Challenges to Sustaining University-Community Partnerships in War-Torn, Northern Uganda: Investigating Resistance, Negative Stereotyping, and Gender Bias in Agricultural Students' Attachments

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Abstract

Gulu Town (Gulu) served as a site of refuge for many during northern Uganda's armed conflict that spanned from 1986 to 2006. Since then, Gulu transitioned into a region with sprawling slums and deteriorating social conditions. To combat these trends, the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment (FAE) at Gulu University adopted a development approach emphasizing community transformation. The FAE conceptualizes community transformation as the building of Gulu community members' capacity to transition from a subsistence agrarian lifestyle to one more economically sustainable. One mechanism the FAE uses to enact their commitment to community transformation are university-community partnerships established to facilitate agricultural student attachments, or internships. Because of the myriad ways university-community partnerships are manifested, we examined the challenges to sustaining such partnerships in this post-conflict region. When interpreting findings through Foucauldian (1972) discourse theory, three themes emerged: (a) resistance, (b) reinforcement of stereotypes, and (c) gender bias. Moving forward, we recommend training opportunities be developed to promote more collaborative, contextually grounded strategies to overcome the challenges and enhance the partnerships such that all participants benefit.

Keywords: attachments; gender bias; Uganda; university-community partnerships

Introduction

Gulu Town (Gulu) served as a site of refuge for many during northern Uganda's armed conflict that spanned from 1986 to 2006 (Branch, 2011, 2013; McKibben & Bean, 2010). Across Uganda's northern region it is estimated the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and other rebel groups abducted thousands of men, women, and children and killed more than 100,000 civilians (Dolan, 2009). In the early 1990s, the Ugandan military forced more than 130,000 individuals into displacement camps intended to house only a quarter of that number (Dolan, 2009). At the war's peak, the containment camps accommodated nearly 1 million refugees (Branch, 2009). In the decade after the war's end, the camps transitioned into sprawling slums with deteriorating social conditions (Branch, 2011, 2013). As a result, Gulu's new population is relatively *struggling and young*. Moreover, in the midst of the war, *land grabbing* arose as a common practice that left a number of displaced Ugandans stripped of their property (McKibben & Bean, 2010). Many northern Ugandan families are now *landless* and unable to secure a steady income (Sjogren, 2011). The conditions surrounding this disproportionally marginalized population appeared to have also intensified *frustration* among an increasing number of youth who report feeling ostracized from society (Finnstrom, 2008).

To combat these trends, the Ugandan government passed a *statuary instrument*, i.e., a legislative act, in 2003 that led to the creation of a public institution, Gulu University, intended to meet the needs of this embattled region (Mugonola & Baliddawa, 2014). The Faculty of Agriculture and Environment (FAE) at Gulu University has attempted to fulfill this mission by adopting a motto emphasizing *community transformation* (Kalule,

Mugonola, Odongo, & Ongeng, 2014). The FAE conceptualizes community transformation as the building of Gulu community members' capacities to transition from a subsistence agrarian lifestyle to one more economically sustainable (Mugonola & Baliddawa, 2014). One mechanism the FAE uses to operationalize their commitment to community transformation is through university-community partnerships established to facilitate agricultural *student attachments*, or *internships*. Mugonola and Baliddawa (2014) outlined three key objectives that guide the program's design: (a) building smallholder farmers' capacities, (b) allowing students to acquire essential training and facilitation experience with farmers, and (c) improving the visibility of Gulu University in the local community through viable partnerships. After the program's inception in 2006, anecdotal evidence reported by faculty, students, and community cooperators, i.e., smallholder farmers, demonstrates its successes. For example, reported outcomes for the program include improved community relationships, enhanced practical and problem-solving skills for students, as well as increased earning potential for community cooperators through value-addition to their agricultural outputs (Mugonola & Baliddawa, 2014). However, these achievements come as the result of more than a decade of *difficult labor* put forth by developers of and participants in the program. Investigating the challenges of sustaining viable university-community partnerships may hold valuable implications for other post-conflict regions.

Review of Literature

Today, higher education institutions find themselves in need of clarifying and reaffirming their roles to the local communities in which they reside (Tsui & Wong, 2006). This stems from increasing

criticism that the aims of many universities are disconnected from their local communities' needs, diminished public funding, and discussions about institutions taking on greater *responsibilities* to research, teach, and serve in their local contexts (Aronowitz, 2000; Checkoway, 2000; Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, & Lewis, 2005). As a result, calls for universities to become more actively engaged in their communities are intensifying (Asifiwe, 2011; Huggins, Tadesse, & Tadesse, 2015; Makkawi, 2013). This position has special resonance for institutions situated in post-conflict contexts (Costandius & Bitzer, 2014; Makkawi, 2013; Tavanti, 2011). Huggins et al. (2015) took this call a step further by arguing that universities' community engagement efforts should be grounded in *collaborative relationships*. The literature, however, contradicts a *tidy establishment* of university-community partnerships (Archer-Kuhn & Grant, 2014; Harkavy & Romer, 1999; Stewart & Alrutz, 2012; Strier, 2011). For example, the cultures of universities often support a *privileged stance* in which officials adopt a position of power as the *experts* in their local communities (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). By transitioning to a position of *mutual respect* and *balance* with the local community, Cozza and Blessinger (2015) argued university-community partnerships could be more beneficial for all stakeholders. As discussions foment surrounding the nature of university-community partnerships, VanderDussen (2009) suggested these collaborations might even serve as a way to enact *revolutionary change* and *reform* within the institutions of higher education.

One source of potential change is the role of private markets in local communities of developing countries (Keith, 2011; Tsui & Wong, 2006). For example, private markets can translate into economic livelihood opportunities for local citizens

while also helping the related partnerships become more *relevant* and *practical*. Therefore, universities should strive to attune their objectives to ensure clear linkages can be made likely to stimulate sources of local livelihoods and economic wherewithal (Keith, 2011). Mounting evidence (Barrick, Samy, Gunderson, & Thoron, 2009; Shoulders, Barrick, & Meyers, 2011; Thoron, Barrick, Roberts, & Samy, 2008) in the international agriculture development literature demonstrates these connections may be accomplished through student internships, such as the attachment program investigated. However, Thoron et al. (2008) argued university faculty in developing nations often lack the necessary training to facilitate quality internships. To better prepare agricultural workers in international settings, Barrick et al. (2009) proposed a model that included student internships as a critical element but the model gave little attention to the challenges implicit in forming and sustaining university-community partnerships to ensure successful internship experiences. Another gap in the literature exists in regard to the concept of relationships among faculty, students, and community volunteers through internship experiences. The nature of these partnerships have been shown to be crucial in influencing not only the quality of learning experiences but also the degree to which real-world issues and problems are addressed (Annor-Frempong, Zinnah, & Akuamoah-Boaten, 2002; Archer-Kuhn & Grant, 2014; Miller, 2007).

The emphasis on *relevant conditions* in university-community partnerships has different meanings depending on how stakeholders conceptualize their endeavors (Keith, 2015; Sandy & Holland, 2006). Despite the divergences and similarities among conceptualizations, it is apparent universities can no longer ignore the importance of *social responsibility* and

applicability of partnerships to their local contexts (Keith, 2011). Therefore, contemporary university-community partnerships should be based on citizenship, reciprocal learning and power, ethical responsibility, and social justice (Keith, 2015). These pillars of success for university-community partnerships may be especially true for post-conflict regions, such as northern Uganda, concerning their creation to support the facilitation of student internships (Wallace, 2007). Empirical evidence supports the concept of students gaining work and life skills in the context of their local communities (Kaye et al., 2011). However, Butterwick and Harper (2006) demonstrated university-community partnerships are not as successful as frequently depicted. In fact, sustaining partnerships has been shown to be *difficult* and *messy*. A need existed, therefore, to explore the complexities regarding how these partnerships may influence student internships in the context of Gulu University's surrounding community. To achieve that aim, this investigation sought to situate the challenges of these partnerships within the larger debate surrounding Gulu University's identity, role, and mission in its post-conflict context.

Purpose
Because of the myriad ways university-community partnerships are manifested, we examined the challenges to sustaining such collaborations in the post-conflict region of northern Uganda. We specifically focused this investigation to examine how actors storied and articulated the multiple ways in which the challenges to *community partnerships* were experienced.

Theoretical Lens
The current study is epistemologically situated in the critical constructionist perspective (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2008). Critical constructionists believe the world is systematically defined by societal norms, which are heavily influenced by systems of power (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Therefore, individuals espousing this philosophical perspective challenge the belief that knowledge is an "objective unbiased observation of truth" (Burr, 2003, p. 3). Rather, it is held that society can be transformed if individuals call these norms into question. Then, by bringing awareness to the silences, injustices, and inequities existing in reality, traditions and transactional practices can become more inclusive (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

In this study, the researchers challenged the underlying assumptions of university-community partnerships, especially in regard to how power structures mediate such relationships. As a result, the critical constructionist worldview influenced various aspects of this study's design, including its grounding in Foucauldian discourse theory [FDT] (Foucault, 1972). Foucault (1972) explained that discourse is the construction of knowledge through language and other forms of communication. Therefore, discourse is a subjective glimpse into reality (Foucault, 1972). Nevertheless, it provides crucial insight into both the *dominant and concealed views* existing in the social world (Foucault, 1972). For example, Foucault (1972) explained that society uses discourse to exert *social power*, *discipline*, and *control,* and some discourses may assist in upholding the status quo while diminishing important aspects of agency for the less powerful.

Discourse is also viewed as an account heavily influenced by a socially classed, raced, and gendered context (Foucault, 1972). In the current study, discourse played a significant role because the way in which the actors chose to story their challenges to sustaining university-community partnerships formed a salient

body of knowledge uniquely shaping the nature of such collaborations. Therefore, through the lens of FDT, the underlying assumption of this study was that university-community partnerships are part of the social world producing the discourse. The actors involved in university-community partnerships contributed to the construction of this discourse, and critiquing their *talk* in regard to the partnerships holds value for informing the literature and the context under study. These assumptions profoundly influenced our decision-making throughout this investigation.

Reflexivity

We developed the reflexivity section to own the biases, assumptions, and perspectives embedded in this study. Because the critical constructionist worldview deeply influenced this investigation, it is important to reveal that our beliefs about inequity and injustice may have influenced resulting interpretations. To that end, we developed the following disclosure to acknowledge our positions in collecting, interpreting, and representing the data.

> *It is important to acknowledge the lead researcher comes from a relatively privileged background. He is a White male who grew up in middle-class family in the United States. He was employed as a school-based, agricultural education teacher for four years; and, as a consequence, has dedicated a significant amount of thought to teaching and learning in the context of agriculture. Therefore, his gender, race, upbringing, and education greatly influence how he perceives and interacts with the world. His advisor, the other author, mentored him from the study's early conceptualization. He has conducted*

development project's involving faculty members of Gulu University and visited northern Uganda several times. Both researchers have also worked with and conducted research involving marginalized populations. And, as a result, we believe these experiences influenced our thoughts and ideas in regard to interpreting the data associated with this study.

We are mindful that our experiences and biases influenced this study. However, questioning existing power structures and bringing awareness to important issues are key tenets of critically positioned inquiries (Lather, 1986; Popkewitz, 1999). In fact, critical theorists consider their biases as powerful strengths in the research process, rather than weaknesses (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that ethical decision-making was upheld in this study. To demonstrate, we explicitly outline our methodological influences and also describe the standards for *rigor* and *trustworthiness* designed into this investigation.

Methodology

To achieve the purpose of this study, we conducted a systemic inquiry grounded in Stake's (1995) *instrumental case study* methodology. This qualitative approach provides unique understandings in regard to bounded systems (Stake, 1995). For example, in the current study, Gulu University's internship program served as the unit of analysis (Stake, 1995). Although most qualitative case studies are not generalizable, we made attempts to ensure the findings may be transferable to other post-conflict contexts by upholding standards of qualitative quality.

Building Quality into the Study

Ensuring quality is implemented in qualitative investigations is essential (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Patton, 2002). Therefore, we sought to provide findings that not only *rang-true* to practitioners and scholars but were also grounded in ethical and rigorous decision-making. To that aim, we chose to ensure rigor and trustworthiness by using Lincoln's and Guba's (1985) four principles of qualitative quality: (a) credibility; (b) transferability; (c) dependability; and (d) confirmability. *Credibility* refers to the importance of producing trustworthy findings. We strove to achieve credibility through *prolonged engagement* in the field during an eight-week period. Through this experience, the lead researcher was able to conduct *persistent observations*, perform *member checking*, and *triangulate* emergent findings through multiple sources of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In regard to *transferability*, or connecting the study's findings to other contexts, we sought to provide *accurate descriptions* of participants and the context in which they were situated while also attempting to obtain a *diverse sample* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure *dependability*, we fully described our roles in the research process and also specified the paradigms influencing the design of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Further, we only collected data that directly connected to the study's purpose. The final standard, *confirmability,* refers to whether the researchers have been explicit about their decision-making (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To achieve that aim, we sought to adequately describe the participants, methods, and procedures employed in this study.

Participants

Participants (n = 22) were directly involved with the student internship program at Gulu University. After receiving IRB approval from Oklahoma State University, we used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling procedures to recruit participants (Miles et al., 2014). This process began by contacting Gulu University officials who coordinate the attachment program. We asked the coordinators to recommend faculty, students, and community cooperators whom they perceived could provide diverse and rich insights into this program. In all, six university faculty, six undergraduate students, six program alumni, and four community cooperators agreed to participate. To protect participants' identities, we assigned each individual a participant number rather than reporting their names. Table 1 offers a profile of the study's participants.

Table 1
Profile of Study Participants

Participant Number	Gender	Age	Group/Tribal Affiliation[a]	Length of Involvement	Role
1	Male	36	Mukonzo	4 years	Faculty
2	Male	37	Lango	10 years	Faculty
3	Male	67	Bantu	10 years	Faculty
4	Male	41	Bantu	4 years	Faculty
5	Male	42	Acholi	10 years	Faculty
6	Male	39	Luo	10 years	Faculty
7	Female	59	Acholi	5 years	Cooperator
8	Female	37	Acholi	3 years	Cooperator
9	Female	35	Acholi	3 years	Cooperator
10	Female	47	Acholi	7 years	Cooperator
11	Male	26	Muganda	3 years	Alumnus
12	Male	34	Acholi	4 years	Alumnus
13	Male	26	Acholi	2.5 years	Alumnus
14	Female	27	Muganda	2.5 years	Alumna
15	Male	32	Acholi	3 years	Alumnus
16	Female	28	Karamajong	2.5 years	Alumna
17	Male	27	Lango	2 months	Student
18	Male	21	Buganda	2 months	Student
19	Male	22	Buganda	2 months	Student
20	Male	25	Buganda	2 months	Student
21	Male	24	Mutoorro	2 months	Student
22	Female	23	Muganda	2 months	Student

[a]Acholi is the dominant tribe in northern Uganda; however, students from across the country attend Gulu University based on a career placement system coordinated by Uganda's government.

Data Sources, Methods, and Analysis Strategies

To understand this phenomenon more intimately, the investigation required direct experience and interaction with the

internship program and its many actors. As a result, the lead researcher was immersed in the program for an eight-week period. Through this experience, he was able to position himself as a "*participant observer*" (Patton, 2002, p. 265) during the peak of the program's activities. As a consequence, he assumed both an *insider's* and *outsider's* position (Saldaña, 2015). For example, being an outsider of a different nationality, race, and background than the subjects meant he was able to enter the setting with a relatively fresh perspective. Meanwhile, he was also able to assume the role of an *insider* by participating in the day-to-day activities of the attachment program as well as meetings concerning the program's organization, design, and revision. Through these experiences, he collected multiple sources of data to gain a *rounded view* (Patton, 2002) of participants' perspectives regarding their experiences with the attachment program.

In this study, we analyzed data derived from four sources: (a) interviews, (b) documents, (c) observation/field notes, and (d) photographs. To gain insight into participants' unique perspectives, the lead researcher facilitated initial semi-structured interviews that ranged from 60 to 85 minutes in length. He also conducted additional follow-up interview sessions with participants to clarify conversations as well as further understand observations from the field. To systematically facilitate observations, we followed procedures outlined by Emerson, Shaw, and Fretz (2011) by which jottings and field notes were recorded. We also collected *visual evidence* (Pink, 2007) and *organizational documents* (Linde, 2009) to triangulate findings and ensure data saturation was achieved.

To analyze the data, we grounded procedures in Patton's (2002) concept of a *layered analytic approach*. This process began by employing Corbin's and Strauss' (2015) constant comparative method through the process of *immersion* and *incubation* as we coded, categorized, and created themes. We initiated this technique by employing three levels of coding: (a) open, (b) axial, and (c) selective (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). We began the *open coding* process by reading data sources line-by-line (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Then, to view the data through various frames of reference, we employed both *descriptive* and *in vivo* coding techniques outlined by Saldaña (2012). By using such an approach, we preserved important layers of *context* and *richness* while also making meaning of the data (Saldaña, 2012).

To initiate the second cycle of analysis, we engaged Corbin's and Strauss' (2015) *axial coding* technique in which we scrutinized relationships across the data corpus. In this stage, we were able to collapse the *open codes* into non-overlapping *categories*. We also weaved *indigenous concepts* (Emerson, et al., 2011) into the codes to ensure context and that participants' meanings were not lost. In the final phase of analysis, we developed *evidentiary warrants* that aligned with the categories developed through axial coding (Saldaña, 2012). Participants' words and other accompanying sources supported these warrants. Next, we conducted an *alternate reading* of the data by "thinking with theory" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 6). Therefore, we were able to consider the data through the lens of Foucault (1972) and begin to *make sense* of how power structures may have influenced the university-community partnerships. To further assess these categories, we deductively scrutinized the concepts against "confirming and disconfirming evidence" (Erickson, 1985, p. 90) in the *selective coding* phase. Ultimately, through continual analysis and data reduction, we arrived at three

empirically saturated themes to represent the study's findings.

Findings

The analysis of data revealed three major challenges to sustaining university-community partnerships: (a) resistance, (b) reinforcement of stereotypes, and (c) gender bias. Therefore, when interpreting these findings through Foucault's (1972) lens, it appeared that *gender* and *class* seemed to uniquely shape the challenges associated with the partnerships examined in this study. To situate these factors in the northern Ugandan context, the discussion of themes draws on relevant examples from the study's findings.

Resistance

Although resistance is often conceptualized as existing within macrostructures of power, i.e., where the *oppressed* struggle against the *powerful*, Foucault (1972) argued that resistance also may be situated in less visible spaces. For instance, everyday resistance may be *hidden*, *overlooked*, and *obscured* from view. Despite the ambiguousness of micro-resistances, these small acts can provide insight into the silenced views and perspectives of the oppressed, especially regarding the underlying challenges and barriers related to partnerships. In interviews, participants articulated that resistance occurred through actors' suspicions and skepticisms of both *university officials* and the *internship program* in the aftermath of armed conflict in their region. For example, the violent conditions of the Gulu region throughout the 20-year war left many individuals, including farmers, dependent on foreign aid and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Although the aid was deeply appreciated, it also created unintended consequences in northern Uganda. Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, and

6 described how locals became dependent on *hand-outs*. Therefore, when Gulu University officials attempted to introduce the internship program, many farmers expected to be paid for their participation. Participant 1, a university lecturer, explained that "farmers were scared of [the] conditions but [also] lazy" because of the aid they had received. Participant 2 provided further insight on the attitudes of farmers regarding the program:

> [They would say] here is the university coming and they're not paying people any money. So eventually the farmers started saying, '[w]e are not going to help you. We want you to pay us some money.' There was that resistance. And also being a post-war situation, people were suspicious of us.

However, suspicion and skepticism were not only limited to farmers but also extended to the program's students. For instance, Participant 5 explained students were suspicious of the program's value due to its "intensive workload." Meanwhile, Participant 14, a program alumna, explained that many of her peers complained about being "required to participate." She continued: "They were skeptical of the program because they felt like they were having to do extra work that students in similar programs were not having to do." Similarly, Participant 13 expounded that many of his peers were resistant to the program because they did not understand its intent. He further stated that students persistently posed questions such as "'*What is this all about?'* and '*When will it end?'*" The webs of resistance brought forth in the first theme revealed participants' "reactive acts of opposition" (Foucault, 1972, p. 141) to the internship program in its early phase. Although these acts were ephemeral at times, they continually reappeared well after

the program's establishment as both community cooperators and students struggled to understand and come to terms with its aims and expectations.

Reinforcement of Stereotypes

Participants in this study often voiced the *difficulties* involved with maintaining university-community partnerships. However, they also articulated the relationship-building phase as *worth it* because of the many positive outcomes associated with the program. Nevertheless, at times, the internship program seemed to reinforce negative stereotypes regarding *agriculture* and the *university*. Foucault (1972) espoused that stereotypes can work as a form of oppression by inscribing negative depictions of people, issues, and traditions in the public's consciousness. Therefore, negative representations of agriculture and the university arose. For example, Participant 22 expressed that some farmers did not view students as knowledgeable about agricultural practices; rather they are viewed as "free labor." Therefore, the view that agriculture is only for *laborers,* and not *educated professionals,* was reinforced for some students in the program. Participant 22 explained:

> To some of the farmers we are only providing them free labor. We are not able to apply what we are studying because farming is just work. There is not much thinking. You go there, the farmer expects you to weed, to open up land, maybe plant something new. So you ride your bicycle for 10 kilometers and you just work, not think.

Participant 4, a university official, echoed the view that "attitude issues" existed with the program. He stressed that sometimes farmers did not view "students as colleagues." And, conversely, some students viewed farmers as "simple and unknowing." Moreover, without forming a deeper, more close-knit bond in the partnership, both students' and cooperators' "opinions never change," according to Participant 1. The extent to which stereotypes were reinforced in the partnerships also extended to the attachment cooperators. For example, several community cooperators viewed the concepts emphasized by the university faculty members were sometimes "not important." Participant 8, a community cooperator, revealed that some of her negative views of the university were reinforced through her involvement with the program:

> I really enjoy my experience with the [attachment] program. I have learned a lot from the students that attach to me, but some of the information I hear they are learning is not so important. They miss out on important information. The university should focus more on information that will help us survive, not silly things.

As voiced by some participants, certain aspects of the internship program seemed to reinforce the stigmas perpetuated by Ugandan society concerning *agriculture* and *university education* as the students and community cooperators engaged with one another. As a result, this unintended reinforcement of negative stereotypes presented a unique challenge to sustaining viable university-community partnerships intended to serve the needs and interests of all stakeholders.

Gender Bias

Through field observations, an emergent pattern was the concept of *female silence* and *lack of representation* in the attachment program. In 2016, only five of the 36 students in the program were female.

Conversely, roughly 80% of Uganda's farmers are female (Ali, Bowen, Deininger, & Duponchel, 2015). Foucault (1972) explained that silence is often the result of being oppressed as well as the existing gender rules within a given context. In this regard, we asked participants to express their opinions on this issue during interviews. Participant 6, a faculty member, explained this bias was connected to a "concerning trend" in Ugandan society. Through additional interviews, 15 participants echoed similar views. Participant 3's explanation is representative:

> First of all, there's a misconception and attitude that agriculture majors are for males. Now, with that attitude, many girls already grow up knowing they'll go [to school] for arts or nursing. They don't want to do agriculture, physics, chemistry, math, or biology. They just grow up and they say to Hell with it, it's for men. Agriculture is for men; I don't need to do it. I think the main thing is attitude, but also there is a lack of social pressure on the girl child to stay in school. Especially here in Uganda, girls drop out.

University officials, community cooperators, alumni, and students all expressed thoughts concerning the *negative stigma* associated with women in agriculture. Participant 22, an undergraduate student, explained that while growing up agriculture was regarded as "man's work" in her family despite the relatively small number of men in the farming profession. As a result, she was encouraged to pursue more "appropriate careers" such as nursing, teaching, or a job in the arts. This gendered issue presents a unique challenge to Gulu University's attachment program.

Conclusions

This study explored the challenges to sustaining university-community partnerships in a post-conflict context. Three challenges were identified: (a) resistance, (b) reinforcement of stereotypes, and (c) gender bias. The findings illustrate how these challenges are positioned within the existing discourse of university-community partnerships in Gulu, Uganda. By grounding this study in FDT(1972), implicit challenges emerged as associated with *power* and *privilege*. Further, the findings may hold valuable contributions to the literature in regard to understanding the complexities of university-community partnerships and their implications for students' internship experiences. Although internships have been depicted as overwhelmingly positive in international contexts (Shoulders et al., 2012; Thoron et al., 2008), limited attention is given to their potential challenges. To provide additional perspective into how the Foucauldian (1972) lens *opened up* new insights into this phenomenon, we next provide conclusions based on the study's major findings.

The first theme, *resistance*, demonstrated the *suspicions* (Foucault, 1972) displayed by both community cooperators and students in their early engagement with Gulu University's attachment program. In particular, this finding provides important insights into the role that perceptions play in shaping university-community partnerships. For example, findings of this study illuminated the importance participants' contextually situated experiences had in influencing the construction and evolution of the partnerships. We, therefore, conclude that social tensions, relations of power, as well as group dynamics influenced the resistance experienced by stakeholders in their attempts to collaborate through the attachments.

Moreover, the partnerships leading to student internship opportunities in northern Uganda were predominantly depicted and voiced as high-quality experiences. However, in regard to the second theme, findings illustrated the partnerships could also uphold negative stereotypes perpetuated by Ugandan society. For instance, negative views on agriculture and the university's role in the local community emerged as challenges as amplified by community cooperators' and students' *lived experiences* – a view supported by existing literature (Costandius & Bitzer, 2014; Makkawi, 2013; Tavanti, 2011). Of central importance to this finding is the *role of relationships* among faculty, students, and community cooperators. Relationships are recognized as factors influencing partnership-building (Annor-Frempong, et al., 2002; Hoyt, 2010), but less attention has been paid to the social and historical features influencing the construction of such collaborations and how that can serve as a basis for preserving negative stereotypes. In this study, relationships seemed to *naturalize* negative stereotypes of agriculture and the university on the part of students and their attachment cooperators while simultaneously limiting their mutual possibilities.

The dominance of women in agricultural roles throughout Ugandan society (Ali et al., 2015) stands in sharp contrast to existing trends in the student attachment program. Through in-depth ethnographic fieldwork and individual interviews, the silence and lack of representation of women emerged as a challenge to successful university-community partnerships. Participants articulated this trend is connected to broader social issues that often mute the discourses of women in Uganda. Further, women appear to be discouraged from selecting careers related to agriculture because the

vocation is considered more appropriate for men – a notion supported by existing literature (Houweling, Christie, & Abdel-Rahim, 2015; Minde et al., 2015). Foucault (1972) suggested that the silence associated with issues of gender exist when one sex lacks agency in their private or professional lives. In accord, findings of this study indicated that women's sense of agency was limited in both domains. The struggles of women in agricultural careers as well as related academic majors in developing countries has been documented (Beintema, 2006; James & Denis, 2015), and in Uganda in particular (Mukembo, Uscanga, Edwards, & Brown, 2017). However, the challenge of engaging women in university-community partnerships, such as through student internship programs, warrants more attention.

Recommendations, Implications, and Discussion

University-community partnerships are vital to the success of agricultural development in post-conflict areas (Harkavy & Romer, 1999; Stewart & Alrutz, 2012; Strier, 2011). Therefore, it is imperative to understand their complexities more fully. As such, the findings of this study suggest the challenges to partnerships are nested in broader socio-political issues of power, injustice, and inequality (Foucault, 1972). These implications expand possibilities for future research and practice. First, future investigations should examine the intricacies involved with *stakeholder resistance* throughout the various phases of university-community partnerships. For instance, researchers might explore the extent to which dialogue, co-construction of knowledge, role conflicts, and social tensions shape how stakeholders negotiate the conflicting agendas embedded within partnerships. Other researchers (Hart & Wolff, 2006; Miller, 2007) suggested

university-community partnerships promote egalitarian dialogue and social action. However, when considering the findings of this study, perhaps more attention should be placed on understanding how intersections of tribal affiliation, native language, experiences, and existing relationships, including gendered roles and other norms, promote various forms of resistance. By more deeply understanding the influence of these factors, perhaps Gulu officials can begin to make the necessary adjustments to gain more widespread acceptance of the attachment program's objectives and thereby facilitate the relationships needed to achieve such.

In this study, university officials developed community partnerships to promote the application of theoretical knowledge while building the capacities of both students and smallholder farmers. However, these partnerships also led to unintended consequences such as reinforcing negative stereotypes. More study, therefore, is needed to determine the extent to which reinforcing negative stereotypes through partnerships may function as a challenge to enacting *community transformation*. By understanding the boundaries this feature may impose on the partnerships, perhaps the institution could develop approaches to minimize such influence. Therefore, we recommend regular stakeholder meetings be implemented so actors can dialogue, reflect, and pose critical questions concerning how the potential of partnerships may be diminished by their participants' adherence to negative stereotypes. Further, discussions should also explore how partnerships can begin to move past this particular challenge to alter structures of power and oppression at a macro level (Foucault, 1972) in Ugandan society.

Issues of gender also should be examined to explore ways that a more equitable, inclusive culture can be created in the university-community partnerships facilitated by Gulu University. By silencing and obscuring the roles of women in agriculture, feelings of *exclusion* and *rejection* are likely to emerge (Foucault, 1972). However, by questioning the source of this discourse and discovering its structures of power, we can begin to understand how such serves as an impediment to successful and inclusive university-community partnerships. Gendered labels, stigmas, and taboos limit opportunities for women (Foucault, 1972), but by raising awareness of these issues, the same also *can be* used to stir a *doubled consciousness*. Britzman (2003) explained that a *double consciousness* is attained when oppressed individuals are able to "watc[h] themselves through the eyes of the powerful" (p. 51). Therefore, we suggest university officials design tailored campaigns aimed at promoting opportunities for women through participation in agricultural internships. Moving forward, we also recommend training be offered to address the three identified challenges by promoting more collaborative, contextually grounded strategies calibrated to preserve while enhancing Gulu University's community partnerships.

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