

The Concept and Context of the Engaged University in the Global South: Lessons from Latin America to Guide a Research Agenda

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Abstract

Engagement is widely recognized by higher education institutions, nation-states, and international organizations as the third pillar in the mission of university education. Despite the global reach of this concept, published research is disproportionately based on examples from the United States. This article brings to light the rich and extensive literature on university engagement from Latin America that is largely accessible only in Spanish. Among advocates for engaged universities differences exist in terms of the rationales that justify it and the means used to accomplish it. The authors identify the historical roots and current applications of three models of university engagement—market-oriented, social justice, and university social responsibility—and use case studies from Latin America to explore more deeply the potential of the third model. This is then used as the basis for developing a research agenda that would inform practices in both the Global North and Global South.

Keywords: Third mission, engaged university, Latin America, university social responsibility, *responsabilidad social universitaria*

Introduction

The last decades have witnessed national and international efforts to raise awareness regarding the importance of university engagement and to call on universities to be more committed to advancing various forms of outreach. At the international level a consensus seems to exist that public or community service is, or should be, one of the core functions of the university, a third mission alongside the traditional teaching and research missions (Laredo, 2007). Declarations of intent, reports of high level commissions, and public policies in multiple latitudes express similar sentiments. Perhaps most notable among these is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Declaration of 1998 in which social responsibility of universities was recognized as one of their main purposes, and universities worldwide were exhorted to provide relevant educa-

tion, to educate citizens in democratic values, to conduct pertinent research that might contribute to the development of society, and to engage faculty and students in their communities (*Gaete Quezada, 2014; Núñez, Salom, Rosales, & Paz, 2012*).

Although the statements in support of engaged universities occur at a global level, the published scholarship is disproportionately focused on universities in the United States and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom, with occasional country case studies from other parts of the world. In this manner, the research perpetuates the image of the Global North (encompassing Europe, North America, and other developed economies) as a provider of resources, knowledge, and expertise to counterparts in the Global South (including the majority of countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America). The premise of this article is that, with respect to university engagement, the Global North could benefit from a look to the South, in particular a look to Latin America.

In part due to their history and context in terms of poverty and social inequities, countries from the Global South have been very creative in how universities contribute to their communities, and “northern institutions of higher education have a great deal to learn from the committed and innovative civic engagement of sister institutions in the global south” (*Reid, 2013, p. 35*). In the case of Latin America, universities have a long tradition of community outreach and engagement; their commitment to advancing the social function of the university spans nearly a century.

Despite the rich tradition of university engagement in Latin America, little is known in the English-speaking world about the practices, successes, and challenges in the region because of both the language barrier (*Tessler, 2013*) and the barriers that low- and middle-income countries face in bringing university research and education into the social and public spheres (*Thorn & Soo, 2006*). In the context of Latin America, “[w]hat remains a challenge . . . is that the richness of Latin American activist intellectual experience is largely invisible to a world that operates mostly in English” (*Gutberlet, Tremblay, & Moraes, 2014, p. 179*). Higher education community outreach practices exist in Latin America and include a multitude of tools and methods such as “popular education, participatory research, theater of the oppressed, participatory video, feminist research, [and] indigenous-centered research” (*Gutberlet et al., 2014, p. 179*). Therefore, analyzing the community outreach and engagement experiences and perspectives from Latin American universities and scholars could bring important contributions to

the active worldwide movement, study, and debate around this topic.

This article is organized in four parts. In the first part we further describe the worldwide movement toward advancing the third mission with highlights from the United States, outside the United States, and Latin America in particular. In the second part we compare and contrast three models of university engagement, two of which are common to the discourse in multiple contexts, and one of which is not as prevalent in U.S. practices or in the English-language published scholarship. Focusing on this third model, the third section of the article presents two case studies illustrating how networks of universities in Latin America have applied the model. In the fourth and final part of the article we reflect on the lessons learned from the review of literature and the two case studies and posit a series of research questions that flow from this research and can guide a research agenda.

Worldwide Agreement and Commitment on the University Third Mission

Scholars, universities, and even governments worldwide have concurred in recognizing public or community service as the university's third mission. Challenges remain, however, in the form of tensions between the third mission and the conventional notions of the research and teaching missions (*Keyman, 2014; Laredo, 2007*), the failure of most institutions to incorporate engagement into promotion or tenure criteria (*Sobrero & Jayaratne, 2014*), and the multitude of universities that *claim* an engagement mission, but whose actions suggest only superficial commitment (*Keyman, 2014*). Even while acknowledging these challenges and recognizing that teaching and research remain pillars of university missions, the potential role of the university in the economic, social, and political fabric of the community is increasingly accepted. Indeed, Benneworth and Sanderson (*2009*) indicate that “the notion of university/community engagement is now uncontroversial, as it is embodied in the rise of the ‘third’ (engagement) mission for universities” (*p. 133*).

University Engagement in the United States

In the case of the United States, engagement has its roots in the land-grant universities established in the 19th century. These institutions utilized, and to some extent continue utilizing, the extension model to apply research in agriculture and other fields to advance regional development; they are considered an impor-

tant precedent for university–community engagement (Drabenstott, 2008; Goddard & Puukka, 2008). Only land-grant institutions in the United States are required by government to participate in community engagement and development as a result of the Morrill Act of 1862 (Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo, & Bringle, 2010). Land-grant universities emphasized teaching, research, and community outreach and extension programs, and this charge has spilled over into other types of universities. To encourage the spillover, numerous voices continue advocating for expanding the engagement of higher education institutions. In 1999, the Kellogg Commission stressed the importance of engagement while also recommending changes in other university functions to better respond to community needs (D'Agostino, 2008). In 2000, representatives from 500 higher education institutions signed the Presidents' Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education (Reid, 2013), and in 2012 the American Association of Colleges and Universities continued these efforts by launching a national call to action recommending the use of engaged pedagogies to encourage civic engagement (Trudeau & Kruse, 2014).

The Carnegie Classification framework has also contributed to advancing the third mission in the United States. Although perhaps most widely known for its differentiation of universities on the basis of the level of research activity, highest degrees offered, size of the institution, or any special foci of the institution (<http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/>), a more recent addition to the Carnegie classification scheme is an elective community engagement classification. As of 2016, some 361 institutions had earned the classification by demonstrating “collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (Carnegie Foundation, 2015, para. 1). Universities are evaluated on their (1) institutional identity and culture, (2) institutional commitment, (3) curricular engagement, and (4) outreach and partnerships. Each of these four dimensions requires extensive documentation to demonstrate engagement. For example, in the area of institutional commitment, universities are asked to describe how their organizational structure, investment of resources, fund-raising practices, internal policies, data collection, and rewards systems support community engagement, and to assess the impact of community engagement on faculty, students, the community, and the institution. Although no predictive variable exists to help understand which institutions of higher education apply for and receive this classification (Pearl, 2014), and a wide

variety of strategies are used by these institutions (Noel & Earwicker, 2015), a holistic approach to engagement underpins their various methods (Liang & Sandmann, 2015).

University Engagement in Other Parts of the World

A similar movement for an engaged university has taken place in other countries and regions of the world. In Australia, for example, the creation of the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA) in 2003 represents an initiative that has advanced creating a framework for benchmarking university–community engagement (Garlick & Langworthy, 2008). In Japan, recent reforms in higher education policies exhorted universities to be more engaged (Kitagawa & Oba, 2010). A survey conducted in 2006 highlighted that at least half of university presidents in Japan say their institutions act as “community based education centers;” around 80% identify such a function as the main one in their future and point to it, along with service to society, as the most important university functions (Kitagawa & Oba, 2010, p. 512).

Similar initiatives from universities and networks of universities in the United Kingdom, Russia, Asia, and the Middle East have led to signed agreements, as part of a global movement that calls for universities to be engaged in and contribute to the world, the country, and the communities in which they are located (Reid, 2013). The 2005 *Talloires Declaration on the Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education* serves as a milestone in the commitment of universities with community engagement which, as of 2013, included a network of 300 universities from 71 countries (Reid, 2013). In response to a recognized absence of clear criteria by which to evaluate the engagement mission, Hart and Northmore (2011) drew upon the experiences of the University of Brighton in the United Kingdom to establish a series of detailed examples of engagement corresponding to seven dimensions: (1) public access to facilities, (2) public access to knowledge, (3) student engagement, (4) faculty engagement, (5) widening participation and diversity, (6) encouraging economic regeneration and enterprise in social engagement, and (7) institutional relationship and partnership building.

University Engagement in Latin America

In the case of Latin America, the social function of the university dates back to the initial founding of university-level edu-

cation and the Córdoba Reform of 1918 (*Bustos & Inciarte, 2012; Tunnermann, 1998*). The Córdoba Reform was inspired by an Americanist sentiment that called for a “new university,” which was defined by its social function and its concern for national issues, as well as by several other principles such as free teaching, universal and free higher education, and university autonomy (*Tunnermann, 1998*). This reform movement of Latin American students began in Córdoba, Argentina, and then spread throughout the region. It was followed by other salient efforts, such as the first Congress of Latin American universities in 1949, the first Latin American Conference on University Extension and Cultural Diffusion in 1950, and the second conference of this type in 1972. In each of these forums, the third mission of universities was defined in terms of the universities’ relations with other social units and their contributions to societal transformations (*Bustos & Inciarte, 2012; Tunnermann, 1998*). More recently, we see evidence of the continued importance of engaged universities in Latin America manifesting in one of three approaches: market-oriented, social justice, and social responsibility. They represent different notions about the rationale for engagement, the nature of university–community relationships, and how impact is interpreted and implemented.

Approaches to the Engaged University in Latin America

The notion of a university dedicated to community engagement, outreach, and development stands in stark contrast to the image of a university as an ivory tower separated from and often looking down upon the community in which it is located. The elitist ivory tower position is one that universities can no longer afford to take, because if they are not engaging in public problem-solving, they are at risk of becoming “socially irrelevant” (*Ostrander, 2004, p. 76*). Higher education leaders in Latin America have acknowledged and spoken out about this developing role in the region. As one Argentinian higher education leader explained, “Now is the time to say (to university and college leaders), ‘You are not serious enough if you are not involving your students in reality and building relevant skills. You are not serious enough if the knowledge you are producing is not relevant to pressing problems’” (*María Nieves Tapia, director of the Latin American Center for Service-Learning, in Hoyt, 2014*).

There is a long and noteworthy tradition of public intellectualism in Latin America dating back to the 19th and 20th centuries. As part of a democratizing trend, the philosopher-like notion of *letrados* or “men of letters” of the previous centuries gave way to a

model of public intellectuals in which the *intelectual de transición* or intellectual of transition contributed to the renovation of public universities, transformation of urban centers, and secularization of culture (Granados, 2015; Monsiváis, 2007). The tradition of public intellectuals has continued into the 21st century with writers such as Mario Vargas Llosa, who ran for the presidency of Peru and won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2010. Public intellectuals in Latin America have been on all sides of political and social issues, representing a wide range of ideas and stances (Monsiváis, 2007; Prado, 2012). It is commonplace in Latin America for leading scholars from a variety of disciplines, including economics, education, law, medicine, policy, political science, public administration, and others, to write weekly columns in national newspapers or newsmagazines to bring their scholarly expertise to a forum and format targeted at the general readership audience.

Among advocates for engaged universities it is possible to identify differences in terms of both the rationales that justify engagement and the means used to accomplish it. A market-oriented approach to university engagement with an economic focus is coupled with “regional development,” whereas a perspective inspired in social justice commitment could be paired with the set of strategies called “engaged pedagogies.” A third model labeled university social responsibility (*responsabilidad social universitaria*, or RSU for its initials in Spanish) brings together elements of the two other models with a quintessentially Latin American concept of solidarity. RSU would likely strive to achieve both the economic and social aims concurrently. An overview of key distinguishing characteristics of the three models and their application in Latin America is presented in Table 1, and then each is discussed in turn. The order in which the three models are presented reflects a movement from most universal (i.e., U.S.-centric) to most uniquely Latin American models.

The market-oriented model is based on free-market capitalism and has been adopted in some Latin American countries as part of broader pressures for neoliberal reforms. The social justice model has elements that originated in Latin America and retain relevance there, but have also been exported to other parts of the world, including the United States. The university social responsibility model, particularly as it has been applied through networks of universities, represents a distinctly Latin American contribution to our understanding of engaged universities in that it offers a different model in both its objectives and its implementation.

Table 1. Three Models of University Engagement in Latin America

| | Market-Oriented | Social Justice | University Social Responsibility (RSU) |
|--|--|--|---|
| Philosophical roots | Free-market capitalism | Social justice, activism, solidarity | Sustainability, ethical model management |
| Core values | Economic development, entrepreneurship, innovation | Increased social equity, giving voice to the disenfranchised, promoting participation as equals | Solidarity; sustainable development; ethics; balance of social, economic, and environmental interests |
| Key partners | Private sector businesses | Students, community members | Private sector businesses, students; university and community members |
| Forms of engagement | Patented research innovations, entrepreneurial activities, copyrighted teaching materials, business incubators, technology parks, innovation bridges | Pedagogy of the oppressed, community-based research (CBR), participatory action research (PAR) | Research, teaching, extension, and managerial organization linked to social change, environmentally friendly policies, and socially responsible economic growth |
| University roles | Scholars and teachers as experts who produce products and services for sale; student volunteers, alumni as employees and entrepreneurs | Teachers and scholars facilitating empowerment and activism among students and community members | The entire institution—scholars, teachers, students, and administrators—engaged in promoting solidarity and sustainable social and economic practices |
| Indicators of successful engagement | Student competencies for the workplace, regional economic growth | Empowerment of students and community members, social change | Collaborative efforts to address recognized social problems in the country or region, organizational climate and culture |
| Path to/from Latin America | Model adapted from Global North (U.S.) to Global South (Latin America) | Ideas from Latin American scholars and activists adapted to U.S. contexts | Roots in Latin America, not yet evident in the Global North |
| Implementation mechanisms | Neoliberal pressures from international lending organizations, accreditation standards | University-level or individual faculty-level commitment to social justice | Networks of universities within a country or across the region |

A Market-Oriented Model of University Engagement

A market-oriented approach to university engagement emphasizes the potential economic and development advantages derived from university collaborations with private partners. This model is by no means unique to Latin America. In Australia, for example, the policy debate on the third mission focuses on an opportunity for finding a third stream of funding (*Garlick & Langworthy, 2008*). The common denominator across the literature aiming to encourage university–community partnerships for regional development is a demand for more sustainable and closer relationships between universities and their regional partners by encouraging coordination and colearning, or by creating innovation bridges or other similar formulas (*Benneworth & Sanderson, 2009; Drabenstott, 2008; Goddard & Puukka, 2008; McGuinness, 2008*). The assumption is that universities could help in knowledge creation and economic innovation through faculty research. Technology parks, business incubators, and similar strategies are always present in these initiatives for regional development, as are demands for more appropriate structures of higher education institutions intended to facilitate the creation and maintenance of partnerships (*McGuinness, 2008*).

The underlying premise of the market-oriented model is that universities and the business community would realize economic benefits through collaboration and that these benefits would indirectly benefit the broader community. This approach can be seen in the policies and practices of many Latin American countries and universities. Under this approach, the third mission of the university involves “knowledge transfer narrowly defined as licensing and commercialization of research” (*Thorn & Soo, 2006, p. 3*). This frames the role of the university as contributing to in-country innovation systems. That is, universities under this approach frame their role as not only producing knowledge but also commercializing knowledge to be usable in the marketplace. Evidence shows that this role of the university is well developed in countries that make up the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and is promoted by multinational institutions for low- and middle-income countries (*Thorn & Soo, 2006*). However, this framework can be problematic in that

university researchers generally engage in long-term research projects and are expected to push the knowledge frontier forward by making results publicly available. Firms, on the other hand, tend to focus on short-term, specific research activities

and have an interest in concealing new knowledge from potential competitors. (*Thorn & Soo, 2006, p. 6*)

Additionally, some observe that university research is not aligned with regional needs, that often the impact is limited to surrounding areas, that universities and regional development officials should work together to better identify competitive advantages, and that regions should be viewed as innovation markets (*Drabenstott, 2008*).

Market-based models of university engagement promote policies that enhance the university's profile and its contribution to industry as an indicator of academic quality and thereby directly address a weakness within higher education in low- and middle-income countries, including those in Latin America (*Aedo & Walker, 2012*). In order to contribute to economic and technological development, advocates suggest that there is a need for institutional instruments to incentivize universities to contribute to innovation systems through competitive government funding; through accreditation, monitoring, and evaluation; and through the widespread application of competency-based learning models (*Thorn & Soo, 2006*).

Community outreach and engagement within a market-oriented model can help make the university a contributor to both economic and social development in low- and middle-income countries in Latin America, but it also risks positioning higher education as a commodity (*Ostrander, 2004*) and promoting a dangerous form of academic capitalism (*Slaughter & Leslie, 2001; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004a, 2004b*). The pressures toward academic capitalism, in which colleges and universities engage in "market and market-like behaviors" (*Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004b, p. 37*), stem from significant losses in public funding that drive universities

to generate revenue from their core educational, research and service functions, ranging from the production of knowledge (such as research leading to patents) created by the faculty to the faculty's curriculum and instruction (teaching materials that can be copyrighted and marketed). (*Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004b, p. 37*)

Academic capitalism prioritizes short-term economic gains while fundamentally shifting or even disregarding the other functions of higher education institutions.

Scholars have argued that academic capitalism is intertwined with neoliberalism (*Brackmann, 2015*) and even neoconservatism (*Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004b*), as it prioritizes revenue generation over core educational activities. These objectives have seeped into the

language of the university with references to university presidents as CEOs and the popularization of the term *educational entrepreneurialism* to represent academic departments and other university units tapping into new markets for revenue (Kauppinen, 2012).

A Social Justice Model of University Engagement

The social justice model of university engagement stands in sharp contrast to the market-oriented approach. Advancing the third mission of the university in a manner inspired by social justice has a long and rich history in Latin America. This model relies on community partnerships oriented toward social transformation, democratization, community empowerment, and advocacy (Reid, 2013). Given the history and context of countries from the Global South in terms of poverty and deep social inequities, practices of engaged universities in the South have had a tone of political and social activism, as well as an option for the poor to be at the center of what universities do in these countries (Reid, 2013).

To promote social justice, scholars in the Global South and particularly in Latin America have adopted an array of engaged pedagogies such as community-based research and service-learning, which allow students and scholars to appropriately work with communities (Pendas & Dierwechter, 2012). Community-based research (CBR) is “collaborative, change-oriented research that engages faculty members, students and community members in projects that address a community-identified need” (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003, p. 5). It reduces the separation between the researcher and community stakeholders by enabling them to engage in coinquiry and as coresearchers (Munck, 2014, p. 11). CBR not only has the potential to contribute to the production of knowledge but also is intended to benefit communities (Schaffer, 2012). Service-learning (SL) is recognized in the United States context as contributing to the goals of an engaged university by integrating service in community to academic learning (D’Agostino, 2008). SL represents an engaged pedagogy that is instrumental not only in bridging theory and practice, but also in instilling in students a sense of social activism (Levkoe, Brail, & Daniere, 2014).

In addition to the engaged modes of research and teaching from elsewhere adopted by Latin American universities, such as CBR and SL, Latin America has also made its own seminal and unique contributions to the repertoire of strategies for engaged teaching, learning, and research in which the roles of all parties are redefined. Among the most notable strategies for university

engagement in the pursuit of social justice developed in Latin America are Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed and Fals Borda's participatory action research.

Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, published in Portuguese in 1968 and English in 1970, is instrumental in demystifying relationships in the classroom by questioning traditional education strategies that reinforce the status quo and exclusion. These traditional views consider students ignorant and passive while assigning professors the duty of enlightening them. Freire was particularly critical of this traditional approach to teaching, which portrayed the students as empty vessels to be filled with the knowledge imparted by the wise professor. In his model, the agency of students is revalued and elevated. His critical pedagogy applies learning that is active rather than passive and a language of critique rather than silence and acceptance. Freire thus acknowledges the leading role of students in their own education and recognizes students' capacity for agency that perfectly fits with the idea of critical service-learning or community engagement in social transformation (Bryer, 2014; Peterson, 2009).

The core of Freire's argument is that education is not and cannot be a neutral force; it either contributes to change or maintains conformity. His work is grounded in categorization of individuals into oppressors and oppressed, paralleling Hegelian and Marxist notions. According to Freire, the role of education should be to provide a means for the oppressed to challenge their oppression, first through a regained sense of their humanity and then through tools of liberation. In this way, education is a political act in which the approach to educating—the pedagogy—is an integral part of the process. He challenges teachers and students to question the political ideas they bring to the classroom and to take responsibility for questioning and changing the balance of power.

As Freire united engagement and teaching to advance social justice, a similar integration of engagement and research is provided by Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda. In the 1970s and 1980s, Fals Borda's work focused on developing participatory action research (PAR) as a new methodology designed to combine research and theory with political participation. PAR is intended to generate solutions for economic, political, and social problems through a process of articulation and systematization of knowledge by grassroots groups so that they can carry out their own work without having to rely on academic experts (Fals Borda, 1991).

During the 1990s, Fals Borda continued to investigate the role of people in the research process and the importance of having research address issues of social justice. According to Fals Borda, researchers who engage in PAR are not simply utilizing a participatory method; they are joining a movement. Fals Borda's research guides sociologists interested in participatory approaches to grassroots communities, considering them a key component of the process as partners and coresearchers. Furthermore, he encouraged the use of counternarratives with communities to rebuild the history imposed by dominant groups.

Principles of PAR have been adopted and expanded by subsequent scholars, who have highlighted the importance of bidirectional relations (Bahng, 2015) and contributions from and benefits to all parties (Peterson, 2009) to avoid further marginalizing communities and perpetuating power asymmetries between academia and communities (Strier & Shechter, 2015). Working from the assumption that universities should value communities as much as students and scholars, these authors recommend working toward democratization of knowledge production through community participation in every step of the research process.

In the case of scholarship, PAR serves as a foundation for Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990) which encompasses a scholarship of discovery, scholarship of integration, scholarship of application, and scholarship of teaching; in Boyer's scheme, the role of service is revalued within universities to address social questions (Bahng, 2015; Koliba, 2007). Koliba (2007) cautions that revaluing service activities implies reviewing promotion, tenure, and other faculty policies within universities to actually facilitate the engagement of scholars in service-learning and other PAR or service-related activities. Many acknowledge these concerns as an area of continued struggle, but few universities in either the United States or Latin America have made such fundamental changes.

The interconnectedness of the teaching and research functions of an engaged university within a social justice model is evident. Only by recognizing students' capacity for agency is it possible to expect that they can engage in PAR. And only by promoting long-term and equally balanced university–community relationships can real transformations occur (Bahng, 2015; Rai, 2003). Within this model there is a role not only for the students and scholars but for the university as an institution; institutional support for and facilitation of such endeavors reflects a university commitment to engagement (Pendas & Dierwechter, 2012). A challenge for the social justice model is that it is often portrayed as antigrowth or

in conflict with the market-oriented model. Universities thus find themselves having to choose between the two models in developing an engagement strategy.

A University Social Responsibility Approach to University Engagement

A final model reviewed here applies a managerial and organizational perspective and encompasses both of the aforementioned approaches under the label university social responsibility or *responsabilidad social universitaria* (RSU). There has been limited academic scholarship written in English about this model of university engagement, which is gaining a foothold across Latin America.

Most research on RSU, including the works of Bustos and Inciarte (2012); Gaete Quezada (2014, 2015); Núñez et al. (2012); and Núñez Chicharro, Alonso Carrillo, and Pontones Rosa (2015), refers back to a framework for RSU presented by Vallaeys (2006). Vallaeys presents RSU as an ethical model of management designed to guide four dimensions of the university: (1) intraorganizational performance and behavior, (2) the influence of education processes on students' capacity to understand and act in the world, (3) production of knowledge and epistemology, and (4) the social impact on sustainable human development. As a model, RSU extends beyond traditional voluntarism, service-learning, and other community outreach practices to attain a more comprehensive and strategic management level of university engagement (Vallaeys, 2004, 2006).

RSU strives to bring together the strengths of the market and social justice models. It retains a strong component from the market-oriented perspective in terms of prioritizing university relevance in the economy, while also asserting that students and community members should participate as equals within the academic institution to promote social change and research in ways that are reminiscent of Freire and Fals Borda. RSU adds an element of environmental stewardship as an essential organizational practice. RSU recognizes the importance of implementing engaged pedagogies that prepare students to take an active role in democratic processes. At the same time, the model calls on researchers to make contributions in addressing critical social problems related to poverty, corruption, inequity, and environmental degradation.

Because RSU offers an alternative to models traditionally referenced in the academic literature and university practice in the United States, research on the implementation and practices of

community outreach and engagement in Latin American universities through the framework of RSU has the potential to contribute to new understandings of the engaged university. Indeed, the English-language literature has minimal reference to the university social responsibility model; the most similar example appears in Keyman (2014), in which three principles of genuine social responsibility—equal rights, capability, and mutual responsibility—are identified for the UK context. We therefore provide an opportunity to learn from Latin America's experiences with the implementation of RSU. In the following section we present two illustrative case studies of the RSU model in Latin America through networks of universities on a regional and a national scale.

University Social Responsibility in Latin America: Two Illustrative Cases

There is no shortage of case studies within the literature on university engagement. Most cases focus on the policies, practices, and experiences within a single university. In recent years, the subjects have included the Pennsylvania State University (Franz, 2009), University of Georgia (Garber, Epps, Bishop, & Chapman, 2010), University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill (Blanchard, Strauss, & Webb, 2012), Ohio University (Hamel-Lambert, Millesen, Harter, & Slovak, 2012), and University of North Carolina–Charlotte (Morrell, Sorensen, & Howarth, 2015) in the United States, and University of Brighton (Hart & Northmore, 2011) in the United Kingdom, among others. Our approach to case studies uses a different level of analysis, namely networks of universities.

Networks of universities are established within many contexts and to serve many purposes. They may be organized by geographic region, like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations University Network (ASEAN-UN or simply AUN) or the state university systems in New York (State University of New York or SUNY). They may bring together institutions that share common characteristics: for example, the network of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States or the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU), which spans the United States and Canada. They may also be dedicated to particular issues; for example, the Utrecht Network promotes best practices in internationalization among universities across Europe. Networks of universities may also emphasize community engagement; one example is the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA) referenced earlier. Our focus is on networks of universities specifically dedicated to promoting RSU.

The RSU framework has been well received in universities in Latin America and is being tried in and monitored by several entities within their broader scope of activities. For example, the Association of Colombian Higher Education Institutions has created an observatory of RSU, and a group of higher education institutions providing distance education created an inter-American observatory for RSU as well (Observatorio de Responsabilidad Social de las Universidades a Distancia, or OIRSUD, for its initials in Spanish). Two networks have been developed explicitly for the purpose of advancing the RSU engagement model, and they serve as our case studies. The first case is based on a network of 13 Chilean universities engaged in a process labeled *Universidad Construye País* (Gaete Quezada, 2014), which began in 2001. The second case represents an even more ambitious regional network of Jesuit universities from across the region that launched an initiative in 2007 to advance *Responsabilidad Social Universitaria* (Gragantini & Zaffaroni, 2011). These two cases not only represent well-established university networks with an explicit emphasis on RSU, to the best of our knowledge they also represent the population of RSU networks in Latin America and possibly in the world.

The Case of RSU in Chile's Universidad Construye País

The first illustrative case of the use of the RSU framework in Latin America is Chile's Universidad Construye País, which translates as "University Building a Nation." In this instance, a group of Chilean universities participated in a project intended to promote and advance RSU during the period 2001–2008, which has been recognized as an important precedent for engaged universities in that Latin American country.

Universidad Construye País (UCP) was an initiative of Corporation PARTICIPA in partnership with the AVINA group to advance the concept and practice of university social responsibility in Chilean higher education institutions (*Proyecto Universidad Construye País*, 2006). Initially it was expected to last for 3 years (Jiménez de la Jara, 2002a), but it continued for a period of 7 years. The project not only aimed to reflect, discuss, frame, and disseminate a common idea of RSU across the network of universities, but also was intended to articulate a countrywide project in which universities played a central role.

Originally seven universities were expected to participate in the project, but this number quickly grew; in 2001 the program was

initiated with 11 participants, and the next year a total of 13 universities were involved (*Jiménez de la Jara, De Ferrari, Delpiano, & Ardiles, 2004*). Some sources suggest that this initiative was finally able to engage as many as 16 Chilean universities (*AUSJAL-Red RSU, 2014*).

As a form of RSU, the Chilean program urged students and scholars to reflect on Chile's social problems and on the role of universities in overcoming those problems. The underlying philosophy is that universities, at their roots, should dedicate knowledge production and dissemination to solve pressing social problems (*Jiménez de la Jara, 2002a*). The group of universities who formed the network agreed to assume individual and collective social responsibility to address the country's current problems and toward the need for creating opportunities for everyone, thereby redefining the role of the university. The first years of this initiative were devoted to reflecting on and building a concept of RSU aligned with the views and realities of the university participants, as well as to promoting its importance. The UCP initiative conceptualizes RSU as being grounded in a series of general principles that inform specific university principles and are applied throughout the four critical processes of a university; the principles and processes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Dimensions of RSU in the Chilean Network Universidad Construye País

| General Principles | Specific University Principles | University Processes |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social responsibility • Individual dignity • Freedom • Citizenship, democracy, and participation • Solidarity and fraternity • Social equity • Environmental protection • Sustainable development • Diversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to the truth • Integrity • Excellence • Interdependence • Interdisciplinarity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management • Teaching • Research • Extension |

Sources: *Jiménez de la Jara, 2002; Jiménez de la Jara, et al., 2004*

Once this general model was in place, the project dedicated considerable time and attention to promoting the importance of incorporating RSU practices into the university curriculum. In 2003 they organized a conference held at the University of Concepción titled "Educating for Social Responsibility: The University Function of Teaching" (*Proyecto Universidad Construye País, 2003*). The goal was to develop students' social consciousness by transforming classrooms from places of individualistic and competitive behaviors to com-

munities of togetherness, solidarity, and common purpose (*Jiménez de la Jara, 2002*) Universities in this model are encouraged to incorporate reflexivity around social concerns and responsibility, as well as provide opportunities for students to have concrete experiences in the community, to help others, to experience group problem-solving, and to explore the real world.

The project also developed an instrument to evaluate the extent to which RSU is implemented and, as of 2004, five universities had used it. The instrument was a survey designed to assess the incorporation of the principles presented in Table 2 into the four basic university functions. Results of the survey were reported to each university, and later the survey instrument was improved to establish a different version for each stakeholder group within the university: students, academics, and administrative staff (*Jiménez de la Jara et al., 2004*). After the period of promotion provided by UCP, RSU was relatively institutionalized among the project members. The universities making up UCP have implemented diverse specific initiatives in their own organizations. Therefore, they determined that the project could move forward to engage the entire Chilean system of universities, to foster international dialogue around the topic, and to influence public policies on higher education.

The experience of Universidad Construye País is frequently referenced as an interesting endeavor pursuing RSU (*AUSJAL-Red RSU, 2014; Gaete Quezada, 2014; Proyecto Fondecyt, 2013*). Furthermore, several universities in Chile continue implementing practices of RSU (*Proyecto Fondecyt, 2013*), and numerous scholars are studying different aspects of RSU in Chilean universities, such as students' social responsibility attitudes (*Navarro et al., 2012*) and RSU among Chilean private universities (*Ganga Contreras & Navarrete Andrade, 2012*). Chile's UCP network reflects the use of the RSU framework in its focus on the idea that such practices should be incorporated in the four aspects of university functions: teaching, research, extension, and management. In that sense, RSU can be understood as a management model that extends engagement beyond the third mission—extension—and distributes it throughout the entire university.

The Case of RSU in Latin America's Regional Network of Jesuit Universities

The second case we examine extends the RSU framework through a regionwide network via the Association of Universities Entrusted to the Societatus Iesu or the Society of Jesuits in the

region (Asociación de Universidades confiadas a la Compañía de Jesús en América Latina, or AUSJAL for its initials in Spanish). Ever since AUSJAL was created in 1985 in Rome, the association has been invested in reflecting on the role of higher education institutions, in particular Jesuit higher education institutions, as a function of the context in which they are immersed and the religious character of their community. This endeavor has been undertaken by every executive secretary since the establishment of the association through the present even as the seat of the association has shifted from Colombia to Guatemala to Venezuela, and is reflected in several institutional documents (*e.g.*, AUSJAL, 1995, 2001).

The religious tenets of Jesuit universities stamp them with a particular character and orientation toward social responsibility in the organizations and initiatives they manage. This orientation not only helps explain the commitment to advance an engaged university but also seems to facilitate the adoption of the framework. To promote this work, AUSJAL has created a subnetwork of universities specifically dedicated to RSU, referred to as AUSJAL–Red RSU (the term *Red* translates as Network). As the association has grown, the RSU network has also increased its membership. AUSJAL had 25 members at the beginning of the 1990s (AUSJAL, 1995) and had 30 members as of 2016. A similar trend has been experienced by AUSJAL–Red RSU, which began with 19 universities in 2007 and included 26 universities as of 2016. Furthermore, this network has played an active role in promoting and advancing the RSU framework among its members by designing a project aimed at RSU institutional strengthening. Based on the effectiveness of the network’s work, AUSJAL has committed itself to maintain and advance the path of RSU.

Those familiar with the Jesuits’ commitment to helping the poor and disenfranchised, and promoting social justice for all individuals, might expect them to use the social justice engagement model and wonder why an alternative RSU framework is necessary. In this context, RSU represents a commitment to social justice within a broader institutional (*i.e.*, conservative) framework and working with rather than against other established social institutions. It also moves beyond teaching and research to encompass the managerial and organizational aspects of university life. The work of the RSU Network began with an assessment of the Latin American context to better understand the challenges of the region and thereby better design a strategy to contribute in the transformation of that reality. In its assessment AUSJAL (1995) identifies the key characteristics of Latin America as entrenched poverty and exclusion, instability in

terms of economic development, transitioning from dictatorships toward democratic regimes, external pressures to adopt neoliberal policies, and the rise of a civil society sector with an important role in coping with the challenges of the development. AUSJAL (1995) concludes that what is necessary is “a radical increase of the human capacity of production and organization in our societies, oriented and animated by new principles of solidarity capable of better possibilities of producing internal wellness and of realistic negotiating at the international level” (p. 18).

Within this context, the university, particularly the Jesuit university, plays a critical role in educating a new group of socially conscious and productive people. Therefore, AUSJAL (1995) claims that “research around a country’s specific problems, the application of adapted solutions, internships in companies, and working in neglected areas, are a few aspects shaping realism and national and social content to university degrees” (p. 27). Jesuit universities have a responsibility to provide an integral and comprehensive education in the context of poverty and exclusion, and to prepare individuals capable of producing real transformations. University engagement within the framework of AUSJAL–Red RSU demands that universities not only examine their programs and curricula, and create courses around ethics and history, but also encourage concrete and practical experiences of solidarity on the part of university leaders, faculty, and students (AUSJAL, 1995).

AUSJAL–Red RSU also prioritizes solidarity as a core value, and a transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to teaching and research. The network builds on participatory action research associated with the social justice model in its call for transdisciplinary action research on economic, social, and cultural causes of poverty, as well as on the comprehensive policies to overcome it (AUSJAL, 2001). The strategic plan for the network recommends agreements between universities and schools and other social projects of the Jesuit Society, specifically with popular education projects such as *Fe y Alegría* (Faith and Joy), as a way to materialize the purpose of providing experiences in the principles of solidarity.

In order to promote RSU, the network engages in several activities, including publishing a newsletter to share information on RSU practices, hosting conferences, and, perhaps most significantly, facilitating agreement around a standard set of policies and a system of self-assessment and management of the RSU in AUSJAL universities. A first draft of these policies and this system was shared in 2009, a voluntary self-assessment exercise was conducted by 14 universities in 2011, and based on this experience the

system was revised and polished in 2014 (*AUSJAL–Red RSU, 2009, 2011, 2014*). The group of policies and the system of self-assessment and management rely on Vallaey's (2006) framework (*AUSJAL–Red RSU, 2014*) and propose policies in five dimensions. Table 3 lists the five dimensions and the corresponding 23 variables that serve as the basis for evaluating RSU efforts, based on a more detailed list of 52 institutional and 29 perception indicators.

Table 3. Dimensions and Criteria to Evaluate University Social Responsibility in the AUSJAL–Red RSU Network

| Dimension | Criteria |
|---|--|
| 1. Educational impact | 1. RSU integrated to the curriculum 2. Experiential contact 3. Reflexivity and critical analysis 4. Graduates' profiles |
| 2. Cognitive and epistemological impact | 5. Setting the research agenda 6. Methodologies meeting ethical principles 7. Knowledge interaction 8. Socialization 9. Incidence of research in policies and organizations |
| 3. Social Impact | 10. Planning and budgeting extension projects 11. Scope of programs and projects 12. Articulation with other actors 13. Disciplinary articulation 14. Generated learning |
| 4. Organizational impact | 15. Organizational climate 16. Development of human talent 17. Relationships with suppliers 18. Inclusion 19. Responsible communication 20. Participation 21. Transparency culture and continued improvement |
| 5. Environmental impact | 22. Environmental resources management 23. Environmental culture and education |

Source: *AUSJAL–Red RSU, 2011*

In its strategic planning document covering the period 2011–2017, the RSU network demonstrated that this group of universities remains committed to advancing this comprehensive approach of university engagement and the role of the Jesuit universities as active agents of social change (*AUSJAL, 2011*). The group also continues to (1) develop policies and evaluation systems of RSU, (2) develop methods of strengthening the institutional commitment to RSU in all aspects of university organization and management,

and (3) pay more explicit attention to management of environmentally friendly practices and education (*AUSJAL-Red RSU, 2011*). The model of RSU within AUSJAL is still under development and growth.

Reflection and a Proposed Research Agenda

Each of the three models of university engagement discussed in this article is present in Latin America, but one in particular stands out as deserving of further attention. The market-oriented model is familiar to North American readers because it was largely developed in the United States and exported to Latin America as part of broader neoliberal policy pressures. The social justice model, although having its roots in Latin America, is also reflected in the pedagogical and research practices of a small but dedicated group of faculty in the United States. As developed and applied in Latin America, the university social responsibility (RSU) model of university engagement brings together elements of the market-oriented and social justice approaches, with expanded scope to address all aspects of university management. Instead of positioning economic development and social equity as competing goals as the market-oriented and social justice models suggest, RSU pursues these goals simultaneously. Greater attention is focused on promoting sustainability by balancing economic, social, and environmental considerations. The model described in this article and illustrated through the case studies of Chilean and Jesuit university networks provides an alternative model worthy of additional study. The two case studies demonstrate (a) the power of a network approach to promoting engagement and (b) the potential for the RSU model to be adapted to the needs of a particular country or type of university. The application of RSU methods can be the basis for both identifying the key social problems that universities have a social responsibility to address and determining specific strategies of engagement.

We propose that our exploratory and reflective examination of university engagement in Latin America provides the foundation for a rich research agenda. As a starting point for future research, in Table 4 we identify four broad areas of inquiry and two corresponding research questions for each. By no means constituting an exhaustive list of potential questions, the list is intended to serve as the basis for a systematic examination of the RSU model of university engagement and its potential for application outside Latin America.

Table 4. Proposed Areas of Inquiry and Research Questions for an RSU Research Agenda

| Area of Inquiry | Research Questions |
|---|--|
| Scope, reach, and form of university social responsibility | Is university social responsibility unique to Latin America? Might other regions have similar orientations? Are there other orientations substantially different in other regions? |
| | Does the model of university social responsibility look different when adopted by individual institutions as opposed to networks? |
| Motivating factors for university social responsibility | What motivates universities to take on this approach? Is it top down; is it diffusion from peer institutions? Is it circumstantial or strategic? |
| | Does being a religious, public, or private university have a relationship with using a university social responsibility approach? |
| Internal manifestations of university social responsibility | Is university social responsibility conducive to all disciplines or might there be some that are more likely to fit better? |
| | How does the university social responsibility approach influence pedagogy at the department and course level? |
| External reactions to university social responsibility | How are external stakeholders of the universities involved in university policy formulation and implementation of the university social responsibility approach? |
| | How do different stakeholders in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors view the university social responsibility approach relative to the alternatives? |

A more overarching question not listed in the table but also deserving of attention is whether an RSU model can mainstream discussions of engagement within the conventional research and teaching missions of the university, thereby transcending compartmentalization as the third mission of universities. That is, we may now ask, is it still appropriate to speak of engagement as a “third mission” when the model of engagement (e.g., RSU) encompasses teaching, research, outreach/engagement, and management? Along with the more focused research questions in Table 4, we call on scholars and university administrators to engage in reflection and dialogue about this broader question.

Conclusion

The increasing attention to engagement as the so-called third mission of universities coincides temporally with increased globalization and internationalization of universities as well. In that spirit, it is fitting that the scholarly dialogue on university engagement not be limited to materials published in English or models utilized in countries of the Global North. A goal of this article was to illustrate the value of examining the models of university engagement in Latin America and to reflect on how the preliminary lessons learned from our review of the scholarly literature and reports from the region, largely available only in Spanish, suggest the need for a more comprehensive research agenda that offers promising alternative models of the engaged university.

The university social responsibility model examined in this article has the potential to bridge the divide between the earlier models of engagement. By defining the key stakeholders more broadly to include private sector businesses, as well as students and the community, and by focusing on sustainability through the balance of economic, social, and environmental interests, RSU may appeal to more universities than either the market-oriented or social justice models. If universities have been hesitant to choose a model of engagement that emphasizes their contributions to economic development, innovation, and entrepreneurship (the hallmarks of a market-oriented model of community engagement) or a model that promotes activism, social equity, and empowerment of the disenfranchised (per the social justice model), RSU may offer a good alternative.

Our goal for this article is to encourage an expansion of the dialogue about university engagement in terms of the models we apply as well as the geographic areas and sources of scholarship we rely upon. By focusing on a region of the world typically excluded from the discussion based on language and other barriers, and examining a model of engagement not previously addressed in the English-language literature, we have been able to identify a whole series of new and exciting research questions that we see as having the potential to advance the body of knowledge about engaged universities and, accordingly, the effectiveness of universities in fulfilling their engagement missions.

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