International Service Learning: Guiding Theories

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International Service-Learning

Guiding Theories and Practices for Social Justice

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Introduction

With roots in various streams of educational philosophy and the instructional trends they have spawned, recent publications proclaim that international service-learning (ISL) has come of age as an academic subfield. International Service Learning: Engaging Host Communities (Larsen, 2016), International Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Research (Bringle, Hatcher, & Jones, 2011), and other recent volumes (e.g., Gelmon & Billig, 2007; Porfilio & Hickman, 2011; Tonkin et al., 2004) tell the story of, identify best practices in, and chart a course for future research about international service-learning.

Increasingly, the scholarship on international service-learning (also known as global service-learning), along with the projects, courses, and pedagogies described therein, adopts an explicit social justice stance and proceeds from the understanding that a clear set of social justice commitments should inspire and guide this work (e.g., the collection edited by Marianne Larsen, 2016, and the articles in the fall 2015 special issue of the Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning). This emerging literature reflects an intensifying cross-pollination among and integration of theories and critical perspectives

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1 The authors of this manuscript are from the interdisciplinary field of communication. We have doctoral training in Communication Studies and Rhetoric & Professional Communication, respectively. Our disciplinary and methodological approaches share roots and branches with fields such as rhetoric and rhetorical criticism, critical analysis of media systems and texts, the social scientific study of human communication behavior and interaction. The first author’s research has focused on international and comparative media systems, community radio, development communication, and media criticism connected to issues of cultural identity and gender. She has been exploring these disciplinary interests as they intersect with international service-learning pedagogy, practice, and research since 1992. The second author’s research has focused on writing pedagogy theory and practice, particularly related to community-engaged teaching and learning, comparative educational methods and systems, and international educational partnerships. He has been teaching, studying, and writing about civic engagement in professional and technical communication since 1991. This contribution to the Handbook of Service-Learning for Social Justice revisits and extends our previous contributions to the academic conversation about service-learning and related topics.

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related to internationalization, civic education, critical pedagogy, cross-cultural interaction, community development, and democratic research. Explicitly engaging ethical dilemmas in ISL more and more, this growing body of academic literature explores mixed and varied consequences for differently situated participants, and advances theory, practice, and critical/reflexive assessment (Kiely & Hartman, 2015; Larsen & Gough, 2015). Our contribution to the Handbook of Service-Learning for Social Justice focuses on those theoretical perspectives that undergird an emerging critical turn in the theory and practice of international service-learning.

Concurrent Movements: International and Civic Education

There have been many calls to internationalize higher education (Angell, 1969; Annette, 2003; Kenny & Gallagher, 2002), to enliven our institutions’ civic mission (Barber, 1992; Boyer & Hechinger, 1981; Dewey, 1916; Erlich, 2000; Freire, 1998), and to leverage educational resources in response to domestic and global social justice issues (Ansley & Gaventa, 1997; Beyer, 1990; Brown & Tandon, 1983; Reason, 1991; Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003; Whyte, 1991). As a result, most postsecondary institutions now have study abroad programs as well as community service programs; many curricula feature at least a few noteworthy service-learning courses, some of which involve global immersions; and an increasing number of faculty across every conceivable discipline have similarly inspired and engaged research agendas (e.g., Appe, Ruhai, & Stamp, 2015; Barnes, 2016; Curtin, Martins, Schwartz-Barcott, DiMaria, & Ogando, 2013; Jeffers, Beata, & Strassmann, 2015). Related to and often arising from these same trends, international service-learning programs of all shapes at institutions of all sizes involve every conceivable category of partner organization (e.g., nonprofits and community-based organizations, government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, local and global people’s movements, and civic organizations) and are unfolding in communities across the United States and around the world. A brief history of these often concurrent and intersecting movements supports a social justice consciousness in international service-learning practice.

International educational exchanges grew rapidly after World War II (Bochner, Lin, & McLeod, 1979), during which time programs for diplomats and business people also proliferated (Martin & Nakayama, 2004). Once experienced by a very small percentage of typically affluent college students, international educational experiences, of which “study abroad” is just one, are increasingly popular, though the average duration of such experiences is now a semester or less, and many programs are founded with an entrepreneurial focus on developing “alternative revenue streams” for their home institutions (Green & Baer, 2001) in what are increasingly challenging economic times for higher education in the US. Emerging critiques of international education and study abroad experiences themselves recommend more meaningful contact in host countries than is typical
in traditional study abroad, and greater connection to social issues in host cultures involving community-based experiential learning opportunities (Barker & Smith, 1996; Gates, Fletcher, Ruiz-Tolento, Goble, & Valles, 2014; McLauchlan & Patils, 2015) in addition to traditional internships.

There has been a concurrent call for renewal of education's civic mission. Drawing substantially on the educational philosophies of John Dewey (1916) and the founding of land-grant colleges (e.g., Kenny & Gallagher, 2002), educational associations, scholars, government officials, and others argue that college graduates must be prepared to function as informed and engaged citizens (Barber, 1992; Boyer & Hechinger, 1981; Commission on National Community Service, 1993). Community service connected to formal academic experiences framed by the disciplines arose as a significant strategy for teaching citizenship and social responsibility (Barber, 1992; Kraft & Dwyer, 2000; Rutter & Newman, 1989; Sapp & Crabtree, 2002). Informed by these traditions, organizations such as the Commission on National Community Service and Campus Compact formed to advance this civic educational mission, most significantly through what came to be known as service-learning.

Obvious synergies between study abroad and service-learning are many (Hartman & Rola, 2000; Parker & Dautoff, 2007; Pyle, 1981; Wood, Banks, Galiardi, Koehn, & Schroeder, 2011), particularly in terms of expected learning outcomes for student participants. Direct beneficiaries of study abroad and traditional academic travel were largely conceptualized in utilitarian terms, such as improved language skills and enhanced job preparation. Service-learning outcomes for and benefits to students are articulated in more civic and social terms, rather than an individualistic one, such as increased rates of civic participation, higher measures of social responsibility, and increased commitment to lifelong community service (Kenny & Gallagher, 2002; Parker & Dautoff, 2007). Best practices in service-learning experiences also foreground notions of mutuality and reciprocity, with clear focus on benefiting communities and their members, as well as students.

As these educational movements come to be increasingly mutually informing, scholars and academic administrators are reexamining international programs vis-à-vis notions of social justice (Jacoby, 2015; O'Donovan, 2002; Prins & Webster, 2010; Wood et al., 2011). In addition to improved language skills and appreciation of other cultures that can be derived from an immersion experience, global learning is now more complexly conceptualized in relation to outcomes such as understanding the forces of history and the structures of power and privilege at work within and across nations and peoples; reflecting critically upon shifting self-awareness arising from new knowledge and experience; and applying knowledge about global contexts and cultural differences in ongoing academic inquiry, civic engagement, and everyday interpersonal relations (see, in particular, the American Association of Colleges and Universities' Global Learning VALUE Rubric in Whitehead, 2016; also Barker & Smith, 1996).

Today, many scholars and practitioners seek to facilitate a critical understanding of study abroad and service-learning contextualized by the particularities of history and the structures of globalization negotiating a social justice approach to both.
Recently, critical civic engagement and critical civic literacy are terms circulating in the literature on service-learning and civic education, and even in discussions of career preparation, all associated with twenty-first-century liberal learning outcomes (e.g., Donnchadh, 2015; Pollack, 2015; Zapata Calderón & Pollack, 2015). Critical civic literacy goes beyond the development of individual learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, orientations, and skills to incorporate, as well, recognition of the importance of social responsibility, equity, and social justice as aspects of the cultural, civic, and political capital, which should be among the collective social returns on investment in education. Feminist critiques of civic education also have noted its tendency to perpetuate a naive faith in Western models of civility and democratic process (Arends, 2013; Haubert & Williams, 2015; Williams & McKenna, 2002). Increasingly, then, approaches foregrounding social justice are shaping philosophies of community-engaged learning and influencing program and partnership development, course and project design, and the resulting teaching and learning.

In the remainder of this chapter, we explore some of the underlying theoretical perspectives and research streams that have given rise to a social justice approach to international service-learning. The following discussion includes a variety of academic disciplines and research traditions, provides foundations for ISL practice and research, and informs a social justice perspective to these endeavors. While we use the term international service-learning to denote experiences that involve international immersion, this discussion may also be relevant to community-engaged teaching and learning in domestic contexts, particularly as partner communities and sites increasingly involve significant and complex global and intercultural dimensions. Similarly, many service-learning educators today seek to cultivate both local and global citizenship by incorporating local and international community engagement and combining local community and international partnerships (e.g., Barnes, Ford, & Crabtree, 2000; Ford, Crabtree, & Hubbell, 2009; García & Longo, 2015).

In addition, for the purposes of this chapter, our understanding of social justice can be seen as incorporating the following three ideas: (1) that there is a fair relationship between the individual—regardless of identity or station—and the larger society, manifest in areas such as political rights and enfranchisement, treatment under the law, economic opportunity, self-determination, personal freedom and safety, and access to the benefits and public services of the society; (2) that, in relation to service-learning projects and dynamics, there is an ethos of inclusion, empowerment, mutuality, reciprocity, and solidarity undertaken with a posture of personal humility and openness to learning from each other as equals in human dignity; and (3) that the critical turn in service-learning work has focused (a) on ensuring that the associated learning includes exploration of the underlying, systematic, and structural causes of poverty, injustice, and marginalization in the communities where we work, and (b) on analyzing the dynamics of the projects and associated interactions in ways that both reveal and seek to disrupt these same systematic and structural dynamics, within the contexts where we engage and also in the interrelationships of project/program actors.
Pedagogical Theories

“What cannot be questioned... is that service-learning is fundamentally a question of pedagogical strategy” (Butin, 2005, p. xviii). Many faculty drawn to community-based teaching and learning may have been introduced to alternative and active learning pedagogies, that is, approaches that move away from the “sage on the stage” model toward methods designed to facilitate active, applied, and experiential learning. Some faculty, particularly in fields requiring clinical and practicum components (e.g., nursing, social work, and teacher-education), had long incorporated community-engaged learning before the service-learning movement emerged in the 1980s, though not always critically. Other service-learning faculty may come from backgrounds as community activists seeking to connect their teaching and their scholarship to their political commitments, helping students gain the insights and empowerment that can come through hands-on engagement with social issues and movements (e.g., Crabtree, 1999; Crabtree & Ford, 2006; Sapp & Crabtree, 2002).

The value of experiential learning is foundational for understanding service-learning (Kolb, 1984). Experiential learning enhances conceptual understanding, increases student ability to apply abstract concepts, and involves greater opportunities for general learning (such as communication, cooperation and teamwork, leadership skills) than do traditional lectures, readings, and examinations. With roots in Dewey’s philosophies (1916, 1938) and David Kolb’s models of experiential education (Deans, 1999), many scholars have studied the learning processes and outcomes of community service in higher education (Cone & Harris, 1996; Le & Raven, 2015; Primavera, 1999) and other contexts (Carver, 1997). Empirical research has focused on various cognitive, affective, and operational dimensions of student learning and how these manifest in or are enhanced by service-learning (e.g., Eyerl & Giles, 1999; Gardner & Baron, 1999).

The work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1994, 1998, 2001) is often cited among the foundational pedagogies for service-learning with a social justice orientation. His work focused on literacy education through which he sought political transformation of individuals and structural transformation of society. Freire introduced a radical approach to experiential education that attends to cultural diversity and class conflict, foregrounds social analysis of students’ identities and experiences as well as of the world beyond the classroom. Based in Marxist philosophy and grounded in a utopian and revolutionary vision for social change and social justice, what has come to be known as critical pedagogy illuminated the ways that knowledge production and the institutions that sponsor it rationalize and perpetuate particular sociopolitical interests. For Freire, education is political; thus, critical reflection and collective social action should be explicit in teaching and learning. Analysis of and consciousness-raising about power relations as they manifest in the classroom are also important. Freire’s pedagogy of liberation is one of the theoretical anchors for service-learning and also has been cited in the literatures explored in this chapter about other alternative pedagogies, related to participatory development, and influencing democratic modalities of research, all discussed below.
Feminist pedagogy evolved concurrently with the rise of civic educational movements in the twentieth century, and also is relevant to the social justice approach to service-learning. Feminist pedagogy connects self-reflection, critical analysis, and social action (Maher & Thompson Tetrault, 2001). Among the principles and characteristics of feminist pedagogy are value for the epistemological validity of personal experience, exploring the links between the personal and the political, development of caring, nonhierarchical relationships among students and teachers, creation of a supportive classroom learning community based on reflexive analysis of power and privilege, and application of knowledge through advocacy and direct social action (Crabtree, Sapp, & Licona, 2009).

Similar to critical pedagogy as it has been elaborated over the years (Giroux, 1997; McLaren, 2000; Weiler, 1991), feminist pedagogy includes critical analysis of received disciplinary canons and taken-for-granted assumptions in research methodologies across the disciplines (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Cohee et al., 1998), and includes learning objectives, classroom practices, and instructional relationships that explicitly interrogate and seek to disrupt traditional power dynamics (Crabtree & Sapp, 2003; Luke, 1996; Macdonald & Sánchez-Casal, 2002; Munson Deats & Tallent Lenker, 1994; Ropers-Huilman, 1998).

Feminist scholars practicing and writing about service-learning have provided useful examples of the integration of service-learning and feminist/critical pedagogy (see Ballit & Heffernan, 2000; Iverson & James, 2014), as well as pointed critiques of service-learning that illuminate the importance of a social justice approach (e.g., Foos, 1998; Michelson, 1996; Neururer & Rhoads, 1998; Williams & McKenna, 2002). Feminist critiques note that community engagement should not be thought of as merely a vehicle for individualistic learning; rather, it is comprised of social constructions that both reveal and potentially reinforce inequitable power relationships and prejudices (Hartman, 2015; Michelson, 1996; Williams & McKenna, 2002). A social justice orientation pairs individual student transformation with explicit emphasis on social transformation (see also Deans, 1999), and incorporates analysis of all participants' subject positions in relation to the experience.

The transformative potential of service-learning and international educational experiences is often trumpeted. Transformations sought include greater global and self-awareness; augmented and more sophisticated learning of conceptual material; improved language acquisition, communication skills, and confidence; and the development of more complex and personal understandings of notions such as community, poverty, and justice (Crabtree, 2007; Kiely, 2002, 2004; Monard-Weissman, 2003; Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000; Tonkin et al., 2004). Transformational learning theory (Mezirow, 2000) provides one framework for understanding global service-learning (e.g., Bamber & Pike, 2013; Kiely, 2002, 2005a). In Kiely's (2004) application of Mezirow, for example, the ISL experience produces perspective transformation and the development of "emerging global consciousness" on six dimensions: political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal, and spiritual (p. 11; see also Kronk, Weideman, Cunningham, & Resick, 2015). This approach models and empirically studies learning outcomes from intentionally designed ISL focused on social justice. Such an approach necessitates moving
students away from individualistic, charity, and paternalistic understandings of service, development, and social change (see, for an exploration of and alternatives to this continuum model, Cuban & Anderson, 2007; Morton, 1995).

Social justice oriented pedagogical and learning theories include a substantive focus on critical reflection. The nature of the cross-cultural encounter, an awakening of global awareness, the sorts of cognitive and political dissonance that often results, and the immense personal growth made possible by these experiences carry enormous disruptive as well as transformative power (see also Adler, 1975, 1985; Kim, 2005; Morrison, 2018). While not intended, psychological risks such as disaffection with one's own culture can impact longer-term effects on students' cultural identity and psychological equilibriums. Robert Bringle and Humphrey Tonkin (2004), Richard Kiely (2004, 2005b), and Margaret Pusch and Martha Merrill (2008) discuss many potential positive and negative psychoemotional outcomes for students in international service-learning. Oftentimes, these outcomes occur after returning home and unfold as students try to readjust to campus life. These effects can linger or change over time as students reflect on their experience in light of a new decision or relationship.

Dewey, Freire, and other critical pedagogues, feminists: theorists, and service-learning scholars all articulate a sort of praxis in experiential education manifest in a recursive cycle of knowledge-reflection-action that forms a process of transformational learning. Through reflection we come to understand our beliefs and habits of mind, reassess presuppositions and reveal distortions in our perspectives, and arrive at conclusions about appropriate action. In all of these pedagogical approaches, critical reflection on the self, on classroom dynamics, and on society are part of both content and method for teaching and learning. Critical reflection “examin[es] power relationships and hegemonic assumptions” in relation to both educational contexts and practices and in society-at-large (Brookfield, 2000, p. 125). Reflection activities in service-learning help students deepen their understanding of the experience, their self-image, and their beliefs, including identifying and exploring changes in their self-image and beliefs as a result of the experience (e.g., Bamber & Pike, 2013; Larson & Fay, 2016).

Much has also been made of the opportunity that service-learning affords faculty to find deeper meaning in and greater social impact from their teaching (Birge, 2005). While transformed faculty attitudes and student–teacher relations initially were identified as an unexpected outcome of service-learning (MacNicol, 1992), a social justice approach to service-learning, particularly when grounded in the pedagogical theories explored here, invites a more intentional strategy of developing new relationships among teachers and learners similar to the new kinds of relationships we seek to enact in and with communities. As with critical and feminist pedagogical approaches, a social justice orientation to service-learning can create new, more egalitarian, authentic, and mutually transformative student–teacher relationships (Birge, 2005). In fact, all of the pedagogical approaches discussed here call on the educator to engage in a reflexive and recursive praxis as we become co-learners and subjects of collective analysis in our classrooms and in the world (see, in particular, Kiely & Hartman, 2015, and the essays they co-edited in that edition). It should be noted that faculty may
experience many of the same transformative and disruptive outcomes from engaging in international service-learning; there are additionally some professional risks faculty should consider (Crabtree & Ford, 2006).

**Theories of Cross-Cultural Encounters**

All international educational experiences include cross-cultural contact and immersion; more and more, the same can be said for local or domestic community-engaged global learning experiences. Past research on international education focused on its impact on academic learning, cultural awareness, and related personal growth for student participants; this is also true for extant empirical research on service-learning (e.g., Crabtree, 2013; Dunlap, Scoggin, Green, & Davi, 2007; Fitch, 2004; Myers-Lipton, 1996). To optimize the benefits of ISL experiences for students, and to help conceptualize the benefits to and the impact on all ISL participants, some proficiency is essential in cross-cultural psychology and communication theories related to immersion experiences and their effects (see Berry, 1990, for a deeper exploration of the parallels between service-learning, international education, and intercultural training).

While intercultural contact was initially believed to produce increased cross-cultural awareness and reduced ethnocentrism (Amir, 1969; see Guadynkrust, 1979, for a review of literature related to the “contact hypothesis”), decades of empirical research questioned and complicated these assumptions. Through empirical research, it was discovered that factors such as group status (Amir & Garti, 1977), gender (Baty & Dold, 1977), individual attitudes and predispositions (Kim, 2005), student country of origin (Becker, 1983), and characteristics of host countries (Jones & Popper, 1972; Kim, 2005) all have been identified as intervening variables in realization of the positive predicted outcomes of cross-cultural experiences. In early research about study abroad and other intercultural immersions, effective communication and development of meaningful cross-cultural relationships were identified as key to successful and satisfying international experiences (Brislin, 1981; Hammer, Guadynkrust, & Wiseman, 1978; Rohrlich, 1987).

Research on intercultural immersion also examined variables such as a priori cross-cultural awareness (Bochner et al., 1979; Kohlby & Daugherty, 2015), degree of language learning (Wilkinson, 1998), and relative acquisition of intercultural communication skills (Guadynkrust, 1979; Hammer et al., 1978), on the creation of a global world view (Bachner, Zeutschel, & Shannon, 1993; Nickols, Rothenberg, Moski, & Tetloff, 2013) and other predicted personal transformation and growth (Adler, 1975, 1985; Coelho, 1962; Kim, 2005; Steinkalk & Taft, 1979). This research demonstrated mostly positive, though not simple, correlations between immersion experiences and sought-after outcomes.

Not surprisingly, but particularly relevant to ISL, meaningful participation in host countries and communities was highly correlated with achievement of more profound levels of cross-cultural awareness (Hanvey, 1979). Research over the decades has found that cross-cultural contact leads to greater mutual understanding when members of each group share relatively equal status, when there
are opportunities for interpersonal interaction beyond mere transactional encounters, and when contact involves shared tasks that require interdependence and cooperation in a supportive climate (e.g., Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985; Stephan & Stephan, 1995). These findings can inform and support ISLs increasing focus on mutuality and reciprocity.

Another approach to cross-cultural immersion and adjustment examined resulting and often intense psychoemotional, ideological, and physiological disruptions. Initially conceptualized as an “illness” to be overcome (Lygaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960), later models posited stages of psychological disruption, gradual adjustment, and adaptation over time, elucidating the positive growth and learning ensuing from cross-cultural immersion and reentry (e.g., Adler, 1975; Bikos, Gowen, Rodney, Yamamoto, & Dykhous, 2015; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1993; Kim, 2005). An analogous approach models the cognitive learning sought through ISL in a series of stages whereby the initial shock experienced in a domestic or international service site gives way to “normalization,” eventually evolves toward “engagement” (Rockquemore & Schaeffer, 2000, pp. 17–18), ideally followed by the integration of academic and community sensitivity learning with the development of a structural critique of social issues and interest in advocacy.

Related theories of intercultural sensitivity development charted students’ attitudes on a continuum from more ethnocentric to more ethnorrelative; research has demonstrated a relationship between international service-learning experiences and increased self-awareness, cross-cultural skills, and intercultural learning (e.g., Pusch, 2004). Compatible models illustrate the process for developing awareness of socioeconomic and White privilege; research has applied this model to cross-cultural contact in service-learning (Dunlap et al., 2007). Models like these are all useful heuristics to inform our facilitation of cross-cultural adjustment in ISL contexts.

Understanding culture shock and cross-cultural adjustment can be particularly important for relatively short ISL experiences in marginalized, structurally underprivileged, or severely underresourced contexts. In experiences such as “mission trips” and “alternative breaks,” students and faculty may experience accelerated succession of the stages/symptoms involved in cross-cultural adjustment. Often in a matter of 7–14 days, participants encounter cultural differences, confront poverty and gross inequity, begin to recognize historical and contemporary political relations, manage evolving senses of self and home, and grapple with the frequently alarming realities of globalization and the persistence of global injustice that often are revealed during many ISL experiences (e.g., Berry, 1990; Crabtree, 1997, 1998; Kiely, 2004, 2005a, 2005b; Martin, 1984; Quiroga, 2004; Toms, 2015). Indeed, recent studies demonstrate that cross-cultural encounters in ISL experiences produce many anxieties, as well as both physical and emotional stress for participants, in addition to enhancing several dimensions of intercultural competence (e.g., Nickols et al., 2013).

Especially given the characteristics of typical ISL contexts, reentry from an ISL experience, whether a short-term spring break or a semester immersion, is perhaps the most difficult for students to process (e.g., Quiroga, 2004). Effective strategies include follow-up research and advocacy projects, identifying subsequent study-abroad experiences or post-graduation service opportunities,
speaking on campus and in the community about the ISL experience and context, and ongoing exploration of the complex intellectual and ethical issues through reflexive analysis (Kiely, 2004; Kiely & Hartman, 2015). Greater attention to preparing students for immersion and following up with students after return have emerged as critical components of effective ISL (e.g., Gates et al., 2014).

While the research discussed in this section informs facilitation of student learning in ISL, the impact of these cross-cultural encounters on host communities and partner organizations also warrants attention. Little has appeared in the academic literature about preparing communities for ISL visitors, about community perspectives on the encounter, or about the long-term impact of that encounter on hosting individuals and partnering communities (e.g., Crabtree, 2013; Kozak & Larsen, 2016; O'Sullivan & Smaller, 2016; Reynolds & Gasparini, 2016). In the early years of growth in ISL programs and research, John Fiske cautioned, "cross-cultural interaction which is initiated and directed by the more powerful of the two cultures (for power difference is always part of the cultural differences) always runs the risk of reducing the weaker to the canvas upon which the stronger represents itself and its power" (1993, p. 149). Indeed this warning has heralded the emergence of the social justice approach to ISL, one that is increasingly impacting civic and international education movements, as well.

The proliferation of critical race theory in social analysis, academic research, and application within student development programs signals the need for attention by practitioners of service-learning for social justice. Critical race theory developed largely through the writing and activism of progressive intellectuals of color and their allies, across virtually all academic disciplines and in movements beyond the academy. Concurrent and in many ways related to the emergence of cultural studies in textual analysis and postcolonial studies for analysis of cultural relations and migrations, critical race theory seeks to expose and confront the structural hierarchies of White supremacy (and concomitant hierarchies based on gender, sexuality, etc.) and histories of oppression as they permeate every facet of economics, education, health care, law, and politics (see Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2015). These theorists provide essential perspectives to inform a social justice approach to ISL. They identify the importance of attending to conscious and unconscious racism and ethnocentrism related to our students' identities and subject positions, those of participants in communities where ISL projects unfold, and in the historical and international relations that frame these encounters. It is worth noting, by way of integrating the various sections in this chapter, that critical race consciousness and anti-oppression work also are integral to theorizing and practicing feminist teaching (hooks, 2003; Macdonald & Sánchez-Casal, 2002) and increasingly are being foregrounded in service-learning course design, assessment research, and reflexive analysis (Bocci, 2015; Durlap et al., 2007; Green & Baer, 2001; Hickmon, 2015).

When the theories of cultural and cross-cultural identity and engagement are foregrounded in service-learning programs, the focus moves to facilitating encounters and relationships rather than remaining mainly focused on material projects. For example, through community and cross-border storytelling projects (e.g., García & Longo, 2015), students learn to listen to and value others'
Development Theories

Throughout the evolution of international service-learning in program design and in on-the-ground practice, the so-called development project has been a central vehicle for engaging students in community-engaged learning. Whether co-curricular models such as mission trips and alternative breaks, or in course-based service-learning across disciplines as varied as anthropology, biology, communication, engineering, occupational therapy, political science, and theater, ISL experiences are connected to community development work. There is a growing literature on community partnership building for service-learning (e.g., Jacoby, 2003), and an extensive literature on campus—community partnerships for healthcare education, in particular (e.g., Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2016). Somewhat curiously, past writing about best practices in ISL rarely referenced the literature on comparative theories, ideologies, and models of development (Crabtree, 2008). Despite this missed connection, ISL programs that typically include projects that fall under the broad categories of construction, health care, and educational interventions should be informed by and comprehended in relation to complex histories and theories of development.

Generally understood to be a process of human and material improvement, the idea of “development” emerged in the nineteenth century and manifested largely through the formation of nation states, transition to industrial technologies, and emerging capital markets (see McMichael, 2004, for a thorough history and contemporary analysis of development philosophy and models). The dominant conception of the post-World War II world order divided the globe into so-called modern/developed nations (i.e., First World), communist/Soviet bloc nations (i.e., Second World), and remaining newly independent and developing nations.
(i.e., Third World). Lack of technological advancement coupled with individual deficits such as traditional values, low educational attainment, lack of "modern" job skills, and resistance to "modern" viewpoints were then deemed responsible for poor rates of development in many parts of the world (Lerner, 1958). Modernization theory was the prevailing approach to development at the time, and this theory promoted rapid economic growth focused on capital and technological improvements. These advancements were paired with the creation of so-called modern attitudes and behaviors, usually employing emerging media interventions (e.g., advertising) and other communication strategies. This theory focused most substantially on developing urban centers and promoting urbanization (i.e., physical movement, but also psychic identification), industrialization and agro-industrialization, and increasing rates of consumerism all as measures of development and drivers of modernization.

By the 1970s, when so-called developing countries did not seem to be catching up to the Western developed nations, despite growth in GNP and related capital and technological advancements, several alternative explanations and critical models were posed (e.g., Frank, 1968). These critiques pointed out that, particularly in Africa and Latin America, advancements in technology, industrialization, consumerism, and associated rising GNP failed to produce or correlate with broad-based changes in educational attainment, economic circumstances, and living conditions for the majority of people in those nations. Not only were such conditions not ameliorated as hypothesized, but in many cases they seemed to be exacerbated by so-called modernization (McMichael, 2004; Rogers, 1976) and related policies such as structural adjustment (Stiglitz, 2003). Analyses and critiques revealed that development had largely been driven by actors and processes external to the developing nation such as international monetary policy and global agricultural and commodities markets (Stiglitz, 2003). Other intervening factors were also revealed, such as corrupt governments, local elites acting as agents of colonial regimes, internal colonialism in postcolonial states, and rapid urbanization without sufficient planning for improved infrastructure and services (see McMichael, 2004, for an analysis of the sociopolitical dimensions of development and the impact of concurrent trends such as the globalization of finance, debt, trade, manufacturing, agriculture, and labor).

Beginning in the mid to late twentieth century, alternative approaches to development introduced models that focused on decentralized, rural, community-level interventions with expectations that the beneficiaries of development projects and programs would participate in design, implementation, and assessment (Bessette, 2004; Moemeka, 2000; Nair & White, 1987; Nelson & Wright, 1995). Nongovernmental organizations have since prioritized so-called participatory development models and strategies (Bhuvan & Williams, 1992; Nelson & Wright, 1995; Streeten, 1997), though large-scale international and state-sponsored development efforts continue to emphasize national economic growth, and continue to foreground market/consumer logics in efforts to address inequalities based on class, gender, race, and ethnicity (McMichael, 2004).

The development project has undergone substantial scrutiny in the past two decades and has "lost considerable credibility among members of Third World (now southern) states" (McMichael, 2004, p. 37; also see Sefa Dei, Hall, &
Goldin-Rosenberg, 2002). Legacies of colonialism, failures to respect and utilize Indigenous knowledge, the persistence and exacerbation of inequitable global trade arrangements, the devastating impact of structural adjustment on Third World debt, corruption of governments, enduring tribalism, and the failure of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are all implicated (Stiglitz & Squire, 1998). Discourses of liberation and social justice have replaced earlier discourses of development in the voices and works of intellectuals and activists from/within and beyond the Global South, who instead conceptualize development in terms of sustainability and democratization (e.g., the work of Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai), biodiversity and Indigenous people’s rights (e.g., the work of Vandana Shiva), and gender, race, and (im)migration justice (e.g., the work of Arundhati Roy).

Today, many ISL programs partner with small local NGOs and community-based organizations that facilitate partnerships, cross-cultural relationship building, and participatory project design and implementation, and who also provide needed perspectives on local politics and maintain longer-term commitments in host countries and communities (for a variety of perspectives on such partnerships, see Crabtree, 2007, 2013; Crabtree & Sapp, 2005; Curtin, Martins, & Schwartz-Barcott, 2015; Kiely & Nielson, 2002/2003; Lane, 1995; Porter & Monard, 2001; Simonelli, Earle, & Story, 2004; Streent, 1997).

This admittedly brief and incomplete history reminds us that partnering contexts and communities in ISL have been profoundly shaped by this legacy. International service-learning courses and co-curricular experiences are implicated in development's blemished history, and we continue to struggle with our sometimes naïve hopes for projects, through collaboration with NGOs about which we know too little, or in tacit complicity with governments that fail to adequately address the needs of the most marginalized communities and populations (Crabtree, 1998; Streent, 1997). As a foundation for ethical ISL work from a social justice perspective, we need to incorporate consideration of development's complex and troubled history, be acquainted with comparative ideologies and models of development, and connect these to understanding and preparing to engage in specific contexts (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Crabtree, 2008, 2013; Porter & Monard, 2001; Simonelli et al., 2004). A critical/cultural analysis of ISL in relation to development/history along with contemporary critiques of globalization (McMichael, 2004; Sefa Dei et al., 2002; Srerberry-Mohammadi, 1997; Stiglitz, 2003) will also help us better understand how our work may be perceived by and impact communities and countries where we engage. This background also supports reflection upon how ISL can reinforce - rather than disrupt - students' and community members' knowledge about and sense of their place in the world (see other pointed critiques and cautions in Cone & Harris, 1996; Cruz, 1990; Illich, 1990; Neururer & Rhoads, 1998; Simonelli et al., 2004; Williams & McKenna, 2002).

Importantly, the most rapidly proliferating literature in ISL now relates to best practices in engaging host communities (e.g., the collection of articles in Larsen, 2016) and the development of sound partnerships that operationalize values such as mutuality, reciprocity, and dialogue (e.g., García & Longo, 2015; Hammersley, Bilous, James, Trau, & Suchet-Pearson, 2014; Jacoby, 2003, 2015;
Johnson, 2013; Jones, Kamela, & Peeks, 2011; Lloyd et al., 2015; Pisco, 2015; Sharpe & Dean, 2013; Vonkens-Talz, 2003). Similarly, growing interest in a social justice approach to ISL is resulting in more writing about its reception in and impact on host communities (e.g., Crabtree, 2013; Dharamsi et al., 2013; Duarte, 2016; O’Sullivan & Smaller, 2016; Smedley, 2016). In many cases, these recent developments also intersect with increased faculty interest in research for social justice and associated methodologies. The following section discusses research as service in service-learning, as well as the philosophies and theories of participatory and democratic research methodologies that inform a social justice orientation to ISL.

**Research for Social Justice**

Among the critiques of domestic and international service-learning is the questionable material contributions that service-learning courses, projects, and their students can actually provide to host organizations and communities. Cautions include whether students have the appropriate expertise, knowledge, or experience to make meaningful contributions beyond their own learning, the fact that any physical labor supplied by students could be provided by local people, the knowledge that supervision of service-learning students can cost community organizations more time than is matched by students’ contributions, and so on (e.g., Crabtree, 1998, 2013; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Reardon, 1998). Increasingly, then, and in part to overcome these concerns, research might be one of the practical and valuable forms of service students can provide communities and organizations (Reardon, 1998). Research can provide data to document issues, assets, and problems of interest to a community organization, supporting community problem-solving, strengthening community advocacy, and manifesting solidarity (e.g., Haubert & Williams, 2015).

Traditional research paradigms conceptualize the activity as something pursued by experts using specialized methodologies in highly specialized fields. Standards of objectivity and academic peer review are used to legitimate data, to frame results, and determine the value of the work. Assessments of a study’s value are based largely on contributions to extant disciplinary theory and traditions of inquiry. In such a paradigm, and even while often seeking concrete change (e.g., improvements in practice, health, or other areas and applications), it is usually scholars and academic communities who reap immediate outcomes from research in forms such as publications and professional advancement (see, for elaborations of this argument, Boyer, 1990; Hall, 1981). Whether or not the common good is served by research also is largely subject to the judgements and determination of experts.

Despite the persistence of the traditional research paradigm across the disciplines, many in the academic world understand that research is inherently political and knowledge production serves political interests (Reason, 1991). Several cogent critiques of the dominant research paradigm mirror critiques of modernization theory in development, as discussed earlier in this chapter. For example,
the benefits of scholarship tend to accrue to powerful institutions, elite social groups, and rich nations, resulting in a sort of monopoly on knowledge production and its application; knowledge production is inextricably linked to global power relations and social control (Tandon, 1981). Beyond these macrolevel considerations, the traditional and widely accepted approach to research often questions common knowledge and perspectives of disenfranchised populations as being too subjective (Ansley & Gaventa, 1997; Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991).

By contrast, alternative and more democratic research paradigms begin with the assumptions that the identification and definition of phenomena to study, the development of research questions, the forms of data and the methods of collection and analysis, and the use of research findings all should be relevant to those whose lives and problems are being studied (Brown & Tandon, 1983; Whyte, 1991). Researchers in the participatory action research tradition, for example, commit to collective investigation, analysis, dialogue, and action that are primarily aimed at long-term and structural change in addition to short-term local solutions relevant to community interests and in collaboration with members of those communities (Strand et al., 2003).

Similarly, feminist approaches to research acknowledge positions of power and privilege within the communities studied and among researchers and community members, which must be considered and accounted for in research design and dissemination (Maguire, 1987; Naples, 2003; Reinharz, 1992; Schrijvers, 1995). Highlighting the ways research not only reveals unjust social relations, but reproduces them, feminist critiques of the traditional research paradigm similarly question notions of objectivity, reappraise the scientific method, pose dilemmas based on standpoint theory, and promote activist research (Belenky et al., 1986; Code, 1995; Harding, 1991; Naples, 2003; Reinharz, 1992). These alternative research paradigms leverage research for social justice aims.

Informed by these epistemological frameworks, then, participatory and action-oriented approaches to community-based research offer a model for collaboration between ISL faculty and students and communities that are consistent with best practices in ISL (Belone et al., 2012). International service-learning provides a rich context for research related to disciplinary concepts and theories, and of course to illuminate the challenges faced by and evaluating the solutions implemented within communities. Following the ideals of participatory development in community-based projects as discussed earlier in this chapter, participatory modes of inquiry also serve student learning goals, provide real service to organizations and communities using expertise and tools they otherwise might not have, and manifest values such as reciprocity and social advocacy.

Within a participatory and action-oriented framework, research endeavors can build the capacity of novice scholars and empower communities as collaborators in knowledge production and social action (DeBlasis, 2006; Strand, 2000). In their writing on service-learning, Nadirne Cruz and Dwight Giles (2000) noted that action research philosophy and methodology ultimately generate better data while also “avoiding doing any harm to the community relationships that we are trying to nurture as well as study” (p. 31). The ethos of reciprocity is the key to ethical and successful collaborative research, just as it is to ISL (Henry & Breyfogle, 2006; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). The literature on participatory
development and democratic research elaborates on the ethos of reciprocity in ways that can productively guide ISL, suggesting theories, models, methods, and on-the-ground strategies that can produce mutuality in process and outcomes.

Participatory, action, and feminist approaches to community-based research provide the epistemological frameworks that connect academic research with civic responsibility and social justice in ISL. Even when short-term immersions do not lend themselves to research projects, or when student or faculty research is not an explicit component of ISL programs, these alternative research paradigms can inform ISL with a set of values, a language of critique, principles and guidelines for appropriate collaboration and participation, and the shared goals of reciprocity, mutual empowerment, and social change.

As this discussion reveals, participatory paradigms of community-based research evolved in tandem with the academic conversations on civic education in the 1980s and 1990s (Boyer, 1990), and with the study and practice of participatory development (Reardon, 1998). These are all relatively concurrent philosophical and theoretical movements that should be understood in relation to each other and should be undertaken in a mutually informing way. Nevertheless, until recently, the ISL literature focused almost entirely on student learning outcomes and logistics from the perspectives of institutional administrators, parents, and faculty (Crabtree, 2007; Tonkin et al., 2004). More and more, however, ISL is a theoretically informed practice that considers a “360-degree view” (Brown, 2011; Crabtree, 2013).

**International Service-Learning and Social Justice**

Through the 1980s and 1990s, and into the 2000s, research on service-learning examined learning goals such as enhancing active, collaborative, applied, and experiential learning; improving cross-cultural, global, and diversity awareness and skills; increased university–community collaboration on social problems; enhanced critical thinking and reflection; and the formation of an informed and engaged citizenry (Berry & Chisholm, 1999; Boyer & Hechinger, 1981; Erlich, 2000; Gabelnick, 1997; Gamson, 1997; Sapp & Crabtree, 2002). A growing literature has outlined the essential logistics, pedagogical dimensions, and best practices of service-learning (Barber & Battistoni, 1993; Howard, 2001; Jacoby, 1996; Kendall, 1990; Zlotkowski, 1998). Journals such as the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, the *Journal of Higher Education*, and the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* also advanced service-learning practice and research. Today the literature is vast, increasingly theoretical and empirical, and associated with virtually every academic discipline.

Though more slowly, the ISL literature has proliferated as well and now includes descriptions of specific university programs (e.g., Crabtree, 1997; Garcia & Longo, 2015; Kraft, 2002; Simonelli et al., 2004; Smith-Parinolá & Gökkê-Parinolá, 2006) and case studies of individual ISL experiences (e.g., Crabtree, 1998; Crabtree & Sapp, 2005; Liebowitz, 2000; Milofsky & Flack; 2005; Schensul & Berg, 2004). The International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leaership has played a significant role in building an understanding of ISL, including providing an inventory of models (Kraft, 2002) and supporting large-scale analysis (Tonkin et al., 2004).
In studying teaching and learning in ISL, the literature is absolutely burgeoning. A variety of methods for ISL research have been identified that account for all participants (e.g., Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996). Comprehensive research agendas on key concepts have been outlined (e.g., Arends, 2013; Tonkin, 2011). A growing number of quantitative and qualitative studies of ISL confirm student development of civic and research skills (Schensul, 2004), positive effects on diversity learning (Camacho, 2004), and longitudinal impact on students (Kiely, 2004, 2005a). Relevant multi-disciplinary concerns and theories have been established and these literatures are increasingly cited in writing about ISL (e.g., Crabtree, 2008; also see the collection of essays in Bringle, Hatcher, & Jones, 2011). Importantly, a growing number of scholars have committed themselves to empirical research about ISL beginning during their doctoral studies and continuing to contribute increasingly sophisticated empirical analysis (see the work of Richard Kiely, for example).

Significantly, attention to community-level concerns is also growing rapidly, and from this literature we are learning how to facilitate student learning and relationships with communities in ISL contexts through a social justice lens (see Camacho, 2004; Donnchadh, 2015; Morrison, 2015; Porter & Monard, 2001; Simonelli et al., 2004). Research increasingly respects — even centers — the perspectives from, impacts on, and benefits experienced by communities (e.g., Crabtree, 2013; Haubert & Williams, 2015; Larsen, 2016; Morton & Bergbauer, 2015). Scholars are reporting not only the positive outcomes for students and communities achieved through ISL, but increasingly attending to the unintended and negative consequences on student learning such as oversimplification, homogenization, ongoing stereotyping (e.g., Dharmasi et al., 2013), and the negative impacts that can be produced in communities (e.g., Crabtree, 2013).

To a greater extent, research on outcomes in communities is now designed and implemented collaboratively with local communities (e.g., Morton & Bergbauer, 2015). Participatory approaches like those discussed in this chapter promote research design and methods that are consistent with best practices for international service-learning (Belone et al., 2012). Similarly, beyond explorations of ISL course and project structure, and beyond seeking enhanced learning of specific disciplinary content, there are growing calls that all ISL course content and student learning objectives include explicit engagement with development theory and cultural theory (e.g., Crabtree, 2008), ethical theory (e.g., Appe et al., 2016), and be designed to cultivate interest in social justice (e.g., Barnes, 2016). Some approaches to ISL connect to various religious and spiritual roots and learning objectives that foreground ethics, solidarity, and social justice (e.g., Bamber & Pike, 2013; Cuban & Anderson, 2007; Gates et al., 2014).

The shifting theoretical orientation of ISL practitioners and scholars, and the resulting ISL engagements, portend greater likelihood that students will develop more strongly relational orientations to service and citizenship, with greater attention to equity and social justice. The next decade of research, including continued proliferation in the range of voices from communities and scholars in the Global South (e.g., Erasmus, 2011; Larkin, 2016) will reveal whether the promise of ISL for social justice is realized and will support ongoing analysis and improvements in practice.
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<th>KEY TERMS</th>
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<td><strong>Civic education</strong>: Civic education involves the cultivation of understanding of people's rights, responsibilities, beliefs, values, roles, and habits in relation to a society's political processes, and how these work—ideally and actually—in a democratic society. Civic education seeks to cultivate informed participation in a democracy, perhaps even to inspire public service and leadership, and is often achieved through discussion of controversial issues, debates, and other applied learning activities.</td>
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<td><strong>Critical pedagogy</strong>: Based in Marxist philosophy and grounded in a utopian and revolutionary vision for social change and social justice, critical pedagogy illuminates the ways that knowledge production—and the institutions that sponsor it—rationalizes and perpetuates particular sociopolitical interests and orders. Within critical pedagogy, critical reflection and collective social action should be explicit in teaching and learning. Analysis of and consciousness-raising about power relations as they manifest in the classroom are also important.</td>
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<td><strong>Democratic research</strong>: Democratic research approaches begin with the assumptions that the identification and definition of phenomena to study, the development of research questions, the forms of data and the methods of collection and analysis, and the use of research findings all should be relevant to those whose lives and problems are being studied. Democratic research might include investigation, analysis, dialogue, and action aimed at social change relevant to community interests and conducted in collaboration with members of those communities.</td>
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<td><strong>Feminist analysis and pedagogy</strong>: Feminist pedagogy connects self-reflection, critical social analysis, intersectional analysis featuring gender as the central organizing principle, and social action. Teaching methods explore the links between the personal and the political, and seek to develop caring, nonhierarchical relationships among students and teachers. Educators informed by feminist pedagogy seek to create an inclusive and supportive classroom learning community based on reflexive analysis of power and privilege, and application of knowledge through advocacy and direct social action.</td>
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<td><strong>Global service-learning</strong>: Global service-learning, related to international service-learning, is a course-based or co-curricular form of cross-cultural and experiential education wherein students, faculty, staff, and institutions collaborate with diverse community stakeholders on an organized service activity to address social problems and issues in the local community or abroad. Such experiences usually involve a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems (e.g., natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people's lives, communities and societies, and the planet.</td>
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<td><strong>Intercultural communication</strong>: Intercultural communication takes place in contexts made up of individuals from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds, based on known and unknown patterns of differences in the ways people from different countries and cultures perceive the world, act, and communicate. It also involves a wide range of communication processes and problems associated with sharing information across different cultures and social groups. It is sometimes referred to as cross-cultural communication.</td>
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- **International service-learning**: International service-learning, related to global service-learning, is an earlier term used to describe a credit-bearing or co-curricular form of educational engagement that combines cross-cultural encounters and experiential education wherein students, faculty, staff, and institutions collaborate with diverse community stakeholders outside of their own community, on an organized service activity or project that seeks to address social problems and issues in the community. Such experiences ideally involve a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent systems (e.g., natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications.

- **Participatory development**: In contrast to top-down or large-scale approaches to national development and associated projects, participatory development seeks grassroots and local solutions for broad social problems and inequities. It is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development activities and related resources and identification of solutions to challenges they face. Participatory development is conceptualized in terms of self-determination, sustainability, and democratization, and often utilizes discourses of liberation and social justice in association with broad social movements or the political efforts for enfranchisement of marginalized populations.

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### KEY IDEAS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- There are growing intersections in the emergence of educational movements such as internationalization, civic engagement, service-learning, and democratic community-based research.
- Multiple theoretical perspectives and research traditions can inform effective practice, critical analysis and reflection, and research in international service-learning.
- Social justice frameworks for and practices in international service-learning are emerging.
- There are ethical dilemmas regarding the community impact of international service-learning in communities.
- It is important to consider intended and unintended consequences of international service-learning.

### References


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to increase her learning experiences by continuing participation in service-learning and joining organizations that support indigenous health initiatives.

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Storytelling: A Decolonizing Journey for an Indigenous Community as a contemporary example of how Indigenous communities might work to revitalize oral traditions and intergenerational learning.

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