Behind the Rhetoric: Applying a Cultural Theory Lens to Community-Campus Partnership Development

Kevin Kecskes
Portland State University

The nature of engagement between American campuses and communities is contested. This article is an invitation to reconsider why community-campus partnerships often look so different and have diverse and sometimes negative outcomes. Using a cultural theory approach (Thompson, Ellis, & Wildavsky, 1990) to elucidate the four main cultural frames that inform human behavior—hierarchist, individualistic, fatalistic, and egalitarian—this treatment maps these frames onto the broad terrain of community-campus partnerships. This exploration enables service-learning and other partnership building practitioners to more clearly recognize and understand the preconceptions that influence partners' approaches. Because service-learning rhetoric is heavily biased toward egalitarian (reciprocal, mutual) relationship building, it does not necessarily ensure that all entities on and off campus understand or accept this approach. This application suggests several areas for future research as service-learning practitioners "unlearn a belief system" and work to build a new system in its place.

"There is an important role for higher education in the global society, but the exact nature of that engagement is contested. Higher education's failure and best self can be found by engaging community partners in mutually transformative work that allows us to reimagine, in ways both creative and practical, sustainable communities. Our choice of partners and our visions of what may be accomplished together create opportunities for us to become members of communities and of a world of which we would like to be part" (Enos & Morton, 2003, p. 40).

The "nature of engagement" between American campuses and communities *is* contested. The advent of service-learning pedagogies and associated relationship building practices in higher education has provided much fuel for reciprocal community-campus partnership development. However, the pace of change in higher education can be quite slow, and traditions play an important role within even the most permeable walls of the ivory tower. Thus, despite more than a decade and a half of robust rhetoric, implementation, and emerging research in support of *egalitarian* approaches to partnership development, many within (as well as outside) the academy view partnership building through alternative lenses. Despite some recent, excellent theoretical treatments of service-learning partnership development (e.g., Enos & Morton, 2003), there is a gap in the service-learning literature regarding this topic. With the hope of eventually helping to address this shortage, this article invites reexamining assumptions about partnerships to learn more about the thinking that informs practitioners' actions.

Consider this (perhaps familiar) example. Recently, a private college in Portland, Oregon purchased a large home in a nearby residential neighborhood without informing the local residents about intentions to remodel and use the home for off-campus events (Zheng, 2005). A group of local residents were concerned about the impact this might have on their quiet block. Some were quite upset and vowed to prevent the college from gaining approval. The campus' "shove-it-down-your-face" excuse-me approach is obviously rubbing us the wrong way," said resident Mike Fisher. Another resident, Craig Korstad, said the college was "coy" about this purchase and claimed he didn't find out about the new owners until he asked the renovators. A public affairs official at the college said the city approved the required work permits, yet "it's not part of the process to go back to any of the constituents and seek formal approval." It does not appear that the college was initially concerned about building an egalitarian relationship with the new neighbors. This scenario is not unique. This article invites us to reconsider why some partnerships—service-learning or otherwise—between higher education institutions and communities often look so different, and have such diverse (and sometimes negative) outcomes. To explore this partnership dynamic we will consider the preconceptions or "frames" practitioners bring to the community-campus partnership building table.

This article applies a cultural typology (Hood,

1998; Thompson, Ellis, & Wildavsky, 1990) consisting of four main "ways of life," or cultural frames, to community-campus partnership development. This heuristic effort builds on a group-grid typology first proposed by the well-known anthropologist Mary Douglas (1982). Douglas' approach suggests that social life can be assessed along two axes: group and grid. The group axis evaluates individuals' incorporation into bounded units, or "groups," and therefore reflects the extent to which individual choice is constrained by group choice. For example, an individual salesperson working freely and independently in a limited and competitive market exemplifies someone on the low end of the group axis. By contrast, a monastic community or a back-to-the-land commune would tend to be placed on the high end of the group axis; in these instances individuals are bound to a collective body, pool resources, and generally make collective decisions that supersede the particular will of an individual member.
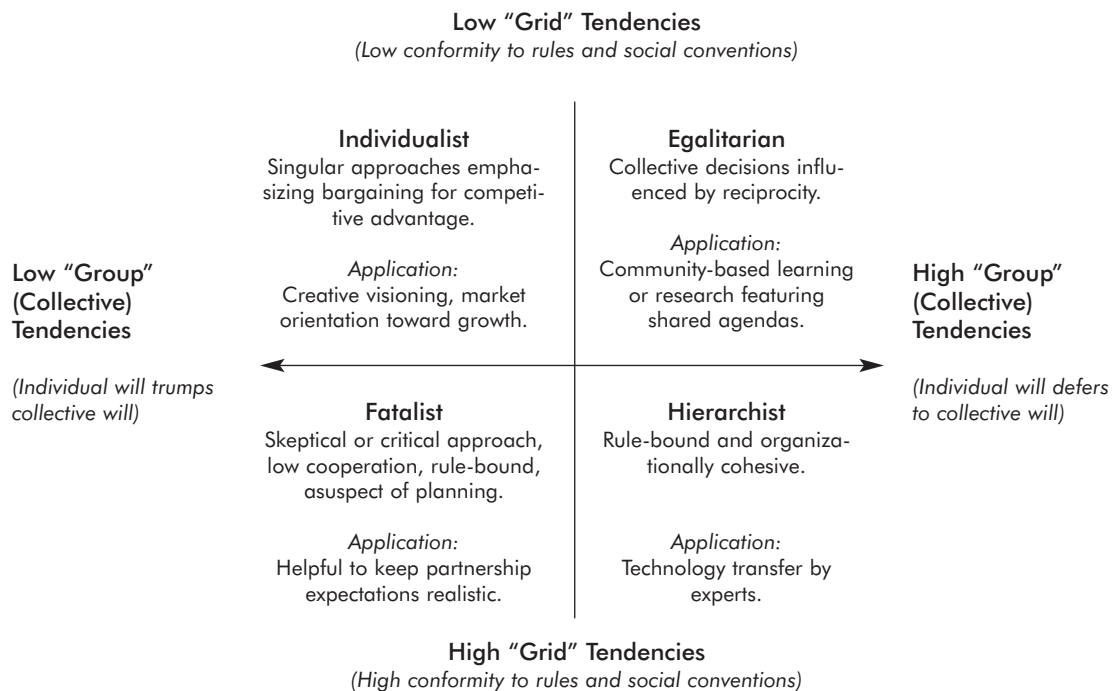
The other axis, which Douglas (1970) in her root definition called grid, "refers to rules which relate one person to others on an ego-centered basis" (p. viii). Grid assesses individuals' relations to externally imposed rules, prescriptions, or conventions, and delineates the degree to which individuals' lives are limited by those rules. For instance, if parents choose to name their child arbitrarily on "what sounds good

at the time," or after a pop star, this would represent low-grid behavior. By contrast, if parents are constrained by rules—for example, if name choice is limited by religion or culture as with the Chinese practice of considering only pre-selected names shared by all siblings in each generation—then this would represent high-grid behavior (Hood, 1998).

Thompson et al. (1990) applied Douglas' group-grid typology to outline four main cultural frames, or ways of life, that characterize human behavior: (a) individualist, (b) egalitarian, (c) fatalist, and (d) hierarchist.[1] Hood (1998) applied these four cultural frames to the public administration discipline. To build on Hood's treatment, this article maps the four ways of life onto the broad terrain of community-campus partnership building.[2]

This article discusses the types of policies, administrative processes, and/or institutional arrangements that each frame implicitly encourages participants to use, as well as advantages and disadvantages of each approach. Then briefly, it explores the "theory of surprises" (Thompson et al., 1990) to investigate what might happen when partnership building assumptions and reality do not align. A few recent, higher profile presentations concerning community-campus partnerships also are analyzed. Finally, hybrid cultural frames are considered as possible efficacious approaches to

Figure 1

Four Styles of Community-University Partnerships: An Application of Cultural Theory

Low "Grid" Tendencies
(Low conformity to rules and social conventions)

Individualist
Singular approaches emphasizing bargaining for competitive advantage.

Application:
Creative visioning, market orientation toward growth.

Egalitarian
Collective decisions influenced by reciprocity.

Application:
Community-based learning or research featuring shared agendas.

Low "Group" (Collective) Tendencies

(Individual will trumps collective will)

High "Group" (Collective) Tendencies

(Individual will defers to collective will)

Fatalist
Skeptical or critical approach, low cooperation, rule-bound, asuspect of planning.

Application:
Helpful to keep partnership expectations realistic.

Hierarchist
Rule-bound and organizationally cohesive.

Application:
Technology transfer by experts.

High "Grid" Tendencies
(High conformity to rules and social conventions)

Note. Adapted from Douglas, 1982; Hood, 1998; and Thompson, Ellis, & Wildavsky, 1990.

community-campus partnership building.

The goal of this exploration is to help service-learning and other community-campus partnership building practitioners more clearly recognize and understand the cultural frames that influence partners' conceptions so they may be better able to: (a) be aware of individual and collective propensities; (b) align their expectations with reality; and (c) positively influence outcomes by intentionally utilizing language that is familiar to one or both of the potential partners.

To help apply the most positive aspects of service-learning beyond the classroom to build more engaged departments and institutions, practitioners must continually consider a broad diversity of community-campus partnership building arrangements. Simply because service-learning rhetoric is heavily biased toward egalitarian (reciprocal, mutual) relationship building approaches does not necessarily ensure that all entities on and off campus understand or accept this approach. Moreover, as we become more familiar with the four main cultural frames, we *may* find situation-based merit in *each* approach and/or in hybrid frames.

Applying the Individualist Worldview to Community-Campus Partnerships

"We know our objectives, we have our plan, we will be happy to bring this out to the community and show them how and where we intend to move in our development strategy. If they wish to join in, all the better. We are certainly quite open to that kind of collaboration" (Personal communication with a senior campus development officer, January 2004).

To an individualist, the possibilities afforded by life in this world present boundless opportunities. As depicted in Figure 1, individualists focus primarily on their own needs or perhaps on those of a relative in the nuclear family (low group) and are characterized by few comprehensive and obligatory rules of conduct guiding behavior (low grid). Overt optimism, ambition, rational self-interest, and an overriding focus on possibilities are the mark of the individualist way of life. Individualists view nature as benign and munificent and largely supportive of individual initiative. The individualist has a very active and creative orientation toward the world, focusing efforts to transform what are considered boundless human and natural resources via technology and other personal skills and societal advancements for personal gain. An individualist approach to action involves removing constraints so as to be able to extend one's rational, entrepreneurial spirit to act freely in the world.

According to Hood (1998), "rivalry" and "competition" are the watchwords of the individualist. Individualists assume a world populated by rational egoists who are bent on outsmarting one another to acquire something desirable. This philosophy manifests in the belief in reward and incentive structures so that "duty coincides with personal self-interest" (p. 105). In this way of life orientation, there is also a reliance on the competitive contracting of services. Individualist biases in thinking can be traced to Spinoza and Montesquieu and are apparent in the works of Adam Smith, the father of modern economics. Individualist philosophies peaked in the 19th century, waned for most of the 20th century, and have undergone a new resurgence in the last two decades (Hood).

An advantage of this cultural frame is the ability to envision and enact significant accomplishments. The individualist's Achilles' heel can manifest when private self-interest is put before public or collective interest. One overt example of this is when justice or law-enforcement is turned into a private-market transaction. Finally, this frame may chronically suffer from a lack of cooperation among necessary parties, especially where parties' self-interests are not immediately evident.

Based on the individualist orientation, how might a community-campus partnership emerge? Returning to the quote from the senior development officer that began this section, there was a clear explanation of goals, objectives, and timelines concerning the large development project. However, the individual was inflexible; parameters were set as if the campus was acting as a "corporate" individual (i.e., the institution as a single actor). Of course this happens frequently, for example, when campus presidents or other institutional representatives unveil university development plans or other similar initiatives that focus first, and sometimes only, on the institution's agenda. The development officer did not appear to consider the community interests, assets, and aspirations. At best, community interests were considered as an afterthought, and only after the initiative parameters were established.

In terms of policies and other arrangements, the agenda was completely set by the campus in this instance. Therefore, most of the community-campus partnerships that will emerge in this case, if any, will be directed largely toward achieving campus objectives—they will be set on the campus timeline, at the institution's fair-market rate for goods and services delivered, and in accord with campus regulatory constraints. The nature of the partnerships will be based on rational self-interest of the parties involved. Many of these partnerships

will focus on economic transactions, largely between the campus and a set of contractors.

"The community," in this case, would be quite limited to individuals involved in economic arrangements. Few, or perhaps none, of the individuals involved in the leadership of this expansion effort may actually live in the neighborhoods where the work will take place. Undoubtedly, there are local residents and business people—not to mention city and county officials, traffic planners, law enforcement officers, students, bus drivers, etc.—for whom this may represent quite an impact. According to the individualist worldview, these concerns are subordinated to the primary objective of realizing the larger goal.

This type of institutional development partnership is common between campus finance/planning offices and local contractors. The negative ramifications of this approach will be discussed later in the section "Surprises in Partnerships." The scenario presented is simplistic; for such a large-scale plan to become manifest, city and county officials would have to be consulted to obtain construction permits, and this in turn would set in motion a variety of associated city/county offices and perhaps neighborhood associations that would be alerted to the need to make adjustments. Notwithstanding these exceptions, however, quite frequently in this type of "partnership development" local residents and small business owners are not consulted in the planning phase or given much (if any) power in the actual decision-making process. In the end, the "corporate" individualist "wins" (supported by the campus and the contractors) were made possible by the "losses" of another constituency group (local residents). If that latter group felt forced into selling its assets—either by overt take-over schemes or by eventual displacement due to neighborhood transformation or gentrification—the individualist would perceive that as a "necessary precipitate" of the overall endeavor. However, not all individualist-inspired partnership developments need to end in potentially exploitative arrangements; often, community and university entities enter into "marriages of convenience" that can have positive short-term impacts for both sides.

Applying the Egalitarian Worldview to Community-Campus Partnerships

"Creating effective, democratic, mutually beneficial, mutually respectful partnerships should be a primary, if not the primary, agenda for service-learning in the first decade of the twenty-first century" (Harkavy, 2003, p. xii).

In an egalitarian worldview, life is predicated on equal participation of all actors in all aspects of endeavors. The watchwords for egalitarians are "mutual responsibility." As depicted in Figure 1, this frame is characterized by individual will subordinated to the (generally small) group will that is mutually enforced and generated by current collective group policies (high group), and a lack of externally-enforced, institutionalized, and obligatory rules of conduct that guide behavior (low grid). The egalitarian's ontological view of nature, or the external environment, is that it is quite precarious and difficult to maintain in balance. The epistemological view is physically objective (i.e., the limited and precarious resources of the world are immutable) and socially subjective (i.e., people have choice in social actions). These beliefs lead to an active orientation toward the world based on the collective group will. Accountability is imposed and actions are judged by the collective; this is necessary to maintain a delicate balance between the group and environment. An egalitarian approach to action is often dialogue-focused, generally based on a "town meeting democracy" process model, and guided by a communal viewpoint. Egalitarians believe that decentralized self-governing units, rather than conventional large-scale structures, are the most viable forms of governance (Hood, 1998).

Egalitarian attitudes re-emerged during the 1980s in public debates over domestic and foreign policy, in part as a backlash to the overt individualism of that era. Egalitarian ideas of limiting professionalism and maximizing collective citizen participation in the production of public service are long-established. This tradition can be seen in the citizen militias of the French revolution, in the thinking originally espoused by Thomas Jefferson and other agrarian founders, and more recently in the 'Great Society' programs of the 1960s, as well as in contemporary neighborhood watch initiatives and community policing endeavors.

A communal sense of belonging and increased feelings of empowerment and control over the collective's fate are positive aspects of the egalitarian cultural framework. Group decision-making strategies increase commitment to partnership building processes, including in cases when consensus can be achieved (or not), leading to action (or inaction), depending on the situation. Primary challenges of the egalitarian framework are the potential for indefinite debate, unchecked feuding and factionalism, and collapsed organization amid mutual recriminations. An unwillingness to accept higher authority to break deadlocks can result in the degeneration of collegiality.

Harkavy's (2003) quote at the beginning of this section points toward an overarching propensity of respected leaders in the national service-learning

movement to approach service-learning, and by extension most community-campus partnerships, largely from an egalitarian-influenced position. It would be difficult to overstate the influence of the egalitarian orientation on current thinking in the service-learning literature. This definition from the emerging Carnegie elective classification project, among several others in circulation today, attests to the influence of this cultural frame in the service-learning field: "Community engagement describes the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (unpublished, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, elective classification project documents, Draft, 2005).

So, based on an egalitarian orientation, one might expect to find partnership policies, processes, and arrangements that appear (at least on the surface) to be built on mutual respect, democratic principles, reciprocity, and responsibility. Nearly all decisions affecting the partnership would be made jointly between parties, communication would be regular and ongoing, and the relationships would be marked by trust, reciprocity, shared values, and commitments.

In the early 1990s, Community-Campus Partnership for Health (CCPH), a national organization, was launched with the express purpose to build community-campus partnerships, particularly in the health fields. CCPH has successfully influenced the service-learning field as well as the broader community of professionals interested in civic engagement issues. CCPH values are largely based on egalitarian worldviews. The CCPH Board's working definition of partnership is "a close mutual cooperation between parties having common interests, responsibilities, privileges and power" (http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph/principles).

The egalitarian way of life has inherent strengths and weaknesses. Next we turn attention to fatalists to see how a chaotic view of nature might influence community-campus partnership development.

Applying the Fatalist Worldview to Community-Campus Partnerships

"The central principle on which fatalist society operates is a rejection of cooperation in any form, as something likely to have unpredictable and possibly unpleasant results" (Hood, 1998, p. 148).

A discussion of fatalist attitudes as they relate to the development of community-campus partnerships

may seem to border on the absurd. But fatalists' attitudes manifest quite regularly in the development of how, when, and why constituents from the campus either partner or do not partner with counterparts from the community.

To a fatalist, life appears chaotic and unpredictable. As depicted in Figure 1, this framework is characterized by individuals who sense a lack of control over their destiny, thus focus on themselves (or sometimes on their immediate family) because there appears to be little or no reason to interact with or trust a group (low group) and who feel quite constrained by externally-enforced, obligatory rules of conduct guiding their behavior (high grid). Because fatalists view nature (understood as the external environment) as unpredictable, they adopt a passive (and sometimes resistant) orientation toward the world in an attempt to protect what little they have by hunkering down and depending on no one, or only on the nuclear family as needed. Fatalists see the world as resource poor, feeling their ability to utilize what is available as quite limited. Fatalists buffer themselves through psychological means or by adopting cynical attitudes that can at times manifest as elitist. Motivated by the need for socioeconomic security, fatalists may exploit others as a means of personal survival. Hood (1998) suggests that Gerald Mars' (1982) well-known study on cheating at work demonstrates how

> people whose work is highly regulated in some way but who do their work in relative isolation from others (the low-group, high-grid characteristics of fatalism) often find ways of reacting against management-imposed rules by individual 'fiddles' (stealing time, money, or goods) and even sabotage. (p. 146)

Fatalist attitudes are usually portrayed as anti-organizational. However, informal manifestations of the fatalist orientation are quite commonplace in the modern workplace because managers and workers alike recognize that organizational and policy-making processes are "inescapably unpredictable and chaotic, defying any clear-cut theory" (Hood, 1998, p. 146). Fatalist attitudes can translate into group activity in ways akin to the role of the chorus in classical Greek theatre, where "the chorus relates to the drama as a periodic commentator on the decisions made by active players on the stage. Its comments underlie the inherent folly, futility, and unpredictability with which all human affairs are conducted" (Hood, p. 149). In these occasions chance or some other element of randomization can have an unexpected positive or negative effect on processes or outcomes.

While resilience can be a fatalist's strength, a built-

in weakness is an inability or unwillingness to engage in even a modicum of planning—or to take action, even in the face of extreme circumstances (Hood, 1998). How then might a fatalist orientation affect community-campus partnership development policies, processes, and arrangements?

Fatalist views influence community-campus partnership development in three main ways. First, they can assume the modern-day equivalent of the role of the classical Greek theatre chorus—the sideline commentators—and can keep those who are making partnership plans and promises in check by adding a *practical* sense of reality to the ideas and promises being discussed by the campus and community constituents. Commentaries have both positive and negative effects. Positively, fatalists can help advocates keep community-building hopes or problem-mitigation expectations more in alignment with reality. Incessant questioning of processes, plans, and outcomes may be tiresome at times but indeed can help uncover unrecognized concerns and open up new lines of thinking that enhance the project or help to diminish potential disappointments at the project end. Negatively, overly cynical sideline comments from fatalists can derail fledgling momentum that campus or community activists might generate in a community meeting or throughout project implementation.

Second, on campus, the idea of randomness might influence implementation of partnerships unconsciously in the selection process of what community organization with which to partner. In other words, the partner selected for collaboration might be (and often is) randomly selected by a very busy individual, within the course of a few moments, largely on the basis of who "comes to mind" at the moment (or who called recently). The fatalist orientation toward "chance" could also manifest as using a lottery, or other random selection process to determine which issues to address and/or with which organization to engage at any given time.

Third, randomness can be seen in the community in terms of both which specific organization, and/or which specific individuals within an organization engage with campus constituents. For example, community-campus partnerships—including perhaps powerful long-term ones—might be established largely on the basis of who shows up to a meeting at a critical time in the process. This is a common occurrence. Perhaps less likely, but also plausible, is the fact that an organized community might employ a lottery system to determine which organization or need to address next on a community or community-campus partnership agenda. Finally, a community might negatively perceive a "needs assessment" by outside experts (such as a large, national community-

based organization) that drives funding and thus may limit action agendas of local nonprofits. This negative perception can lead to a lack of engagement at the local level from the outset of a project and is akin to a fatalist's sense of lack of control over their destiny.

Fatalist views and influences are often overlooked because they are passive in nature. However, clearly their influence is noteworthy in relation to community-campus partnership development and enactment.

Applying the Hierarchist Worldview to Community-Campus Partnerships

"I believe that academic institutions have much to offer their communities….We create research institutes focused on regional development….Such activities draw upon a rich tradition of community service dating from the land-grant movement of the mid-19th century" (Freeland, 2005).

Northeastern University President Richard Freeland's comments above are indicative of hierarchical thinking, signaling technological transfer of expertise and an active orientation toward the world. Later I return to Freeland because many of his comments in this important *Chronicle of Higher Education* opinion article demonstrate various cultural frame perspectives, including hybrids. We now turn attention to the hierarchist worldview in which life is quite structured and predictable.

As depicted in Figure 1, this frame is characterized by individual will subordinated to the group will (high group) and conformity to institutionalized and obligatory rules of conduct to guide behavior (high grid). The hierarchists' ontological view of nature (or the external environment) is that it is limited and complex, yet controllable and predictable with the correct application of human expertise. Their epistemological view is highly objective—humans know what we know based on objective and exhaustive scientific study. This view of knowledge leads to an active orientation toward the world that aligns with the will of the group and is directed by experts in an effort to "tame" the limited resources for the common good. Accountability is imposed by the collective and is necessary to achieve control of outcomes. A hierarchist approach to action involves a well-defined social structure, marked by technical rationality and highly programmed behavior.

According to Hood (1998), hierarchist attitudes are long-lived and tenacious. The two millennia-old Confucian organizational traditions in Chinese society and the American military industrial complex are two examples of classical hierarchical framework. Hierarchical orientations have developed in different

countries and contexts. They are not the exclusive province of a particular political ideology. They have been espoused by revolutionary socialists such as Lenin, by liberal-democrats such as Woodrow Wilson, and by European Cameralists in the 16th to 19th Centuries. Hierarchists have "a faith in professional expertise dedicated to the collective good of society through an ethos of elite public service" (Hood, p. 97).

An advantage of this cultural frame is its ability to focus considerable technological and human resources to address a challenge. A primary disadvantage to the hierarchist framework can manifest when authority or expertise is insufficiently questioned, leading to incorrect assumptions at the foundational level of an endeavor. For example, an engineering department that is motivated to raise test scores in an underperforming elementary school seeks to enhance the learning environment by designing a plan to fix a leaky roof. If the repair plan is not sufficiently questioned at the outset, however, this initiative could unwittingly have a negative affect on parents and students—if pride in their school is diminished. For instance, what might happen if partners learn there are insufficient resources to carry out the plan, or while implementing the plan discover additional problems with the heating system, foundation, and so on? Based on the hierarchical orientation, how might a community-campus partnership emerge? What type of policies, processes, and arrangements might we expect to be present?

First, the approach to the partnership would be based on community needs and campus assets, and the application of a highly technological or analytical orientation to a defined set of problems. This orientation is common among higher education constituents, funding agencies, and community-based organizations, all looking to apply higher education-based expertise to salient problems or issues. Often it is assumed that the university houses nearly all of the "assets" (expertise) and the community hosts the "needs." Occasionally, the community agency mediates this transaction and in some cases it is able to utilize its own unique "expertise."

Next, university expertise would be applied to assess and clearly define the set of problems. A staffing structure would be established with university experts or managers given authority to command and control processes and resources (both human and financial) in favor of the anticipated outcome that mitigates a problem. Most or all policies, processes, and administrative arrangements would be determined by university-based leadership (e.g., administrator or faculty member) and carried out largely by university personnel (staff, graduate, or research assistants, other students).

The campus would be viewed as the purveyor of services; the community would be seen largely as the recipients of those services. The role of the community members would be mostly passive; they would be expected to be compliant and appreciative throughout the process, especially at the end of the effort. Most awards and gratification would be bestowed on the campus leadership, with some recognition appropriately or proportionately 'trickling down' to staff and student workers.

Community-campus partnerships that follow a hierarchist framework will be largely transactional or instrumental—designed to complete a task with no greater plan or promise. The parties engage because each has something the other finds useful. The relationship works within existing structures. No long-term change is expected, and little disruption occurs in the normal work of either organization or its players. In transactional relationships, individuals leave the transaction satisfied with the outcome and not much changed (Enos & Morton, 2003).

The hierarchist orientation toward broad community-campus partnership development is pervasive in America today. Despite the focus on reciprocity in the service-learning field and the yeoman efforts of many adherents, a hierarchical approach is still the norm for a high percentage of service-learning relationships between campus personnel and community "partners." Utilizing higher education resources to address compelling community needs is largely viewed by campus and community constituents as magnanimous. Community members are, for the most part, grateful for the service. Campus constituents are generally pleased to be able to help "the less fortunate," and provide opportunities for students to put theory into practice in community settings. The campus serves the community.

We now briefly investigate the "Theory of Surprises" (Thompson et al., 1990) to consider what a "surprise" in a partnership might look like when viewed through the lens of each frame.

Surprises in Partnerships

"Surprises happen when social action based on incorrect assumptions about nature [understood as the social environment] run up against the unsuspected vetoes that are the means by which natural constraints sooner or later make themselves felt" (Thompson et al., 1990, p. 70). In other words, when a particular set of anticipated processes and/or outcomes—based specifically on the assumptions inherent of one of the four cultural frameworks—does not happen, a "surprise" occurs. Recognizing and reflecting on a surprise can inspire practitioners to explore the biases that undergird their partnership development approach, and eventually help them modify

their assumptions or actions as needed to avoid future surprises. I now briefly look at possible surprises in building community-campus partnerships, from the four aforementioned perspectives.

For *individualists*, given their belief in the munificence of nature, power of the market, and human self-interest, a surprise might occur if plans to develop campus-community (largely economic) partnerships of convenience did not produce the intended outcomes. A surprise may occur if the development endeavor becomes problematic, such as the case discussed earlier of the campus purchase of a home in a residential neighborhood. Indeed, this kind of surprise occurs frequently in university development efforts. In addition to economic misfortune, a psychological surprise might occur if there are vociferous complaints about the process/outcome of a short-term partnership from constituents—both internal and external to the campus and the community. These could take the form, for example, of student and community activist protests, faculty disgruntlement, challenges from local government, and bad press.

For *egalitarians* that prioritize collaboration to shape partnerships, a surprise might occur when—despite the endless hours of meetings, development of shared visions, and mutually agreed upon actions—things still do not work. Perhaps consensus can only rarely be reached or remains difficult to maintain. The collective spirit (*moa commune*) remains elusive. Finally, group members may become increasingly frustrated with the amount of time necessary to take action, or worse, the group's inability to negotiate through impasses due to parties' unwillingness to accept the decisions of a higher authority.

For *fatalists*, who view nature as capricious, seeing others do consistently well (or consistently poorly) might constitute a surprise. Thus, a surprise might occur for fatalist community members if campus constituents (students, faculty, or staff) consistently set and show up for campus-community meetings over a long period of time. From the campus-staff perspective, a surprise might occur if eventually some type of a system were actually set up and maintained that could manage and track what may have once seemed like endless and random calls from potential community partners.

For *hierarchist*s, a surprise might occur if the partnership seems to be doing poorly. It may be especially surprising if others working on a similar issue seem to be doing substantially better without being as knowledgeable or careful (Thompson et al., 1990). Thus, because campus constituents would be attempting to address compelling community needs, via an expertise application or tech-

nology transfer model, it could be surprising if the positive impact was only minimal. One is reminded of Peace Corps folklore about Central America: allegedly, the Peace Corps paid peasants to dig United States-designed irrigation ditches, only to find them filled in six months later by the same local ditch diggers, once the Peace Corp worker had left the community (and the funds that supported the original activity were no longer available). Perhaps psychologically more surprising to hierarchists would be if the community appeared ungrateful or resentful for actions campus constituents might have contributed to support a project.

Final Thoughts on Cultural Frames

Followers of each cultural frame depend on the other group members to keep them in check. Members of the three active frames (hierarchists, individualists, and egalitarians) constantly struggle with each other, and especially with the passive fatalists, for new members. Moreover, proponents of two or more frames may temporarily partner with each other to achieve a short-term goal. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, very few individuals can be easily and regularly categorized into only a single frame. Indeed, most people display tendencies indicative of all four frames to varying degrees at any given time (Hood, 1998).

One Promising Hybrid for Community-Campus Partnerships

Thankfully, Thompson et al. (1990) recognized the elasticity of the four main ways of life, and Hood (1998) completed his work with an emerging typology of hybrids. One such arrangement that may be promising for community-campus partnership development is a hybrid of the hierarchist and egalitarian frames. In this "managed peer review" hybrid, associations might develop "self-policing" arrangements under codes of conduct approved or guided by a collective. Expertise (from various sources, not just the campus) would be valued and utilized for collective ends. Reciprocal relationships would be developed regularly and collective decision-making would be the preferred mode of operation. However, when necessary to maintain reasonable progress on critical projects, the rigidity of a strictly consensus-building, or other egalitarian, democratic decision-making model could be suspended in favor of previously agreed upon "fall back" decision-making mechanisms. In other words, the norm would be a consensus decision-making model; however, from the outset there could be an understanding that a time limit could be placed on the process with clear understanding that if the collective cannot agree, then pre-

appointed and approved "leaders" would make a decision for the group. To add complexity to this hybrid model, a randomness element generally associated with a fatalist perspective could be added by rotating the leader, selecting the leader by lot, etc.

Cultural Frames and Campus Actions

In a keynote address, Oregon University System Chancellor George Pernsteiner demonstrated an egalitarian bias toward community-campus partnership development, and warned the audience against hierarchist or individualist approaches. Pernsteiner (2005) remarked at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' American Democracy Project conference that

> there must be an equal partnership, not a paternalistic one. If a university acts like an institution doing things *for* the community rather than nurturing a true relationship where all parties are equals, it perpetuates the notion that colleges and universities are elitist institutions that expect others to adapt to them, or just don't care what others do at all.

Pernsteiner also points to individualist tendencies in the history of higher education and alludes to the challenges inherent to that cultural frame:

> We prided ourselves on being different and apart from the world. That ingrained belief of separateness militates against the understanding and embracing of partnership. We know we have to unlearn a belief system—and that makes the connection and the partnership more difficult and more tentative.

Now that several leaders in the field have elevated the unit of analysis to community-campus *partnerships* and invite us to focus not only on service-learning courses, but also on the larger relationships between institutions and communities (Bruckhardt, Holland, Percy, & Zimpher, 2004; Pasque, Smerek, Dwyer, Bowman, & Mallory, 2005), it is necessary to consider the many "faces" of the campus from the community perspective, and to ascertain and understand the cultural frames that inform campus actions. These complexities—including activities similar to individualist-inspired real estate developers' actions discussed earlier, historical roots, and the changing nature of community-campus partnerships in the 21st century—were recently laid bare in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* opinion article by Northeastern University President Richard M. Freeland (2005). He suggests three kinds of interactions have historically characterized universities' relationships with their surrounding communities: incidental impacts, intentional contributions (both "defensive" and "civic-minded"), and extracted benefits. Freeland characterizes incidental impacts as those "byproducts of our efforts to strengthen our institutions." For example, jobs provided, money spent to construct buildings, research dollars, etc. Thus, applying the cultural-theory lens, these actions are primarily individualist in nature. Defensive intentional impacts are those "taken to protect our institutions." The example Freeland provides is an "initiative to ameliorate urban blight around campus because such conditions adversely affect admissions." These actions demonstrate hierarchist tendencies to apply technology to address problems, as well as "corporate" individualist propensities to control the environment to maximize profit. The example given by Freeland for a civic-minded intentional impact is "a program to enhance K-12 education by housing a city high school in university facilities and enriching the school's curriculum." This action, it could be argued, is a hybrid of cultural frames including the hierarchist approach (expertise applied), egalitarian influences (mutual goals and actions improve living conditions), and individualist tendencies (improving high school education provides the university more qualified students in the future). Finally, "an extracted benefit is something the city demands of the university as a quid pro quo," such as a zoning change for the institution in exchange for a new park and an increase in student scholarships. This individualist-inspired transaction could be viewed as a marriage of convenience.

Freeland (2005) ends with a call to move beyond "corporate" individualist tendencies to create a "much-needed new paradigm for town-gown interactions, leaving behind the old obstructionist and coercive behaviors…(because) we have much to lose by maintaining the status quo." Oregon's Chancellor Pernsteiner (2005) extends Freeland's approach and envisions a global egalitarian-influenced paradigm:

> To meet society and the economy of the twenty-first century, we need global interconnectedness in ways we have not confronted before….By this I mean a construct where everyone's ultimate success is dependent on one another, and collectively a village's or a community's strength and resources are much more powerful than when a citizen acts singularly.

Conclusion

The four "ways-of-life," and the emerging hybrids that change situationally, coupled with the change theory of surprises, is a compelling framework through which to view community-campus partnership development. This application suggests several areas for future research, such as how groups and

individuals *within* the campus relate to each other: for example, the interplay between faculty, staff, administrators, and students; amid academic affairs and student affairs personnel; among natural and social sciences; or between academic units themselves. Perhaps analysis will demonstrate that certain campus cohorts (e.g., administrators) display certain cultural framework tendencies when partnering with community groups, whereas other cohorts (students or faculty, etc.) gravitate toward alternative expressions. Perhaps the tendencies displayed by various campus groups will shift depending on the type of partnering community entity (e.g., a construction contractor partnership or one with the director of the food bank or the local zoo). Additionally, it might prove illuminating to investigate how community development, leadership development, social change, or other theoretical constructs might be informed by a cultural theory approach, and how these new hybrid models might influence knowledge about community-campus partnership building efforts.

Understanding our own propensities and being able to recognize others' biases to observe reality through certain cultural frameworks can be particularly educational and helpful when entering into or negotiating a partnership. Understanding the inherent strengths and weaknesses of each cultural frame can help campus and/or community leaders determine how to most effectively approach a given public or private, personal, or professional partnership building endeavor. As the service-learning movement continues to expand and influence campus- and community-wide engagement efforts in the next decade, it will continue to be challenging to "unlearn a belief system." Understanding cultural theory can inform a new system we put into practice.

Notes

[1] Thompson et al. also outline the "hermit" as a "fifth way of life," although discussing this application is beyond this paper's scope.

[2] Note that while service-learning partnerships comprise but one type of relationship for institutions engaged or seeking engagement with communities, this article considers multiple types of community-campus partnerships. The approach is predicated on the view that "the community" observes and engages with multiple aspects of "the campus" over time, including service-learning students, sports teams, purchasing agents, researchers, fundraisers, and others.

References

Bruckhardt, M. J., Holland, B., Percy, S. L., & Zimpher, N. (2004). *Calling the question: Is higher education really ready to commit to community engagement?: A wingspread statement.* Milwaukee, WI: University of Wisconsin.

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health national Web site: (http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph/principles.html#principles)

Douglas, M.T. (1970). *Natural symbols: Explorations in cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockliff.

Douglas, M.T. (1982). Cultural bias. In Douglas (Ed.), *In the active voice* (pp. 183-254). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

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

Freeland, R. M. (2005). Point of view: Universities and cities need to rethink their relationships [Electronic version]. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *51*(36), B20.

Harkavy, I. (2003). Foreword. In B. Jacoby (Ed.), *Building partnerships for service-learning* (pp. 20-41). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hood, C. (1998). *The art of the state: Culture, rhetoric, and public management.* Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.

Mars, G. (1982). *Cheats at work.* London: Allen and Unwin.

Pasque, P. A., Smerek, R. E., Dwyer, B., Bowman, N., & Mallory, B.L., (2005). *Higher education collaboratives for community engagement and improvement.* Ann Arbor, MI: National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good.

Pernsteiner, G. (16 June 2005). Address presented at the American Democracy Project Second National Conference, Portland, Oregon. [Transcript] Retrieved October 12, 2005, from http://www.pdx.edu/media/p/e/pernspeech.pdf

Thompson, M., Ellis, R., & Wildavsky, A. (1990). *Cultural theory*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Zheng, Y. (2005, October 13). As Reed moves in, neighbors are put out. *The Oregonian*, pp. 8-9.

Author

KEVIN KECSKES is director for Community-University Partnerships in the Center for Academic Excellence at Portland State University. He has been involved in community-based work and K-12 and higher education for 25 years. His recent publications focus on faculty and institutional development for civic engagement, ethics and community-based research, and student leadership development. He recently edited *Engaging Departments: Moving Faculty Culture from Private to Public, Individual to Collective Focus for the Common Good*, to be published by Anker Publications, Inc. in 2006.