer to participate, please contact:

*Vanessa Sperduti* [REDACTED]

or leave a message at the front desk of the [REDACTED] office

\*There are no known risks to participating in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your position with [REDACTED]

## **Appendix E: Interview Questions – Community Partners**

### **General Information**

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Marital status
4. Children (age, gender)
5. Employment/ position
6. Role Held in Community (if applicable)
7. Length of time living in the community
8. Education
9. Other information

### **Questions**

#### **Involvement with [REDACTED] volunteers**

1. Can you give me an idea of how many [REDACTED] volunteers you have been in contact with over the last 5 years? How much time did you spend with them? How often were your encounters?
2. Describe what your involvement with the volunteers has entailed. (i.e. your role as a community member)
3. What do you think the purpose is of having volunteers coming to [REDACTED]?
4. What expectations do you have of volunteers coming to [REDACTED]?
5. What background support do you have from [REDACTED] respective to your role with volunteers?

#### **Experiences with Volunteers**

1. Could you describe a typical day working with volunteers from [REDACTED]?
2. Tell me about a positive experience that you've had with a volunteer.
3. Tell me about a negative experience that you've had with a volunteer.
4. Describe a volunteer that stands out for you and explain why this experience/volunteer was memorable.
5. Could you describe interactions between volunteers and other people, which you've observed? Were they positive? negative? neutral?

#### **Everyday Life**

1. Could you tell me what happened from the moment volunteers arrived on their first day in [REDACTED] for the program?
2. Could you tell me what happened when you met the volunteers for the first time?
3. Could you describe an important holiday or festival for you/your family/the community? Did the volunteers participate in these festivals?
4. Could you describe some place(s) you may have brought participants to visit outside of [REDACTED]?
5. Could you describe some activities you did with your host participant?
6. Did the volunteers use the local transportation? If not, why don't you think so.
7. If the participant got sick or had an accident, what would you do? Who would you contact if you needed assistance?



### **Relationships**

1. Could you tell me if/how you formed a relationship with any of the volunteers that you hosted in [REDACTED]?
2. Thinking about a volunteer that you developed a relationship with during their stay in [REDACTED], have you maintained that relationship with them in present day? How do you stay in touch?
3. Have you participated in a team or club activity with a volunteer? If so, could you describe this activity for me? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?
4. Choose one typical experience and tell me about what you did with the volunteers in your free time.
5. Could you describe one of your most interesting experiences with the volunteers?

### **Benefits and Challenges**

1. Do you think you have benefitted from having [REDACTED] volunteers in your community?
2. If so, how (economically, culturally, socially)?
3. Have you learned anything from the volunteers? If so, what?
4. What do you think that volunteers have learned from you?
5. Did volunteers bring gifts? If so, what kind of gifts? How did you feel about the gifts? Who were the gifts for? Did anyone comment on the gifts? If so, what did they say?
6. What are benefits you may have experienced we've not yet had the chance to talk about?  
\*We're now going to talk about the challenges and barriers you might have faced with the [REDACTED] volunteers.
7. Could you describe one of your most challenging experiences dealing with the [REDACTED] volunteers (or one of the volunteers) and explain how you dealt with it?
8. Did you experience any cross-cultural differences?
9. Did you experience any communication challenges?
10. Did you experience any economical challenges?
11. What are challenges you may have experienced we've not yet had the chance to talk about?

### **Concluding Questions**

1. Finally, if you could describe the effects (or influences) on your community through the presence of volunteers, what words would you use?
2. What have you changed (in your thinking or actions) from your experiences with the volunteers?
3. If you could recommend any changes about how the [REDACTED] program, what would they be? Or, if you could recommend any changes about how the volunteers work with your community, what would they be?  
\*Is there anything else at all you'd like to share with us about your experiences with the [REDACTED] volunteers?

## **Appendix F: Interview Questions – Host Families**

### **General Information**

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Marital status
4. Children (age, gender)
5. Employment/ position
6. Role Held in Community (if applicable)
7. Length of time living in the community
8. Education
9. Other information

### **Questions**

#### **Involvement with [REDACTED] volunteers**

1. Can you give me an idea of how many [REDACTED] volunteers you have hosted over the past 5 years? How long the typical hosting period has been?
2. Describe what your involvement with volunteers has entailed (i.e. your role as host)
3. What do you think the purpose is of having volunteers coming to [REDACTED]?
4. What expectations do you have of volunteers coming to [REDACTED]?
5. What background support do you have from [REDACTED] to help you with hosting (or working with) volunteers?

#### **Experiences with Volunteers**

1. Could you describe a typical day with volunteers you host from [REDACTED]?
2. Tell me about a positive experience that you've had with a volunteers that you've hosted in your home.
3. Tell me about a negative experience that you've had with a volunteers that you've hosted in your home?
4. Describe a volunteers that stands out for you and explain why this experience/volunteers was memorable.
5. Could you describe interactions between your children and volunteers in your home? Were they positive? negative? neutral?

#### **Everyday Life**

1. Could you tell me what happened from the moment volunteers arrived on their first day in [REDACTED] or the program? in your home? at the [REDACTED]?
2. Could you tell me what happened when you met your host participant for the first time?
3. Could you give me an example of a typical meal (breakfast/lunch/dinner/snack) you would provide?
4. Could you tell me what their reaction was to the food?
5. Could you describe an important holiday or festival for you/your family/the community? Did the volunteers you hosted participate in these festivals?
6. Could you describe some place(s) you brought participants to visit outside of [REDACTED]?
7. Could you describe some activities you did with your host participant?

8. Did the volunteers use the local transportation? If not, why don't you think so.
9. If the participant got sick or had an accident, what would you do? Who would you contact if you needed assistance?

### **Relationships**

1. Could you tell me if/how you formed a relationship with any of the volunteers that you hosted in [REDACTED]?
2. Thinking about a volunteer that you developed a relationship with during their stay in [REDACTED], have you maintained that relationship with them in present day? How do you stay in touch?
3. Have you participated in a team or club activity with a volunteer? If so, could you describe this activity for me? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?
4. Choose one typical experience and tell me about what you did with the volunteers in your free time.
5. Could you describe one of your most interesting experiences with the volunteers?

### **Benefits and Challenges**

1. Do you think you have benefitted from having [REDACTED] volunteers in your community?
2. If so, how (economically, culturally, socially)?
3. Have you learned anything from the volunteers? If so, what?
4. What do you think that volunteers have learned from you?
5. Did volunteers bring gifts? If so, what kind of gifts? How did you feel about the gifts? Did anyone comment on the gifts? If so, what did they say?
6. What are benefits you may have experienced we've not yet had the chance to talk about?  
\*We're now going to talk about the challenges and barriers you might have faced with the [REDACTED] volunteers.
7. Could you describe one of your most challenging experiences dealing with the [REDACTED] volunteers (or one of the volunteers) and explain how you dealt with it?
8. Did you experience any cross-cultural differences?
9. Did you experience any communication challenges?
10. Did you experience any economical challenges?  
What are challenges you may have experienced we've not yet had the chance to talk about?

### **Concluding Questions**

1. Finally, if you could describe the effects (or influences) on your community through the presence of volunteers, what words would you use?
2. What have you changed (in your thinking or actions) from your experiences with the volunteers?
3. If you could recommend any changes about how the [REDACTED] program, what would they be? Or, if you could recommend any changes about how the volunteers work with your community, what would they be?
4. Is there anything else at all you'd like to share with us about your experiences with the [REDACTED] volunteers?

## **Appendix G: Interview Questions – Intermediary Organization**

### **General Information**

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Marital status
4. Children (age, gender)
5. Employment/ position
6. Role Held in Community (if applicable)
7. Length of time living in the community
8. Education
9. Other information

### **Questions**

#### **Involvement with [REDACTED] volunteers**

1. Can you give me an idea of how many [REDACTED] volunteers you have been in contact with over the last 5 years? How much time did you spend with them? How often were your encounters?
2. Describe what your involvement with the volunteers has entailed (i.e. your role as member of the intermediary organization)
3. What do you think the purpose is of having volunteers coming to [REDACTED]?
4. What expectations do you have of volunteers coming to [REDACTED]?
5. What background support do you have to help you with volunteers (or working with volunteers)?

#### **Experiences with Volunteers**

1. Could you describe a typical day working with volunteers from [REDACTED]?
2. Tell me about a positive experience that you've had with a volunteer.
3. Tell me about a negative experience that you've had with a volunteer.
4. Describe a volunteer that stands out for you and explain why this experience/volunteer is memorable.
5. Could you describe interactions between the volunteers and other people, which you've observed? Were they positive? negative? neutral?

#### **Everyday Life**

1. Could you tell me what happened from the moment volunteers arrived on their first day in [REDACTED] for the program?
2. Could you tell me what happened when you met volunteers for the first time?
3. Could you describe an important holiday or festival for you/your family/the community? Did the volunteers participate in these festivals?
4. Could you describe some place(s) you may have brought participants to visit outside of [REDACTED]?
5. Could you describe some activities you did with your host participant?
6. Did the volunteers use the local transportation? If not, why don't you think so.
7. If the participant got sick or had an accident, what would you do? Who would you contact if you needed assistance?

### **Relationships**

1. Could you tell me if/how you formed a relationship with any of the volunteers that you hosted in [REDACTED]?
2. Thinking about a volunteer that you developed a relationship with during their stay in [REDACTED], have you maintained that relationship with them in present day? How do you stay in touch?
3. Have you participated in a team or club activity with a volunteer? If so, could you describe this activity for me? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?
4. Choose one typical experience and tell me about what you did with the volunteers in your free time.
5. Could you describe one of your most interesting experiences with the volunteers?

### **Benefits and Challenges**

1. Do you think you have benefitted from having [REDACTED] volunteers in your community?
2. If so, how (economically, culturally, socially)?
3. Have you learned anything from the volunteers? If so, what?
4. What do you think that volunteers have learned from you?
5. Did volunteers bring gifts? If so, what kind of gifts? Who were the gifts for? How did you feel about the gifts? Did anyone comment on the gifts? If so, what did they say?
6. What are benefits you may have experienced we've not yet had the chance to talk about?

We're now going to talk about the challenges and barriers you might have faced with the [REDACTED] volunteers

7. Could you describe one of your most challenging experiences dealing with the [REDACTED] volunteers (or one of the volunteers) and explain how you dealt with it?
8. Did you experience any cross-cultural differences?
9. Did you experience any communication challenges?
10. Did you experience any economical challenges?
11. What are challenges you may have experienced we've not yet had the chance to talk about?

### **Concluding Questions**

1. Finally, if you could describe the effects (or influences) on your community through the presence of volunteers, what words would you use?
2. What have you changed (in your thinking or actions) from your experiences with the volunteers?
3. If you could recommend any changes about how the [REDACTED] program, what would they be? Or, if you could recommend any changes about how the volunteers work with your community, what would they be?
4. Is there anything else at all you'd like to share with us about your experiences with the [REDACTED] volunteers?

## Curriculum Vitae

**Name:** Vanessa R. Sperduti, OCT

<b>Post-secondary Education and Degrees:</b>	2015-2021	<i>Ph.D., Education</i> Western University London, Ontario, Canada
	2011-2014	<i>M.Ed., Social Cultural Contexts of Education</i> Brock University St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada
	2010-2011	<i>B.Ed., Primary &amp; Junior Education</i> University of Windsor Windsor, Ontario, Canada
	2006-2010	<i>B.A. Hons., Political Science &amp; Spanish</i> University of Windsor Windsor, Ontario, Canada
<b>Related Work Experience:</b>	2018-Pres.	<i>Occasional Teacher</i> (Certification by the OCT) Thames Valley DSB, London, Ontario
		<i>Instructor</i>
	Winter 2019 Winter 2018	- Teaching English Language Learners* - Research in Intercultural Contexts Western University, London, Ontario *Undergraduate Teaching Award (Nominated)
<b>Related Research Experience:</b>	Jan. 2020- Present	Graduate Research Assistant Faculty of Information & Media Studies (FIMS) Western University, London, Ontario

**Recent Publications:**

Smeltzer, S. C., Leon, C., & Sperduti, V. R. (2020). 'You can't throw snowballs Over Zoom!': Understanding service learning reflection via online platforms. *Revista Iberoamericana de Aprendizaje Servicio (RIDAS)*, 10, 101-112.

Seithers, L. C., Sivasubramaniam, M., & Sperduti, V. R. (2020). Negotiating the virtual conference space: Reflections from new and emerging scholars on vCIES 2020. *Comparative Education Review*, 64(4), 765-768.

Larsen, M. A., & Sperduti, V. R. (2019). Comparative and International Education / Éducation comparée et internationale [special issue]. *Scholarly and Research Communications*, 10(2), 1-14.

Sperduti, V. R. (2017). Internationalization as westernization in higher education. *Journal of Comparative and Higher Education*, 9, 9-12.