Partnership & Place-Based Community Engagement: Competencies and Contributions of Professionals Within an Emerging Field

by

Justin P. Dandoy

Bachelor of Arts, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, 2007

Master of Arts, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, 2012

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of Pittsburgh

2020

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This dissertation was presented

by

Justin P. Dandoy

It was defended on

July 23, 2020

and approved by

Thomas Akiva, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Education

Char Gray-Sorensen, Director, Strategic Initiatives & Operations, Campus Compact of New

York & Pennsylvania

Dissertation Advisor: Linda DeAngelo, PhD, Associate Professor, Administrative and Policy

Studies

Partnership & Place-Based Community Engagement: Competencies and Contributions of Professionals Within an Emerging Field

Justin P. Dandoy, EdD

University of Pittsburgh, 2020

As institutions of higher education bolster their commitment to institutionalizing community engagement and strengthen their efforts to intentionally connect and partner with local communities, there is an increased call to focus on a place-based community engagement strategy. Colleges and universities look to Community Engagement Professionals or (CEPs) to initiate and lead this approach. The University of Pittsburgh has initiated such as strategy, facilitated and supported by the place-based CEPs within the Office of Community & Governmental Relationships and the associated neighborhood-based Community Engagement Centers. Although there is research which presents the professional competencies for CEPs in general, the literature does not directly address the unique work of the place-based professionals within this greater field.

Through Participatory Action Research (PAR), utilizing an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach, this study examines the work of partnership focused and democratically oriented place-based CEPs at the University of Pittsburgh to gain a deeper understanding of the specific competencies necessary for supporting place-based community engagement. Initiated through an agreement with the Office of Community & Governmental Relationships, 6 place-based CEPs at the University of Pittsburgh participated in a multi-stage Participatory Action Research process, which included individual pre and post-group session journal entries and a five-phase, multi-activity Appreciative Inquiry working session which was held virtually. The researcher coded the data using a thematic analysis. This study presents 5 place-based CEP professional competencies,

which are identified as *Relationship with Self*, *Relationship with Place*, *Institutional Relationships*, *Personal & Professional Relationships* and *Interrelationships*. These competencies are connected as part of a larger relationship-oriented framework which is viewed and interpreted through both the CEPs individual understanding of Self and Place.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Julie Dandoy. She is the reason I am an educator. She has instilled in me a love for my community and a joy in serving it. Without her influence, I would not be doing this work. I know that she continues to look down on me as I complete my degree. Mom, I continue to feel your love and guiding hand.

Acknowledgements

I would like to start by thanking my research advisor, Dr. Linda DeAngelo, for going above and beyond to support me during my doctoral program and research. This has been quite a journey, and one that has taken us down many different roads along the way, and I am grateful that I had you in my corner to help me find my voice and confidence in my writing. You challenged and supported me at each step throughout this journey, and I know that, if you had not become my advisor in year two of the program, my experience would never have been the same. I am who I am as a scholar because of you.

I would also like to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Thomas Akiva and Dr. Char Gray-Sorensen. Dr. Akiva, thank you for sticking by me through the ups and downs of my research process. I am forever grateful for the extra time that you gave to me as I navigated my dissertation. Your passion for your work (and the fun you bring to it!) has been an inspiration for me since on-ramp. Dr. Gray-Sorensen, you are one of my first mentors in the field of higher education community engagement, and without your guidance along my professional journey, I would not be the CEP that I am now. You have been such a great influence for me since my first days a new professional at W&J (even before!). Thank you for your willingness to engage as a member of my committee. I cannot imagine this research without you.

To my many professional colleagues along the way. First, to all of my friends at Washington & Jefferson College, especially Eva Chatterjee-Sutton, my former supervisor who helped me to grow as a professional and who supported me as I became a practitioner scholar, Dr. Ketwana Schoos, my EdD mentor who guided me through every little step along the way, and Rachel Stalker: We worked together at W&J and learned together at Pitt! Without our frequent

processing sessions, I do not know how I would have managed as my career changed. I want to also thank my current (and original!) supervisor at Penn State Greater Allegheny, Lorraine Craven. Thank you for being such a great friend and mentor for all these years, and for encouraging me to do what I needed to do to successfully complete this doctoral program.

To my many friends, colleagues and fellow students at the University of Pittsburgh. My original ARCO-mates, you all helped me through some pretty difficult times, and I continued to look to you as an inspiration to complete this work. To my fellow Dr. DeAngelo advisees, thank you for your help and guidance along the way. To the CEPs at the University of Pittsburgh, you are all amazing and you do phenomenal work. I am so inspired by who you are, and I know that my personal practice within our field will never be the same after having worked with you. And to Dr. Lina Dostilio. I could never have expected that, when I emailed you as a graduate student a decade ago about an internship, you would end up being my most influential professional mentor, an inspiration, and such a wonderful friend. Thank you for the many coffees, calls, text messages, emails, educational opportunities, professional opportunities, and so much more. I am so proud and grateful to have your influence throughout my professional and scholarly story.

To my family. To my father, Robert Dandoy, for so many things beyond words. You and mom are the reason that I do what I do and the reason that I have accomplished what I have accomplished. I am so thankful for the privilege to be your son. To my sister, Jessica Matonak, and her family for being in my corner, and for her help with my writing down the home stretch. And finally, to my wife, Correy Dandoy and our daughter Cecilia. When I started this program, I feel like we were just two crazy kids and I am so grateful that you encouraged me to take this step. Now that this is coming to a close, we are parents! Thank you for all the extra things you had to

do along the way to make sure I was successful. This accomplishment is all of ours. Mine, yours and Cece's. You are my people. This is for you.

1.0 Introduction to the Problem of Practice

Little is written on the professionalization, dispositions, or development of CEPs, and rarely are CEPs an explicit audience of community engagement literature (Dostilio, 2016, p. 377).

1.1 Introduction

When compared to the long history of higher education, the formalization of community engagement as a functional and professional field is comparably recent. However, the practices and pedagogies of community engagement are not new to higher education. The public purpose of higher education, that which promotes a democratic society, dates to colonial colleges. In the 1980s and 1990s, there were increased higher education community engagement efforts which were enacted largely through the development and expansion of formalized service-learning (Hartley, 2011; Welch, 2016). During that same time, groups such as the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) and the foundational iterations of Campus Compact began to promote and support student community service and social action (Welch, 2016). This has led to the more recent history of the field, where there have been robust and comprehensive efforts throughout higher education to promote the institutionalization of community engagement, strategically aligning and coordinating the aforementioned practices, as well as others (Sandmann, Thornton & Jaeger, 2009). Due to this robust history and increased strategic effort to make community engagement a formalized field in the greater higher education landscape, practitioners have emerged and have

come together who have specialized in this work. These individuals are identified in the field as Community Engagement Professionals or CEPs.

Using a "big-tent framing" of community engagement, the practitioners of this work can be found in, "service-learning, student civic development, community-university partnership work, participatory research, advocacy and activist scholarship, and others" (Dostilio & Perry, 2017). Despite the varying and disparate nature of the roles and orientations of CEPs within this inclusive framing of community engagement, "knowledge, skills, and dispositions" are shared amongst the greater group. These shared qualities have recently been presented as CEP professional competencies (Dostilio, 2017a). Although the CEP professional competencies have been presented, during their development and now moving forward, new questions have emerged which emphasized an increased understanding of how these competencies relate to certain subsets of CEPs. Are there processes, procedures or situations that make the work of certain CEPs unique? Do certain CEPs have and/or need knowledge, skills, or dispositions that are specific to their specialization? Questions like these have led to a call from CEPs who specialize in partnership focused place-based community engagement to seek out an increased understanding of the "knowledge, skills, and dispositions" which make them and their work unique to the profession.

The *Preliminary Competency Model for Community Engagement Professionals* (Dostilio, Benenson, Chamberlin, Crossland, Farmer-Hanson, Hernandez, 2017), which emerged from the CEP competency efforts and serves as a framework, was not intended to be exhaustive. It is meant to be foundational guidance which can lead to a further understanding of more specific elements of the field. There is an opportunity to explore the work and understand the perspectives of CEPs who specialize in place, utilizing the competency model as a lens. The following study is an effort

to build upon this foundational framework and support the needs of the professionals within the field of partnership focused place-based community engagement.

1.1.1 Key Terminology & Concepts

There are a few terms and concepts presented below which frame important background information for this study. Some of these terms have several varying definitions in the field and have been used when referencing very general topics, but at the same time are also used in delineating specific concepts with important characteristics. This variance emphasizes the importance of clarifying these terms for use in this study. For the purpose of this research, the concepts below can be defined and understood using the following definitions and context from the field:

- *Community Engagement.* "The collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2018).

- *Community Engagement Professional (CEP)* – Community Engagement Professionals or CEPs (Dostilio, 2016; Dostilio & McReynolds, 2015; Jacoby & Mutascio, 2010; McReynolds & Shields, 2015) are defined as "professional staff whose primary job is to support and administer community-campus engagement" (Dostilio & Perry, 2017). This concise definition captures the variety of staff, faculty and administrators who facilitate this area of work. The type and orientation of CEPs who are a part of an institution vary according to that institution's mission, vision, strategy, and purpose, among other foundational elements.

- *Place-Based Community Engagement.* A specialized type of higher education community engagement, place-based engagement is defined as, "long-term university-wide commitment to partner with local residents, organizations, and other leaders to focus equally on campus and community impact within a clearly defined geographic area" (Yamamura & Koth, 2018, p. 18).

- *Democratic Engagement.* This type of higher education civically-oriented community engagement is, "framed as inclusive, collaborative, and problem-oriented work in which academics share knowledge generating tasks with the public and involve community partners as participants in public problem-solving" (Saltmarsh, Hartley, Clayton, 2009, p. 9).

- *Partnership.* Also termed "community-university partnership," partnership can be defined as "ongoing, long-term relationships in which each partner brings individual goals, needs, assets and strategies, and through collaborative processes blends them into common goals and outcomes." (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2018)

Although these definitions help to frame the background of the study, in order to establish a greater foundation for the research, it is important to define the scope of the work of CEPs. By clearly outlining the CEP role and the purpose of their work, it becomes more evident who this study is meant to support and how it fits into their efforts. Welch (2016) provides a structure to comprehensively understand community engagement work by breaking it down into the purpose of community engagement, platforms for community engagement and programs of community engagement. While the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2018) definition

previously stated defines what community engagement is in the context of this study, more can be said as to why this work is important.

Welch (2016) frames the purpose of higher education community engagement, stating that it, "reflects and combines the academic and civic missions of the campus to create a new paradigm of cooperation that embodies the democratic values of collaboration, reciprocity, and equal respect for the knowledge, experience, and assets that students, staff, faculty members and community partners bring to advancing knowledge and community building" (p. 3). While this purpose explains the "why" of community engagement, the platforms and the programs of community engagement explain the "how" and the "what" respectively. The platforms are the system or structures of community engagement which have been established and institutionalized by the college or university. In the case of this study, the platform of community engagement is reflected as a place-based strategy. And finally, the programs of community engagement are the efforts that are supported by CEPs. The programs of community engagement work are diverse and often disparate in nature, which is why CEP defined previously as someone who supports community engagement work, is so broad and inclusive. These programs are curricular, such as service-learning or work through undergraduate research, or co-curricular, initiated through efforts alternative breaks or volunteer service. However, what ties these programs together, and what brings the CEPs who facilitate these programs together, is that most of these programs work through the same institutionalized platform to meet the same purpose. This study is aimed at supporting the individuals who facilitate programs through a place-based platform in order to meet the purpose of higher education community engagement.

1.2 Background to the Problem Area

1.2.1 CEP Professional Competencies

As higher education institutions have begun to institutionalize community engagement, cohesive, strategic approaches have started to emerge, bringing together the CEPs administering this work. The literature and best practices surrounding the efforts of these professionals has grown significantly and there is now a comprehensive and robust understanding of theory and practice of the field. CEPs began building a community within this network of professionals and scholarly practitioners. As the CEP community expanded and matured, a need emerged to better understand the profession. Campus Compact (2019) initiated an effort to better understanding the work of CEPs in 2015. Two years later, Campus Compact published *The Community Engagement Professional in Higher Education: A Competency Model for an Emergent Field* (Dostilio, 2017a). Dostilio and Perry (2017) reflected in that publication that this work was an effort to, "systemically uncover the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that the literature suggest are necessary to promote the practices of community-campus engagement," (p. 2). Not only did this larger work provide a model for CEPs which outlined the professional competencies, broken down as the knowledge, skills and abilities, dispositions, and critical commitments (Dostilio, 2017a), but the contributors to the project provided additional insight as to how this model applies to key components and practices of community engagement, such as program administration and evaluation (Farmer-Hanson, 2017), institutionalization of community engagement (Weaver & Kellogg, 2017), and community-campus partnerships (Martin & Crossland, 2017), among others.

The creators of the competency model deliberately made it inclusive and encompassing of the many orientations and variations of CEPs. The intention of the model was to outline that which

is shared within the profession. Dostilio (2017b) writes, "…our professional identify is associated with the purposes we serve rather than the job titles we occupy" (p. 8). However, the model was not made to be conclusive either. This competency model was to be foundational for the profession, not a ridged and permanent construct.

The developers of the model understood that there was room for further discussion and a deeper understanding of its various aspects. One area of the profession where a need has emerged for further analysis is community engagement which is place-based. Kuttner, Byrne, Schmit, and Munro (2019) write, "The competency model is a work in progress. As it stands, the competency model does not fully reflect the work of place-based CEPs or the hybrid roles they play in bridging community and university spaces" (p. 133). Yamamura and Koth (2019) echo that claim: "The growing use of place-based community engagement in higher education and the skills needed to lead and work within this subfield of community engagement invite community engagement professionals to further develop competencies in several significant areas that are less conspicuous in the current competency model" (p. 182). As place-based initiatives increase within the greater high education community engagement movement, these calls to deepen the understanding of competencies for place-based CEPs will continue to grow as well.

1.2.2 Problem of Practice Site

The University of Pittsburgh is an institution which has adopted community engagement at its core. The University of Pittsburgh's Mission Statement speaks to its contributions to its communities and the most recent strategic plan, the "Plan for Pitt," focuses on strengthening communities, "by expanding engagements," and, "supporting collaborations" (Plan for Pitt, 2016). It is the intention for this mission and vision permeate the entirety of the institution, but specific

and deliberate efforts of community engagement are conducted through the Office of Community and Governmental Relations (CGR). Through CGR, and the numerous institutional entities which are supported through and partner with this office, the University of Pittsburgh has moved forward a strategy which utilizes a place-based approach for community engagement that focuses on long-term partnerships. There is a staff of Community Engagement Professionals in CGR dedicated to these place-based partnership efforts.

The Pitt Neighborhood Commitments are an example of place-based initiatives at the University of Pittsburgh: "Pitt Neighborhood Commitments build stronger communities and a stronger University based on long-term place-based partnerships. In partnership with local communities, the University is making a minimum 15-year commitment of investment, infrastructure, programming, and dedicated staff in neighborhoods such as Homewood and the Hill District" (Pitt Neighborhood Commitments, n.d.). This effort, as well as others within and in partnership with CGR, reflect an approach of community engagement which is "place-based," defined previously. The CEPs in the CGR are the primary facilitators of this work.

In addition to specializing in place-based community engagement, the University of Pittsburgh also utilizes the work of the CGR to focus on supporting collaborations and partnerships. The partnerships which are a part of community engagement, otherwise referred to as community-university partnerships, are an important piece of what differentiates community engagement from community outreach (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2018), democratic approaches from technocratic orientations (Saltmarsh, Hartley & Clayton, 2009), and unidirectional activities from collaborations (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008). These relationships are essential to the work of the University of Pittsburgh GCR.

1.3 Problem of Practice

Mirroring the national trends in community engagement, the University of Pittsburgh has several offices and units that support community engagement, often centered on certain audiences, such as students, or activities, such as undergraduate community-engaged research, and a number of CEPs within these offices and units. There also may be future development of infrastructure to support faculty development and involvement within certain activities. However, CGR remains the *primary* unit dedicated to place-based engagement and democratic forms of engagement in which they broker partnerships and collaborations to support the University's participation in public problem-solving with a diversity of other civic partners. In other words, they are the CEPs at the University of Pittsburgh who specialize in partnership focused place-based community engagement. Like other CEPs in the field who have this same specialization, the CEPs who facilitate and support the work of the University of Pittsburgh CGR have begun to question and seek to understand the unique value of their work. This presents the problem of practice: The work of the place-based CEPs who operate within University of Pittsburgh Office of Community & Governmental Relations is unique within the greater university community engagement strategy. This work cannot be done by any community engaged faculty, staff or student leader. Therefore, there is a need to determine and more clearly understand the competencies necessary for these specific individuals to support this partnership focused place-based community engagement work. Without specific competencies, these place-based CEPs are not able to fully strategize as a unit, they are not able to more effectively support the greater institutional community engagement strategy, and they are not able to develop to more effectively support their unique work.

1.4 Democratic Engagement

Undergirding this Problem of Practice, the professional competencies of CEPs and the engagement work conducted at the University of Pittsburgh is a concept which was defined previously in this chapter: democratic engagement. As the field of community engagement has changed over the years, the democratic engagement framework emerged to understand, support and direct this change. The University of Pittsburgh has adopted this framework as part of their conceptualization of this work. Democratic community engagement, or an approach to higher education community engagement which has a specific framing of community relationships and knowledge production, a particular epistemology and political dimension, and focuses on an explicit outcome of community-change, is a common thread throughout this research. It is vital to the understanding of this study.

As the research and practice of partnership and place-based community engagement has grown, it has done so embracing principles of democratic civic engagement. Democratically oriented community engagement has begun to permeate the greater higher education community engagement landscape, and has direct ties to partnerships, place-based engagement, and the competencies of the professionals within the field. Saltmarsh and Hartley (2011) align partnerships within a democratic framework with many of the same qualities of positive partnerships, describing these partnerships as inclusive, collaborative, and problem-oriented, where there is mutual knowledge generation with the purpose of public problem solving. Martin and Crossland (2017) take it one step further, by connecting democratic engagement directly to the transformational partnership theory and how that relates to CEPs: "A partnership built on the framework of democratic engagement will be much more likely to embody transformational

qualities (2003)" (p. 166). Thus, knowledge of theories pertaining to democratic engagement supports a democratic approach to partnership development.

Yamamura and Koth (2018) connect democratic engagement to place: "[Place-based community engagement] provides a comprehensive strategy for universities and communities to more democratically partner with each other through long-term efforts focused on distinct geographic areas" (p. 81). They directly align place-based approaches as democratically oriented. Dostilio (2017c) writes extensively on the connection of democratic engagement to neighborhood-emplaced community engagement, describing it as the "animating paradigm" (p. 26). Regardless of the specific topic within to this study, whether community-university partnerships, place-based community engagement, or the core competencies of CEPs, there is an interwoven emphasis on a democratic-orientation of the work.

Democratic engagement permeates the study itself, both the setting/site and the methodology. As Jameson, Clayton, and Jaeger (2011) conclude, there is extensive democratic potential in community engaged scholarship, the type of researched utilized by this study in the form of Participatory Action Research. Although the methodological approach for this study does not work directly with campus and community participants like most engaged scholarship, and so there is not a direct focus in the methodology on the relationship between the campus and the community, the result of the research still emphasizes epistemology that knowledge is co-created and that there is a shared authority of that knowledge creation among all the participants (Saltmarsh et al, 2009). And the result of the work will support those professionals who are utilizing a democratic orientation in their work. By aiding the CEPs in the clarification of their contributions to this space, that will be able to aid in greater community change that results from the co-created knowledge.

11

In summary, by framing the Problem of Practice itself, with a democratic orientation, we can have a more specific understanding of the type of community engagement that is being addresses through this research. In saying that this research will provide an understanding of the contributions and competencies of CEPs who specialize in place and partnership-focused community engagement, it must be understood that community engagement in this form has a democratic orientation.

1.5 Significance of Study

The University of Pittsburgh has been making strategic efforts to institutionalize democratic community engagement. Robust practices of community engagement have been prevalent throughout the efforts of numerous campus stakeholders, including through the various colleges and departments in both academic and student affairs. The Office of Community and Governmental Relations as also been an essential facilitator of this work. However, as the institution moves forward with strategic community engagement efforts, CGR and the professionals within and in partnership with that office are still attempting to find their place in this strategy and, as the stakeholders who focus specifically on place and partnership, their unique contributions to this work. By engaging in Participatory Action Research with members of the CGR team who specialize in partnership focused place-based community engagement, the research group can unveil a more detailed understanding of the work that they are doing, how they understand their contribution, and their professional knowledge and experience that makes these contributions possible. The data can then be analyzed to understand the unique role that CGR can play in the development and support of place-based partnership community engagement at the

University of Pittsburgh. Further, this study can then provide insight into how Community Engagement Professionals throughout this specialized area of the field can support democratically oriented placed-based partnership work.

Beyond the research itself, this study can provide insight into the use of this specific Appreciative Inquiry approach, including the procedures, tools, questions, activities, etc. as a process for understanding teams of higher education CEPs. Many of the elements which are being utilized as part of this study have been knitted together and synthesized from other scholarly work and professional practices in the field. However, the specific methodology is unique to this study. If this approach to Appreciative Inquiry is demonstrated as being highly effective for gathering the necessary information to answer the research question, these processes and procedures can be utilized by other teams of CEPs, opening a door to additional data which can be gathered around partnership focused place-based community engagement.

1.6 Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the unique contribution, and the core competencies needed to make that contribution, of community engagement professionals who specialize in place-based community engagement at the University of Pittsburgh. To support this purpose, a team of CEPs connected with the Office of Community & Governmental Relations at the University of Pittsburgh was analyzed. The following question was asked to help address the purpose of this study:

- What are the specific competencies, including knowledge, skills, and dispositions, for CEPs who specialize in partnership focused place-based engagement at the University of Pittsburgh?

Transformative participatory action research (PAR) was utilized to address the research question. Appreciative Inquiry (AI), a model for organizational development, was highly influential to the methods of this study and AI activities were utilized to facilitate the research process.

The research for this study took place at the University of Pittsburgh, a large, state-related, urban, research institution with approximately 26,000 undergraduate students and 10,000 graduate students, which includes the Oakland campus as well as the University's regional campuses in the PA cities of Bradford, Greensburg, Johnstown, and Titusville. The main institution is located in Pittsburgh, in Allegheny County, the largest city in Western Pennsylvania, comprised of a population of approximately 300,000. The majority of the University of Pittsburgh is in the Pittsburgh neighborhood of Oakland, but, in addition to the aforementioned regional campuses, the University also has buildings and/or operations in a number of other Pittsburgh neighborhoods, including community engagement centers in Homewood and the Hill District. The primary setting was the Pittsburgh-based sites, as the CEPs who are part of the University of Pittsburgh CGR work within greater Pittsburgh and the areas adjacent to the City. In the place-based nature of their work, this is that "context of Place" which will be referenced throughout this research.

Within the University of Pittsburgh setting, those involved in this study are most directly situated within the Office of Community and Governmental Relations (CGR). The CGR, "maintains relationships with all levels of government, including Federal, Commonwealth, County, and City, while also leading Pitt's community-facing work through collaboration,

communication, and facilitation of University engagement with its broader communities"
(University of Pittsburgh, n.d.). The staff of the CGR is comprised of several CEPs who specialize
in partnership focused place-based engagement and who would be the primary stakeholders in this
study. Thus, the results of this study would have the greatest impact on the efforts of the CGR.

Participatory Action Research, was the method selected for this study, due to the reflection
of the concepts of democratic engagement in the language and practice of PAR. The site and setting
for this research are highly influenced by democratic community engagement, the conceptual
framework for this study. The community engagement strategy of the University of Pittsburgh and
the efforts of the CGR have an embedded emphasis on democratically oriented community
engagement, including the co-creation of knowledge and positive social and community change
as a part of that knowledge creation. These are also key elements of Participatory Action Research.

The participants of the study were those professionals within the CGR who specialize in
partnership focused place-based community engagement or what is described internally to the
CGR as the CE Team. This research group participated in Appreciative Inquiry pre and post-work,
which includes individual journaling, as well as the main Appreciative Inquiry research session,
an afternoon-long, virtual, multistage facilitated group working session which includes full and
small group activities, evaluation, brainstorming and strategy. Data was gathered from the
individual journals and group session, including from group and individual notes as well as
observations, and analyzed utilizing Campus Compact's Project on the Community Engagement
Professional (Dostilio, 2017a) as well as the *Place-Based Community Engagement Professional
Model*.

2.0 Literature Review

There are three focus areas in the body of literature relevant to this study: community-university partnerships, place-based community engagement and the literature on competencies of community engagement professionals. This literature review focuses on how all of these areas relate to one another and contribute to the greater body of democratically oriented higher education community engagement research. There is certainly some crossover among these various areas of the literature. There is research on partnerships which are place-based. There is literature about professional competencies for CEPs who specialize in partnerships. These bodies of research, especially at these intersections, frame this study. However, what this literature review will present is the gap in the literature which will be addressed by this study. Although there is crossover, little research has been conducted on the space where all three areas come together: professional competencies for community engagement professionals that specialize in partnership focused place-based community engagement.

2.1 Community-University Partnerships

The body of literature that influences this study includes community engagement as defined in Chapter 1: that which includes community-university partnerships. It is a goal of this study to understanding CEPs unique contribution to democratically oriented community engagement partnerships. Therefore, the body of literature on community-university partnerships influences this research, in that the area of "partnership" is one of the spaces where the work of

these CEPs is embedded and highly influences place-based work. If this research can unveil contributions of CEPs to this space, as well as the competencies needed in order to effectively function within this space, then this body of literature can provide vital foundational understandings of this problem of practice.

As will be explored further in the literature on CEP competencies, the research which focuses on the actual people, the CEPs who function within a partnership space, is fairly new, so the more robust body of literature which influences this area of the study is the more general literature on the field in which they work. This literature on community-university of partnerships has become more robust over the last few decades. By looking at the research on community university partnerships, we can make connections between the work itself and the CEPs who conduct that work.

Since the literature on community-university partnerships has emerged, much of the research has be devoted to focus on the qualities of positive or effective partnerships based on empirical evidence. In their research from their own work within a service-learning context, Gugerty and Swezey (1996) discussed two levels of campus-community "relationships," comparing an institutionalized approach with one where a narrower collaboration between a community-based organization and a specific campus classroom or classrooms, department(s) or office(s). The CEPs from the University of Pittsburgh which will take part in this study function in both partnership spaces referenced by Gugerty and Swezey (1996). In either type of collaboration, Gugerty and Swezey (1996) clearly outline elements of the partnership which include shared goals, needs, assets, sustainability and power, "not as a dominant partner but as valued contributor to the community development process" (p. 104). Beere (2009) analyzed the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement application data to present a comprehensive

17

overview of partnerships derived from the perspectives of the institutions conducting this work, stating that partnerships include formal or informal, large or small, short or long term, reciprocal relationships between two or more individuals, groups, or organizations with a mutually understood purpose and shared goals. Beere's (2009) study is particularly relevant to the CEPs engaged in this work at the University of Pittsburgh which will be part of this study, due to the University of Pittsburgh's participation in the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement application process. The characteristics of positive community-university partnerships throughout the literature enlighten this study, in that for partnerships to exist in this way, stakeholders in the partnerships, including CEPs, need to embody these characteristics.

By looking at the literature on the elements of promising partnerships, there is the potential to make deductions about the stakeholders in those partnerships. For example, both aforementioned descriptions of partnerships include shared goals, so it could be surmised that community goal setting is part of the "knowledge" that is necessary for CEPs. Another example is the previous reference in the literature to mutuality and power, so it could be understood that the ability to navigate relationships and to understand compromise and collaboration is an important characteristic of CEPs.

Enos and Morton (2003) built on the literature surrounding campus-community partnerships when they introduced a theory that utilized the characteristics of effective partnerships from a review the literature and practice and further outlined a process for the development of these partnerships. As part of a larger collection of empirical research on service-learning partnerships, Enos and Morton's (2003) work adapted theories of leadership to construct a theory on partnership development, introducing the language of "transactional vs transformational," which differentiated the roles, goals, purposes, identities, and other criteria for the different types

18

of "relationships" (p. 25). The transformative relationships that they discussed, those which have a larger meaning beyond individual interests, critically examine institutional values, and lead to a new and ever-developing nature of the partnership, mirror partnership frameworks, including Gugerty and Swezey (1996) and Beere (2009) mentioned previously, and stated the richer and more meaningful outcomes that would come as a result of these types of relationships. Because Enos and Morton (2003) focus on how stakeholders develop partnerships, this provides meaningful information on the contribution of CEPs, one of the goals of this study, such as engaging and assisting in the facilitation of mutually rewarding exchanges, organizational literacy, and an ability to navigate loosely coupled institutions, among other contributions. In this study, questions will be asked about the development of the partnership, which will present the contributions of all stakeholders, including the CEPs involved.

2.2 Place-Based Community Engagement

As mentioned previously, the literature on higher education *place-based* community engagement, as defined in Chapter 1, is newly emergent in the greater body of literature on higher education community engagement. The literature on this approach is new, because the concept is a new trend, at least to higher education, and it started with the expansion and development of community-university partnerships. Welch (2016) bridges the concepts of place-based community engagement and partnerships: "Community partnerships have traditionally been course-based, consisting of short-term experiences… Institutions of higher education and partners are now conceptualizing and implementing long-term partnerships in which colleges and universities have a physical presence in specific neighborhoods" (p. 201). Institutions were now connecting

community-university partnership work to a more specific space: Geography. Dostilio (2017c) states, "Geographically focused approaches to community engagement became particularly relevant as a means to focus partnership work and its underlying infrastructure" (p. 27). The research on higher education place-based community engagement has been influenced by, and have emerged from, areas of research on these geographically focused approaches.

In an essay on neighborhood-based community engagement centers, Dostilio (2017c) outlined a concept review of geographically focused frameworks, stewardship of place, anchor institutions, and metropolitan universities, which are not mutually exclusive, but do have numerous similarities. She uses these frameworks to provide an understand of institutions which are *in* a place (place-based) and, how these place-based institutions can function as being *of* a place (emplaced), and then provided four examples of higher education neighborhood-emplaced centers, or those whose, "community engagement efforts are informed by a sense of place… and as a result reflect the context, setting, and meaning made of that setting by those who live, work, and seek to influence that location" (p. 30). These emplaced centers reflect the intended work of the CEPs who specialize in place and partnership in the University of Pittsburgh CGR, especially those within the neighborhood centers, and this work can enlighten important characteristics that are relevant to that work.

Dostilio (2017c) offers up several elements of this work that can influence this study: (1) The institution should reflect and respond to the place's community development processes in a collaborative way with both university and community stakeholders (2) the activities that take place as part of the partnership initiatives of the institution should be developed with an understanding and approach of democratic civic engagement and inclusivity and (3) the staff of the centers should be able to operate as "boundary spanners." These elements reflect specific

knowledge (promising practices of community development, democratic engagement), skills (collaboration) and dispositions (inclusivity), and a direct reference is made to the staff of these efforts (CEPs) as boundary spanners, which is defined as, "the ability to build relationships that navigate and knit together the cultures and practices of community and campus in order to achieve collaborative goals" (Dostilio, 2017c, p. 34). This is a clear statement of skill needed for this work. Although the Dostilio (2017c) essay still mostly articulates the elements of a geographic framework in general, connections specifically to place-based CEPs and their knowledge, skills, dispositions and contributions can still be made.

The literature on anchor institutions provides important foundational research for this study as well. Yamamura and Koth (2018) call upon universities, specifically anchor institutions in this case, to, "expansively leverage their resources to better address the needs of their urban communities." The Democracy Initiative (n.d.) defines anchor institutions as, "enterprises such as universities and hospitals that are rooted in their local communities by mission, invested capital, or relationships to customers, employees, and vendors. As place-based entities that control vast economic, human, intellectual, and institutional resources, anchor institutions have the potential to bring crucial, and measurable, benefits to local children, families, and communities." Although the literature on the work of anchor institutions is extensive on *what is being done* by anchor institutions, there is little on the approaches of leaders and individuals. However, by looking at the efforts of anchor institution stakeholders in general, a comparison can be made to higher education place-based CEPs.

Rubin and Rose (2015) presented case studies of anchor institutions, many which are situated as higher education partnerships, and offer up a number of recommendations for anchor institutions and their leaders: Leaders can serve as facilitator, convener, trainers, technical

assistants, consultants, and other inferred roles; Institutions can leverage resources, incubate business, and build community organization capacity. The Democracy Initiative (Dubb, McKinley & Howard, 2013; Sladek, 2017) has been responsible for presenting a plethora of research on anchor institutions. Dubb et al (2013) initiated a survey of 75 leaders of anchor institutions, national nonprofit organizations, federal agencies, and community organizations to study the role of anchor institutions in building community wealth and community economic development, and to build an "Anchor Dashboard," a tool for how institutions can form more strategic economic and social relationships with local communities, especially those that are low income. Sladek (2017) expanded on that research and use of the dashboard through engaging a cohort of higher education partners in the dashboard process. This study provides robust examples of anchor institution partnership initiatives that can be a model for CEP skills and contributions.

The literature on geographically oriented engagement had created the groundwork for the more recent specific literature on place-based community engagement. Yamamura and Koth (2018, 2019) have done the most recent and robust research that addresses this specific topic. In a collective case study approach including case-analysis and cross analysis of well-established place-based community engagement at Drexel University, Loyola University Maryland, San Diego State University, Seattle University and the University of San Diego, Yamamura and Koth (2018) outlined the key principles of place-based community engagement as a *Geographic Focus, Equal Emphasis on Campus and Community Impact, Long-Term Vision and Commitment, University-Wide Engagement That Animates the Mission and Develops the Institution and Drawing Upon the Concept of Collective Impact*. This definition and connected concepts are outlined in Table 1.

Like the literature on partnerships, this work on place-based engagement focuses on elements of this work in general, not on the professionals leading this change effort. Although this study provides guidance on potential knowledge of CEPs, like collective impact, skills such as program development, etc., it does not explicitly identify competencies or contributions of the *professionals* in this setting. Beyond this study, there is an increased reflection of place-based community engagement in higher education being addressed through the most recent literature, but the next step is still missing: a focus on the professionals which execute this work.

Table 1 Place-based Community Engagement (Yamamura & Koth, 2018)

Definition	Key Concept	Phases		
A long-term university-wide commitment to partner with local residents, organizations, and other leaders to focus equally on campus and community impact within a clearly defined geographic area	1. A geographic focus 2. Equal emphasis on campus and community impact 3. Long-term vision and commitment 4. University-wide engagement that animates the mission and develops the institution 5. Drawing upon the concept of collective impact	**Phase 1: Exploration** • Catalyst • Leadership • Engaging campus and community • Geographic considerations: Identifying and exploring place • Organizational structures and systems: Key questions	**Phase 2: Development** • Programs and partnerships: Experimentation • Resources and funding: Increasing capacity • Organizational structures and personnel: Building infrastructure	**Phase 3: Sustaining** • Geographic considerations: Responding to neighborhood change • Programs and partnerships: Moving toward sustainability • Resources and funding: Maturation of sources and greater stability of funding • Organizational structures and personnel: Succession and change management

2.3 Community Engagement Professional Competencies

Although there is limited work on the professionals that support community-university partnerships and/or place-based community engagement, there is emergent work on CEPs in general. Community engagement comes in various forms and practices and is situated through numerous locations with a wide spectrum of differing stakeholders. Community engagement takes place in the curricular, the cocurricular, by faculty, by administrators, by students, locally to internationally. Due to this sporadic and varying nature of community engagement, there has not been a unified understanding of this work, specifically of the people who support this work, until recent years. Community Engagement Professionals or CEPs (Dostilio, 2016; Dostilio & McReynolds, 2015; Jacoby & Mutascio, 2010; McReynolds & Shields, 2015) are defined as "professional staff who primary job is to support and administer community-campus engagement" (Dostilio & Perry, 2017). This concise definition captures the variety of staff, faculty and administrators who facilitate this area of work. It is this more all-encompassing and inclusive understanding of the profession that is addressed through the literature.

Although there were preexisting efforts to understand the professionals facilitating and supporting community engagement work, such as the resources for professional development by McReynolds and Shields (2015), *The Community Engagement Professional in Higher Education: A Competency Model for an Emergent Field* outlined and built upon those efforts to better understand the competencies of CEPs (Dostilio, 2017a). The *Preliminary Competency Model for Community Engagement Professionals* (Dostilio, Benenson, Chamberlin, Crossland, Farmer-Hanson & Hernandez, 2017) was the specific model which emerged from that process. It is this competency model, and information provided through the companion guide, which will aid in

analyzing the data obtained through the study. Their research was conducted in multiple stages, starting with a literature review across seven areas: managing change within higher education, institutionalizing community engagement, faculty development, student civic development and learning, cultivating high-quality partnerships, critical practice and program administration and evaluation. From this literature review, distinct competencies were identified, ranked and moved into functional areas. Participants from conference sessions then participated in a pilot study survey, and then were brought back together in a focus-group style conversation. The model then went through a second refinement via survey to members of Campus Compact, which resulted in the final competency model.

Building upon this model, Dostilio and Welch (2019) released a companion guide to the first Campus Compact publication, which provided additional prompts for each element of the competency model. In this guide, *The Community Engagement Professionals Guidebook*, Dostilio & Welch (2019), not only provide further insight into the competency model, but they also provide additional context as this topic relates to the other literature areas of this study. Some chapters of the guidebook include more detailed understanding of a concept already established through the original competency model, such as that regarding partnerships. While Martin & Crossland (2017) provided an overview of high-quality community-campus partnerships in the original competency model work, Dostilio & Welch (2019) break down each individual competency within the partnership development focus area of the framework and provide ways in which CEPs can develop that competency area. This particular area of the competency model will be used directly in this study, in that data will be compared to ensure that the competencies detailed in the partnership section are not wholly encompassing of those that are also partnership- *and* place-based.

Whereas the guidebook builds directly on the competency model in the area of partnerships, Dostilio and Welch (2019) utilize the guidebook to build on the competency model altogether as well by providing additional areas of understanding and competency. One of those areas also builds on a previous section of the literature relevant to this study: anchor institutions. Dostilio and Welch (2019) discuss the very nature of the anchor institution's role in community engagement: "Anchor institutions… represent a complex, hybrid approach to community engagement... the role of the CEP in this context is that of a team member who generally has his or her finger on the pulse of various forms of engagement on and off campus as well as an understanding of the structures and dynamics of anchor programs" (p. 199). These competencies within anchor institution strategies are key for CEPs within an anchor institution such as the University of Pittsburgh, especially those who specialize in place and partnership. For example, competencies such as "Knowledge and Understanding of Collective Impact" and "Able to Articulate Key Components of Asset Mapping and Readiness Assessment" relate to the direct work of the team of CEPs who work with the University of Pittsburgh CGR and the CECs.

Although the competency model (Dostilio et al, 2017) and the subsequent guide were intended to be inclusive for all CEPs, as with any broader more all-encompassing concept, there has been the natural reaction for the need to specialize the framework and understanding. Kuttner, Byrne, Schmit, and Munro (2019) point out that, although this competency model has been vital in the development of higher education community engagement, an area not covered by the model is a competency towards place-based community engagement work. Kuttner et al (2019) conduct a case study of the University Neighborhood Partners (UNP) at the University of Utah to begin the work on developing these competencies. Building on the competency model by Dostilio et al (2017), Kuttner et al (2019) presented the "Competencies of Partnership Management," which

included *Relationship Building, Crossing Boundaries, Responsivity, Collective Relationships, Building Community Leadership and Organizational Capacity, Supporting Individual Leaders, Supporting Organizations, Community & Systems Change* and *Engaging Power.* There is significant crossover with the Dostilio et al (2017) model, but several unique elements are present and some of the language intentionally varies.

There are other areas of the greater CEP competency literature that, although not deliberately, build on and/or address certain aspects of the competency model as it relates to this study. There are various elements, knowledge, skills or dispositions, of the competency model which have greater bodies of literature of their own. This demonstrates the complexity of some of these competencies. For example, within Cultivating High Quality-Partnerships in Dostilio et al (2017), one of the skills and abilities is, "Able to communicate across boundaries and roles, and between internal and external stakeholders." As Martin and Crossland (2017) conclude, this is reflective of the concept of boundary spanning, "where CEPs play a key role in bridging the threshold hat separates academia from the community setting" (pg. 164). Depending on the area of literature or the source, boundary spanning is seen as a competency (Kuttner et al, 2019), or, as Martin and Crossland (2017) suggested, a role (Dostilio, 2017c). Sandmann, Jordan, Mull and Valentine (2014) state that boundary-spanning is set of behaviors, while a Williams (2011) study framed the *competencies* necessary for boundary-spanning (although in a different field). What this demonstrates is that the literature on CEP competencies is more expansive and complete when each competency is dissected individually. Boundary-spanning is an example of that which relates to this study.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study is a model for CEP competencies that brings the elements of this study and the Problem of Practice together: democratically oriented place-based community engagement. Most of the foundational work for the conceptual framework for this study is based on *The Preliminary Competency Model for Community Engagement Professionals* (Dostilio, et al, 2017) and the following companion guide (Dostilio & Welch, 2019), which already have components of a competency framework which addresses partnerships. However, as noted by Kuttner et al (2019), there is additional competency work to be built around partnerships and as Yamamura and Koth (2019) articulate, there is also additional needs within this framework for place-based work.

The framework outlined in Table 2, *Competency Framework for Place & Partnership-Based Community Engagement Professionals*, synthesizes this competency work by Dostilio et al (2017), Kuttner et al (2019) and Yamamura and Koth (2019). Cultivating High-Quality Partnerships was sourced from the Dostilio et al (2017) model directly. However, other pieces of the model could possibly be used in understanding the data, so although this particular part of the model was utilized for this framework, the full Dostilio et al (2017) competency model can be used for additional guidance. Both the Kuttner et al (2019) and the Yamamura and Koth (2019) components of the framework are drawn from the language presented in their work. This language has been pulled directly or with only slight modifications in order to align with the Dostilio et al (2017) form of the framework. Each study was presented differently, some using the language of knowledge, skills, abilities and dispositions directly, while others discussed in more generalities. The Kuttner et al (2019) and Yamamura and Koth (2019) components where broken down to

mirror the Dostilio et al (2017) framework. Like the Dostilio et al (2017) portion of the model, language was selected that summarizes the concepts discussed, but it will be important to look back to the texts as a whole to during the data analysis of this study.

Table 2 Competency Framework for Place & Partnership-Based Community Engagement Professionals

	Competencies		
	Knowledge	*Skills & Abilities*	*Dispositions*
Cultivating High-Quality Partnerships (Dostilio et al, 2017)	Knowledge of self: self-awareness Knowledge of local community: history, strengths, assets, agendas, goals (Dostilio et al, 2017)	Able to communicate across boundaries and roles; between internal and external stakeholders Able to connect campus and community assets Able to initiate and maintain effective partnerships Able to involve partnership members in reflection on and assessment of partnerships Able to resolve conflict (Dostilio et al, 2017)	Embrace passion for and commitment to community engagement Desire to participate in the ongoing life of the community (participating in community-building events, serving on boards, being aware of and invested in community concerns) (Dostilio et al, 2017)
Managing Partnerships for Equity and Systems Change (Kuttner et al, 2019)	Relationship Building - Knowledge of communities' priorities, assets, history, and local context Supporting Organizations - Basic understanding of how organizations function, how they are structured and funded, and the strengths and weaknesses of	Relationship Building - Ability to cultivate and maintain trusting, reciprocal relationships with and among partners creating space for authentic leadership from community residents Crossing Boundaries - Ability to adapt to different culture, expectations, norms, and languages while at the same time staying true to the	Relationship Building - Being "present" in both the physical and psychological sense Crossing Boundaries - Cultural humility Responsivity - Put aside personal agendas and focus on the priorities of partners; Strong belief in people—their

Table 2 (continued)

	organizations as agents of change Community & Systems Change - Understanding of how systems work to produce the outcomes we see; Understanding of individuals as embedded in families, communities, institutions, and larger economic, cultural, and social systems (Kuttner et al, 2019)	manager's authentic self Responsivity - Ability to be flexible and responsive to partners: communicating in their preferred mode, focusing on their priorities, adapting to their schedules, and adjusting to different paces of work Community & Systems Change - Ability to move across system "levels" and work at different scales Shifting Power - Ability to center resident leaders and resident voices (Kuttner et al, 2019)	assets, their intelligence, their leadership ability, their potential for growth—no matter the deficit narratives about their community, or the history of the institutions they represent Community & Systems Change - Avoid the instinct to control, or own, a particular change effort (Kuttner et al, 2019)
Centralizing Geographies of Place and Space for Community **Actualizing a 50/50 Approach to Community and University Impact** **Leading with Multicultural Competency and Inclusion** (Yamamura & Koth, 2019)	Knowledge of a geographical region Hiring of External-Facing Staff - Demonstration of political and financial acumen Understanding of curricular innovation Understanding of assessment and evaluation (Yamamura & Koth, 2019)	Ability to work collaboratively with campus and community partners to identify needs, assets, and strategies to improve community outcomes in their respective geographic areas Ability to listen, to facilitate complex multi-partner conversations, and to move groups toward a shared vision of focusing on place (Yamamura & Koth, 2019)	Embrace personal individual identity Commitment to strategies which foster inclusion (Yamamura & Koth, 2019)

2.5 Conclusions and Gaps in the Literature

The literature on higher education community engagement partnerships is robust and continues to grow. There is emerging literature on place-based higher education community engagement. There is a concentrated effort to develop an understanding around CEP professional competencies. These areas of the literature repeatedly connect with one another and each one enlightens the other. However, as the focus on the research becomes more specific, a gap is uncovered. There is a gap where the theory and practice of place and partnership-based community engagement meet the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to specialize in this work. The research outlines not just the general practice of higher education community engagement, but the specific practice of partnership focused place-based community engagement. Therefore, if the literature outlines the general competencies for Community Engagement Professionals, should there not also be a more specific understanding of how these competencies translate to CEPs specializing in place-based partnership work? The conceptual framework outlined in this study provided a foundation for filling that understanding, and when compared with the data as part of this study, this framework was able to more wholly take shape.

As Dostilio and Perry (2017) state about the preliminary competency model, "This review… is the first step in a multiphase inquiry. Our hope is that the findings here and of future phases of the project will open up myriad researchable questions about CEPs that can be undertaken to build a knowledge base about this group of stakeholders so key to community engagement" (p. 2). This study asks some of those questions. The Community Engagement Professionals who are a part of the Office of Community and Governmental Relations and the Community Engagement Centers at the University of Pittsburgh are expected to understand their

33

role in and unique contribution to democratically engaged place-based partnerships. However, their area of focus, the specific area of place-based partnership work, is not clear at the University of Pittsburgh and although the outlined literature in this review can help them understand their practice more generally, there is not a recognizable body of literature which would support them in their specialized work. It was the intention of this study to provide the data to do so.

3.0 Methodology

The purpose of this study is to determine the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions for community engagement professionals (CEPs) who specialize in partnership focused and democratically oriented place-based engagement. To support this purpose, this study engaged these professionals at the University of Pittsburgh in the research process, particularly those whose work is situated in or in connection with the Office of Community and Governmental Relations (CGR) and the Community Engagement Centers. The following question was asked to help address the purpose of this study:

- What are the specific competencies, including knowledge, skills, and dispositions, for CEPs who specialize in partnership focused place-based engagement at the University of Pittsburgh?

To engage all stakeholders within this inquiry, transformative participatory action research (PAR) was utilized to address the research question. This PAR was framed utilizing an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach to develop the structure, the activities and processes.

PAR is a well-documented form of engaged scholarship that captures the values and principles of democratic community engagement (Harter, Hamel-Lambert & Millisen, 2011; Jameson, Clayton, Jaeger, 2011). To provide an example of the relationship between PAR and democratic community engagement, Kearney, Wood and Zuber-Skerritt (2013) utilized an action research approach, which they call Participatory Action Learning and Action Research or PALAR, and discuss how this approach can: "(1) promote mutual learning and development; (2) foster the cascading of learning and knowledge to others in the community; and (3) co-create knowledge that

is relevant, contextualized and useful, both for meeting community needs and producing research output as required of universities" (p. 113). This is language that directly mirrors language of democratic engagement, in that it focuses on key components of the framework, including a shared authority for knowledge construction and community change as a result of that knowledge. As CEPs who work in a context of partnership-oriented community engagement, this is an approach that is both familiar and valued by the participants of this study.

In Participatory Action Research, those involved become co-researchers and work together to identify problems which can be addressed through the research, as well as a mutual understanding of a change effort to address those problems (Mertens, 2015). In order to ensure positive organizational change for the group of CEPs within this study, it was vital that the group of CEPs were not only able to benefit from the research itself but were able to benefit from the research *process*. As Jones and Wells (2007) stated, PAR, "emphasizes equal partnership for community and academic partners while building capacity for partnered planning and implementation" (pg. 408). If this study were to determine the competencies for place-based CEPs through PAR, then it would be necessary to find the appropriate mechanism to ensure that those competencies were implemented in practice by the participants. Although AI was not intended for research and is utilized most significantly in the business and organizational management context, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has been documented as an instrument to reach this goal in PAR (Harter, Gerbensky-Kerber, and Patterson, 2011). AI focuses on exploring and transforming systems and structures and promoting positive change for the professionals as individuals and as members of a group. The opportunity for positive change that was presented to the participants reflects that value of reciprocity and mutual benefit within a PAR framework. Although AI is meant to identify and intervene to create positive change in organizational management, with the a group of institutional

CEPs serving as the "organization" engaging in the research process, this has the potential to meet the needs of this participant group within a PAR context.

By removing the hierarchical and researcher/research participant nature of the partnership relationship, there was the opportunity for all the participants to be involved in the entirety of the evaluation process of the system (Hung, Phinney, Chaudhury, Rodney, Tabamo & Bohl, 2018). It was the intention of this research to be able to provide information (competencies, specifically) which were, and would continue to be, useful to the CEPs themselves, and so the use of AI to engage these CEPs as co-researchers allowed them to gain a deeper understanding of their own work from a place of intentional self-evaluation and understanding. They were able to reflect on their own individual and group skills, knowledge, and abilities, as well as their contribution to the community-university partnership work, engage in conversation with their peers, and assist in reviewing and framing the data. The process did not provide information that was independently analyzed and presented back to them for their use. Instead, they were active participants in gathering and understanding the information, and in charge of their own commitment to potential professional development which emerged from the AI process.

3.1 Research During the COVID-19 Crisis

Once the methodology for this research had been developed, we were met with a crisis that changed the dynamics of our world: COVID-19. Higher education was greatly impacted by the ripple effects of the virus, social distancing, and quarantine, and there were implications of that impact on this research. During the 2019-2020 academic year, institutions of higher education

began to contend with concerns of the COVID-19 pandemic that was moving into the United States. In March of 2020, the University of Pittsburgh made the decision to shift to remote instruction and support for the remainder of the semester, which would then continue throughout the summer of 2020. This included non-essential data collection. This also included the remote work of all non-essential employees, including the CEPs which were a part of this study. In March of 2020, in response to social distancing and remote work measures, I made the decision to alter the inquiry and analytic approach described below to adhere to a virtual, remote format. This included shifting both the research orientation session and the Appreciative Inquiry session to a virtual format and then altering some of the activities as part of the AI session to fit the virtual space. Those changes will be highlighted throughout the Inquiry & Analytic Approach section.

3.2 Inquiry & Analytic Approach

3.2.1 Participants

The participants of the study included six professional staff members within and in partnership with the CGR who specialize in partnership focused place-based community engagement, or what is described internally within the CGR as the CE Team. All of the participants, in cooperation with one another, facilitate place-based community engagement work in specific geographical areas, including the Pittsburgh neighborhoods of Homewood, the Hill District and Oakland. While some participants work specifically within one neighborhood (for example, the neighborhood Community Engagement Center Directors) others work across all of

these neighborhoods. There were additional CEPs who are considered part of the CE Team who had originally agreed to participate in the study but were unable to participate due to scheduling complications which came as a result of their remote work environment. Although not all professionals within the full CE Team were able to participate, the team consisted of varying types of place-based CEPs, included leadership from Community & Governmental Relations, director and administrative staff from the Community Engagement Centers and an internal partnership representative from Student Affairs, specifically PittServes, creating a diverse representation of place-based CEPs. Although this final participant from Student Affairs was the only participant who was not directly situated in CGR, this person does facilitate place-based community engagement work in conjunction and partnership with CGR, which would fall within the scope of the professionals within this study, and provided meaningful contributions as a stakeholder in these efforts. To confirm participation in this study, an agreement was made with the leadership of CGR outlining the commitment of the CEPs.

3.2.2 Process Outline

This research process centered around one intensive virtual group AI strategy session that involved the cohort of selected CEPs within the CGR. However, before the formal AI group session began, I conducted a virtual research orientation for the participants and presented an overview of the entire research process from start to finish, including background on the pre-work, an overview of the AI strategy session, and additional details about follow-up activities. This orientation was conducted over *Zoom* and was recorded and shared with the participants for their reference along with resource materials that were used in that orientation. Once the entire research

process had been outlined, the participants were tasked to engage in independent pre-work to prepare them for the AI strategy session.

The CEPs were asked to participate in a journaling process, responding to specific prompts outlined in *Appendix A – Place-Based Community Engagement Professional Pre-Work Journal Protocol*, which was distributed digitally through Qualtrics. The questions that were constructed for the pre-work journal asked the individuals to respond to prompts about their own work and experience as CEPs who specialize in partnership focused place-based community engagement, specifically surrounding their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. These prompts directly addressed the research question and reflected the competency work completed through *Campus Compact's Project on the Community Engagement Professional* (Dostilio, 2017a). The participants responded to questions immediately following the orientation session (*Pre-Work Journal Entry 1*) and once again in the days leading up to the AI strategy session (*Pre-Work Journal Entry 2*). The participants were directed to fill out the journal entries no sooner than a certain date but were given flexibility as to when that entry could be completed, as long as *Pre-Work Journal Entry 2* was completed prior to the AI strategy session. These entries progressed over time in order to obtain information that included both an immediate self-observation and understanding of the work of the participants, but also allowed the participants to reflect on the questions and concepts over time as they actively engage in the work. The prompts were identical for each entry, which was emphasized at the orientation session. At the orientation session, the participants were asked to be mindful of the questions after they responded to them in the first entry, so that they could be reflective of those questions during their time of practice leading up to the second entry. These journal responses were used as a source of data.

The CE Team then participated in one virtual AI data collection strategy session, conducted over *Zoom*, which utilized an approach that was synthesized from Mertens (2015), outlined as Inquiry, Imagine, Innovate, and Implement, and the Mohr/Jacobsgaard Four-I Model, which includes processes of Initiate, Inquire, Imagine, & Innovate (Watkins, Mohr & Kelly, 2011). This synthesized model is outlined in Figure 1 below. The changes made to the original AI structure were more significant than the changes made to the rest of the study, but I was able to keep to a very similar process to the in-person structure. First, I was able to move the AI session from an in-person to a virtual format conducted via *Zoom*. My main concern with this change was the amount of time I would be expecting the participants to remain in a virtual space (the original structure planned for five in-person hours), and so I asked the participants if they would prefer longer breaks to allow anyone accommodating other concerns at home, including childcare, or if they would prefer to work through the final phase at their own pace and end the structured session an hour earlier. They opted for the second option, and the entirety of the sessions took approximately four hours. Overall, the structure to the research was very similar. The participants were fully invested in the time and space and the conversation was robust. Although many of the participants had to balance distractions such as family or other work obligations, they still engaged fully and provided the data that was intended.

Phase 1 - Initiate

Introduce Appreciative Inquiry

Define Purpose

Set Group Goals

Ask clarifying questions

Phase 2 - Inquire

Small Group Breakouts & Interveiws

Discussion

Phase 3 - Imagine

Self-Reflection

Perspective Sharing

Initial Conversation Around Themes

Phase 4 - Innovate

Strategize

Knowldege Co-Creation

Themes Developed

Phase 5 - Implement

Development of process

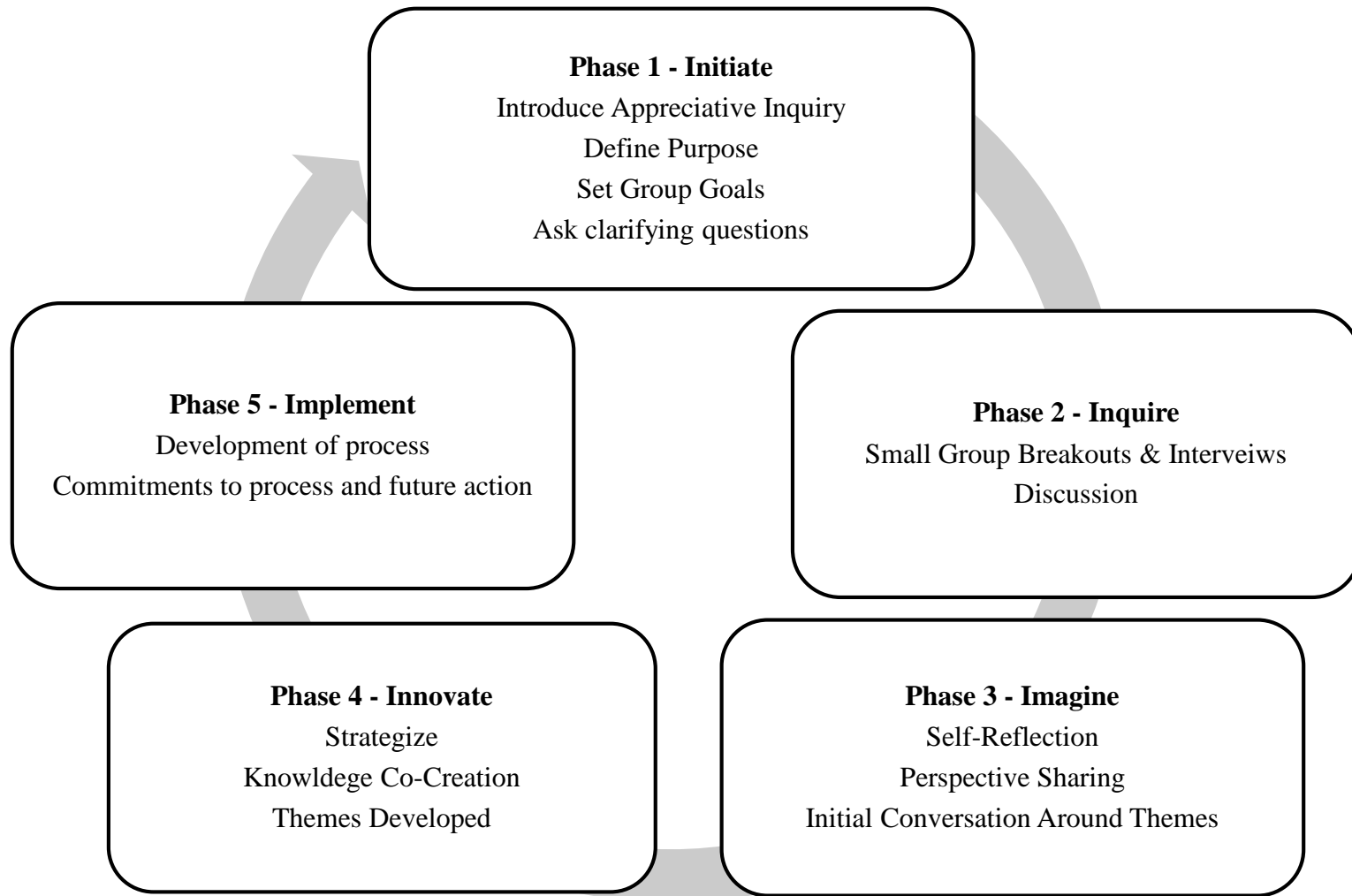Commitments to process and future action

Figure 1 Appreciative Inquiry Strategy Session Model

In Phase 1 of the AI strategy session, I began by recapping components of the orientation session and outlining the entire strategy session to the participants. This setup the necessary foundation for the AI process and ensured shared understanding of the session and the goals. The participants were also asked to share their own personal and group goals for the session and were given the opportunity to ask any clarifying questions. This part of the process was not recorded. The only source of data from this phase were my own personal notes taken during the conversation.

As part of Phase 2, the Inquire Phase, participants were split into two virtual breakout rooms and engaged in an interactive session, which included interviewing each other in a smaller group setting, with one person interviewing another person, and with a third person taking notes. These interviews focused on the CEPs place-based efforts and specific partnership work. The notes from these interviews served as source of data. Small groups rotated until all in the small group had participated. Each interview took approximately 10-12 minutes. Prior to these interviews, I articulated that I would be entering these breakout rooms to observe and take notes, similar to the way a facilitator would move from table to table in an in-person group workshop or conference session. I rotated rooms, spending time in both breakout rooms and hearing portions of each interview. When providing instructions for this activity, I stated that it was the intention for the interviewee to think deliberately about their response and the role of the interviewer is to ask the questions and actively listen. By providing a third person to take notes, the interviewer was able to be more intentional about listening, changing questions as appropriate or asking follow-up questions. At this point and throughout the AI process, not all participants were using the video function of *Zoom*. I recognize that this may have changed some of the dynamics from an in-person format. The conversation may have flowed differently, or an interviewer/interviewee may have reacted differently than they would have as part of an in-person interview, but it was generally the

same process. Once the interviews were completed, the small groups then reported back to the larger group for discussion, which was recorded and served as a source of data.

The prompts for the questions used in this phase are outlined in *Appendix B - AI Inquire Phase Group Interview.* Although these questions were utilized as guiding questions for the interviews and following discussion, the participants could ask and answer all the questions, but also follow-up questions could be asked, and/or the order of the questions could be changed as not to interrupt the flow of the conversation. These questions were used as a recommended guide, but if the concepts/ideas were being addressed through participant responses even without the questions, the conversation could flow naturally. The notetaker was directed to use an Inquire Phase Prompts document which I provided to them to take notes. It was the intention of these questions to learn more about how the CEP views their role in the partnership and what they view as their contributions. This addressed the inquiry question. Participants reflected on what they do (active manifestations of their competencies) but also on problems they have run into or concerns they have. These questions framed what the CEP Team was already doing well within the framework of their partnership work, but also gaps within their work.

In Phase 3, the Imagine Phase, participants were asked to envision their work and contributions in their ideal state, focusing less on known or anticipated restrictions (Mertens, 2015). This served as an individual self-reflection exercise, but also served as an idea and brainstorming phase, and helped to develop a shared understanding of the work through the various participant perspectives. This self-reflection exercise was based around a visual display of how they saw themselves as a practitioner. I asked them to reflect on themselves as a CEP and consider the following questions:

- What are the things that make you who you are in your professional work?

44

- Why do you do this work?

- What and/or who influences you?

- What are your values?

- What about you makes you successful in this work?

- What do you know about this work?

- What do you not know about this work that you wish you did?

- What are you good at that allows you to succeed in this work and where do you need to improve?

- In thinking about your character, how do you interact with others?

They were given these only as examples to reflect on their own work and identity as a CEP. Then the participants were asked to turn off their video and take a break. They were asked to, upon returning from their break, to not return to the group format immediately, but to complete independent work and complete written responses to Appendix C – AI Imagine Phase Prompts. They were asked to take their reflections from the previous questions that framed the activity, as well as their responses from the prompts, and create a visual of their responses which was made up of pictures, quotes and words. These were to be a visual representation of not just the responses to the questions, but how they saw themselves as a CEP. Each person worked independently to create their visual and then the group came back together in the main *Zoom* meeting room to share their visual and described it to the rest of the group. Each participant shared their screen to display their visual. After each participant shared, the group engaged in a robust conversation about mutual connections and common themes they heard throughout this exercise. The full group share-out and discussion process was recorded as a source of data, as well as the written responses to the Imagine

Phase prompts and their connected visual creations. Each one of these items was uploaded by the individual participants to a separate *Box* folder that was created for each one of them.

In this phase, the participants would have completed the same activity if completed in an in-person format, but the exercise would have been done using magazines and other craft supplies, as opposed to creating the document in a Word or PowerPoint document using online images and their own words. With some participants' digital fluency being stronger than others, some participants were only able to include a few photos. Some of the participants stated that they had difficulties creating their digital visualization and stated if these visuals were created in-person, they would have been robust and more complete. However, all the participants agreed that they would have explained their visual similarly and the subsequent conversation would have been similar.

The next stage, Phase 4 of the AI process, is the Innovate Phase. Mertens (2015) describes this stage as change-oriented perspective-taking. This is not strategic planning but developing a shared understanding of foundational principles so that planning can take place. This phase "enables exploration of and commitment to whatever actions, new roles, relationships, or design modifications (the social architecture of the organization) are seen as being important to support implementation of the provocative propositions" (Watkins, Mohr & Kelly, 2011, p. 12). This reflects the "co-creation" of knowledge that is part of the democratic community engagement framework (Saltmarsh et al, 2009). In this phase, the group would be identifying themes that they felt had emerged up until this point.

The group was once again separated into two breakout rooms, although the participants were shuffled to create new small groups. The groups were given the Innovate Phase Worksheet (Appendix D) which was distributed via a shared *Box* folder which continued resources for

46

participants. This worksheet provided the definitions of knowledge, skills, and dispositions from Dostilio (2017b) and questions for group discussion. The small groups were then asked to discuss the questions and establish mutually agreed upon knowledge, skills and dispositions. The two breakout groups were then brought back into the main *Zoom* room to discuss. One participant from each group was asked to submit a completed worksheet on behalf of their group to *Box* and the main *Zoom* room discussion was recorded. Although the breakout rooms were not recorded, similarly to the Inquire Phase, I went back and forth from breakout room to breakout room to listen and take my own personal notes on the discussion.

The final phase, Phase 5 or the Implement Phase, which did not take place immediately following the rest of the virtual AI session, is the presentation and strategic planning phase, where all the participants were tasked to create a plan for their own personal competency development, utilizing the previous phases' ideas and conversation. At this point, discussion ended, any final questions were answered, and the group was dismissed. To meet the goal of this phase, the participants were asked to complete the *Professional Competency Action Implementation Goals worksheet (Appendix E)*. They were given the Innovate Phase worksheets from both groups to guide their goal-setting process, so that they had the themes identified by the participants throughout the previous stages of the AI session. They were not asked to complete the Implementation Goals worksheet during the AI session, but the participants were given instructions, dismissed, and asked to complete the goals within the following 24 hours and submit their worksheet to their individual *Box* folder. In an in-person format, this phase would have been conducted immediately after Phase 4 and the group would have set group goals/strategy in addition to the individual goals. However, this was the area that would have taken the most time, so I reduced the amount of work by shifting to individual goals only. I also ended the AI session before

this phase and gave them additional time to complete this task. In an in-person format, this would have been completed before the AI session ended and before the group departed.

Mertens (2015) points out the AI process oftentimes needs to be paired with other approaches, and that was the case as part of this study. The first paired approach was the pre-work journaling, and the second was a post-AI strategy session reflective journal. As was the case with the pre-work journal entries, the reflective journal was also staggered over time, responding to specific prompts outlined in *Appendix F – Place-Based Community Engagement Professional Reflective Journal Protocol*. They responded to questions following the AI strategy session (within three days) through *Reflective Journal Entry 1* and then the same questions once again two weeks from the AI strategy session (*Reflective Journal Entry 2*). They were given a three-day period within which they were asked to complete the second entry. These questions were more direct in addressing the research questions. By allowing the participants to look back over the entire process, there was significant conversation surrounding contributions, knowledge, skills, and dispositions, so they were expected to be able to provide a more comprehensive response to their experience. These journal responses were used as a source of data.

3.3 Data Analysis

Before I engaged in analysis, as previously outlined through the PAR process methods, the group had the opportunity to "review and interpret the data and draw conclusions" (Mertens, 2015, p. 251). This is essential to the Participatory Action Research process, and the participants were able to contribute to data analysis by coming up with and discussed their own themes in the

Innovate Phase as well as through the Reflective Journals. My first round of data analysis was completed according to these themes. I structured the data by *Knowledge*, *Skills* and *Dispositions* and then coded the data according to the themes identified by the participants within those categories. I used the themes as directly stated by the participants from the Innovate Phase. I then analyzed the *Zoom* recordings, which were stored in *Box* and only accessible to me, as well as the other worksheets and notes submitted to *Box*, and coded the data within these sources according to the participant identified themes. I then took the themes that they identified, looked for any duplicates, common themes, or anything that may have been mislabeled (a skill that is actually a disposition, etc.) and then established a final set of themes. There were three themes within each concept (knowledge, skills, dispositions) for a total of nine themes.

During this first round of data analysis, it became evident that the themes were interdependent of one another and that often themes overlapped. Although this analysis would have structured the data to align directly with the concepts within the Dostilio et al (2017) model, and thus the *Competency Framework for Place and Partnership-Based Community Engagement Professionals* which I had developed by use of the literature, it would not have wholly addressed the research question. The research question looks at the necessary competencies of place-based CEPs *including* the knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and this was reflected in the data. Upon reviewing the data further, it became clear that the data presented skills that were connected to knowledge, dispositions that related to skills, etc. This interconnection of these competency components demonstrated that the competencies themselves were more inclusive. The knowledge, skills and disposition themes were then regrouped according to five new themes that I identified as the researcher and the data was recoded according to those new themes.

3.4 Researcher's Reflexivity

Over the last decade, I have served professionally as a Community Engagement Professional, or CEP. I served as a CEP with community engagement being my primary role, first as a paraprofessional and graduate assistant at Slippery Rock University, then as the Director of Volunteer Programs at Washington & Jefferson College, and finally as Director of Community Engagement at Washington & Jefferson College. I now serve as a CEP with community engagement being part of a larger portfolio of work as the Associate Director of Student Affairs at Penn State Greater Allegheny. I see myself primarily as a CEP and, regardless of title or position, will continue to engage in this work as a higher education professional and frame my approach to my work in this way. However, the majority of my work as a CEP has focused on student-centered, co-curricular programming aspects of community engagement. I have only served as a CEP who was situated in a context of place and partnership briefly as part of academic internship experiences and now, through my current role, by serving as a CEP who serves as a stakeholder and/or support to *other* CEPs who focuses on place and partnership. As a professional, this research guides my aspirational professional focus, not on my current work directly.

Although I do not currently work as a CEP who focuses on place and partnership, I come to this research as someone who has had connections to this type of work at the University of Pittsburgh. I served as an intern with the University of Pittsburgh Office of Community and Governmental Relations, specifically with the Homewood Community Engagement Center, and although I am no longer serving in that internship, I am still wholly invested in the success of the efforts of CGR and the community engagement centers. Contributing to the success of CGR would be a continuation of my work at the University of Pittsburgh, and although I am not a CEP with

50

CGR, I still consider myself an internal participatory stakeholder in the AI process. I look as my role not just as a University of Pittsburgh researcher, but as a University of Pittsburgh CEP.

Finally, as outlined in Chapter 2, democratically oriented community engagement focuses on a greater community and social change as a result of partnership. Pittsburgh is my home and it is my desire to see our local institutions of higher education engaging in collective impact efforts to influence and support positive social change in our neighborhoods and communities. By providing information for the development and support CEPs who specialize in this community social change work, I believe that this research can contribute to that change.

3.5 Researcher's Epistemology

The knowledge that will be produced from this study will be derivative of the multiple perspectives of all of those involved, and the truth that is considered will be primarily subjective to the various participants. Participatory Action Research relies on elements of both a positivism and post-positivism approach to research. However, since there is the understanding that the knowledge is conditional, it would be classified as post-positivist (Tekin and Kotaman, 2013). I will be approaching this from a post-positivist approach, in that the knowledge that comes from this research will be co-created and based on the conditions of the cohort and of the process. There is also no end to this process, or as Ryan (2006) notes about post-positivist research, it, "may indeed reach valuable conclusions, but these are always regarded as partial and revisable" (p. 19). If the nature of democratically-oriented community engagement focuses on an on-going and developing process, and if this Participatory Action Research process can give birth to new

contributions of the place-based CEPs, an understanding of the contribution will continue to develop, change, expand, etc., to meet the needs of all of the stakeholders involved in the various partnerships supported by the CGR and the members of the research cohort. Whatever is true with the Appreciative Inquiry session takes place, may not be the same truth two or five or ten years from now as institutional and community stakeholders changes.

Ritchie and Rigano (2001) write, "In post-positivist research, truth is constructed through a dialogue; valid knowledge claims emerge as conflicting interpretations and action possibilities are discussed and negotiated among the members of a community. Researchers don't ask themselves 'is this the truth?' Rather, we talk about the issues raised during the interviews, the participants' reactions, and our interpretations of these interwoven ideas. In this context, it seems right to open up the interpretive discussions [to our respondents], not for them to confirm or disconfirm them, but to share our thinking and how the ideas might be used" (p. 752). This approach, from the emphasis of dialogue, to the understanding of truth to the reflective nature of respondents all align with this AI strategy.

Post-positivist research and Participatory Action Research also both closely consider dynamics of power in research. Lake and Wendlend (2018) state that PAR "practitioners routinely critique how traditional research structures and practices encourage researchers to speak for and on behalf of others instead of empowering others to speak for themselves" (p. 21). That is the very nature of this study and the Appreciative Inquiry process. The CEPs themselves are active participants in the data gathering, analysis and interpretation. As co-researchers in this process, knowledge is not articulated to them, but as part of a conversation with them.

3.6 Limitations of the Method/Approach

Participatory Action Research models, especially Appreciative Inquiry, oftentimes focus on a positive and forward-thinking approach, not including discussion on deficits or problems. However, in this study, constructive feedback and honest exchanges and evaluations were essential, and participants were especially candid in their observations of the stakeholders involved. Not only did the participants have to look towards ideal scenarios within their place-based partnership work, but they also had to be honest in the experiences and realistic in the expectations, resources, relationships, etc., and open and honest about their previous contributions, both good and bad. Participants had to be vulnerable in order to admit they there is a place in which they do not feel they have strong knowledge or a place where they have an undeveloped skill. Although AI would traditionally reframe this discussion points positively, this AI process was constructed to be more direct. While this study utilizes an AI process, some of the details varied from strictly reflecting on positives, but also include constructive feedback.

The cohort which has been identified for this study is made up of members of the same unit and there are elements of reporting structures and hierarchy within the cohort. Certain members of the cohort report to other members of the cohort, so there is the potential for participants not to respond genuinely, especially when being critical of current contributions to the work. However, this was the reasoning for including individual pre and post-group session work, so that each personally individually can provide additional information in a confidential manner. And although the journal responses are confidential, the themes and general ideas from those journal responses were discussed in a group setting. When discussing themes and responses, they have been presented in a way which would removes context which would allow other participants

to identify one another. However, in the data analysis process, it was vitally important to look for inconsistencies in individual vs group responses.

An additional limitation is the translation of the knowledge provided through this research beyond University of Pittsburgh. Since the nature of the knowledge is so subjective, definitions and understandings of terms may not translate from institution to institution. Terms such as "reciprocity" and "formal partnership" may be defined differently according to the environment. For example, if partnerships are understood differently at another institution, the way in which CEPs contribute to that partnership may also be distinctly different. These are all things that would need to be considered in translating promising practices from one institution to another.

Finally, and most significantly, were the limitations due to COVID-19. The AI process that was developed for this research was planned to be intensely interactive, allowing the group to feed on each other's input and establish both group and individual goals. However, conducting the research via *Zoom* and *Box* added virtual barriers that might not have been present during an in-person AI session. Although the virtual format certainly provided additional flexibility for participants, there was still a difference in the study according to its original format and the interaction may have been different if the participants would have been in the same place. There is no way that I can know what the data would have looked like if the research had been conducted as originally planned. Although I can only speculate that some of these things served as limitations, there were two direct limitations that resulted from the changed format. The first was time. It was necessary to reduce the amount of time that the participants spent in the AI session and certain things needed to be removed from the exercises and discussions had to be shortened. The second limitation was participation. Due to complications from scheduling that came as a result of remote work for some of the participants, we ended up having less participants than planned. The size of

the participant group was a direct result of COVID. Working remotely caused issues for anticipated participants when it came to childcare, to the ways and times which they engaged with their partners, to their day to day obligations and commitments to their partnerships. If the limitations of COVID were not a factor, the size of the participant group would have been significantly larger and more encompassing of the entire place-based CE Team.

4.0 Findings

When reading the findings, it is important to consider two factors which emerged during the data analysis: 1) consistency of the themes across professional roles and 2) consistency of the themes across the process. The first factor presented itself when the CEP participants discussed the themes as part of the Appreciative Inquiry process. They determined that the themes were mostly consistent among all their roles, regardless of that specific role or position and placement at the institution. Although the way in which they experienced the competencies varied, the participants concluded that they were often talking about a similar concept or idea across the collective group.

The second factor emerged as I analyzed the inquiry approach in its entirety, including both journals and the AI session. The topics discussed and structure in each stage of the PAR process varied significantly, as did the way in which each component of the process addressed the research question, yet the themes were consistent across the entire PAR process. For example, some parts of the PAR process, such as the Pre-Work Journal Entries and the Inquiry Phase of the AI session, focused on partnerships, including strengths and weaknesses, specific stakeholder roles, histories, and other technical elements. The later parts of the process looked at competencies directly, utilizing conversations and activities which addressed CEP knowledge, skills and dispositions. However, regardless of the manner and methods in which the participants discussed their work, the themes that emerged remained similar. This shows that *common* competencies can be applied to place-based community engagement professionals at the University of Pittsburgh as a whole.

It is also important to discuss COVID-19 within the context of this study, due to the influence on the methodology articulated in Chapter 3, but also due to the way that COVID-19 influenced the work of the CEPs. COVID-19 was certainly a focal point for many of the participants earlier on, because they took part in the orientation and responded to the Pre-Work Journals during the time they were shifting to a remote working environment. During this early period within the study, participants talked about how to address the needs of their place-based partnership work in a COVID-19 influenced environment. For example, when responding to the Pre-Work Journal prompt, "Do you feel partnership stakeholders looked to you to help them discover the knowledge necessary to fully participate in the partnership," many of the CEPs discussed how their partners, some that they have been working with for years, came to them for an understanding of their partnership moving forward once COVID-19 forced them into a virtual space. Although the question related to the CEP's work with that partnership comprehensively over history, their response referred to the last few weeks before they answered the prompts in the journal.

However, once the participants began to engage in reflective conversations around the bigger picture of their place-based partnership work, as opposed to active perceptions in the moment, their responses related to their experiences in a much more all-encompassing manner. They began talking about place-based CEP competencies in a way that suggested that the knowledge, skills and dispositions for this work were necessary before COVID-19, are necessary during their current experience with COVID-19, and will be necessary moving forward. This continued beyond the conversational Appreciative Inquiry space, and participants responded similarly as part of the Reflective Journal entries at the end of the process. COVID-19 was still

mentioned by the participants, but it was no longer central to their responses. If discussed by a participant, it was to demonstrate an example of a place-based CEP competency in action.

4.1 Presentation of the Findings

Throughout the research process, participants shared their experiences of place-based partnership work. The inquiry process was framed around the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of partnership and place-based community engagement professionals at the University of Pittsburgh, and therefore this group structured their conversations around those directly stated competency themes. However, as was intended in the Participatory Action Research space, the participants, as co-researchers in the process, completed the exercises in the AI process by identifying their own separate themes and conclusions framed by the inquiry question. When analyzing these conclusions and themes, it became evident that central to the work of place-based community engagement professionals was a multifaceted understanding and navigation of relationships. When I analyzed the data according to the participants' themes and conclusions, I was able to group those specific ideas into inclusive relationship themes, and develop competencies framed by each theme. The following are the identified Place-based community engagement professional competencies and corresponding relationship themes:

- *Relationship with Self* – authentically reflect on, articulate and embrace their own individual identities, values and purpose
- *Relationship with Place* – acknowledge and apply their own individual identities, values and purpose in the context of and in relationship to Place

- *Institutional Relationships* – understand and navigate complex relationships, both historical and current, between institutions of higher education and communities

- *Personal & Professional Relationships* – develop and sustain strong emotional intelligence to support and manage personal and professional relationships between groups and individuals

- *Interrelationships* – understand and navigate complex systems, both internal and external, and manage the space where those systems interact

CEPs utilize these competencies to shift both personal and professional dynamics and functionality to fit various roles including administrator, convener, facilitator, mediator, community advocate and institutional liaison in various environments within Higher Education Institution (HEI) and Community spaces. Place-based CEPs use these competencies not only to support specific community-university partnerships through these roles, but also to support a greater, all-encompassing network of relationships between the HEI and the Community. This network of relationships is the "Place" of their place-based work. When viewed in the context of Place, these various competencies often are independent of one another. So, although the competencies will be presented in these findings as separate constructs, they overlap.

During an exchange about navigating trust in relationships, the participants provided an example of this overlapping of competencies. This example presents how members of a community may have trust for one CEP more so than another, or as one participant stated, "There are spaces where [another CEP needs] to bring me into the room… we sort of know how to navigate those conversations and when to plug each other in at the right point." The CEP making this statement understands Place and *how they relate* to Place, in that they know that another CEP may have a stronger connection with that aspect of Place, so thus the need to "plug them in" to

59

that situation. The connection may be stronger for the other CEP because they *identify* with a component of the Place (such as being a resident of the neighborhood or representing the racial composition of the community, to provide Community examples) or because they have longer and more extensive personal relationships in that area of the Place (such as someone who has taught with faculty in the department or been on committees with upper administration, to provide examples from Higher Education). In these examples, the CEP is reflecting on *Relationship with Self* and *Relationship with Place*.

These competencies do not only connect conceptually, but practically. If a CEP is still developing in a specific competency area, other areas of their work can be impacted. For example, if a CEP does not have a robust sense of how their identities relate to Place, or if they are not aware of the historical context of the partnerships, relationships with groups or individuals can be negatively affected. The CEP may make assumptions or insert themselves inappropriately into a situation, adversely affecting *Interrelationships*. Elements of *Relationship with Self*, *Relationship with Place* and *Interrelationships* are all present in this example. *Institutional Relationships* and *Personal & Professional Relationships* may also be affected, so those could be considerations as well. In the example above, a CEP *could* be engaging in all five competencies in one space. So, although these competencies are presented as separate concepts, they not only crossover conceptually, but they are interdependent in that each one can change the dynamic of the overall relationship orientation of the work.

4.1.1 Relationship with Self

Place-based community engagement professionals need to have the ability to
authentically reflect on, articulate and embrace their own identities, values and purpose.

Participants stated that, for place-based community engagement work to be done effectively, that authenticity was key. CEPs must have a keen understanding of who they are as a person, both personally and professionally, as well as an understanding of what is important to them and what their own personal connection is to this work. During the AI session in the Inquire Phase, as they discussed their role in place-based partnership work, one participant presented their work as the "lifestyle of engagement." Another participant followed to describe this lifestyle: "The work sort of permeates, for better or for worse, your entire life, right? So, making sure that you don't get lost in it." With a greater understanding of self comes a greater ability to represent that authentic self in their work, or to, as one participant stated, to "…show up as people. Real people." This authenticity is essential to the other relationship-oriented competencies. The CEP's identities, values and purposes serve as a lens in which they view their work and all relationships within the work. To provide an example, understanding and embracing how their racial and/or gender identity impacts this work is essential in managing their *Personal and Professional Relationships*. Knowing what they value and why they do their work, "informs your role… informs your relationship and informs what [partners] can expect of you." Participants concluded that identifying and initiating their authentic self is central to the work of a place-based CEP.

As the participants discussed the need to understand and embrace their personal identities to be truly authentic in their work, especially in the Imagine and Innovate Phase discussions of AI,

the conversation centered around race and gender identity. For example, in the Imagine Phase of the AI session, participants were asked to reflect on questions such as, "What are the things that make you who you are in your professional work?" Although the participants had varying personal identities, whenever answering this question, each person still mentioned the impact of their identities on their work. For example, one participant stated,

> My grandmother was the best, fiercest, strongest Black woman I ever knew. She taught me so much about place… The stories she would share with us about growing up and where we were and our family history was very, very, important impactful for me. And I think as a CEP… that's the person that kind of started that love for me.

However, not all the personal identity reflections within *Relationship with Self* were focused on race and gender. One participant discussed how they brought a global perspective to this work as part of their immigrant identity. Other participants had their families, who were described as an important component to their identity, deeply entrenched in the way that they approached this work. Each one of these examples demonstrates how, although the CEPs identified differently in many ways, it was the *understanding and embracing* of those identities that shaped them into their authentic selves. This competency is articulated as a *Relationship with Self,* with an emphasis on "relationship." It is not enough for the CEP to know and reflect on their identity, but they also must embrace and make meaning of those identities.

The participants outlined *Relationship with Self* in a way that not only considered their personal identities, but their purpose and values as well. As the participants talked about their work, they articulated passion and commitment for what they believed to be foundational values of the work of higher education community engagement. In discussions around those values, they demonstrated a fervent commitment to ensuring that their individual passions were supported through their work. Their role as a place-based CEP is a mechanism for them each to fulfill their

purpose. Although this purpose varied from CEP to CEP, there was significant alignment in how many of them viewed the purpose of their work. For example, throughout the AI Process, multiple participants discussed the idea of engaging in this work to support, connect with, and serve the neighborhoods and communities in which they are working, or oftentimes the neighborhoods and communities in which they are living as well. Specifically, they were referring to Communities of Color which historically have been neglected by or taken advantage of by institutions of higher education. For example, during their presentation of the Imagine Phase exercise, one participant discussed engaging with a community with which they identified:

> I am passionate about engaging marginalized communities (or communities that people say are marginalized) and improving their quality of life. I know that's one of the goals of the CEC initiative. So, as a community engagement professional, even before I used that term, I'm just thinking back through my career, I've just always had that personal, drive in my work and whatever I did. I was always concerned about pulling someone up with me. Or behind me. Or opening a door because I had so many open the door for me.

Another reiterated the purpose during the Imagine Phase, stating, "My passion and life mission is to level the playing field for my community and all Communities of Color. This is at the heart of everything that I do."

CEP participants discussed this mission of supporting Communities of Color, because they saw this as directly relating to their work within place-based community engagement. The participants stated this was something that they were committed to, not just for themselves, but for the other stakeholders who work within their partnership settings. For example, one participant stated, "For our students and university stakeholders, I believe increasing knowledge on the connection of racial justice in community-based settings and in our university community in very much needed." Although racial justice work was a common purpose, it was not the only purpose.

However, this example of a commitment to a purpose demonstrates how their *Relationship with Self* focuses on embracing that purpose, not just recognizing it.

These examples of identity, values and purpose which were described by the participants, construct the lens that the CEP uses to view the other relationships within their place-based work. In the Innovate Phase of the AI session, when the group was asked to brainstorm ideas for collective action for competency development, one participant, in discussing their commitment to "bias, racial injustice, and systemic racism" stated, "I actually think that racism and implicit bias are huge barriers and obstacles in this work. And that my own biases make me ignorant of the ways that I could potentially break trust with somebody, particularly somebody whose race differs from my own." In their *Relationship with Self*, this individual has identified values and purpose (working towards addressing concerns of bias, racial justice, and systematic racism) and their personal identity (race) and even their biases, to understand how they can authentically interact with another person (*Personal & Professional Relationships*). This demonstrates the ability to view this competency as a lens through which to view and understand the rest of the competencies.

4.1.2 Relationship with Place

Place-based community engagement professionals need to have the ability to acknowledge and apply their own individual identities, values and purpose in the context of and in relationship to Place.

If *Relationship with Self* is the lens with which a place-based CEP views place, then *Relationship with Place* is the picture they are viewing through that lens. For example, in the

Imagine Phase exercise of the AI session, when one participant was talking about navigating Place as a Black woman, they reflected,

> As a Black woman and as a Black immigrant woman, I'm constantly thinking about it. Probably more so in spaces in the institution, at the University as opposed to the community, but also in the community, when there's gaps in just the shared experiences. I'm constantly thinking about that. And I'm constantly thinking about the Black identity and how it matters.

This provides an example of *Relationship with Place* in a way that aligns with the intent of the competency as described in this study. This participant is acknowledging personal identities as a Black immigrant woman and applies those identities to the Community and HEI, the "Place," and reflects on the relationship with that Place, which is articulated in this case as understanding "shared experiences." This CEP discusses their *Relationship with Place* in context of both the Community and the HEI, which together make up the Place of place-based work.

There are two distinct relationships *within* Place: A relationship with the Community and a relationship with the HEI, including the history, identity, physical space and goals of both. However, these relationships are not framed by two separate competencies. *Relationship with Place* is how the CEP situates themselves in the common space where the two come together. Given the oftentimes contentious relationships between these two stakeholders, many of the CEPs talked about navigating their *Relationship with Place* in this space as being a difficult, emotional and even oppressive experience. This was the case quite often if the CEP had a more robust relationship with the Community. For example, as part of the further discussion in the Imagine Phase, one CEP discussed this tension between the two sides:

> I struggle with being of the community and just holding that space, representing a Predominantly White Institution and doing this work. And then [community stakeholders] are like, 'Well, why is it always the people in the community are mostly People of Color and then the ones at the top are the White men? And they're the ones that really got the money and tell you what to do anyway.'

65

In describing their *Relationship with Place*, this CEP is discussing how they relate to both the Community and HEI spaces, reflecting on maintaining this tumultuous space where they are grappling with concerns of trust, racial identity, power and control.

Most often, CEPs framed their *Relationship with Place* according to their relationship with the Community. The participants discussed a greater amount of influence by this relationship when considering their place-based work. There are three ways that the CEPs framed their relationship with the Community. There were those who were "of" the Community, meaning that these CEPs had a longstanding history within the Community as a resident and often still lived within that Community currently as they performed their duties. The second, was those CEPs who have made, or are in the process of making, the Community in which they are working their home. These CEPs now identified as part of the Community, because they both live and work within the space, but they are not originally from the space, and often still sense feelings of being an "outsider" to those who originate from the Community. Finally, there are also those CEPs whose *Relationship with Place* with the Community was that of a professional setting. These individuals work in the Community, but regardless of how long they have worked in that Community, they do not and have not lived in that Community and are not viewed as "part" of the Community. They can still have strong *Personal & Professional Relationships* within that Community, but their *Relationship with Place* in the Community is still framed most significantly by their employment and professional role.

As part of the Inquiry Phase discussion of the AI session, one participant who did not identify as part of the Community compared the different relationships with the Community, "I think there's such a difference between somebody that does this work as part of their job and

somebody who's invested in a partnership because it's about where they live. It's about the future of their own community." Another CEP reiterated this idea, as someone who lived within the space, when they shared how they identified as a CEP in the Imagine Phase, "I know for me this is... it's very personal… because these are my communities." This same CEP also discussed their purpose of supporting the Community in which they were working, but this time through a very personal lens as someone of that place: "My goal, that I take very seriously, is to use my role at the university to level the playing field for my communities, which is Homewood and the Hill." What this demonstrates is that there may be two CEPs, both which have a *Relationship with Self* that identifies a purpose of supporting the Community; both are viewing their *Relationship with Place* through that same lens. However, although that aspect of their *Relationship with Self* is the same, their *Relationship with Place* varies, because their influences are different: One CEP is of that Community and the other is not.

One of the elements that affected the CEP's Community relationship was the blurred line that occurred when it comes to engaging in place-based work. The more wholly engaged the person is within that space, a greater sense of being "of place" within the Community can be established. Some of the participants which were from their place of work discussed this as a benefit, but also discussed that, with the blurred lines between home and work, it is important to mindful of this dynamic of their work: "Now I've spent half of my life here officially… I stepped foot in the city of Pittsburgh once before I moved here for 17 years. And so, it's been a really formative place for me professionally." Time, both length and extent, was determined to be a factor. Another participant continued to discuss how much time they spend working in the space:

> This is the type of work where people get to learn about your personal life. They see your family… It's about being with the community even if you aren't necessarily *of* the community. Hopefully they'll take us in after, after long enough… so if I'm there [in the

neighborhood with my family] in the park just because it's a familiar place, I want people to stop and say hi and to kind of know me as a person as well.

This authenticity, that which is established as part of *Relationship with Self*, is an important factor for all the participants when reflecting on their sense of place in the Community. However, the *Relationship with Place* is not always discussing a relationship in the context of formal structures, history and physical space of Place. An element that the CEPs discussed also influenced their *Relationship with Place*, especially the relationship with the Community, was their racial identity. Although a CEP may not be a current or former resident of the Community and may have limited history with that space, that CEP could be more highly influenced by the Community in their *Relationship with Place* if they are, for example, a Black CEP working in a traditionally Black neighborhood. Place in this case does not refer to the formal structures of the Community, but to the demographics.

As stated previously, *Relationship with Place* is how the CEP situates themselves in the common space where the Community and HEI come together, so the CEP's relationship to the HEI is also considered. The participants articulated someone who is strongly influenced by the HEI in their *Relationship with Place* as someone who has a background in higher education community engagement, significant work with administrative, faculty and often student networks and has a personal history at the HEI. The more of these elements a CEP had, and the more robust the elements were, the more they were influenced. For example, a CEP who has worked at HEIs in other functions throughout their employment history would by influenced more by the HEI than someone who formerly worked in community development before becoming a CEP. Someone with education and training in HE management or student affairs might be more highly influenced

by the HEI than someone with an educational history in non-profit development. The longer the history with the HEI or with higher education, the greater the influence.

The participants who related more significantly to the HEI often talked about how CEPs who related to the Community helped them create Community connections for them, especially initially. For example, one participant discussed how, in both previous CEP roles and also when they entered their role at the University of Pittsburgh, they have needed other CEPs to advocate and introduce them to the Community, "When I was back at [my previous institution], there was a gentleman… that did this for me. When I came to the University of Pittsburgh, [another CEP] did this for me. When I've been working with new team members of Pitt, I've done this for them." This CEP was understanding that their *Relationship with Place* was highly influenced by the HEI, and so they would need to utilize their team. They understood their space between the HEI and Community and how to operate in that space.

The CEP articulated a need to first understand their relationship with the Community and then enhance that understanding by reflecting on how they relate to the HEI. For example, if someone is a long-time resident of a neighborhood in which they are working, but is new to higher education, their *Relationship with Place* is greatly influenced by the Community. If someone has an intensive background in Higher Education and at the University of Pittsburgh but is from and lives in a completely different Community, they may have a *Relationship with Place* which is more highly influenced by the HEI. The participants discussed relationships with HEIs and academia and understood their relationship to the University of Pittsburgh within that space. However, the reason that the participants understood their *Relationship with Place* through the Community relationship primarily is because the participants reflected that it was not possible to be "of" an HEI in the same way someone could be "of" Community. The CEPs had a varied influence by the

69

HEI, some greater than others, but there was no relationship with the HEI that aligned with being "of" the HEI.

4.1.3 Institutional Relationships

Place-based community engagement professionals need to have the ability to understand and navigate complex relationships, both historical and current, between institutions of higher education and communities.

Once a CEP understands their relationship to the Community and the HEI, they must be able to navigate the space in between, otherwise described in these findings as *Institutional Relationships*. The keys to this competency, as articulated by the participants, were navigating the complex history between the HEI and the Community, as well as managing the current relationship and the relationship moving forward. Oftentimes, while managing a new relationship between groups, scars from historical complications and negative relationships reemerge. This is what makes the relationship between the Community and/or Communities and the HEI so complex; Place-based CEPs must keep one foot in a historical understanding of the relationship while still proactively looking towards building new and improved partnerships.

This balance of historical and new *Institutional Relationships* can be complicated even further by the CEP's *Relationship with Place*. For example, many of the participants identified as residents of the Community before their employment at the HEI and continue to live in the neighborhoods represented in the Community, so their historical and current understanding of the

relationship may have a greater influence from the Community. One of the participants described

this complexity as part of their relationship:

> I was one of those people on the outside [of the Community Engagement Center] like, 'Hm. I'm not really sure what kids do in here.' I wasn't really sure what was going on. But then, when I really looked at the work… and one of the things that I really talked to other community members about is leave those preconceived notions at the door… Don't let the past or what you felt or how you feel or what you think about research that's been done, don't let that block the gains and the collaboration and the positive things that we that we can do at this point.

This CEP discusses their influence from the Community as they navigate the relationships

between the HEI and individuals in the Community. As someone who is "of the Community," the

CEP acknowledges, and may have even experienced, a historical lack of trust between the

Community and HEI.

This lack of trust between Community and HEI was described in terms of both physical

space and identity. Two different participants discussed the deeply ingrained lack of trust and how

that manifests as they tried to maintain the *Institutional Relationship* space between HEIs and

Communities of Color, specifically Black communities. As one CEP stated,

> The University of Pittsburgh has specific issues in recent memory that would cause Black people not to trust. Having that knowledge and then being of the same culture and the same kinship of those that I am engaging every single day, doesn't make those challenges any easier. If anything, I've been approached by people who distrust me even more. Like I'm a Trojan Horse coming in to hoodwink them by building this trust and then next thing you know the folks in real power at Pitt are going to come in and do something… I navigate those waters on a regular basis and… it can be challenging. It's heavy… knowing that there are times where you're advocating to address social injustice and inequities for a whole community of people and yet I'm suffering through those same injustices by being in this region.

This example articulates how a CEP can view and understand a situation in the *Institutional*

Relationships space. As a liaison of the HEI, they are trying to serve as an advocate for the HEI

while recognizing, and even identifying with, the complex history and lack of trust that is established within the Community.

In both examples above, the CEP outlined a specific role that the participants stated they served in to support *Institutional Relationships*, that of liaison and advocate. What this CEP is referencing is a point that was continually brought up by the participants through the entire Participatory Action Research process, from start to finish: Historically, there has been contentious relationships between higher education institutions and communities, and the Universities of Pittsburgh and its partnering communities, including Oakland, Homewood and the Hill District, are no different. CEPs who have a greater identity with the Community often found themselves having to be an advocate for the HEI, trying to build trust by leveraging their own trust as a member of the Community. A similar example can be said for CEPs who more closely identified with the HEI. They can serve as a liaison and advocate for the Community in HEI spaces by leveraging existing trust and relationships. However, participants stated that serving as both liaison and advocate in *both* spaces is necessary for all CEPs, regardless of the way that they identify with those stakeholders.

One CEP articulated their experience of observing the *Institutional Relationships* between HEI and Community when discussing the block party efforts initiated by the University of Pittsburgh:

> One of the things that stand out to me as a benefit of those types of engagements is sort of having that human to human connection and breaking down barriers between perceptions about groups, right? So, you have students and you have residents, and you have Pitt and you have community organizations, and it's easy to get entrenched in those identities and have perceptions about what they represent. But coming together and really seeing past those in an informal way like that is that small step… to the larger engagement work that we're able to do in those settings.

As an advocate and liaison for both the HEI and the Community, as well as the individual groups and stakeholders within those spaces, CEPs strive to break down the barriers that are based in the historical interactions between those entities.

However, the CEPs acknowledged that, as part of navigating these relationships, it is not enough to bring stakeholders together, but in order to break down those barriers, it is necessary to acknowledge and articulate that difficult history. As one participant shared in their Pre-Work Journal, this was often done at community meetings which are comprised of a group of community stakeholders. This CEP stated that, at these meetings, they, "shared facts about the challenging history of Pitt and the [community] and acknowledged that this effort was moving towards a better partnership while not discounting the legacy of hurt and the healing that still needed to occur." Another CEP echoed in their Pre-Work Journal the importance of this effort in another community space:

> My work primarily is focused in [Neighborhood], where there are many deeply rooted perceptions – both accurate and inaccurate - of the nature of the campus-community relationship, and how it as developed over many years. We attend all neighborhood meetings and community-based spaces to which we are welcomed to ensure that the University, in 2020, is visible as a positive partner… The partnership is a balancing act; one day community may be criticizing the university, the next day they may be soliciting us for financial support. Being present and responsive is the key to growing understanding of one another, and ultimately, the partnership.

This CEP is describing the relationship space in between the HEI and Community. They acknowledge the history of the relationship from a Community perspective, which they describe as both "accurate and inaccurate," recognizing that the history of the relationship has not been defined only by the Community, but by the HEI as well. In these spaces, the CEP may concede that the historical relationship and interactions between Community and HEI were negative, while

still advocating for new potential partnerships. This "balancing act" is an example of the *Institutional Relationships* competency in action.

In the *current* relationship space, since the competency is not only about navigating the *historical* aspects of the relationship, much of the work of *Institutional Relationships* is about expectations management between the partners. One CEP reflected in the Inquiry Phase discussion, "Some reliable obstacles with the partnership usually revolve around times when priorities don't completely align between the intention of the institution, with the intention with our staff embedded in neighborhood work – when there's a mismatch between what the expectations are." Another CEP shared an example of their work managing expectations for the Community partners, when they stated, "[We need to] use our positions to kind of shed light on higher ed functioning and to curtail expectations or to make them more realistic. Just like 'Hey, students have midterms. Or, there's an actual spring break.' And those kind of things." Although this CEP was discussing managing Community expectations, CEPs also must manage HEI stakeholder expectations. One CEP presented such an experience:

> In one instance, we came alongside a community-based organization that is setting up a… model of virus interruption. Their approach was rooted in an epidemiological framework and specific in method but based on publicly-available public health information. We had faculty jump at the chance to be part of the partnership and offered to lend expertise in the development of trainings, scripts for certain roles/actions, etc. Those faculty then wanted to share that work with other community-based organizations not involved in the… initiative. They saw it as their intellectual property and were blind to how it might break trust with the organization and partnership. We had to raise those concerns, ask for time to discuss, and help them to see how community organization norms and culture might differ from academic (intellectual property, open source sharing, etc.).

In this example, the CEP is serving as an advocate for the Community partner, pushing back on faculty expectations on what they can and cannot do in the *Institutional Relationship* space. For CEPs, it is a balancing act of managing both sets of expectations.

The participants often discussed that the purpose for managing *Institutional Relationships* as a need to ensure reciprocity in the community-university partnership space. In one of the written responses of the Imagine Phase of the AI session, one participant discussed the potential for harm to the Community partner when the CEP is not appropriately addressing reciprocity in facilitating *Institutional Relationships*:

> You can't prioritize the University's needs or its constituency's needs (faculty, staff, or student) in front of community needs (residents or organizations). Too many CEPs are steeped in the university world so much that they don't even realize they're prioritizing what's most comfortable for the institution or its students or its faculty. I'm not saying that university-peoples' needs aren't important – if we trespass them, we run afoul of our employers, but it reads so arrogantly when CEPs try to 'help' in community spaces but they're really only clued into how to help advance the institution or its faculty/students.

The participants emphasized this need to push university stakeholders to challenge their notions about communities. They discussed a need for HEIs to move away from a transactional and power-based form of "outreach" and to take on a new asset-based understanding of communities, and to look at the space between the HEI and the Community as a partnership space; not something that is done *to* communities, but something that is done *with* communities.

Supporting *Institutional Relationships* in this way can be difficult for CEPs, who often must magnify community stakeholders' voices in the HEI space and serve as an advocate, while also recognizing that they are employed by the HEI and are viewed by both the HEI and the Community as a representative of the HEI. As one CEP discussed in the written Inquiry Phase prompts, "We need to know how to nudge institutions. I'm not sure it's in an institution's DNA to be that kind of partner." The reference to DNA by this participant reflects of how entrenched the historical approaches to this work are within the HEI. This transactional approach to community engagement is so embedded in the HEI culture, it is part of their DNA. The relationships between Communities and HEIs are built around deeply engrained views and processes which are saturated

in a complex and difficult history of mistrust. Place-based CEPs must have a very specific set of

knowledge, skills and abilities to make sure that they are able to navigate this space.

4.1.4 Personal & Professional Relationships

Place-based community engagement professionals need to have the ability to develop and

sustain strong emotional intelligence to support and manage personal and professional

relationships between groups and individuals.

This competency of *Personal & Professional Relationships* breaks down Place from the

larger space between HEI and Communities to the specific groups of people and the individuals

that operate within that space. This competency focuses on the ability of place-based CEPs to

support and manage relationships and personalities, while having the emotional intelligence to be

able to reflect on how they interact with others. As part of the of the Imagine Phase activity, the

participants were asked to use images of how they understood themselves as a CEP. One

participant shared an image of a cartoon of a person and a goose. The person states, "I'm a people

person." The goose responds, "I'm a geese goose." The group of participants wholeheartedly

agreed with this disposition of a place-based CEP: To do this work, the CEP must be a "people

person." And although the group of participants continued to reference this quality as being a

"geese-goose" (to the point where one group listed "Being a geese-goose" as a disposition of a

CEP in the Innovate Phase of the AI session), this phrase was a way of referencing the personal

and intimate relationship orientation of the work. The reasoning for including both "personal and

professional" relationships as part of this competency is because CEPs oftentimes must maintain

relationships in a professional setting with community members with which they also have personal relationships outside of the work environment, especially if they are a resident of the Community.

The importance of these personal and professional relationships was discussed about all the stakeholders in place-based partnership work: Relationships with students, faculty, "informal leaders throughout the community," "institutional leaders that may be of service to the community," residents, government, and other stakeholders. One participant outlined the foundation of these relationships as part of the Inquiry Phase discussion on partnerships:

> Something else I noticed in our group that I thought was a theme, was the importance of small transactional interchanges that lead to larger relationships. So, you know, whether it was talking about managing a room reservation, or passing along information, or, you know, just showing up when somebody asks for your thoughts, I think these are tiny little transactive things that we do… I don't think we can get to the big relationships without those, those incremental transactional moments.

The CEPs outlined qualities as a group that allowed for these small transactional interchanges, including points such as strong emotional intelligence, self-awareness, social awareness, responsiveness, the ability to read situations and respond accordingly, authenticity, compassion and patience. They framed these qualities as "relationship management."

Relationship *management* was used as a term by the participants, because they stated that "management" described the complex and difficult nature of supporting some of these relationships. As one CEP stated, "I am capable of navigating diverse personalities, and helping all parties to feel that their needs are being heard and met." The diversity of relationship building for CEPs is vital, in that they connect with individuals as part of numerous groups in both the Community and the HEI environment. CEPs manage relationships with faculty, staff, administrators, campus leadership, neighborhood leadership, students, local government and

residents, among others. They also discussed not only having to manage the relationships with these groups and individuals, but also to support and nurture relationships *between* these groups and individuals as an intermediary. So not only do they have to manage the relationships between themselves and the other person, but often they bring these relationships together and connect the individuals with one another as well.

If a CEP manages their own relationships appropriately but does not do so between a community stakeholder and a faculty member or group of students, then that could be potentially damaging for the relationship that the CEP had built for themselves, or as one CEP stated, "A poor experience could affect the student negatively in the same way that a poor partner experience could affect [the CEP's] status in the community." The CEPs articulated that, oftentimes, the CEP and their institutional stakeholders are painted with the same brush by community stakeholders. For example, if a student volunteer does something to break trust with a community stakeholder, that trust could also be broken for the CEP. This is also the case for HEI stakeholders as well. For example, if a faculty member has a bad experience with a Community partner, they may hold the coordinating CEP accountable for that negative relationship. It is important for a CEP to be able to manage their own relationships, but also must help to maintain the relationships between other stakeholders.

During the Innovative Phase of the AI process, the CEPs identified "communication" as an essential skill in managing *Personal & Professional Relationships*. They discussed their need to be flexible and adaptable in how they communicate. As one participant stated, "I think [communication] can't be underestimated in this work. How we communicate often reflects on us, on our institution, on collaborations, on the people that we're speaking with." However, as they manage relationships, they are not only focused on their own communication, but the

communication of all partners. For example, one participant stated that they find themselves needing to, "think about the communication delivery. Some partners are not email folks and it's hard for students to get on the phone with people." CEPs not only have to manage their own communication appropriately, but sometimes need to support others to communicate effectively, including the mismatch in communication styles between stakeholders as presented in this example. As another CEP noted, "Universities can come off talking in very closed, jargony ways that prioritize the University as the center of solutions and knowledge. I've often been a translator in these situations and then circle back to make sure everyone is clear on why I stepped in, to re-phrase things or ask certain questions. I often undertake the role of question-asker so that I can help one of the stakeholders or a subset "hear" the other one/s." This role that that the participants labeled several times as "translator" often falls into the communication work of the place-based CEP as they navigate a complex, multi-stakeholder environment.

There are certain qualities that the CEPs identified as a group that outlined the type of positive communication skills needed for a place-based CEP. Those included descriptions such as frequent, open, transparent, clear and concise. The CEPs acknowledged that this type of communication can be positive for the stakeholders involved, but also can be difficult to navigate due to deliberate way that they must manage the *Institutional Relationship* space in between Community and HEI. For example, one participant stated, "I tend to be more transparent than not due to my belief that information is empowering, especially for communities who have historically been left out." In order to make sure that communication is being addressed appropriately, the CEPs discussed the need for it to be open and constant: "Community members know how to reach us, we proactively stay in communication with them as well. We meet regularly with [community partners]; our role is to facilitate overlapping communication and a lot of listening." This sentiment

articulates both the role of "translator," of communication facilitator, but also of another important communication factor identified for in the *Personal & Professional Relationship* space: Listening.

In the Innovate Phase of the AI process, the quality which was most often identified was by the participants was that of active and intentional listening. As one CEP mentioned, "A lot of my role in my position has been primarily focused on listening to what potential partners are planning to do and referring them." This may either mean listening to a Community partner and referring them to a partnership opportunity within the HEI or listening to faculty and/or students and referring them to a potential community opportunity. One CEP described listening as a diplomatic form of communication, and outlined characteristics such as, "the ability to listen… [the ability to be] a curious and respectful learner, [the ability to] take feedback and criticism." Without this quality of effective communication, the CEPs would not be able to appropriately identify their work. For example, one CEP discussed out communicating with stakeholders helps to construct strategy, stating, "community members heavily inform our team's strategies, the type of info we share, why and how we share information. This is iterative – we're in constant communication with our neighbors. They also help to drive the priorities... They've got 'voice' through public meetings, through having a direct line to [us] that make their voices heard." Ensuring that CEPs are listening to this community voice as part of their effective communication also supports effective *Personal & Professional Relationships*.

So, while the competency of *Institutional Relationships* focuses on managing the partnership space, the *Personal & Professional Relationships* competency focuses on managing the individual partnership stakeholders. As one of the participants stated as part of their pre-work journal,

It's sometimes easy to forget that we are all people, not simply representatives of various groups, organizations, or institutions. I expect community partners to treat me with the same respect I show them, and to reciprocate good will. I hope that we can have honest conversations about when things will work, and when things might not work, and why, so there is a mutual understanding. We have one-on-one meetings with members of the community to level set and develop personal connections. We try to cultivate allies who can work together, and not against. Those allies may be able to communicate more effectively with their peers then we can, to advance the partnerships. It's useful to know when stepping back and quieting down may be the best course of action.

This one reflection speaks to the important characteristics of relationship management with the *Personal & Professional Relationships*: Respectful, honest and open communication to work towards more meaningful and reciprocal partnerships

4.1.5 Interrelationships

Place-based community engagement professionals need to have the ability to understand and navigate complex systems, both internal and external, and manage the space where those systems interact.

Interrelationships are the spaces where Community and HEI come together in Place. For example, *Interrelationships* could be where a Community non-profit organization works with a service-learning class. Another example of *Interrelationships* could be when a neighborhood resident walks into a University of Pittsburgh Community Engagement Center to participate in a workshop. The CEP may or may not be connected to this relationship, but regardless, they need to be knowledgeable of it and they need to be able to insert themselves when asked or when there is an appropriate opportunity. This calls for a robust understanding of both the HEI and Community, including all the groups, individual personalities, policies, procedures, goals, missions, visions,

81

systems, processes, and, as noted earlier, histories. However, within this competency is the not only the ability to "understand" the various components of Place. The second piece of the competency is to "navigate" the systems or apply the understanding of one component to another.

CEPs may not function in an *Interrelationship* initially. They may need to utilize some of the listening and communication skills necessary for *Personal & Professional Relationships* and then insert themselves. They need to understand and be able to navigate the *Interrelationship* with the opportunity emerges. One participant reflected:

> I don't think people (whether they are faculty, staff, or community leaders/organizational staff) often consider what it takes to fully participate in a partnership (as a co-equal, co-laborer) and even less frequently ask us (CEPs) for guidance. I think we insert ourselves. We watch for particular actions that might prompt a behind-the-scenes check in, we offer alternative ways to think about a prospective partners' response, we translate what might have been meant by one stakeholder (who may have used a particular set of norms and vocabulary) to other stakeholders (for whom those norms and vocabulary may be unfamiliar). Sometimes we convene partners to discuss how things are going and that's an opportunity to provide some food for thought.

The above statement provides an example of the last key word in this competency: "Manage." In *Interrelationship*s, place-based community engagement professionals need to have the ability to understand and navigate complex systems, both internal and external, as part of both the Community and HEI, and manage the space where those systems interact.

Participants discussed the understanding and application of the HEI Institution that was needed to appropriately execute their work: "[I have] knowledge of the University, how it works, functions, and interacts both internally and externally. This allows me to project how a situation or proposal may be received, or how to navigate our institution in an efficient manner." In other words, they obtain information (understand) and then figure out how to relate it for application (navigate). Another participant stated, "I know the hierarchy of higher education, so I know how to coach faculty on the "permissions" (both formal and informal) they might need to initiate a

partnership," and a separate CEP added, "I have knowledge of how Universities work - what assets can be tapped for engagement and what limitations and boundaries they have." These CEPs are speaking to the ability to understand and apply information not only to the functional aspects of the system, but to the political and strategic aspects of the system.

When it came to understanding the HEI components of *Interrelationships*, the participants discussed multiple different spheres where institutional knowledge was necessary for *Interrelationships*: Institutional (The University of Pittsburgh), stakeholder specific (faculty processes, departments, student engagement), and department/office specific (the Community Engagement Centers, Community and Governmental Relations, PittServes). All of these were communicated as important for the CEPs, because as a community-facing stakeholder, they are often viewed as a voice of the HEI. They are often asked to represent the HEI as a whole (they might be the only person the community member communicates with from the institution), they often have to manage expectations and so knowing HEI stakeholder strengths, limitations, and assets are necessary. They also may need to answer a more direct question from community stakeholders such as why the HEI is doing work in the Community in the first place, what the HEI is trying to accomplish, or more directly, what the specific efforts are that support the Community. Participants stated that having this multi-tiered institutional understanding allowed them to communicate what they are doing, why they are doing it, how it can potentially work, and the players who will be invested in the process. In other words, these place-based CEPs stated a need to know the full mission, vision and practices in relation to University of Pittsburgh community engagement.

Understanding the strategic mission and efforts of the University of Pittsburgh as a whole, especially as it relates to the vision for community engagement, is an important piece of the HEI

component of *Interrelationships* as CEPs work together to engage with communities across offices, departments and functional areas. The CEPs acknowledged that their work affected one another in their various departments, that it was an *Interrelationship* itself, and so there was a need to know not only their own efforts, but the efforts of each other. One participant stated this as, "Awareness of plans or decisions that affects one's work in community (knowing what the right hand is doing if you're the left)." For these CEPs, they recognized that to successfully support the *Interrelationships* between HEI and Community, the first needed to understand the *Interrelationships* embedded within the HEI.

The same was said by the participants for the Community component of *Interrelationships*, although the CEPs did convey that their need to navigate those *Interrelationships* was not as frequent as within the HEI, since their actual role was embedded in the HEI. However, they certainly emphasized a need to *understand* the *Interrelationships* within the Community. For example, one participant stated, "I have deep knowledge of the geographic, social, historical, and economic contexts of the places in which we engage… I know how the roles of community-based organizations, resident associations, institutions, and systems play in community progress." The participants often talked about the Community *Interrelationships* as layers. For example, one participant discussed the need, "To learn about and experience the realities of community building and the human interactions and layers of non-profits, governments, and institutions that drive that work forward." Multiple participants discussed this as the idea of Collective Impact within communities or within the partnership space. They discussed these as multi-organization or multi-stakeholder relationships and emphasized the need to understand these *Interrelationships* in order to apply them to the Place as a whole. The participants discussed this understanding of Community *Interrelationships* was vitally important, because their "efforts ought not to displace or replicate

84

what is indigenously found within the communities we work." In an example, if a CEP was listening to a need from a neighborhood resident and did not have a knowledge of Community *Interrelationships*, their immediate response may be to utilize an opportunity from within the HEI. However, whatever the HEI could do to support the resident may already be available in the Community space.

Having to understand and navigate multiple *Interrelationships* in both the HEI and Community context made it difficult to articulate an "average" day in their place-based partnership work. They discussed finding themselves in different places, different spaces, doing a varied multitude of projects and efforts in different ways with different stakeholders. They were describing the movement between HEI and Community *Interrelationships*. They stated that this can be extremely complex, considering that one moment they may be working with community members, another with faculty and administrators, and another with students. In order to navigate these spaces, the participants discussed a need not only to understand what the *Interrelationships* were and how they operated conceptually, but they also articulated a need for a vast understanding of administrative and technical knowledge in both a HEI and Community space, from larger concepts such as economic and community development, to more specific concepts such as communication and budget management.

As both a representative for the HEI and an advocate for the Community, with a foot in each space, participants concluded in the Innovate Phase of the AI session that they serve as a sort of a centralized knowledge-hub of this conceptual and technical knowledge for both entities. While the first part of this competency is to understand, thus the need to serve as this hub of knowledge for a multitude of stakeholders, the second part to the competency is to navigate this space. The execution of this knowledge in the space of the Relationship System is what the participants

described as "convening." Convening is the action that wraps together the previously outlined understanding of the *Interrelationships* in a space where place-based partnerships come together. Convening becomes the art where place-based CEPs utilize their knowledge together in order to advance this type of work for the various stakeholders involved. It is part of the essence of what makes a place-based CEP a place-based CEP. As one participant described the work of a fellow CEP, "She helped to set up partnership and linkages. She was a dot connector, match maker, and looked for connections that were mutually beneficial." This participant articulated the convening experience as not just something that was done, but who the CEP was and the role that this person played: To navigate *Interrelationships* in Place *is to be a* convener.

On multiple occasions, participants described convening initially as the ability to "read a room" and then act on that ability. One participant stated, "I'm a strong convener. I am a detailed, close listener. After many years of practical training, I can listen to a conversation and summarize and have my understandings be very close to what speakers intended others to hear." This ability to read the room then blends into the ability to interpret that information and utilize it:

> I easily connect people's shared interests. I can leverage a multitude of institutional assets (teaching, volunteerism, research, financial sponsorships, political networks) to facilitate place-based partnership work. I can raise concerns diplomatically in ways that enable partnership members to reflect on how they affect the partnership.

The participants stated that this ability created the foundations and opened the door for partnership opportunities. Without the ability to listen and interpret, they would not be able to bring the appropriate stakeholders together to move forward. For example, one CEP discussed this ability in action during the COVID-19 crisis, "It's a mindset: CEPs are conveners and connectors and with the right track record, we're well-positioned to convene and connect in times of crisis. If there's one thing this crisis confirmed for me, our team is seen as legitimate conveners and

connectors in the places we work." Many of the skills articulated by the CEP participants focused

around that one central idea: Connecting people's shared interests strategically and diplomatically

or, in other words, navigating *Interrelationships*.

5.0 Conclusion & Implications

The purpose of this study was to develop competencies for community engagement professionals (CEPs) who specialize in partnership focused and democratically oriented place-based engagement. This study was designed to draw out the views of place-based CEPs engaging in this type of work at the University of Pittsburgh, particularly those whose work is situated in or in partnership with the Office of Community and Governmental Relations (CGR) and the Community Engagement Centers. These participants engaged in transformative participatory action research (PAR), utilizing Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as the primary structure for the research process. This chapter contains a review of the major findings of this study, including a presentation of a framework in which to view and understand the findings, as well as implications for future research and practice.

The results of this study determined that the competencies which exist for place-based CEPs reflect various relationships within a system. In this system, the CEP is positioned between the institution of higher education (HEI) and the Community. This system of relationships is understood as the "Place" of their place-based work. The findings of this study build on the current literature by presenting this system of relationship-oriented competencies as a framework with which place-based CEPs can view and understand their work. While Campus Compact provided a framework for CEP competencies through the *Preliminary Competency Model for Community Engagement Professionals* (Dostilio et al, 2017), the authors acknowledged that there was the ability to build on this framework and even presented "missing areas" (pg. 40). Both Kuttner et al

(2019) and Yamamura and Koth (2019) identified place-based community engagement as one of those areas and this study expands on that gap in the CEP competency research.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the context of Place is highly influenced by the Community and the way in which the CEP relates to the Community. The competencies found as part of this study cannot wholly function without the CEP orienting themselves and their work to this greater context of Place. Each one of the relationship-based competencies is influenced by the context of Place, which includes the influences of the HEI and the Community both. This aligns with the perspective of Kuttner et al (2019) as they identified this gap in the functional areas within the Campus Compact framework (Dostilio et al, 2017). Those areas are identified as *Leading Change Within Higher Education*, *Institutionalizing Community Engagement on a Campus*, *Facilitating Students' Civic Learning and Development* and *Administering Community Engagement Programs* (Dostilio et al, 2017). These were all focused on competencies for CEPs whose "positionality" was oriented to the HEI specifically, and that only the area of *Cultivating High-Quality Partnerships* emphasized a positionality more highly influenced by both the HEI and the Community together.

The findings of this study build on the existing literature by demonstrating that place-based CEP competencies should not only be framed by the CEPs context of Place, but by the CEP themselves, and their identities, values, and purposes. Dostilio et al (2017) present this concept not as a way of framing the other competencies, but by spreading this concept out through individual areas of knowledge, skills or dispositions, such as the "Knowledge of self: Self-awareness*" or the disposition "Embrace passion for and commitment to community engagement" in the *Cultivating High-Quality Partnerships* functional area (pg. 51). Similarly, Yamamura and Koth (2019) describe this concept separately as part of "Leading With Multicultural Competency and

89

Inclusion." Kuttner et al (2019) state that this concept, which they call "introspection," could be a competency of its own, but suggest alternatively that this idea, as part of the CEPs positionality, could "obscure" the competency model which they present. This study builds on this literature by demonstrating that the CEPs sense of Self is not an independent competency, nor does it obscure the other competencies, but it enhances and clarifies them for the individual CEP as they situate themselves within the system of relationships embedded in the context of Place.

Although this study found that there are relationship-based competencies that should be viewed through both the CEPs sense of Self and their sense of Place, the study also found that the competencies are viewed through these lenses not as independent of one another, but as overlapping parts of a system. While other studies understand place-based CEP competencies as mechanisms for navigate *multiple* systems (Kuttner et al, 2019) or as separate knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Dostilio et al, 2017; McReynolds & Shields, 2015), this study demonstrates that the competencies crossover both conceptually and practically and there are specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are embedded within and which influence multiple competencies. Each competency relates to the other and can affect the outcome or strength of another, and so this system presents that interconnectedness as a framework for place-based CEP professional competencies.

This study demonstrates that the competencies for place-based CEPs should be framed as competencies necessary for supporting a system of relationships which are understood through the CEPs sense of Self and within the context of Place. The overlapping and interconnected nature of the competencies as well the need to understand them through both a sense of Self and Place, led me to develop the *Placed-Based CEP Relationship System Framework*, a framework which outlines this network of the relationship-oriented work of CEPs and displays the structure and

90

connection of those relationships. All aspects of the competencies of place-based CEPs are

presented in this framework, which is displayed in Figure 2.

RELATIONSHIP W/ PLACE

INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

COMMUNITY
History, Identity, Physical Space, Goals, Groups, Individuals

Groups
Community & Neighborhood Organizations, Local Government

Individuals
Community Leaders, Residents

RELATIONSHIP W/ SELF
Identities, Values, Purpose

PLACE-BASED CEP

H.E. INSTITUTION
History, Identity, Physical Space, Goals, Groups, Individuals

Groups
Faculty, Student Groups, Departments, Administrative Units

Individuals
Course Instructors, Researchers, Students, Administrators

PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
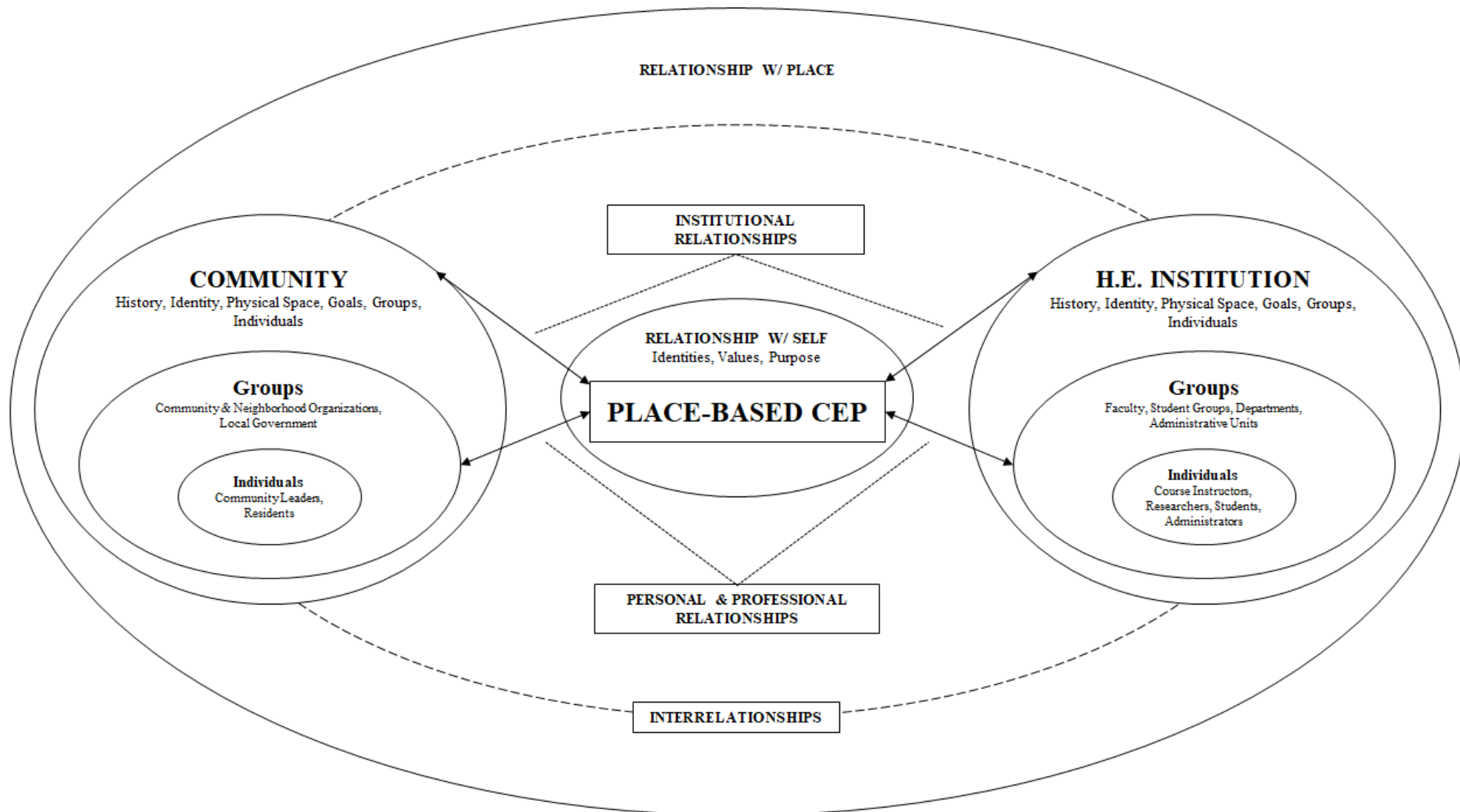
INTERRELATIONSHIPS

Figure 2 Place-Based CEP Relationship System Framework

92

5.1 The Place-Based CEP Relationship System Framework

This framework begins with the place-based CEP at the center of the system. They are located at the center, between the Community and the HEI, because the CEP operates between those two places and function in a third space that is highly influenced by both (Bartha, Carney, Cale, Goodhue, and Howard, 2014; Witchurch, 2009, 2013). Although this figure presents the CEP situated at the very center of the system, equidistant from both the Community and the HEI, most CEPs would be positioned either more closely to the HEI or to the Community based on the other relationships within the system, especially their *Relationship with Self* and their *Relationship with Place*. Not only would a CEP not necessarily start at the center of this system, but as they engage in their work, they may shift back and forth as the nature of their relationships change. For example, as was stated in the findings, there were CEPs who were not "of" the Community in that they were not originally a resident of the Community. However, as time went on, they became more wholly invested and entrenched in the Community space. This demonstrates how a CEP can shift within the framework.

As the CEP navigates their work within the rest of the system, they utilize the *Relationship with Self* competency, represented as a circle around the CEP, as a lens to view and understand the other relationships. All other aspects of the work of place-based CEPs are understood through a CEP's *Relationship with Self*. In their *Relationship with Self*, they authentically reflect on, articulate and embrace their own individual identities, values and purpose(s). All arrows to the Community or to the HEI move through the CEP's *Relationship with Self*, whether in or out. The CEP is understanding all the elements of the Place of their work, including their individual relationships, the groups, the processes, procedures, and other components through this

93

relationship. They also understand how, in turn, these components have a returned impact on their *Relationship with Self* as well. The findings state multiple ways in which CEPs use their *Relationship with Self* to orient to the rest of the system, most significantly through identity, and especially racial identity. The way that a CEP identifies socially and professionally highly effects the way in which they operate as a CEP (Mueller & Picket, 2015). By understanding and embracing their *Relationship with Self*, they can operate authentically and maintain authentic relationships (Mitchell, 2008). As stated in the findings, when CEPs operate authentically by reflecting on, articulating and embracing their own individual identities, values and purposes, they can build a greater level of trust in both Community and HEI spaces. Due to the influential nature of this competency on the others, the CEP must first understand and reflect on their *Relationship with Self*.

Outside of the center circle to either side are external relationships, including separate relationships with the primary "Institutions," one set of relationships with Community and one set of relationships with the Higher Education Institution (HEI). The relationship with each Institution as a whole, including the groups and individuals that make up that make up that Institution, is understood as the *Institutional Relationship* competency. The Community is also labeled an "Institution," because this creates an all-encompassing view of the Community as a partner. Whenever a CEP utilizes this framework, "Community" may represent a different entity. Community can represent a neighborhood, a city, or other geographical area, but it can also represent an identity-based group. The CEP is relating with a Community Institution which represents a community group that has shared history, goals, identities, etc. Depending on the Community, those elements can change, and the nature of the *Institutional Relationship* would very accordingly (Bringle, Clayton & Price, 2009). As stated in the findings, navigating

94

Institutional Relationships requires a CEP to understand and navigate historical and current partnership space between institutions of higher education and the identified Community (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Leiderman, Furco, Zapf, & Goss, 2002). By utilizing this competency, the CEP begins to understand and navigate the space between the Community and HEI and begins to serve as both a liaison and advocate for both the Community and the HEI. The findings demonstrate that, by serving as a fully informed liaison and advocate for both places, a CEP can better manage expectations for stakeholders involved, ensuring a greater reciprocity in partnership development.

Embedded in both the Community and HEI are *Personal & Professional Relationships* with the groups and the individuals that make up those spaces. Although the Institutions of *Institutional Relationships* also include the groups and the individual people that makes up these Institutions, there are separate ways of understanding the relationship with those Institutions as compared to the groups and the individuals, so they are a separately identified component and a separately identified relationship. In other words, *Institutional Relationships* focus on the relationship with the Institution as a whole, and *Personal & Professional Relationships* focus on the relationships with the groups or individuals. For example, faculty are still part of the Institution of an HEI (*Institutional Relationships*), but there is a different competency for navigating that relationship (*Personal & Professional Relationships*), so the relationships are displayed separately. While *Institutional Relationships* focuses on the space between the HEI and the Community, *Personal & Professional Relationships* focuses on connecting with groups and individuals within that space by developing and sustaining strong emotional intelligence to support and manage personal and professional relationships between groups and individuals.

In the framework, the *Personal & Professional Relationships* between the groups and individuals, are represented by two-way arrows moving from the CEP outward to the external

entities and back. While the two-way arrows represent both a reciprocal relationship between CEP and partners, it also represents a flow from one side of the system to the other side of the system through the CEP. For example, the findings articulate communication as part of this competency. If a CEP is engaged in a relationship between a Community and HEI group, the path of communication goes from the Community group to the CEP, the CEP understands that relationship by initiating active listening and processes that information through their *Relationship with Self*, and then the path moves out to the HEI group. The flow then goes back to the Community group in the same manner and continues to move back and forth in a constant flow. These arrows on one side represent, for example, relationship management or communication between the CEP and that Institution. However, based on the findings of this study, CEPs oftentimes find themselves conducting partnership management *between* the Community and HEI, and this is the flow which is represented (Martin & Crossland, 2017). *Personal & Professional Relationships* exist between the CEP and one partner, but the CEP can also help to manage the relationships between the two.

Although CEPs are presented between these Community and HEI groups, place-based CEPs are not always part of a relationship between Institutions or between Community groups and individuals and HEI groups and individuals. The groups and individuals are connected in other ways through the Place. So, the CEP must understand, navigate and manage the space where those systems interact. This is represented as *Interrelationships*, the dotted line that connects the Institutions. As stated in the findings, CEPs oftentimes insert themselves between stakeholder/partner groups through their knowledge and skills as conveners or by boundary spanning (Aldrich and Herker, 1977; Scott 1992; Sandmann et al, 2014). As Weerts and Sandmann (2010) stated about the roles of boundary spanners, they are, community-based problem solvers, technical experts, internal engagement advocates and engagement champions. A CEP is initiating

all of these roles in the *Interrelationships* space. They may insert themselves in either space, and as the CEP connects to the *Interrelationships* in those spaces, that can oftentimes result in an *Institutional Relationship* or a *Personal & Professional Relationship* for the CEP (Bartha et al, 2014). Kuttner et al (2019) referred a to a similar concept as moving across level or changing scales. For example, they may identify a need in the Community space and find the appropriate institutional partner to assist with that community need, or an academic program in the HEI space implements experiential learning opportunities and the CEP seeks out a supportive community organization, and so the CEP initiates their convening skill in order to support that *Interrelationship.*

Viewing all the components of the framework together as connected parts of a system, the CEP understands the *Institutional Relationships* and the *Personal & Professional Relationships* within both the Community and the HEI, as well as the *Interrelationships* between those spaces. Collectively, the two spaces and all their components, as well as how the CEP relates to those spaces, are considered Place. This view of the relationships between all these components is *Relationship with Place*, which is reflected by the outer circle, surrounding all other elements including the institutions and the CEP themselves. Although there are two separate Institutions, they collectively comprise the *Relationship with Place* because Place is not the Community *or* the HEI, it is the Community *and* the HEI. As stated in the findings, the Place where the CEP works is influenced by both. This *Relationship with Place* is comprised of an overall understanding and navigation of the Place as a whole, including the history, identity, physical space, goals, groups, individuals, interactions, and systems, both separately and in the space that they come together, viewed through their own identities, values, and purposes.

The significance of this framework is not limited to the convenience of viewing and understanding the competencies and how they relate to each other in one space. The *Placed-Based CEP Relationship System Framework* also relates these competencies and the supporting literature by placing them in the context of Place and by understanding them through the individual identity and situation of the CEP or group of CEPs. Without the framework to provide the context for the competencies, the competencies would be beneficial, but would be utilized for anyone doing community-based boundary spanning work. Dostilio (2017b) warns of the lack of context often found in competency systems, stating, "There is a concern that establishing a list of competencies promotes and inflexible system of competence, which is often defined in a very particular cultural context and by those who are privileged to hold authority within a profession" (pg. 29). This model is meant to be flexible. It does not present a rigid form of competencies or a checklist of duties and responsibilities. The competencies are about relating to the Place of place-based work by understanding and reflecting on personal identity within the framework. Each place-based CEP to do a self-analysis utilizing this framework would have a narrative behind that CEP's understanding of their system which would vary significantly. Their place in the system would be different. Some lines would be stronger than others and some may barely be existent. The significance of this study and the framework is that is meets the needs of the CEP and the Place where they are doing that work. That Place includes the institution of higher education, which is why the competencies within this framework is not translatable to other community engagement professionals who are engaging in this work outside of a higher education setting. A CEP who works within the context of another anchor institution, for example a hospital or a K-12 school, may relate to and could benefit from the competencies independently, but this specific framework is unique to the higher education CEP. The players within and the dynamics of higher education is unique in this

98

community engagement setting. Higher Education place-based CEPs understand different processes, like faculty tenure, a residential experience or extensive support services. What this demonstrates is higher education place-based CEPs can benefit from the competencies themselves, but it is by placing the competencies within the framework structure that gives the competencies their unique meaning. By utilizing this framework at the University of Pittsburgh, the place-based CEPs at this institution can understand and articulate their unique role in community engagement efforts, both as an individual CEP and as a unit of place-based CEPs, which allows them to provide more strategic support for the community engagement vision at the institution.

This study identified the specific competencies for CEPs who specialize in partnership focused place-based community engagement at the University of Pittsburgh. This was vitally important for these CEPs at the University, because as the University has expanded and developed their overall community engagement efforts, they began to orient their work to focus on a place-based strategy. The CEPs involved in this study have been charged with leading this effort, and although they understood that their specific work was different than the existing community engagement efforts at the institution, they were unaware of their unique contribution, both as individuals and as a unit. And while the literature on community engagement professional competencies is developing and the research on higher education place-based community engagement is emerging, place-based CEPs still find themselves needing to dig through a vast field of related knowledge to understand their roles more fully.

Due to the increased emphasis on place-based community engagement strategy at the University of Pittsburgh, as well as with institutions across higher education, by providing a framework for place-based community engagement CEP competencies, this study provides an important and relevant resource with which to view the efforts of the professionals engaging in

this field. A CEP engaging in place-based work can take this framework and the competencies, identify the Place, understand how they, as an individual, relate to that Place, and then view and navigate the other relationships within that place through that understanding to determine their unique contribution. By understanding this framework, a CEP can step within a place-based system and state, "This is what I can contribute in this space." If a team of CEPs all view their work through the framework, they can implement and support their efforts deliberately and strategically to ensure the greatest level of reciprocity and community change for the Place of their place-based work.

5.2 Implications for Practice

The framework in this study provides a mechanism to allow each CEP to understand and articulate how they fit into the greater institutional community engagement strategy. Their work is understood according to Place and strengthened by their understanding of Self. By initiating the place-based competency framework, place-based CEPs can apply those competencies to the larger context. Even if there are other CEPs at the institution, such as faculty or other administrators, who possess the competencies to support high-quality partnerships, place-based CEPs can engage the framework and understand how they can further support those stakeholders in their partnership efforts. For example, a place-based CEP can activate their role as convener in this space, listening and "reading the room" of the various partnerships between the Community and the HEI. They then can operationalize their other competencies to successfully navigate that space and serve as a support for those *Institutional Relationships*. Place-based CEPs can utilize these competencies to

100

step back and be a birds-eye view of the institutional community engagement strategy and help to identity and address institutional and community needs which are not being met. Due to their knowledge of the system and the entire context of Place, they do not need to try and fill a void, but they can bring stakeholders together and support that need strategically.

These competencies can also assist an institution on hiring and supporting the needs of their staff and of the place-based community engagement team as a whole. As Kuttner et al (2019) suggested, "If partnership work varies based on who the [CEP] is, then the question may not be just 'What competencies do all partnership managers need?' but also 'Who needs to be on staff in order for the organization to have the full range of necessary competencies?'" (p. 153). If we look at the *Placed-Based CEP Relationship System* as a system for an individual, some areas may be stronger or more underdeveloped than others. If all these competencies are necessary to ensure the system operates effectively, then each one needs to be addressed. If the unit of place-based CEPs has a robust *Relationship with Place* that emphasizes the HEI, there is the opportunity to hire a CEP who can bring that same competency with a Community-focused lens. If the CEP team has a vast conceptual knowledge of the system, but needs additional support in the technical aspects, then that is where the focus can be. The framework can be used as a map and assessment tool for the hiring process.

In the same way, the framework can be utilized for professional development of current staff within a greater place-based effort. Especially if the staff team is already complete and no new hires are to be made, if any area of the staff team is particularly underdeveloped, this allows leadership to know where they need to be more intensive and strategic in order to support their efforts. For example, if the members of the CE Team have a greater orientation with the Community and limited experience at the specific HEI, much more attention will need to be placed

on training for HEI history, policies, procedures, structures, etc. Without that training and development, the team would not be able to efficiently operate as conveners in the Interrelationships space. The same approach can be utilized for CEPs as individuals. Place-based CEPs can identify areas within the framework to develop as well. This was something that started though the AI Process as part of this study, as the CE Team engaged in the Initiate Phase. All the participants created Professional Competency Action Implementation Goals, identifying specific knowledge, skills and dispositions which were embedded in the competencies. They determined that these specific areas were those in which they needed the greatest level of development. They reflected on areas of growth and established goals and objectives to meet the needs of those competency themes.

This presents an implication for practice which relates to the Appreciative Inquiry Process. The professional development which was implicated in the findings took place as competencies were discussed individually throughout the Appreciative Inquiry model designed for this study. This model and the activities within the model were designed to discuss the individual bodies of knowledge, the skills and the dispositions of place-based CEPs, so as the CEPs created their Professional Competency Action Implementation Goals, the goals were much more individually oriented, and did not focus on a more holistic view of the CEP as a professional. However, if this same process was adapted to utilize the *Placed-Based CEP Relationship System* as the structure for the model, the CE Team would be able to create specific more intentional group and individual goals by looking at the competencies as a greater body. There is the potential for this opportunity specially at this research site. Since Appreciative Inquiry is intended to repeat if needed, this group of CEPs at the University of Pittsburgh could engage in this process again to more closely understand their contributions to the community engagement efforts of the University.

5.3 Areas for Future Research

First, there is the opportunity for studies such as this to be duplicated at additional institutions and/or multiple institutions in a cross evaluation. The conclusions in this chapter, although they can be understood and utilized in another institutional and/or community setting, the nuances of the data are specific to completing place-based community engagement work *at the University of Pittsburgh*. The competencies are the same but are viewed differently if the Place is altered by changing the institution. In Yamamura and Koth (2019), they engaged in a multi-institution study with each institution having a unique environment. In this case, the Place was different. The Place as influenced by the HEI could even be altered within the City of Pittsburgh. Within the City, there are over a dozen colleges, universities and other institutions of higher education in the City of Pittsburgh. Both Carnegie Mellon University and Carlow University are less than a mile from the University of Pittsburgh. Even with such close proximity, the nature of Place changes according to the HEI. Additional research can be conducted on the transferability of these competencies as the Place is altered more significantly by changing the HEI. As stated in the Dostilio (2017b) work on competencies, "Context is absolutely paramount to competence, and many view competence as a function of the context in which it is applied" (p. 30). The intention of this research would be to expand further on the context of Place.

There is also the opportunity to pursue additional research on individual components of the framework. There was a significant portion of the conversation that took place during the AI session which focused on the CEP's *Relationship with Place* and how the CEP can relate more closely to or be more highly influenced by one Institution in the system more so than the other. While Kuttner et al (2019) discussed this in conjunction with identity and purpose as positionality,

which brings *Relationship with Place* and *Relationship with Self* together, they did not identify these at separate competencies. They stated that it *could* be its own separate competency, and this study at the University of Pittsburgh establishes this concept as two separate competencies, so additional research could be conducted to understanding the nature of positionality for CEPs.

When reflecting on the data, the CEPs often discussed the tension between Community and Higher Education Institution based on a variation of identity. They discussed the tension between neighborhoods and the HEI and their complex histories and complicated current relationships. They discussed tensions between communities and the HEI based on race. Whether talking about their *Relationship with Self*, *Relationship with Place*, *Institutional Relationships*, *Personal & Professional Relationships* or *Interrelationships*, this tension between HEI and community was a consistent factor, especially regarding racial justice and equity. While this subject is represented in the various areas of service-learning and community-university partnership literature (Butin, 2005; Evans, Taylor, Dunlap, and Miller, 2009; Mitchell, 2008, 2013; Mueller & Picket, 2015), there is the opportunity for additional research on this space of tension in the place-based system.

In the same way that there were implications for practice for the Appreciative Inquiry structure of this study, there is also the opportunity for further research. I chose Appreciative Inquiry because I believed that it reflected the values and principles of democratic community engagement. Also, with a positive approach, I felt that this structure would frame the conversation as not, "What *should* our competencies be?" but "What *are* our competencies?" The competencies should not be viewed in deficit, but as an opportunity to strengthen their place-based work. For this study, Appreciative Inquiry met those expectations. The structure and activities that I utilized for this study were effective in having the CEPs have a robust discussion around partnerships and

their placed-based work. We were able to have more generalized conversations about place-based work and have discussions about competencies specifically. The format utilized allowed for everyone to participate to their level of comfort and in different ways. By having different types of activities, each participant was able to have a voice and engage in the process to the best of their ability. Therefore, there is the opportunity repeat this process to validate AI's utility in serving as a mechanism for democratic engagement.

Beyond the purpose of the research itself, this study can provide insight into the use of this specific Appreciative Inquiry approach, including the procedures, tools, questions, activities, etc. as a process for facilitating Participatory Action Research and understanding teams of higher education CEPs and other professionals. Many of the elements which are being utilized as part of this study have been knitted together and synthesized from other scholarly work and professional practices in the field. However, the specific methodology is unique to this study. If this approach to Appreciative Inquiry is demonstrated as being highly effective for gathering the necessary information to answer the research question, these processes and procedures can be utilized by other teams of CEPs, opening a door to additional data which can be gathered around place and partnership-based community engagement. And although the original intention of this study was to have an in-person Appreciative Inquiry session, the AI session was conducted remotely. Although the AI session was successful and met the needs of the purpose of the research, there is future research that can be conducted on this subject which has an in-person format. There is also the opportunity to repeat this research and/or this structure in a virtual format to better understand if Appreciative Inquiry can be effectively conducted virtually in general, or if the success of virtual AI was specific to my study.

5.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to determine the unique contribution, and the core competencies needed to make that contribution, of community engagement professionals who specialize in place-based community engagement at the University of Pittsburgh. Through the use of Participatory Action Research and utilizing an Appreciative Inquiry format and approach, this study was able to conclude that the competencies which exist for place-based CEPs reflect various relationships within a system and are described as *Relationship with Self*, *Relationship with Place*, *Institutional Relationships*, *Personal & Professional Relationships* and *Interrelationships*. In this system, the CEP is positioned between the institution of higher education (HEI) and the Community. This system of competencies is presented as the *Placed-Based CEP Relationship System* framework and reflects the "Place" of the place-based work of CEPs. Place-based CEPs understand this framework and competencies according to their own sense of Self and their sense of Place.

While the core competencies were determined and presented as part of the framework, the other piece of the purpose remains: What is the unique contribution of place-based CEPs? That is what the framework can help each individual CEP and each group of CEPs determine. As a place-based CEP orients themselves to the Place, considering both the HEI and the Community and all of the components that make up that Place, they can then begin to understand and navigate that Place according to how they, as an individual, relate to that Place. They then can use this understanding as a lens to view the rest of the system within Place. This is what makes this study and the framework unique. Not only is the contribution of each place-based CEP unique according to the CEP, but it is unique according to the Place. As the CEP changes, or the Place changes, so

does their potential contribution. By engaging in the *Placed-Based CEP Relationship System* framework an individual place-based CEP or team of place-based CEPs can fully understand how they can contribute to democratic community engagement in their role.

Appendix A Place-Based Community Engagement Professional Pre-Work Journal

Protocol

Considering the full array of partnerships with which you work, reflect on your time working with groups of stakeholders to support these place-based community-university partnerships.

1. What general knowledge did you offer to those involved that would prepare them as individuals to contribute to the partnership? What were some of the facts, information about processes or procedures, awareness of history, individuals, tasks, etc. that you had offered or encouraged those within the partnership to share? How did you facilitate that knowledge sharing?

2. Do you feel partnership stakeholders looked to you help them discover the knowledge necessary to fully participate in the partnership? If so, how did they solicit your help? Alternatively, did you have to insert yourself in the partners' learning process? If so, how did you do that?

3. What skills do you expect partnership stakeholders to have in order to positively contribute to the partnership? Were you able to facilitate a discussion, mediate, leverage resources, communicate effectively, etc.? If so, how did you do that?

4. What skills did you feel that stakeholders were missing that did not allow them to contribute to the partnership in the ways most beneficial or the ways that others in the partnership expected? How, if at all, did you help those stakeholders to identify that skills

gap or develop those skills? Where those skills demonstrated by other stakeholders in the partnership?

5. What important qualities about your disposition, temperament, character and identity allow you to facilitate place-based partnership development? In your support of this partnership, did you have humility? Where you often patient? Were you passionate about the cause? Etc.

Appendix B AI Inquire Phase Group Interview

Appreciative Inquiry Research Session

Inquire Phase Group Interview

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Notes Taken By:

Think of the current place-based community-university partnerships with which you are working where you have done the most work or engaged the most significantly.

- Please provide a brief overview, from your own perspective, of your work with this partnership. What are the roles of the partnership stakeholders, include your role? What does everyone contribute? What does the various stakeholder involvement with the partnership look like on a daily basis?

- What has gone particularly well with the partnership in the past and why?

- What obstacles/barriers did you and the other partnership stakeholders encounter with the partnership in the past and how were those obstacles/barriers addressed?

- What have you found most challenging in your partnership experience?

- What have you found most rewarding in your partnership experience?

Appendix C AI Imagine Phase Prompts

CEP Appreciative Inquiry Research Session

Imagine Phase Prompts

Participant Name:

- What do you view as the goals of your work as a place-based CEP?

- What knowledge would you like to have or feel that it is important to have to help meet those goals?

- What skills would you like to have or feel that it is important to have to help meet those goals?

- What resources would you like to have or feel that it is important to have to help meet those goals?

- Think about obstacles/barriers that you have experiences as part of your work. How do you or how could you handle these? What are the actions the you could take? How could you conduct yourself in order to deal with obstacles/barriers?

Definitions:

- Knowledge – "knowing declarative facts, knowing particular procedures, or having awareness of a task or process itself."

- Skills – "concerned with manipulating, constructing, organizing, sequencing, directing action toward goals, or doing one's practice,"

- Dispositions – Attitudes. "influence one's choice of actions, be they implicit or explicit, conscious or unconscious."

Now that you have had a chance to consider your previous partnership work through individual reflection and group discussion, and using the definitions above for context, answer the following:

1. What general knowledge do you have that allows you to facilitate place-based partnership work well?

2. What general knowledge are you lacking that would allow you to facilitate place-based partnership work better?

3. What skills do you have that allow you to facilitate place-based partnership work well?

4. What skills are you lacking that would allow you to facilitate place-based partnership work better?

5. What important qualities about your disposition, temperament, character and identity do you have that allows you to facilitate place-based partnership work well?

6. What important qualities about your disposition, temperament, character and identity are you lacking that would allow you to facilitate place-based partnership work better?

Worksheet – As a group, state the knowledge, skills and dispositions which were concluded from the discussion:

- **Knowledge:**

    1.

    2.

    3.

- **Skills:**

    1.

    2.

    3.

- **Dispositions:**

    1.

    2.

    3.

Appendix E Professional Competency Action Implementation Goals Worksheet

Professional Competency Action Implementation Goals

Example:

Ex. Knowledge, Skill or Disposition Objective: Skill – Shifting Power - Ability to center resident leaders and resident voices.

- Goal 1 – Identify strategic opportunities for resident voices, i.e. campus committees, personalized invitations to campus forums

1. Knowledge, Skill or Disposition Objective:

   a. Goal 1 –

   b. Goal 2 –

2. Knowledge, Skill or Disposition Objective:

   a. Goal 1 –

   b. Goal 2 –

3. Knowledge, Skill or Disposition Objective:

   a. Goal 1 –

   b. Goal 2 –

4. Knowledge, Skill or Disposition Objective:

   a. Goal 1 –

   b. Goal 2 –

Appendix F Place-Based Community Engagement Professional Reflective Journal Protocol

Now that you have had a chance to consider your previous partnership work through individual reflection and the group discussions which took place as part of the Appreciative Inquiry session, answer the following questions about your current knowledge, skills and dispositions, which are defined below.

Definitions:

Knowledge – "knowing declarative facts, knowing particular procedures, or having awareness of a task or process itself."

Skills – "concerned with manipulating, constructing, organizing, sequencing, directing action toward goals, or doing one's practice,"

Dispositions – Attitudes. "influence one's choice of actions, be they implicit or explicit, conscious or unconscious."

1. What general knowledge do you have that allows you to facilitate place-based partnership work well?

2. What general knowledge are you lacking that would allow you to facilitate place-based partnership work better?

3. What skills do you have that allow you to facilitate place-based partnership work well?

4. What skills are you lacking that would allow you to facilitate place-based partnership work better?

5. What important qualities about your disposition, temperament, character and identity do you have that allows you to facilitate place-based partnership work well?

6. What important qualities about your disposition, temperament, character and identity are

   you lacking that would allow you to facilitate place-based partnership work better

Bibliography

Aldrich, H., & Herker, D. (1977). Boundary spanning roles and organizational structure. *Academy of Management Review*, 2(2), 217–230.

Bartha, M., Carney, M., Gale, S., Goodhue, E., & Howard, A. (2014). This bridge called my job: Translating, revaluing, and leveraging intermediary administrative work. Public: The Journal of Imagining America, 2(2). Retrieved from http://public.imaginingamerica.org/blog/article/thisbridge-called-my-job-translating-re-valuing-and-leveraging-ntermediary-administrative-work/

Beere, C. (2009). Understanding and enhancing the opportunities of community-campus partnerships. In. L.R. Sandmann, C. H. Thornton, & A. J. Jaeger (Eds.), *New directions for higher education: Vol. 147. Institutionalizing community engagement in higher education: The first wave of Carnegie classified institutions* (pp. 55-63). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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

Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J.A. (2002). Campus-community partnerships: The terms of engagement. Journal of Social Issues, 58(3), 503-516.

Campus Compact. (2019). *The community engagement professional credentialing program.* Retrieved from https://compact.org/cep-credential-updates/

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (2018). *Elective classification: Community engagement – 2020 documentation framework.* Retrieved from: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rC5_BQtzGGmNFp94kMwl9qwV8OIHggKK/view

Dostilio, L. D. (2016). The professionalization of community engagement: Associations and professional staff. In T. D. Mitchell, T. Eatman, & C. Dolgan (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of service learning and community engagement*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Dostilio, L. D. (2017a). *The community engagement professional in higher education: A competency model for an emerging field* (First ed.). Boston, MA: Campus Compact.

Dostilio, L. D. (2017b). Planning a path forward: Identifying the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of second-generation community engagement professionals. In L.D. Dostilio (Ed). *The community engagement professional in higher education: A competency model for an emerging field* (pp. 98-117). Boston, MA: Campus Compact.

Dostilio, L.D. (2017c). Neighbourhood emplaced centers: A trend within American urban community–university engagement. Transform: The Journal of Engaged Scholarship, Issue 1, pp. 26–40.

Dostilio, L.D., Benenson, J., Chamberlin, S., Crossland, S., Farmer-Hanson, A., Hernandez, K. (2017). *Preliminary Competency Model for Community Engagement Professionals*. In L.D. Dostilio (Ed.) *The Community Engagement Professional in Higher Education: A Competency Model for an Emerging Field*. Boston MA: Campus Compact

Dostilio, L. D., & McReynolds, M. (2015). *Community engagement professionals in the circle of service-learning and the greater civic enterprise*. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 22(1), 113–117.

Dostilio, L. D., Welch, M., Dostilio, L. D., & ProQuest (Firm). (2019). *The community engagement professional's guidebook: A companion to the community engagement professional in higher education* (First ed.). Boston, MA: Campus Compact.

Dubb, S., McKinley, S., & Howard, T. (2013, August). The anchor dashboard: Aligning institutional practice to meet low-income community needs. Takoma Park, MD: The University of Maryland Democracy Collaborative.

Enos, S., & Morton, K. (2003). Developing a theory and practice of campus-community partnerships. In. B. Jacoby (Ed.), Building partnerships for service-learning (pp. 20-41). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Farmer-Hanson, A.J. (2017). Program administration and evaluation. In L.D. Dostilio (Ed). *The community engagement professional in higher education: A competency model for an emerging field* (pp. 98-117). Boston, MA: Campus Compact.

Gugerty, C. & Swezey, E. (1996). Developing campus-community relationships. In Jacoby, B. and Associates (Eds.), Service-learning in higher education: Concepts and practices (pp. 92-108). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-BassJacoby (2003)

Harter, L., Gerbensky-Kerber, A., & Patterson, S. (2011). Adopting narrative sensibilities in the service of advancing community-based participatory research In L. M. Harter, J. Hamel, Lambert & J. Millesen (Eds.), Participatory Partnerships for Social Action and Research Dubuqe, IA: Kendall Hunt

Hartley, M. (2011). Idealism and compromise and the civic engagement movement. In Saltmarsh, J., & Hartley, M. (Eds.). (2011). To serve a larger purpose: Engagement for democracy and the transformation of higher education. (pp. 27-48). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Hung, L., Phinney, A., Chaudhury, H., Rodney, P., Tabamo, J., & Bohl, D. (2018). Appreciative inquiry. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 17* doi:10.1177/1609406918769444

Jacoby, B., & Mutascio, P. (Eds.). (2010). Looking in, reaching out: A reflective guide for community service-learning professionals. Boston, MA: Campus Compact.

Jameson, J. K., Clayton, P. H., & Jaeger, A. J. (2011). Community-Engaged Scholarship through Mutually Transformative Partnerships. In L. M. Harter, J. Hamel Lambert & J. Millesen (Eds.), Participatory Partnerships for Social Action and Research Dubuqe, IA: Kendall Hunt

Jones, L., Wells, K. (2007) Strategies for Academic and Clinician Engagement in Community-Participatory Partnered Research. JAMA, 297(4):407–410. doi:10.1001/jama.297.4.407

Kearney, J., Wood, L., & Zuber-Skerritt, O. (2013). Community-university partnerships: Using participatory action learning and action research (PALAR). Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement, 6(1), 113-130. doi:10.5130/ijcre.v6i1.3105

Kuttner, P., Byrne, K., Schmit, K., & Munro, S. (2019). The Art of Convening: How Community Engagement Professionals Build Place-Based Community-University Partnerships for Systemic Change. Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 23(1), 131-160. Retrieved from https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/index.php/jheoe/article/view/2198

Lake, D., & Wendland, J. (2018). Practical, Epistemological, and Ethical Challenges of Participatory Action Research: A Cross-Disciplinary Review of the Literature. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 22*(3), 11-42. Retrieved from https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/index.php/jheoe/article/view/2093

Leiderman, S., Furco, A., Zapf, J., & Goss, M. (2002). Building partnerships with college campuses: Community perspectives. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED481879.pdf

Martin, L. & Crossland, S., (2017). Program administration and evaluation. In L.D. Dostilio (Ed). *The community engagement professional in higher education: A competency model for an emerging field* (pp. 98-117). Boston, MA: Campus Compact.

McReynolds, M., & Shields, E. (Eds.). (2015). Diving deep in community engagement: A model for professional development. Des Moines, IA: Iowa Campus Compact.

Mertens, D. M. (2015). Research and evaluation in education and psychology. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

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

Mitchell, T.D. (2013). Critical service-learning as a philosophy for deepening community engagement. In A. Hot & M. Johnson (Eds*.), Deeping community engagement in higher education: Forging new pathways* (pp. 263-269). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Plan for Pitt (2019). The plan for pitt: Making a difference together, academic years 2016–2020. Retrieved from https://www.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Strategic-Plan-Presentation.pdf

Ritchie, S. M., & Rigano, D.L., (2001). Researcher-participant positioning in classroom research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14, 741-756.

Rubin, V., & Rose, K. (2015). Strategies for strengthening anchor institutions' community impact. Oakland, CA: PolicyLink.

Ryan, A. B. (2006) Post-Positivist approaches to research. In: *Researching and Writing your thesis: a guide for postgraduate students*. MACE: Maynooth Adult and Community Education, 12–26

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

Saltmarsh, J., & Hartley, M. (2011). "To serve a larger purpose": Engagement for democracy and the transformation of higher education. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Sandmann, L. R., Jordan, J. W., Mull, C. D., & Valentine, T. (2014). Measuring boundary-spanning behaviors in community engagement. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 18(3), 83–104.

Sandmann, L. R., Thornton, C. H., & Jaeger, A. J. (2009). Editor's notes. *New Directions for Higher Education, 2009*(147), 1-4. doi:10.1002/he.352

Scott, W. R. (1992). *Organizations: Rational, natural, and open systems* (4th ed.). Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Sladek, E. (2017). *Higher education's anchor mission: Measuring place-based engagement*. Washington, D.C.: Democracy Collaborative.

Tekin A.K., & Kotaman, H. (2013). The epistemological perspectives on action research. *Journal of Educational and Social Research. 2013*(1), 81–91

The Democracy Initiative (n.d.). *Anchor institutions.* Retrieved from: https://democracycollaborative.org/democracycollaborative/anchorinstitutions/Anchor%20Institutions

University of Pittsburgh Neighborhood Commitments (n.d.) Retrieved from: https://cec.pitt.edu/about/

University of Pittsburgh (n.d). Office of community and governmental relations. Retrieved from: https://www.cgr.pitt.edu/about

Watkins, J. M., Mohr, B. J., & Kelly, R. (2011). Appreciative inquiry: Change at the speed imagination (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

Weaver, L. & Kellogg, B.T. (2017). Attributes of community engagement professionals seekin to institutionalize community-campus engagement. In L.D. Dostilio (Ed). *The community engagement professional in higher education: A competency model for an emerging field* (pp. 98-117). Boston, MA: Campus Compact.

Weerts, D. J., & Sandmann, L. R. (2008). Building a two-way street: Challenges and opportunities for community engagement at research universities. The Review of Higher Education, 32(1), 73-106. doi:10.1353/rhe.0.0027

Welch, M. (2016) Engaging higher education: Purposes, platforms, and programs for community engagement. Sterling, VA. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Whitchurch, C. (2009). The rise of the blended professional in higher education: A comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. Higher Education, 58(3), 407-418

Whitchurch, C. (2013). *Reconstructing identities in higher education: The rise of "third space" professionals.* London: Routledge.

Williams, P. (2011). The life and times of the boundary spanner. Journal of Integrated Care, 19(3), 26–33.

Yamamura, E. K., Koth, K., & ProQuest (Firm). (2018). *Place-based community engagement in higher education: A strategy to transform universities and communities* (First ed.). Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Yamamura, E., & Koth, K. (2019). Leadership Practices for Place-Based Community Engagement Initiatives. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 23*(1), 181-196. Retrieved from http://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/index.php/jheoe/article/view/2200