Cultural Perspectives on Social Responsibility in Higher Education

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Abstract: The authors of *Rethinking education: Towards a global common good?* (UNESCO, 2015) challenge educators to address their efforts to meet the current threats to sustainable life for all who share this planet. One way that higher education has been attempting to do this is through campus-community partnerships working to solve social problems locally or further afield. In this exploratory study, answers were sought to the question of why faculty members and administrators participate in these service partnerships, both in terms of what motivates them to do so and what they hope to accomplish, and how cultural context may influence their answers. Answers to these questions may have implications for faculty recruitment and support and for curriculum design and student preparation for serving the common good as well as for the larger vision of how institutions might fulfill their social responsibility. Using one-on-one semi-structured interviews in several countries, some trends could be identified. Responding to a sense of duty was found across all cultural contexts as a primary motivator for faculty members and administrators but how duty was interpreted and legitimized depended on their various religious and political grounds. Cultural context also influenced whether participants saw their impact as empowering their service partners or establishing social justice.

Key words: social responsibility, community engagement, common good, higher education, motivation, social justice, empowerment, social change

Introduction

Campus-community partnerships to address social needs locally or internationally are a significant way higher education has been responding to the kinds of 21st century challenges identified in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) document, *Rethinking education: Towards a global common good?* (2015). However, for these partnerships to flourish and expand, policy-makers and administrators in higher education need to know why faculty members would choose to be engaged in this kind community service and how their engagement is influenced by their specific cultural contexts since the vision of *Rethinking education* is global in scope. This exploratory study begins to look for answers to these questions.

Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good

Rethinking education: Towards a global common good? (UNESCO, 2015) identifies some of the most pressing challenges facing the world in these opening decades of the 21st century, from the destruction of the environment to the plight of many of the world's women and children; from violence on the streets to intra-national and international warfare; from

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exploitation and widening inequality to the absence of the particular skills needed to live sustainably. It charges education with the responsibility of taking note of these challenges and addressing them through learning across the life-span. Given the enormity of these challenges and the gravity of the responsibility falling on educators—coincident forces that would seem to demand a definitive and courageous response—it is nevertheless not a mystery that the title of this publication ends with a question mark. The question mark presumably indicates that the document is meant to be nondogmatic about what the common good might be and to simply open a conversation. Certainly, this is not a time to be hesitant or timid about taking bold action. The document is timely and adds further support to a movement that has already begun in higher education to clarify and broaden its responsibility in the community and the wider world.

One of the most significant contributions of the document is its statement of key values to form a foundation for human nurture and to serve as a guide for educational policy-making, an essential element in education reform (Ergen, 2015). Turning away from factory models that frame the purpose of education in terms of economic production, *Rethinking education* centers on the well-being and development of human beings everywhere. In this era of postmodern thinking and profound diversity in belief systems and commitments, a statement of core values is rare but here the proposed values are exposed and laid open to discussion, critique, and hopefully application. Based on humanistic principles that are shown to reflect many cultural, religious, and political commitments, the values identified in the document are "respect for life and human dignity, equal rights and social justice, cultural and social diversity, and a sense of human solidarity and shared responsibility for our common future" (UNESCO, 2015, p. 14).

Building on previous UNESCO documents, *Rethinking education* notes that this learning can take place outside of traditional classrooms, especially in digitized and online environments, including new technological spaces like Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Apart from identifying the possible roles of new technologies, *Rethinking education* does not advocate any particular pedagogies. Its purpose instead is to be "both aspirational and inspirational" (2015, p. 4). How institutions of higher education, for instance, carry out the vision is not prescribed or even suggested.

There is, however, a movement in higher education that does carry the vision of *Rethinking education* forward and that is through campus-community service partnerships. Boyer (1990) labeled this movement the "scholarship of engagement" in which the research capabilities, resources, and energies of students and faculty are connecting with real needs both locally and internationally to bring about positive social change while at the same time providing significant learning experiences for the students involved. In significant ways, these outreach programs reflect many of the key elements outlined in *Rethinking education* as shown below, which can provide added support and possibly clarify and enlarge even further the goals of such programs.

The Common Good

Frequently, in mission and vision statements, as well as national and supranational policies, the impact of the university on the larger society is described in terms of societal development, contributing to the social, economic, and cultural life of the communities they serve and promoting the skills and knowledge that are needed to address the challenges of the 21st century (Abaidoo & Wachniak, 2007; Brennan, 2008). As a university dean in a college of hospitality and management in Sâo Paulo indicated, the university research agenda can often be directly related to real, local needs, giving several examples from her own context, including

issues such as the management of a city or a hospital, the social needs of elderly people, after-effects of an earthquake, and so on.

Clearly some of the more traditional universities with a strong focus on their role in research spend fewer resources on and give much less time to community outreach. These universities have been less concerned with addressing immediate societal needs and, although the results of their research may at times be used to promote the common good, this effect is not the primary driver of the research activity. One faculty member in a prestigious research university in the United States explained that even the architecture of his university enhances its image as an institution set apart from the rest of the city: "it sits on the highest hill …, and it faces inward, with gates that surround it. And it's built up even higher. … The actual ground of the university is three stories higher than the street level … surrounded by gates facing inward. [It sees itself] as closed in, inward looking."

Even in these cases, though, community outreach is often a real force in the experience of students. Undergraduate programs seem to have more freedom to plan and engage beyond the classroom (see, for instance, Faust, 2015). Faculty members in research-centered universities reported as well a personal responsibility to their students and the larger world beyond their laboratories, classrooms, computer networks, and libraries. At the very least, some have attempted to create a community within their departments where integrity, honesty, and civil discourse prevail. As one faculty member from a German research university put it, she sees her role as what she called a "multiplicator" in the sense that the values and caring interpersonal relationships she promotes in her classes would be taken up by her students who in turn would carry these same kinds of values and relationships beyond her classroom. A retired professor from a Canadian research-centered university captured what many others have said: "we can at least influence mindset, giving students critical thinking skills and a wider view of the world", a thought that was echoed in sentiment by another professor from Germany who said that beyond her duty to graduate students good at their profession she also had a responsibility to inculcate in them a life of empathy for others. In Sâo Paulo, a professor put the same idea in these words: "Yes, I teach in the hope that in some way I leave something … a strong [foot]print, … something from my way of seeing the world and understanding things …".

However, in higher education institutions where the programs are designed to prepare students for the professions—business, education, health care and medicine, public administration, social work, architecture, design, hospitality, culinary arts, and so on, interfaces with the community are much more readily forged and may even become a core element of the study program. Clinics, practicums, and field experiences of various kinds are essential for preparing students for their professional roles and have long been utilized for training purposes. These activities are inherently fraught with social responsibility.

As a professor from England noted: "[T]his notion of community engagement is the fundamental reason for the existence of the university—I mean it's not something that you prepare people to go out and do after they've left but something that they're engaged with from the moment that they set foot in the institution." In Columbia, for instance, nursing students must complete a 2-year practicum in needy areas before they can be certified. In New York City, students at the largest teacher preparation institution are required to undertake a practicum in a distressed school district. Dentistry students in Greece work in clinics that serve populations hurt by the current financial crisis. Architectural students design public gardens and other centers for community activity in poorer neighborhoods in Miami. Chinese students have traditionally been required to complete a designated number of hours in service to the community as part of their degree requirements. Music educators in Londrina go into the slums

of the city to establish choirs and bands to boost communal morale and provide opportunities for personal development. Sometimes community service is required and frequently earns course credit, especially when it is tied to classroom learning; at other times it is voluntary but everywhere the skills, energies, and knowledge of university and college students are being directed to serve real needs.

Globalization of Higher Education

Thinking about the global social responsibility of the university is significant in that student bodies are becoming more multicultural. Not only do institutions tend to recruit and admit students from increasingly diverse segments of the local community—as the need for the skills and knowledge provided in higher education are in greater and greater demand—but also from different places around the world. Many universities develop partnerships with institutions in other countries to facilitate shared resources, programs, and even faculty and to permit easy student transition to upper degree levels from one institution to another. Offering degree programs online, universities can increase their enrollment of international students. Opportunities for summer programs of study abroad are being offered more frequently and in a variety of languages. Everywhere, students are moving from state to state and country to country to find the learning opportunities and degree programs that will help them meet their career goals while also providing them with important experiences of cultures and languages different from their own.

Furthermore, increasingly graduates from colleges and universities are entering a global workplace. Students recruited from a local area to the university may end up working in a different state or country after their studies. Universities everywhere are sending their students out all over the world and the need to prepare them to perform appropriately in their new cultural contexts becomes an imperative, including how they understand and practice civic and social responsibility in their adopted locations. The responsibility of the university has widened beyond its immediate environment and, as Abaidoo and Wachniak (2007) further indicated, especially for "societies in transition". All that was envisioned as the university's impact on local communities, economies, and culture is being restated to address an international market place and a multicultural and transnational community. Understanding how differences in perspective on social responsibility toward a global common good occur around the world can make our preparation of students for their roles in this global community more sensitive and better prepare them for the globalized workplace.

Institutions of higher education are also undertaking community projects beyond their local areas. Australian and New Zealand students are frequently found in the Pacific Islands and Asean countries, European students in Africa, North American students in Central and South America as well as with their own indigenous peoples. Service-learning projects conducted in conjunction with university courses have taken students from their local communities to countries around the world. (e.g., George, Shams, & Dunkel, 2011; Mullen, 2010; Ngee, 2011; Wei-Wen, Cheng-Hui, Yu-Fu, & Yu-His, 2012). As a consequence, they are gaining a broader vision of challenge and possibility—with even greater effects on their professional skills and personal development—than from local engagements alone (Miller & Gonzalez, 2010).

Humanistic Values and Alternative Learning Settings

Teaching values through book learning and classroom settings from small group face-to-face seminars to MOOCs is difficult and requires innovative approaches but real-life contexts for learning values can be very effective, especially when combined with reflection exercises in

class. The values of respect and collaboration, social justice, and an appreciation of diversity (e.g., Boland, 2010); independent thinking and active citizenship (e.g., Murphy, 2010; Ponder, Veldt, & Lewis-Ferrell, 2011); the obligation to contribute to community and career development, a broader view of diversity, commitment to the welfare of others, self-confidence, and citizenship (e.g., Rosengarten, Bergman, Kramer, Hemmert, & Messick, 2010) have all been reported as learning outcomes when higher education students engage in community service. Many of these values parallel those identified in *Rethinking education.*

Finding the Common in Common Good

Among the key principles of higher education engagement in service is that the relationship should be collaborative, mutual, and respectful. These partnerships can be with official organizations or informal networks (Gerstenblatt, 2014) but they have a crucial role in successful community service (McDonald, & Dominguez, 2015). Building on a literature that supports the importance of developing campus-community partnerships, Borden and Perkins (1999) created and validated a checklist of features that should characterize such partnerships, which includes establishing channels for clear communication among all the parties involved; planning collaboratively how the project can be sustained; conducting a needs assessment to establish agreed upon goals for the project; maintaining a positive environment among the network of partners; identifying and providing access to the resources each of the partners can provide; basing the project on a real and perceived need; adjusting policies to remove obstacles to the functioning of the partnership; validating a history of collaboration for the partners; ensuring a sense of connectedness among the partners; building teams and utilizing the diversity of the partners; allowing continuing adjustments and feedback as the project unfolds; and understanding the people, cultures, values, and habits of the partners. Partnerships that are characterized by these features avoid imperialistic approaches by the higher education institution. Together the partners contribute to lasting change because the common good is not identified by the guests in the community but is collectively and collaboratively recognized and named, and possibly even celebrated. The question mark about what the common good might be becomes increasingly irrelevant under these circumstances.

Background of the Study

The purpose of this study arose from wondering why institutions and their faculty and administrators in a variety of cultural contexts choose to engage their students in problem-solving and service in the wider community. The historic perception of the university is of a cloistered environment free from the messiness of the world to allow untrammeled and pure reflection on abstract ideas. *Rethinking education* turns that notion upside-down. What considerations would entice an institution to pursue such a vision and what do they hope to achieve by doing so? Of course, there are sociopolitical factors at work but still we know little about what is going on in the hearts and minds of administrators and faculty members, especially considering that the demands of working for the public good on resources, time, and energy are sizeable. And, in studies conducted in the United States, these efforts to date are not always part of the university reward system in terms of tenure, grants, time-off, or promotion (Bulot, & Johnson, 2006; Cooper, 2014; Nicotera, Cutforth, Fretz, & Summers Thompson, 2011; Sobrero & Jayaratne, 2014). Professors in some universities in developing countries explained that their institution is organized on Western models to establish their credibility so similar patterns of (dis)incentives appear there too. Most faculty members involved in outreach efforts are often on their own in finding the time and resources to do so. If we can discover what motivates faculty members to align their efforts with a vision for the common good, we may be

prompted to find ways to build these considerations into recruitment, incentive, promotion, and retention practices when building faculties.

We know something of the motivations of students in the United States in becoming engaged in service projects both domestically and internationally: an expression of values, finding some recognition, social interaction, career development, experiencing new situations, and getting a better understanding of globalization, reciprocity in working with others, and so on (Moore, Warta, & Erichsen, 2014; Okech & Barner, 2014; Phillips, 2013). Much less is known about why university and college faculty members and administrators employ experiential learning opportunities through community service. In a study conducted in a large Mid-western university in the US, Cooper (2014) did find that faculty members used community engagement through service projects primarily because there was strong support from administration and the prevailing political environment to do so and they valued the educational effectiveness of connecting students with real-world problems, findings that were also supported by Nicotera et al. (2011). Do these same motivations apply universally beyond the US?

We also know something of the motivations of students outside of the United States to engage in volunteering activities. In a broad study across 13 countries, including North America, Europe, the Middle East, and the Asia Pacific region, Grönlund et al. (2011), discovered that cultural factors do have a noticeable impact. Specifically, their findings suggest that students from all the countries examined identified altruistic and educational motives for their volunteering. Career building and social motivations were also evident across all nationalities. However, the researchers also noted some differences. Students from countries with high individualism scores (i.e., where ties between individuals and groups are loose such as Belgium, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, United States, and the United Kingdom, rather than close knit societies) were more likely to see service activities as resume builders for developing careers or finding new opportunities for employment or education. Resume building was least important in Korea, Japan, and Finland. Students from countries with a dominant value of egalitarianism (i.e., where there is a commitment to promoting the welfare of others such as Finland and the Netherlands, rather than hierarchically structured societies) rated altruistic values highly. Motivations around the opportunity to learn from the service activities were high in the United States, Canada, and Belgium, while this same motivation was rated as least important in Croatia, Finland, and Japan. Unpredictably, the researchers did not find that conservative cultures (i.e., those that value social order, respect for tradition, preserving public image, politeness, and obedience, for instance) were likely to give rise to social motivations or that affective autonomy (that supports the independent pursuit of pleasure, an exciting and varied life) was related to protective motivations, or that intellectual autonomy (favoring curiosity, creativity, and broadmindedness) connected with motivation to learn from service activities. The writers also pointed out that while they were able to take into account the influence of gender, age, family income, and program of study, they also acknowledge that not being able to take account of individual differences within cultural groups was a limitation of the study. If there are identifiable differences in student motivations across the countries and cultures studied, the question arises whether faculty members and administrators in higher education across countries and cultures also reveal differences in motivation.

Several consecutive instruments have been developed to measure the beliefs, values, and attitudes of those choosing to take up public service careers. Building on early work by Perry and Wise (1990), and with data from over 2800 participants in 12 countries, follow up research validated a Public Service Motivation (PSM) instrument (Kim & Vandenabeele, 2010; Kim et al., 2013) with four categories of motivation: attraction to public service and policy making for the public good, commitment to public values such as equity and ethics, compassion

and concern for others, and self-sacrifice or altruism. Developed for the public service sector, these PSMs raise the question of whether those who teach or administer in higher education also reflect these same motivations when they include community engagement in their programs.

The second purpose of this study was to discover what faculty members and administrators hope to achieve by supporting campus-community engagement in addressing and solving social problems. While the first purpose focuses on what motivates these academics to provide opportunities for their students in community service, the second purpose focuses on what they believe the impact of their efforts might have on those who are served.

Regarding this second purpose, the ideas of Freire (see for example his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1990), a Brazilian philosopher/educator concerned for the impoverished and marginalized people of Third World countries, are particularly relevant here. A central concept from his work, translated into English as *conscientization* (Portuguese: *conscientização*), is a source of inspiration and guidance in service activity. In essence, conscientization is the process of gaining critical consciousness about the social conditions one finds oneself in. Once one's consciousness is raised, and the source and problems of oppression are identified, one has the inner beginnings of social change and is encouraged to act. Conscientization, then, is the first step toward empowerment. Significantly, this theme of critical consciousness leading to empowerment is to be found not only in South America but in other parts of the world, particularly where people are seen to be in some way socially oppressed because of their personal history or circumstances, race, or socio-economic status.

In her summary of the literature around social change and higher education responsibility, Choules (2007) acknowledged that one response to Freire's ideas puts the attention on agency, self-efficacy, and personal empowerment and is likely to be dominant among those who experience marginalization. She also noted that non-marginalized social change activists are also inspired by Freire's work but put the attention on justice, equal rights, and fairness, which is likely to guide the thinking and actions of members of dominant groups. Giroux has also been a proponent of Freire's ideas and advocates for a "public pedagogy" (2012), a label he has coined to identify the kind of higher education that will have an impact as a global force. He attributes Freire's ideas as being a foundation for a movement in education that was part of "the broader struggle for agency, justice, and democracy" (p. 153). The key values of agency, justice, and democracy seem particularly subject to cultural and political interpretation.

The two central themes of this study—first, to discover whether the motivations of administrators and teachers in higher education to have their students engage in community service partnerships reflect cultural differences and, second, to determine whether the purposes for these community service engagements also reflect cultural differences—are conceptually different but likely to be interrelated but they are distinguishable in some of their implications for higher education. Where the findings around the first purpose may have implications for recruitment, incentives, training, and support of faculty members, the second may have implications for curriculum builders and classroom teachers as they prepare students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for addressing social challenges both local and global.

Plan of the Study

Research Questions

The two research questions for this study are both seeking answers to the basic question: Why do you engage in campus-community service engagement? but from different viewpoints. One looks to motivation; the other to purpose. Using examples of volunteer and community service and service-learning as specific enactments of social responsibility in a variety of cultural contexts, the questions for this study were:

1. What prompts or motivates you to give your students the opportunity to engage in service to the community?
2. What general purposes are served by this outreach for the community?

The questions were designed to explore the meaning, significance, purpose, and value implicit in concepts of "social responsibility" and "social change".

Research Method

In this exploratory study of how the social responsibility of the university is influenced and understood in various cultural contexts, a semi-structured interview approach was used. The questions can be found in the Appendix. Study participants were drawn from South America, Europe, North America, Asia, and the Mideast. I met many of them at international conferences and seminars held in Munich, Sâo Paulo, Singapore, Bangkok, and New York City. Others accepted the invitation I put out on the Listserve of a large and international online university where most of the faculty work part-time while also holding university positions in their countries of origin. Two were former students who had taken positions in higher education in their home country after graduation. The sample included faculty members and administrators from a broad spectrum of colleges and universities, including institutions that focus on the training of professionals and those that focus primarily on research. Some included doctoral studies, others did not. Participants met two essential criteria: they were embedded in their particular culture and they had sufficient experience in their institutions to speak knowledgeably to the questions. Altogether, 67 interviewees representing 29 countries and 35 colleges or universities participated in the study.

One-on-one interviews lasted from 30 to 90 minutes each, either face-to-face or by telephone. In the cases when the participant was not fluent in English, a translator was used. All interviews were recorded and later professionally transcribed for analysis; where a translator had been used, only the English language portions were transcribed. In many cases, a notetaker also kept a log of comments which allowed us to debrief and clarify what we believed we had heard, a strategy that had proved effective in a preliminary study (Yob & Brewer, 2016).

Transcripts were shared with participants so they could clarify or correct what they had said and where translation services had been used, particularly in South America, the relevant portions of transcriptions were rewritten in the original language using Google Translator and were sent out for review; although, the response rate in return was low. In analyzing participants' responses and examining them against the features identified in the literature, themes were identified and described at a general and conceptual level to make comparisons that would be helpful to those who work with students and faculty against an international backdrop.

Findings and Discussion

Research Question #1: What prompts or motivates university administrators and faculty members to give students the opportunity to engage in service to the community?

Fulfilling one's duty was the most frequently implied motivation for leading out in efforts to connect university students with needs in the community. This motivation is most closely reflected in the first category identified by Kim and Vandenabeele (2010): attraction to public service and policy-making for the public good; although, one senses that for the professors in this study, it is less an attraction than a consequence since the professors have already committed to public service of a kind by becoming members of faculty.

Duty is often declaimed as a mindless performance of certain acts and often because at some point an authority figure ordered the performance. A graduate student in Singapore announced: "I do what the government tells me to do." Her professors added: "this is a nanny state and most of what happens here is prescribed by the government." The student saw the requirements for graduation as a checklist, with each item to be checked off as it was accomplished, and one of those requirements was a set number of hours in community service. In the case of the individuals interviewed in this project, the authority figure was certainly in the background, sometimes in the form of religious traditions and institutions or the state but there was also a conscious and sometimes unconscious commitment to value the guiding principles from those institutions and put them into practice.

In the case of Muslims, reference was made to the Qur'an and the responsibility towards the welfare of others that the Muslim faith requires. Almsgiving is one of the five pillars of devotional acts required of all adherents. I was told that even in oil-rich Arab states, where social services in support of education, healthcare, housing, and public safety are in place, it is common for civic responsibility to be seen in terms of charitable donations. If needs exist, they can be met by paying someone to provide services. However, some resources also support charitable societies, which work for social causes such as providing vocational training and health clinics. Working with these charities can provide one way for Muslims to readily engage in active public service along with almsgiving. One faculty member interviewed suggested that even in these oil-rich states, there are still pockets of need, especially among foreign workers who often lack resources and services. He suggested that using case studies in these situations may be a way to help students recognize needs and see how they might act to contribute to solutions.

In Buddhism, almsgiving has also played a significant role although the gifts, *panda*, are usually the way the laity supports its monks and nuns, who in turn carry the larger responsibility of caring for the needy. Throughout Southeast Asian countries, especially beyond the urban areas, the monks can be seen on their begging rounds every morning and giving to their support is understood to be an act of devotion and respect. Beyond the gifts of food, however, there is often less interest in engaging in service. One faculty member, an American teaching at a university in Bangkok, remarked that if an empty lot was becoming the dumping place for trash, the locals would not likely take any action to prevent either the health or aesthetic problems this might incur, and in fact, they would not be likely to even notice it except as a place where they might also dump their trash. This suggests that a proactive approach to social problems is much more characteristic of other cultures. However, in regions in the early stages of economic development, the hardscrabble living conditions for many would likely force a focus on daily survival rather than community welfare. In Brazil, with its burgeoning new economy and the possibility for the present generation of students to be more upwardly mobile than their

parents were, many faculty members and administrators, who themselves personally engage in community service, find their students are not so interested but instead are focused on their careers. This generational change seems to be the product of current economic conditions; although, there are significant public and social challenges that would benefit from student engagement.

In the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, believers have been admonished to engage in acts of charity and benevolence. In much of the Christian world, many young people participate in community service through their churches, and where support services are well established, many take their efforts to needy areas in other parts of the world. Many colleges and universities have been founded by religious organizations and derive their mission from religious and accompanying ethical principles. A faculty member from such a university in the United Kingdom subscribes to the ethical outreach and social justice commitment of the Anglican church and supports her work with her students in the community with reference to the Christian narrative. The university itself has adopted a set of principles to guide it in all its activities: "individuals matter, diversity, intellectual freedom, spirituality, creativity, and community outreach", all of which she interprets as supporting efforts around social justice.

In China, the call of duty to serve others comes from a different source. A core principle in Chinese culture, grounded in a commitment to living out and promoting socialist principles, is social responsibility. According to one university administrator, Chinese people would call their service activities something like "doing good deeds for the people" or "serving the society", and involve activities such as working with farmers or factory workers or helping with transportation problems. Quite often these activities are extensions of courses in ideology and career development and are part of the general education core of subjects taken by all students. North American students and faculty members can also be motivated to serve others as part of their duty as citizens in a democracy. A faculty member at a U.S. online university, who has a particular interest in the problem of violence in the schools, described her broad motivation as "feeding the civil society and making sure we have a true democracy." Whether socialist or democratic, citizens often accept as a fundamental duty the promotion of the good of others as a means of promoting the good society.

In a country like Great Britain where there are remnants of a traditional classed society, a sense of responsibility of the upper classes towards those with lower status still lingers. This *noblesse oblige* (the obligation for those of high rank to be generous, thoughtful, and worthy toward those of lower rank) still lingers in the thinking of some. Colleagues from England described how many members of the royal family—and other upper-class families—will set up trusts to support particular causes and also how especially the younger members of these families will personally engage in charity work. This spills over into the ranks of university young people who consider themselves somewhat privileged through their educational opportunities and many will spend their time as volunteers in community service at home or abroad in their gap year (the year between high school and college).

National pride can also add passion and energy to the motivation to serve in countries like China and the United States and elsewhere, including countries that are experiencing trajectories of development and growing economies. Faculty members with experience in countries as widely separated geographically as Columbia, Mongolia, and Ecuador, for instance, talked about how the duty to serve was inspired in part by their pride in and respect for their respective nations. When a faculty member in Ecuador was asked "What is the overall reason for doing all these [service activities]?," she replied:

It is this feeling that gives a lot of–you know, they're trying to sell Ecuador as … this beautiful country that has all these resources for tourism and that we're a beautiful people, that we're very friendly. But, we have all these internal problems such as different strata, economically and socially. So, I think it's just this sense that we can do it a little better.

An interesting exception, at least from the interviews conducted in this project, was represented by a professor in Singapore; although, there are certainly echoes of this elsewhere. He reported that the focus he sees in the university seems to be more on gaining an individual competitive advantage through education than in finding ways to serve others. University education is undertaken for the pragmatic reason of securing a good job and ensuring a healthy economic future for oneself. This is promoted, he suggested, by the fact that Singapore does not consider itself a welfare state, so there is not a strong social services network beyond the basics and general infrastructure and people must provide for their own needs. Of course, this also results in some who, for one reason or another, fall into difficulty and need help beyond themselves, especially when their family is unable or unwilling to help. In the case of Singapore, there is a national mindset that seems not to support or motivate community service as a duty for the general public good, although the same mindset may actually create areas of need when circumstances mitigate against individuals and so university students in Singapore can be found in volunteer clubs and other outreach activities. Coincidentally, a graduate student from Taiwan confessed that she had not encountered the concept of "community", linguistically at least, until she came to the United States to study, which would suggest that a sense of the "common good" would also have been outside the range of her named experience.

Duty as a motivation for faculty to work with campus-community partnerships, then, draws on a wide variety of sources across cultures and countries, from meeting government established requirements such as those found in Columbia and Singapore, to more high-minded commitments to socio-political (China) and religious beliefs (United Kingdom, United States, and to some extent Arab and other Muslim countries) and national pride about one's responsibility to others (e.g., Ecuador). In the case of religious duty, a parallel study that focused on religious influences using many of the same participants found that in Christian contexts, the duty to work for the good of others may have arisen within the faith but can still be a strong motivating call to duty even when other religious beliefs and practices have been abandoned (Yob, 2016).

Some faculty members included mandatory or optional service components within course requirements as a supplement to the classroom because they believed they could be a powerful tool for learning. When a professor in the United States has taken her students into a needy school to teach children in the lower grades to play the violin, she is introducing them to a world so different from the privileged one most of them have lived in. These children come from homes where many parents are itinerant workers, unemployed, or in jail; they would go hungry if the school did not provide free lunches and often take-home packs for dinner; and their caretakers are often ill-equipped to meet their development needs. When the university students first encounter these children, they tend to be shocked, "What is it with these kids?," but as they work with them and see the enthusiasm and progress they make while learning to play music, the students' view of possibilities is greatly expanded. As their teacher-leader says, one of the reasons she is inspired to continue this work it is for the change she sees in her university students "which is huge, huge." She adds, "I want them to become agents for this sort of outreach activity in their own life when they leave me, when they get out from underneath this structure and to see how this should permeate." This faculty member has continued her project for more than six years because of the transformation she sees in the children they serve and the university students who work with her. Professors in the United Kingdom and Brazil also

spoke of the pedagogical value of service activities in the learning program, a finding that extends the Cooper (2014) study to countries outside of the United States.

Other categories of motivation identified in the Public Service Motivation instruments—commitment to public values such as equity and ethics, compassion and concern for others—are evident in reference to the second question addressed by this study. The category these researchers identified as self-sacrifice and altruism was not found to be a causative factor for the faculty members who worked in service projects with their students (possibly because altruism had already attracted them to teaching) but more a resultant factor of their service engagement, one they accepted nevertheless. The time and energy commitment of many of these instructors was very real but seldom rewarded or mitigated by their academic departments. Their efforts were undertaken without reference to compensation and sometimes against their own best interests when they were seeking tenure by drawing them away from research and publishing. In the United Kingdom, one of the professors, who is heavily engaged in public service outreach, lamented the loss of government funding from these kinds of projects in favor of research programs but nevertheless she continues her schedule of activities embracing increasing numbers of local community members in her outreach. There was insufficient information from these interviews to identify cultural trends in Kim and Vandenabeele's categories but traces of each were found across different settings.

Research Question 2: What general purposes are served by this outreach for the community?

In the interviews conducted in this study, the two themes identified by Choules (2007) and the three identified by Giroux (2012), based on the ideas of Freire, emerged in participants' responses to the underlying question about the impact of the service efforts on the community. One theme is more focused on inner needs by building up individuals' sense of self-efficacy and self-worth; the other on external factors by addressing systemic injustice and unfairness in all its forms. The third, democracy, was implicit in the first two themes but specifically mentioned by some participants. It is important to note that all purposes aim toward the common good.

Activities that seek the outcome of empowering people, building their sense of self-efficacy, and strengthening their sense of self-worth, can take many forms. I met a professor in Sâo Paulo, Brazil, who had just returned from a community project with his students in fashion and design. Their project was with women undergoing breast cancer treatment, including surgery and chemotherapy with their disfiguring and demoralizing consequences. Together the students and the patients had designed outfits from remodeled second-hand clothing, hairpieces and hats, and stylish accessories. To celebrate, they had staged a fashion show, with the women modeling their new looks along a catwalk, with a photographer, an audience, and lots of cheering. The impact on the professor, his students, the women, and their supporters was palpable. Where the women had been depressed, full of worry, and feeling down about how they looked and felt about themselves, the process of putting together their outfits began to transform them. They would begin to put on makeup again, and became increasingly excited as their costumes began to take shape. Their outlook on life and their future improved as they saw themselves less in terms of victims of a dreaded disease and more in terms of women who could face the world and the future with growing confidence.

A music educator from Londrina, Brazil takes her students into the slums (favelas) on the outskirts of the city to form bands and choirs. She works with people who have nothing more than squatters' rights, temporary hovels to live in, limited income if any, very few services, and high crime rates. From the start, her purpose is to build their sense of self-worth. So, during her initial visits she shares some suggestions with the people, elicits their ideas, and begins to build

a music program with them. She has to gain respect and cooperation, suffering through having the musical instruments and space vandalized, and rude behavior directed at her and her students. She and her students understand they come from a different world, with different values, and certainly different music since the people from the music school are classically trained musicians. But she begins with their music. She even encourages them to write their own lyrics. As she explains, throughout the process, the young people in the choir and band have a sense that this is their creation and their musical expression. By the time of a performance, these young people who seemed to have no hope or future prospects begin to see themselves as achievers, with value, and a resulting self-respect.

"At least the people who live in the slums have an identity," another Brazilian professor suggested, "but homeless people do not even have that … and do not even know how to work on that [problem]." So, with local priests, he helps the homeless with documentation and identification—in small groups and one-on-one—with the objective to rebuild their sense of self. From the moment a homeless individual arrives at the shelter, "he is receive[d] as a hospitality, as a hostel member, [with] fraternity, and sympathetic[ally], being sympathetic with them."

A dance instructor at a university in Munich, Germany, takes her students to work with special needs children, giving them opportunities to listen and perform with musical instruments in order to improve their sense of accomplishment in their own minds and in the minds of the audiences and others who work with them. Students work in Cambodia and Thailand alongside locals to build better housing for families, engaging the family members in the project to strengthen their sense of agency. A nursing student advised by her professor works with rape victims in an inner-city neighborhood in the United States, addressing their physical needs by equipping first responders with rape kits and on-call nurses, as well as their psychological needs by connecting them with assertiveness and job training classes and Suits for Success, an organization that prepares women for job interviews. A professor in Brazil works with indigenous peoples to get them certificates of citizenship so they can participate in the political life of the country and have a voice. And so, the examples from around the world could be multiplied. The underlying theme common to these activities is their overall purpose: to build self-esteem, self-respect, self-efficacy, agency, and a sense of personal power. Once individuals or groups of individuals realize they are empowered, Freire argued, things can change for the better.

While the Brazilian professor and his students in fashion and design participated in a project that would give women with breast cancer a renewed sense of self-worth and confidence by staging a fashion show highlighting their modified wardrobe, a professor in North America focused on breast cancer from an entirely different perspective. She became alarmed at the high rates of the disease among women living in Appalachia, a poor rural area of the United States. As a specialist in public health, she researched why this should be the case and discovered that fewer preventative measures, such as x-ray screenings, were available to them and that fewer women were taking advantage of the ones that were available. Her activity revolves around educating these women about the resources available and why it is important to take advantage of them. Her concern is that women have equal access to health services that could save their lives. Here we see an example of social responsibility applied to the issue of equity; that is, equal opportunity, equal access, and equal rights. This kind of activity responds to systemic unfairness and injustice and is often referred to as social justice.

In Guatemala, the local government authorities had shut off the water to a school because it had failed to pay the water bill. A professor and employee in the department of education endeavored to persuade the bureaucracy with letters of petition to get the water turned back on, and when that failed, she had the school call all five hundred pupils back and

then telephoned the press. In the end, she failed to have the water turned on until the teachers offered to pay the pesos necessary to cover the debt. Her efforts might not always succeed but she is driven by a sense of children's right to an education without impediment.

A university in England, like many universities, inherited the ivory tower mindset, which regards the university as set apart from the surrounding community to conduct its research and teaching unimpeded by the messiness of the world around it; a place for reflective thinking and grand abstract ideas. A professor there was very aware of the "town and gown" phenomenon, the divide between the "town" or local community and the "gown" or university, where academic robes are traditionally worn. Students are often viewed as interlopers in the town, upsetting the townspeople by being drunk and rowdy and taking shortcuts through their properties. Tensions between town and gown were not uncommon from the beginning and *bulldogs* or enforcers used to patrol the streets and student hangouts to keep the peace. Near the university is a low-income housing area, large portions of which were sold off at one point. Entrepreneurs moved in, bought up the lots, and built housing as rentals for students. The original residents resented the move, feeling their neighborhood had been invaded by students and by student cars since the university has little parking space available to commuting students. So in essence, the expansion of the university created a situation in which a nearby community felt the consequences to them were unfair. The professor of music education and her students sought to address this inequity through an intergenerational singing project in the estate, engaging her students and all those interested in participating from the community from children through to the elderly. Not only did they sing together but they also reminisced and shared experiences together. So by working together on a musical project, the professor, her students, and their neighbors could begin to heal the rift between them and bring greater understanding and collaboration to level the field of engagement.

An Australian professor of history captures this kind of purpose when she reflects on how her students would describe the ultimate reason for becoming involved in service for others, using the colloquialism *fair go*:

> I don't know [that there is] one general purpose, but in Australia, it would be like a "fair go"–everybody should have a fair go. … So it's not fair that some people are so miserably disadvantaged and we want to do what we can. That's basically–and I think the students, the ones who came to be involved--really think that.

She goes on to explain how this influences in some cases the kinds of projects these students choose to undertake or study:

> Most of them do have a picture of themselves as maybe not exactly privileged, but having many advantages when you look at it in the overall picture. And I think that's part of why they do so much overseas because they don't see Australians as terribly disadvantaged … [T]hey essentially know that mostly if you want housing, the government will somehow find you housing. If you want food, if you're prepared to sign up, you know, you won't absolutely be destitute. You may have to wait for your medical care [but it will be provided]. It's amazing what is available and they are aware of that. So they kind of think, well, people overseas are in a much more disadvantaged situation.

A similar line of thought emerged in talking with a colleague from the United Kingdom:

> I would say that where people are interested in social issues is more from the point of view of social responsibility and social justice. And it tends to be young people either

from middle class and upper middle class backgrounds, who have had fairly privileged education themselves. Many of them will spend their gap year working in, say, a school in some remote part of Africa, or helping to build school buildings or just generally working. But always abroad, and Africa is the main country that they're choosing to go to for that kind of thing.

Social justice often takes the form of a struggle for equal rights: rights of indigenous people, women's rights, farmers' rights, gay rights, rights of the disabled, civil rights, the right to vote, the right to get an education, the right to basic healthcare. A Tourism and Hospitality professor used the words "no social differences", "inclusion", "no discrimination" as the objective of social justice, which nicely sums up this purpose.

Some take in a wider sweep of rights and social justice, going beyond the equal treatment of groups within a society. The same professor of music and education in Great Britain who built a music program to bring "town" and "gown" together on equal ground, has also composed large-scale community musical events around some central themes in social justice. She brings together children's choirs (sometimes up to 500 children participating), cantors, priests, imams, orchestras, bands, church choirs, and ad hoc musical groups including choirs for people with dementia (with her students leading the individual groups) for educational and expressive performances around large themes such as cross-cultural communication but also for peace and celebrations of the Earth, thus extending social justice to the relationships between nations and religious groups and including the natural world as well as the human. In other words, she uses the knowledge and skills of her subject-area to promote social justice awareness.

Regarding this aspect of social responsibility, when teachers and students undertake community action for social justice, they may need to become involved in some kind of political action. For most participants around the world, social justice equates with political action and frequently the recent Arab Spring—where people rose up against political dictatorships throughout the Middle East in 2010-11—was cited as an example. In some countries, political engagement is easily accomplished and bears no threat to the activist but that is not true everywhere, and so social justice activity might not be something students and faculty members in China or the Democratic Republic of the Congo and many other places would want to engage in as a required part of a student's study program. However, even when political engagement is a guaranteed right, many faculty members and students have expressed a reluctance to be so engaged. It is generally agreed that such action may be necessary to change laws, processes, and policies to ensure that change is long-term but, as teachers and learners, many are unclear about how to go about political activity and uncertain about whether they should (Yob & Ferraro, 2013). This concern has the potential to put a limit on how social responsibility as social justice is undertaken in higher education.

Giroux (2012) included the struggle for democracy along with agency and justice as part of Freire's legacy. Only one faculty member in this sample, an American, mentioned democracy specifically as a purpose served by working on projects to encourage non-violence, as noted earlier. Another professor from the United Kingdom spoke of her work with her music students in bringing music making to groups usually overlooked in public performances, such as people with Alzheimers disease, disabled children, homeless people, professed non-singers, and members of various faiths, as the "ultimate democratization of music". Including the voices of all, to her mind, promoted an evident mini-democracy. Other than these two voices from within democratic societies, democratic purposes were not specifically named by other participants.

Educators in Brazil present an interesting case. Brazil was home to Freire, whose ideas have been fundamental sources of inspiration and guidance not only in his home country but beyond. In Brazil, every faculty member I spoke with could reference Freire and many saw their efforts as building on the foundation he laid. The concept of conscientization draws particularly on notions of empowerment and agency. Freire argued that bringing literacy to the peasants would bring about social change from the grassroots. So, the professor who takes his students to work with the women in the breast cancer unit, and the one who takes her students to bring music-making to the young people in the favelas, and the one who works with the priests to take in the homeless aim to develop a sense of self-worth and self-efficacy in their community partners.

Yet, even in Brazil, there is evidence that some faculty members also work for social justice. One faculty member, for instance, works with disenfranchised groups to make a case for securing citizenship documentation so they can be treated equitably. She was particularly passionate about this cause since her own family had always been privileged and she felt for those who were less fortunate. Another faculty member had joined in a movement to advocate for more green space in the city since developers were looking to buy up the few empty lots left because she was feeling the stress from living in the highly-urbanized environment of Sâo Paulo. She was engaged in a variety of advocacy and political efforts in the cause.

In Europe, North America, and Australia, where social conditions are generally stable and people's needs can usually be met, the tendency is to work on social justice issues for disadvantaged groups within their societies or further afield to ensure their access to basic rights. It appears to be a position taken most often by those from more privileged backgrounds, as Choules (2007) noted. From the examples in this study, as a general rule, it seems the closer the university partner is to experiencing the problem personally, the more likely empowerment will be the focus of their efforts—so professors in cultures in transition such as South America and South-east Asia will more likely seek to encourage self-efficacy. When the university partner comes from a privileged position and there is a sense of greater distance between them and the area of need, social justice is likely to be the guiding purpose of the activity—so Australian, British, North American, and European professors and students working with disadvantaged groups will tend to work on leveling the playing field, equalizing their relative situations, and trying to establish fair conditions for all.

The challenges outlined in *Rethinking education: Towards a common good?* are global in their sweep and critical in their impact on a sustainable future for everybody on the planet. At first glance the efforts undertaken by faculty members in this sample, while noteworthy and laudable, seem relatively insignificant when measured against the almost overwhelming problems of war and conflict, exploitation of resources, high income inequality, climate change, gender disparity, and so on. In their defense, it might be said that the projects undertaken by the campus-community partnerships observed in this study represent a starting point, a microcosm in of what is writ large in *Rethinking education.* However, it might also be said that they are discrete and somewhat idiosyncratic, dependent in large part on the good will of individual faculty members. But the big social issues identified in *Rethinking education* are systemic and wide-spread. They are complex and brought about by multiple causes. They demand of humankind systemic and multiple solutions and the concerted efforts of multiple players. Institutions of higher education that want to make significant inroads into some of these problems may need to engage in collaborative approaches and large-scale projects beyond the capacity of single individuals, involve educators across disciplines and institutions, and even across countries. This is a significant reason why it is important to understand how institutions of higher education in different cultural contexts understand their social responsibility.

Limitations of the Study

This was an exploratory study in that it represents just a beginning to research around the topic of cultural differences for higher education faculty and administrators to engage in community service with their students. As a qualitative study, it is able to include the voices of those faculty members whose reasoning seems to lie outside the general trend for their cultural group. However, the countries sampled in this study and the number of people within each cultural group was limited. Other possibilities may emerge if more voices were included and, certainly, there are areas of the world which are not represented at all, such as many of the African, Nordic, Central European, and Asian countries. Also, there was only one interviewer collecting and interpreting the data and, while member checking of transcripts was possible in most cases, other guarantees of the trustworthiness of the conclusions were not available.

Another limitation of the study was a lack of a well-developed conceptual framework to analyze the interviewee transcripts. The Public Service Motivation instrument for measuring motivation to enter public service included categories that were marginally present for the participants in this study and omitted the key theme of a sense of duty as a motivator the study participants identified. The framework for exploring the purposes served in campus-community partnerships was drawn from two theoretical reflections (Choules 2007, Giroux 2012) which were similar but likely not sufficiently comprehensive to account for all that is now known about the impact of projects with the university on the communities they serve.

Future studies can address some of these limitations. For instance, replicating for faculty and administrators the large study of Kim, Vandenabeele, Wright, Andersen, et al. (2013) on public service motivations around the world and developing an instrument that better matches the educational context would extend the findings of this study.

Conclusion

This was an exploratory study in the sense that its purpose was to discover whether there was any evidence that administrators and faculty members in higher education exhibited cultural differences in why they choose to engage their students in community service. Why faculty members and administrators would get involved in these partnerships is an important question with at least two parts: what would motivate them to become involved and what would they hope they and their students would accomplish.

The answers to both questions were addressed in a number of diverse and specific cultural contexts. In terms of motivation, a sense of duty was the most predominant response; although, the concept of duty was understood differently in different contexts: the moral imperatives arising in religious faiths (Islam or Judeo-Christian) or political or nationalist commitments (democratic, communist, authoritarian, or simple national reputation) were determinative. Compassion for others and a willingness of faculty to be altruistic in giving their time and energy to the projects was evident in all contexts that engaged in community partnerships. In contexts where learning through service was well known, faculty members also chose to be engaged for the positive impact this pedagogy has on students.

In terms of purposes to be served by campus-community partnerships in addressing community problems, two primary kinds of outcomes were perceived. In developed countries and communities, the primary purpose was more likely to be one of bringing about social justice and guaranteeing fairness and equity for others. It was most commonly claimed as a purpose for community service by people who see themselves as relatively privileged. In countries or

neighborhoods in transition, there appeared to be less attention to working for the common good and more interest in improving one's own position and establishing the groundwork for a good future, thus presenting a challenge to faculty who are more aware of where their society has come from and where it can be headed. Also, for faculty members in countries under transition, empowerment was more likely to be the central purpose of community service, to encourage agency and build a sense of self-efficacy. While both empowerment and social justice aims are seen to be supported by writers such as Freire, faculties in Brazil, Freire's home base, were particularly drawn to his concept of conscientization, an empowerment concept. Conceptions of a stronger democracy as an objective of community efforts were not common in this sample and only arose in contexts of established democracies. Overall, it is also evident from this study that campus-community partnerships in service can go some way to addressing the question raised by *Rethinking education: Towards a global common good?* and with more collaborative efforts across disciplines and institutions could accomplish even more.

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Appendix

Interview Questions: Cultural Perspectives on Social Responsibility in Higher Education

Demographic questions:

- What is your country of origin?
- Where do you currently teach?
- How long have you been teaching in this country?
- What language are you most comfortable speaking and writing in?
- What program of study are you involved in?

1. Does your institution conduct any service activities in the local community? If yes, describe.

- How connected with the university? (classwork, clubs, etc.)
- How many people are involved?
- How effective are these activities?

- How do you feel about faculty and students engaging in these activities?
- What is the general purpose served by service activities?

2. How would you describe the responsibility of the university to its neighboring community?

3. What does the expression "creating positive social change" mean to you?
   Can you give an example?

- Should the university regard positive social change/social responsibility as an important part of its mission?
- What is the general purpose of social change/social responsibility activity?
- What are the challenges to creating positive social change in your setting?
- Are you optimistic or pessimistic about creating positive social change?
- Should the university prepare students to engage in positive social change/social responsibility after graduation?
- How can the university prepare students for this role?