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(Re)framing International Medical Service Trips: Motivations, Paradigms of Engagement, and Global Health Equity

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Abstract

The article analyzes two fundamental questions that emerge as institutions of higher education seek to advance global health equity: What are the motivations driving these initiatives, and within which paradigms of engagement do they enter into collaboration with communities? An examination of the tensions and paradoxes of geopolitical paradigms such as humanitarianism, development, human rights, and voluntourism underscores the need for critical reflection as colleges and universities look across international borders to implement initiatives. The article explains the development of an adaptable tool designed to foment critical reflection, the Paradigms of Engagement Motivational Matrix (PEMM), and a pilot study focused on students' motivations for participating in international medical service trips. A mixed-methods approach was used, and the results reflected the complex movement among motivational categories and paradigms, as well as key implications for campuswide efforts to develop ethical solidarity for long-term collective action aimed at global health equity.

Keywords: international medical service trips, global health equity, critical reflection, motivations, paradigms of engagement

The COVID-19 pandemic created new inequalities and exacerbated existing ones at all levels, from global contexts to local settings. The pandemic made further evident the inextricable links among health disparities and economic, political, and historical factors, as well as the persistence of colonial health structures and the weakening of public-sector health systems, due in part to the implementation of neoliberal policies over the last half century. As Greene et al. (2013) suggested, "Historical consciousness of the colonial roots of global health challenges us to question the knowledge frameworks that constitute the emerging field of global health today" (p. 71). The work for global health equity requires a multidisciplinary and multisector approach, within and across national borders. Equally important, global health initiatives must recognize the inherent interconnectedness of the human and nonhuman, especially considering historical and continuing environmental destruction produced by globalized capitalism and Western processes of industrialization, modernization, and development.

Institutions of higher education can play a fundamental part in the ongoing development of the multifaceted field of global health equity to face these complex problems, working in and with communities. Possibilities exist across practically all academic units and areas on campus, given the multidisciplinary nature of this field and its biosocial approach to global health challenges, spanning from the molecular to the social (Farmer, 2013). However, colleges and universities should not seek to implement programs, projects, and initiatives that simply reflect a return to prepandemic normalcy. As Labonté (2022) stated in a reflection on global health equity and environmental sustainability in a postpandemic economy: "Should we be eager to return to

the 'normal' we left behind in early 2020? If the health of people and planet are of any concern, the answer is a resounding no" (p. 1246). Similarly, the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need for global learning that values the exchange of health equity interventions among countries in ways that are reciprocal and mutually beneficial (Parke et al., 2024).

As institutions look across international borders for research, experiential learning, and community engagement opportunities in the intersecting fields of medicine, public health, development, and other areas, two fundamental questions emerge: What are the motivations driving these initiatives, and within which paradigms of engagement do they enter into collaboration with different communities? Institutions can make positive contributions to global health equity, but they can also do harm and exacerbate existing structural violence. Accordingly, these questions require critical reflection at all levels of the institution, from the creation of university-wide international initiatives, for example, to individual students or faculty members deciding to create or participate in a program. The present article introduces an instrument that emerged out of the research team's praxis of action and reflection, the Paradigms of Engagement Motivational Matrix (PEMM), a conceptual framework designed for use across campus in deepening critical reflection from motives driving individual decisions to a broad geopolitical context at the macro level comprised of the hegemonic discourses and practices of humanitarianism, development, human rights, and voluntourism.

The article then shifts to the implementation of the PEMM in a pilot study at the micro level focused on short-term international medical service trips carried out in Ghana and Panama by an undergraduate student group affiliated with a university in the United States and in collaboration with an international nonprofit organization. For this study, a mixed-methods approach was used in which students from three different international trips, in 2019 and 2020, completed pretrip and posttrip surveys. The results reflected the complex and fluid movement among multiple self-oriented and other-oriented motivations—spanning different paradigms of engagement—and the need to involve all participants and decision makers in exploring this interface in a nuanced manner. Most importantly, the article provides an adaptable tool at the institutional level to help colleges and universities critically reflect on international outreach and engagement initiatives and develop guiding concepts and practices of ethical solidarity for long-term collective action aimed at global health equity.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

We use "paradigms of engagement" here as a broad, flexible notion applied to approaches to entering into collaboration with communities at multiple levels and scales. A paradigm can be understood as "a worldview or framework through which knowledge is filtered," and the set of assumptions, based on ontological and epistemological belief systems, that compose a given paradigm and guide our thoughts and actions are typically taken for granted, thus making the paradigm invisible (Leavy, 2017, p. 11). Accordingly, critical reflection on international engagement initiatives must examine not only the local settings but also broader hegemonic paradigms and historical legacies.

Paradigms of Engagement

Scholars trace the roots of contemporary humanitarianism to the late 18th century and identify its purposes, in general, as providing relief to persons in exceptional distress and alleviating the suffering of others (Wilson & Brown, 2009). Barnett and Weiss (2008) indicated that "specifically, many within the humanitarian sector tend to conceive the ideal humanitarian act as motivated by an altruistic desire to provide life-saving relief; to honor the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence; and to do more good than harm" (p. 11). These authors underscored that "the meaning and practices of humanitarianism have been historically fluid as the world in which it operates" (p. 10). As Wilson and Brown (2009) indicated, "the link[s] between humanism, humanitarianism and empire-building has a long pedigree" (p. 17). As one example, King Leopold II "justified his genocidal exploitation of the Congo as advancing civilization and as a humanitarian project" (Barnett & Weiss, 2008, p. 22). Presumptions of a universal human subject and predetermined grammars of human dignity that transcends imperial or national borders have long been used as a pretext for (neo)colonialism,

military intervention, and the imposition of Western worldviews. Humanitarianism is often framed as apolitical, but Fassin (2012) underscored the key role that moral sentiments have come to play in the political life of contemporary societies in general, a phenomenon the author terms "humanitarian government," which is constituted precisely within the "tension between inequality and solidarity, between a relation of domination and a relation of assistance" (p. 3).

Whereas humanitarianism began to arise in the 18th century, development is a more recent phenomenon that emerged in the mid-20th century, specifically in the context of post–World War II reconstruction in Europe, decolonization in Asia and Africa, growing nationalism in Latin America, and the geopolitical polarization of the Cold War. Escobar (1995) examined how the discourse of development came into existence during the period from 1945 to 1955 as a response to the "discovery" and problematization of mass poverty in the so-called Third World and became, over the course of four decades, a hegemonic form of representation based on "the construction of the poor and underdeveloped as universal, preconstituted subjects, based on the privilege of the representers; the exercise of power over the Third World made possible by this discursive homogenization . . .; and the colonization and domination of the natural and human ecologies and economies of the Third World" (p. 53). More recently, shifting to Lacanian psychoanalysis, Kapoor (2020) sought to uncover the unconscious of development discourse and reveal its internal traumas and contradictions manifested in blind spots and disavowals, such as adhering to a false history of poverty in the Global South that fails to acknowledge the slavery, genocide, and plunder of Asia, Africa, and Latin America linked to Western colonialism and wealth accumulation in the Global North and privileging free market economics while concealing the realities of rapacious capitalism, growing global inequalities, and the extraction of Third World resources, among others.

Human rights often intersect with humanitarianism and development, both discursively and in practice. However, Moyn (2020) argued that the convergence of humanitarianism and human rights occurred as recently as the late 20th century, and in this recent intersection, human rights have frequently been "humanitarianized," retreating from any pretensions to expand egalitarian citizenship rights and the achievement of deep structural change, and focusing instead on providing minimal provisions, often not beyond the protection of biological life itself. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) affirmed, human rights have become the hegemonic language of human dignity at an international level (p. 23), but since the 1970s, this discourse has become tightly interwoven with neoliberalism and the triumph of market fundamentalism, to the detriment of international struggles for structural change such as the New International Economic Order (NIEO), more profound decolonization efforts, and calls for the redistribution of global wealth (Getachew, 2019; Slaughter, 2018). As Whyte (2019) argued, as midcentury neoliberal thinkers viewed the rise of human rights, they "mobilised and developed the language associated with them for their own ends" (p. 5), and they "saw human rights and competitive markets as mutually constitutive" (p. 19). Whyte asserted that "the neoliberals sought to inculcate the morals of the market and pathologise those political struggles which threatened the assigned places of postcolonial societies in the international division of labour" (p. 32).

Voluntourism began to emerge in its current configuration in the late 1980s with the convergence of development volunteering and tourism. However, Sobocinska (2021) traced voluntourism to an earlier phenomenon that they denominated the "humanitarian-development complex," which arose from the 1950s to the 1970s, exemplified by the creation of three Western volunteering programs during that period: Australia's Volunteer Graduate Scheme, Britain's VSO (Volunteer Service Overseas), and the United States Peace Corps. Voluntourism quickly developed into a fast-growing segment of the tourism industry. Poverty and development are reframed within this paradigm as sites of tourist consumption, commodified for the neoliberal market, simultaneously providing income for NGOs and opportunities for individuals from the North to exercise their global citizenship, display their cosmopolitan empathy (often through social media), and acquire social capital and entrepreneurial skills to be utilized upon return home. A number of studies have examined these and other problematic issues related to this paradigm (Abreu & Ferreira, 2021; Biddle, 2021; Guttentag, 2009, 2011; Melles, 2018;

Mostafanezhad, 2014a, 2014b; Occhipinti, 2016; Vrasti, 2013; among others).

It must be emphasized here that this brief panorama is not proposed as a teleological evolution among these phenomena, nor does it negate the fact that humanitarianism can provide life-saving relief for populations in distress, self-determined development can produce vital services and positive social change in communities, mobilization around human rights can lead to more just societies, and voluntourism does not inevitably cause harmful outcomes. Rather, this overview reveals some of the problems, paradoxes, and tensions within and among these complex phenomena. In addition, it reflects the need to examine the different paradigms through the intersections of (inter)actions of nation-states within geopolitical contexts, the roles of organizations and institutions across the sectors, and how and why individuals participate in them.

Shifting to a study specifically on service-learning in higher education, Morton (1995) proposed that students tend to gravitate toward one of three different paradigms of service: charity, project development, and social change (or transformation). Morton argued that, rather than progressing from one paradigm to the next in a continuum from charity toward transformation, students typically remain in the same paradigm. However, there are both thick and thin versions of each paradigm, the former being those that are performed with integrity, "with consistency between its ideals and its practice" (Morton, 1995, p. 28). Upon analyzing this typology, Bringle et al. (2006), in turn, indicated that their findings do not "offer any convincing evidence for Morton's (1995) contention that students have a preference for only one paradigm," and they subsequently argued "that educators should design experiences that deepen the integrity of all three types of service" (p. 12). Critical reflection that leads participants to interrogate their own motivations for engagement within different paradigms and spanning multiple levels—from the micro to the macro—can strengthen the integrity of a given program and potentially contribute to what Hunt-Hendrix and Taylor (2024) described as "transformative solidarity."

Critical Reflection

The literature on community engagement, service-learning, community-based global learning, and other related areas underscores the importance of critical reflection (Hartman et al., 2018; Kiely, 2015; Mitchell, 2008; Norris et al., 2017). Following Kiely (2015), critical reflection is understood here within a critical theory tradition and involves "engaging in a learning process that examines relations of power, hegemony, ideology, trenchant historical structures, and existing institutional arrangements that marginalize and oppress" (para. 19). In this approach, Brookfield (2009) proposed that, by externalizing and investigating power dynamics and uncovering hegemonic assumptions, critical reflection analyzes "commonly held ideas and practices for the extent to which they perpetuate economic inequity, deny compassion, foster a culture of silence and prevent people from realising a sense of common connectedness" (p. 298). Understood as ideology critique, critical reflection "focuses on helping people come to an awareness of how capitalism, White Supremacy, patriarchy, ableism, heterosexism and other ideologies shape beliefs and practices that justify and maintain economic and political inequity" (p. 299). Given the difficulty of seeing naturalized paradigms constructed of unquestioned assumptions, critical reflection can play a key role for all members of the institution.

Critical reflection can lead to perspective transformation,

> the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. (Mezirow, 1990, p. 14)

In a study of an immersion program in Nicaragua, Kiely (2004) indicated that students who participate in international service-learning "that maintains an explicit social justice orientation and is intentionally designed to disrupt students' notion of reality" (p. 8) do indeed experience perspective transformation. However, as suggested in Kiely's longitudinal study, conceptual models tracing students' transformation along a developmental continuum from

charity to social change are problematic (p. 16). Multiple forms of dissonance can play a key role in perspective transformation. Hartman et al. (2018) classified the dissonance experienced by students into two categories: Whereas low-density dissonance "can be addressed through instrumental learning," such as strengthening one's language skills to improve communication, high-density dissonance involves exposure to complex situations and structural issues that "cannot be solved through individual forms of instrumental learning such as skill and knowledge development alone" (p. 102). This distinction speaks to the importance that Morton (1995) placed on both entering more deeply into the paradigm in which one works and exposure to creative dissonance among different paradigms (p. 21).

Freire's (1968/2014) notion of praxis involves both reflection and action directed at the structures of oppression to be transformed (p. 126). It is through this union of reflection and action that one acts to transform the world. Individuals' motivations for acting can reflect the paradigms in which they conceptualize the work as well as how they view their own positionality within systems of power, privilege, and oppression. The first purpose of critical reflection, according to Brookfield (2009), is to externalize and investigate power relationships, and the second purpose is to uncover hegemonic assumptions informed by dominant ideologies (p. 301). Understood as "sets of values, beliefs, myths, explanations and justifications that appear self-evidently true and morally desirable," ideologies "legitimise certain political structures and educational practices so that these come to be accepted as representing the normal order of things" (p. 299). The role that emotions and motivations play in ideologies and, subsequently, in critical reflection, should not be overlooked. Ideologies hold an appeal for people, "an appeal that is as much affective as cognitive" (Burbules & Berk, 1999, p. 60).

The present article emphasizes the development of critical reflection focused on the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of individuals' participation in relation to the dominant ideologies of different paradigms of engagement. Such critical reflection includes examining different scales and parallels of any given paradigm: for example, students who understand their international service trips in terms analogous with a charity, project, or social change paradigm need to examine humanitarianism, development, and human rights discourses and practices respectively, investigating their power relations and hegemonic assumptions. As apparent self-evident truths are uncovered, so too the problems and paradoxes within and among these complex phenomena can be examined through a critical lens. International service trips and other global health initiatives invariably reveal the incongruities between the particularities of colonization and oppression in different geographies and the pretensions of forging global solidarities that often motivate participants and decision makers. Although potential areas of overlap and convergence among paradigms of engagement can be discerned, some initiatives and projects cannot be aligned or allied. Tuck and Yang (2012) called for "an ethic of incommensurability, which recognizes what is distinct, what is sovereign for project(s) of decolonization in relation to human and civil rights based social justice projects" (p. 28). It follows that long-term collective action for global health equity must be carried out in ethical solidarity and through strategic collaborations that recognize such incommensurability. It is within this space of tension that critical reflection will ideally become, as Hartman et al. (2018) suggested, "a lifelong commitment to continuously considering the legitimacy of habits and social structures and being willing to make ongoing adjustments and realignments to create a better, more just world" (p. 80).

(Student) Motivations

The pilot study at the micro level described in this article, which was focused on international trips lasting 7–10 days, can be seen as part of a broader series of related activities within the general area of global health, often described with a wide range of terms, including global health experiential education, short-term experiences in global health, international medical electives (Arya & Evert, 2018), short-term medical missions (Roche et al., 2017; Rozier et al., 2017), medical service trips (Sykes, 2014), and medical volunteerism (McLennan, 2014), among others. In addition, it must be emphasized that these short-term health- and medical-related activities can be seen as part of a range of other overlapping phenomena, including international voluntary service (Sherraden et al., 2006), international development work (Heron, 2007), interna-

tional development volunteering (Tiessen, 2012), volunteer humanitarianism (Sandri, 2018), international service-learning (Green & Johnson, 2014; Larsen, 2017), global service-learning (Morrison, 2015), alternative breaks (Piacitelli et al., 2013; Sumka et al., 2015), international experiential learning (Tiessen & Huish, 2014), and volunteer tourism or voluntourism (Mostafanezhad, 2014a, 2014b; Sheyvens, 2011; Vrasti, 2013). These phenomena have some fundamental differences, and each one must be examined individually. However, they also share some key similarities, and the role of student motivations is central to them all.

Students participate in international service trips for a plethora of reasons, driven by both voiced and unvoiced motivations. White and Anderson (2018) observed that "our motives are often buried in our unconscious such that most of the time we only express those that are rational and socially acceptable" (p. 141). What is certain is that the "why" matters. In a study on Canadian youth participants in short-term (3–6 months) international development volunteering, Tiessen (2012) found their motivations to be "largely extrinsic in nature, reflecting the ways in which Canadians are rewarded for their participation in [these programs] in the form of academic credits, improved job opportunities or skills development" (p. 16). Tiessen identified some "key ethical issues" in the interviewees' responses, including the "self-oriented motivations, the absence of concern for structural change, the superficial emphasis on luck rather than explorations of global inequality stemming from our day-to-day actions, and a lack of motivation based on solidarity and improving the lives of others" (p. 16). Moreover, the participants for the study "did not reflect on their own positionality and privilege in relation to race, class and gendered relations of power" (p. 2).

In their study of faith-based missionary service trips to the Dominican Republic, Occhipinti (2016) found that building genuine relationships is a primary objective expressed by participants (p. 265). The missionaries distinguish themselves from tourists by conceptualizing their own short-term trips within "a narrative of giving, of service, and of spiritual growth," which is a "way of validating the mission trip as a religious experience," Occhipinti suggested, "underlining that it is not about the self but about the other" (p. 263). The volunteering experience is "woven into a narrative of personal morality" that aligns with a neoliberal "vision of social responsibility to the poor that replaces public investment with private, individual action" (p. 266). This construction of a sense of moral self through the performance of good echoes the "helping imperative," as described by Heron (2007) in their study of White Canadian women carrying out development work in Africa. Similarly, these notions reflect the new moral economy, centered on humanitarian reason, as indicated by Fassin (2012).

University students often participate in international volunteering because they perceive such experience as a basic requirement for entry to the job market or admission to professional schools. Using concepts from Freire's liberation pedagogy, Qaiser et al. (2016) described these student volunteers as the "voluntariat"—providing their unskilled labor and paying for the experience—the counterpart of the proletariat, which forms a class of workers who do not own capital and must sell their labor: "The voluntariat not only contributes to the oppression of the community in which they operate, but is simultaneously the object of oppression by liberal institutions, in this case the employment market and graduate schools" (p. e35). Students who wish to enter a health profession may view international volunteering as an opportunity to obtain evidence of "key competencies" that are required in the profession, without which they are at a disadvantage in the admissions process. This approach is evident, for example, in an online guide published by the Association of American Medical Colleges (2017), *Anatomy of an Applicant: Competency Resources and Self-Assessment Guide for Medical School Applicants*, in which "service orientation," the first of nine preprofessional competencies listed, is summarized as follows: "Demonstrates a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; demonstrates a desire to alleviate others' distress; recognizes and acts on his/her responsibilities to society—locally, nationally, and globally" (p. 7).

Similarly, once students are admitted to medical school, experiential learning in other countries continues to be highly valued. Biddle (2021) indicated that "as many as a quarter of all medical students in the United States participate in health-related programs internationally, including voluntourism" and suggested that "universities have learned that offering global

health-themed voluntourism programs is a way of boosting their profile, attracting students and faculty, and making money from organizing and brokering trips" (pp. 113–114). Similarly, "by 2009 nearly half of all dental schools were marketing volunteering abroad to their students" (p. 114). Such practices underscore some of the structural conditions that influence student motivations and the role of institutions in contributing to students' participation in voluntourism and international service.

Much of the research on motivations in volunteerism refers or alludes to the altruism–egoism debate (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Francis & Yasué, 2019; Haslebacher et al., 2019), in which selfless concern for others is opposed to the selfish concern for one's own interests and benefits. In light of a prevalence of such positive/negative binaries in the literature on voluntourism, McLennan (2014) reminded us that "there is a long history of research in the non-profit sector which highlights the nuances of complexities of volunteering" (p. 165). Indeed, there are a myriad of aspects to take into consideration in the exploration of volunteer motivations. Drawing from functionalist theory, Clary et al. (1998) proposed the Volunteer Functions Inventory, an instrument designed to measure six primary functions that are served through volunteering: values, understanding, enhancement, career, social, and protective (Clary & Snyder, 1999, p. 157). Finkelstien's (2009) study linked aspects of functional analysis to dispositional variables, informed by role identity theory and the notion of a prosocial personality. These variables are examined in relation to intrinsic and extrinsic motivational orientations, the former in reference to "actions undertaken because they are inherently interesting or in some way satisfying" and the latter understood as behaviors that "are performed in order to obtain some separable outcome" (Finkelstien, 2009, p. 654).

Motivations for participating in volunteerism are diverse, complex, and multifaceted, and they are not necessarily static over time. Similarly, motivational drives involve an interaction of person-based dynamics and situational opportunities (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Furthermore, organizational variables can play a role just as significant as that of dispositional variables and personality traits (Finkelstien, 2009). Avoiding a Manichean approach, Scheyvens (2011) proposed a continuum of six different perspectives on voluntourism—harmful, egocentric, harmless, helpful, education, and social action—in which "social action" is reflected in "greater involvement of volunteers in social movements in the long term" (pp. 98–99). Scheyvens underscored the key role of organizations that "attempt, sometimes idealistically and other times based on a sound platform of knowledge about the political, cultural and economic context, to make the volunteers part of the solution to global problems" (p. 104).

Study Design, Organizational Setting, and Methodology

As Morrison (2015) suggested in relation to global service-learning, it is crucial for researchers to examine their own reflexivity in the process of knowledge creation. This study emerged out of the research team's direct collaboration with the University of San Diego Medical Brigades (USDMB), an official undergraduate student organization at USD. We have worked as the group's advisors on campus since the chapter was founded in 2010, but we have also accompanied them on their international medical service trips, overseeing and working as volunteers, side-by-side with the students. Guerrieri was recruited by the first cohort of students to be their advisor and later traveled with them four times: Honduras and Nicaragua in 2014, and Panama in 2015 and 2024. Zambrano has accompanied the group on six trips: Nicaragua in 2016, Panama in 2016 and 2019, Honduras in 2017 and 2023, and Ghana in 2020. USD is an institution with a strong stated commitment to both social change and internationalization, with a number of programs in areas related to global health. In addition, the university is located in an international border city, such that the local *is* international in a very immediate sense, which makes decisions to allocate resources toward developing outreach and engagement initiatives thousands of miles away even more significant.

The coauthors share a critical stance toward international service trips and related activities precisely due to their echoes of (neo)colonialism, the neoliberal commodification of service, the ethical concerns that can arise, and the potential to produce harm in local communities and the environment, among other problems. However, this stance is coupled with our understanding of the positive collective impact that can be achieved through community engagement based on democratic,

equitable, and mutually beneficial partnerships in local communities—near home or far away—as well as the potential for deep learning experiences in international contexts to lead students toward transformative solidarity.

Paradigms of Engagement Motivational Matrix (PEMM) and Research Questions

Within our intersecting roles as professors, researchers, and practitioners of community engagement, and through our praxis of action and reflection, we identified the need to develop an instrument that would serve to examine the motivations that drive international initiatives aimed at global health in relation to different paradigms of engagement, including broad geopolitical questions, and, ultimately, to guide critical reflection. This led to the creation of the Paradigms of Engagement Motivational Matrix (PEMM), which is designed for use across campus. The research team then implemented a pilot study at the micro level focused specifically on the USDMB. For this study, we determined four categories of self-oriented motivations specifically for students participating in volunteer-based international service trips, as reflected in Figure 1.

The matrix includes two broad categories, "self-oriented motivations" and "other-oriented motivations," each of which contains four additional subcategories. In order to problematize the reductionist altruism–egoism debate, the matrix includes vertical bidirectional arrows in that column to reflect the dynamic and changing interface among the different motivations and paradigms. Similarly, as indicated in the right-hand column, critical reflection takes place across all categories in the matrix, disrupting the self–other binary and interrogating the areas of convergence and potential tensions among the paradigms. The matrix reflects the three paradigms studied by Morton (1995) but also divides the project paradigm into two categories to encourage the exploration of potential discrepancies between organizational objectives and community-identified outcomes. Moreover, the framework aligns those paradigms to humanitarianism, development, and human rights, explicitly bridging the reflection to the macro level. Most importantly, the categories in the PEMM should not be considered prescriptive but rather adaptable to different initiatives and groups of participants and decision makers on campus.

A central premise here is that in order to make positive contributions to global health equity, institutions of higher education must investigate the paradigms of engagement in which they seek to make those contributions to reveal their paradoxes, underlying colonial structures, and systems of oppression that have been institutionalized. As Hunt-Hendrix and Taylor (2024) indicated, even "philanthropy can become a form of domination" or a "tool for transformation" (p. 174). Through a process of continual critical reflection and the production of creative dissonance that heightens awareness and exposes incongruities, institutions can choose to abandon or change harmful initiatives and work for transformative solidarity. These actions can occur at the individual, programmatic, and institutional levels. For colleges and universities this requires examination of a wide range of initiatives at multiple levels: study-abroad programs, pro bono clinics, overseas centers and institutes, and international research projects, among many others.

For the purpose of our pilot study on international medical service trips, we posed the following three questions:

Figure 1. Paradigms of Engagement Motivational Matrix (PEMM)

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Personal enjoyment and adventure</td><td rowspan="4">Self-oriented motivations</td><td rowspan="8">Critical reflection</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Personal growth and reflection</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Learning and skill development (not specifically career-oriented)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Professional development and career preparation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Direct service and charity</td><td>Humanitarianism</td><td rowspan="4">Other-oriented motivations</td></tr>
<tr><td>Project-based – Addressing community needs</td><td rowspan="2">Development</td></tr>
<tr><td>Project-based – Collaboration with organization</td></tr>
<tr><td>Social change, transformation, & social justice</td><td>Human rights</td></tr>
</table>

1. What are the most significant motivations for students to participate in international medical service trips? As secondary questions, are the motivations more self-oriented or other-oriented, and for each of these general orientations, which of the four motivational categories in the PEMM is the most significant?

2. Do the students' motivations for participating in the international service change significantly upon completing the service? As secondary questions, is there any movement between self-oriented and other-oriented categories and, specifically within other-oriented categories, is there any movement among paradigms of engagement?

3. How effective is the PEMM as a tool for helping individuals to critically reflect on their international service trips?

University of San Diego Medical Brigades and Global Brigades

The University of San Diego is a private, faith-based, medium-sized university located in the western United States. USDMB is a chapter of Global Brigades (GB) and an official student organization at the university, with approximately 25–30 members each year. The group participates in one or two "brigades" (short-term medical trips), in January or in the summer, to Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, or Ghana each year. The executive board recruits and selects the members of the general body of the organization at the beginning of each semester, and there is consistently a portion of students who participate in two or more brigades and eventually become members of the e-board. During the semester, the group meets biweekly to carry out preparations for the upcoming brigade. The travel arrangements and logistics in the destination country are managed entirely by Global Brigades.

Founded in 2003 by students and promoted as a student movement, Global Brigades is an international nonprofit organization that works in seven countries: Belize, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. According to its mission statement, GB seeks to "inspire, mobilize, and collaborate with communities to achieve their own health and economic goals" (Global Brigades, n.d., Our Mission). With more than 500 chapters worldwide, GB is funded primarily by its student volunteers' fund raising in addition to other donations and grants received. Partnering with local governments and other NGOs, the organization promotes a holistic model based on three interlocking areas in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: sustainable health systems, economic development, and water and sanitation infrastructure. GB's approach, as described on their website, is based on building local capacity in order to empower communities to lead their own development and reduce inequalities. As a community reaches a determined level of development, GB stops sending material assistance and shifts their priority to deepening long-term relationships by supporting local leadership, monitoring impact, and consulting on different initiatives. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization initiated Global TeleBrigades, a program in which volunteers collaborate with local in-country teams via a virtual platform without traveling internationally. They now offer both in-person and virtual volunteering opportunities.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was used in this study in which students from three different brigades, two in 2019—Ghana in January and Panama in June—and another to Ghana in January 2020, were invited to participate by completing pretrip and posttrip surveys. Human subjects approval was obtained from the university's IRB in advance (IRB-2018-553), and students who agreed to participate in the study gave their consent electronically. An email invitation to take the online survey was sent to all the students enrolled for the trip approximately 10 days prior to departure, and a reminder was sent a week later. The messages included a link to a Qualtrics survey, and all responses were recorded anonymously. The posttrip survey was administered upon completion of the brigade, and two reminders were sent inviting participation.

Each survey gathered information on the respondent's age, gender, major, minor, class rank, career plans, international experience, and community engagement experience. The data gathered also included a multipoint question (Q22) in which students were asked to indicate the degree of importance, using a five-point Likert scale, for each of 20 different potential reasons or motives underlying their desire to participate in the brigade (Table 1). This list was

compiled based on previous studies, mentioned in the theoretical framework and literature review, and the research team's experience working with the students.

In the posttrip survey, the prompt was aimed at future participation: "Please rate how important is each motive for you for participating in a future brigade." In addition, participants were also asked in the pretrip survey to identify their most important motive with an open-ended question (Q23): "What is the main reason that you want to participate in this brigade? Please explain in detail." However, in the posttrip survey, this question was retrospective: "What was the main reason . . . ?"

The research team used the PEMM as a tool to analyze both the quantitative data (closed multipoint question Q22) and the qualitative data (open question Q23), following two distinct paths. For the quantitative data, the 20 motives were first ranked by mean independently of their placement in the matrix (see Table 2 below). Then the motives in Q22 were sorted into the eight categories of the matrix. Each motivational category included two or three motives from which a composite mean was derived using the five-point scale (see Table 3). The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 28). For the qualitative data, the responses to Q23 were coded using the eight categories from the PEMM, and frequency counts served to determine the distribution of motives by percentage in the matrix. Each member of the research team scored the responses, and together we discussed our scoring to ensure agreement (see Table 4).

Results

Description of the Research Population

The two survey instruments created for this study were sent to a total of 88 USDMB participants. Sixty-eight volunteers (77.3%) responded to the prebrigade survey and provided demographic information about themselves; 27 (30.7%) responded to the postbrigade survey and completed the demographic items. Sixty-six (97%) of the 68 prebrigade respondents completed the survey questions about previous volunteer experience, and all 27 (100%) postbrigade survey respondents completed these items. With regard to the remaining items on the surveys, including Q22 and Q23, 61 (89.7%) prebrigade respondents completed them (internal reliability Cronbach's alpha = .89), and 25 (92.6%) respondents completed them on the postbrigade survey (internal reliability Cronbach's alpha = .90).

Prebrigade Demographic Results

Regarding personal demographics, of the 68 prebrigade respondents, 75% (n = 51) identified as female and 25% (n = 17) identified as male. Respondents' ages ranged between 18 and 22 years old, and 19.1% (n = 13) were first-year students, 42.6% (n = 29) were second-year students (sophomore), 30.9% (n = 21) were third-year students (junior), and 7.4% (n = 5) were fourth-year students (senior).

Table 1. List of 20 Potential Reasons or Motives for Participating in the Brigade (Q22)

1. Fulfill the purpose and objectives of Global Brigades	11. Help others who may be less fortunate than myself
2. Develop skills for my chosen career field	12. Strengthen my résumé for future job opportunities
3. Accompany my friend(s) on this trip abroad	13. Embody my religious or faith-based beliefs
4. Apply academic knowledge to a real-life situation	14. Get away from everything for a while
5. Help to address specific community needs	15. Support an international service organization
6. Learn about another country and culture	16. Reflect on my own life, identity, and future
7. Fulfill the objectives of the specific brigade	17. Give back to the community
8. Go on an adventure traveling abroad	18. Meet new people and network within the profession
9. Help change society for the better	19. Work towards greater equality in society
10. Improve my language skills (Spanish or other language)	20. Travel to a new or unknown destination

Of the 66 respondents who completed the survey items regarding community engagement (CE) experience, 89.4% (*n* = 59) indicated they had previously participated in some kind of CE activity (at USD or elsewhere), 68.2% (*n* = 45) said that they had participated in a USD-related CE activity, and 28.8% (*n* = 19) said they had previously participated in a USDMB brigade.

Asked about previous travel outside the country, 56.1% (*n* = 37) of the 66 respondents indicated that they had made five or more trips outside the United States, 12.1% (*n* = 8) reported four trips, 10.6% (*n* = 7) reported three trips, 1.5% (*n* = 1) reported two trips, 15.2% (*n* = 10) reported one trip, and 4.5% (*n* = 3) indicated they had never been outside the United States. Twelve respondents (18.2%) indicated they had lived outside the United States for a period of several months or more.

The survey provided a list of academic areas of study from which respondents were asked to select their major(s). Behavioral neuroscience was selected 32 times, biology 14 times, biochemistry seven times. The "other" option was selected 10 times: four respondents wrote in psychology, two respondents added sociology, and each of the following majors was written in by one respondent: marine ecology, political science, sociology/concentration in social justice, and sociology-psychology. Several respondents, some 10% (*n* = 7), had not yet selected their major and selected "undeclared."

The survey also included an open question (Q7) regarding the students' future, long-term career plans. Of the 66 respondents, 83.3% (*n* = 55) indicated that they intend to seek a career in health professions: 27.3% (*n* = 15) of these did not specify a field, but 72.7% (*n* = 40) listed a specialization, and 21 different fields or areas were mentioned, including anesthesiology, dentistry, dermatology, neurology, nursing, orthopedics, pediatrics, perinatology, podiatry, and radiology, among others. One respondent wrote law, and two indicated a career in biotechnology. Four students listed multiple possible professions in different sectors, and four were undecided.

Postbrigade Demographic Results

Of the 27 volunteers who responded to the postbrigade survey, 81.5% (*n* = 22) identified as female and 18.5% (*n* = 5) identified as male. Their ages ranged between 18 and 22 years, and 29.6% (*n* = 8) were first-year students, 33.3% (*n* = 9) were second-year students (sophomore), 25.9% (*n* = 7) were third-year students (junior), and 11.1% (*n* = 3) were fourth-year students (senior).

Asked about their experience with community engagement (CE) prior to the brigade they had just completed, 92.6% (*n* = 25) indicated they had participated in some kind of CE activity, and 74.1% (*n* = 20) said they had participated in a USD-related CE activity, whereas 7.4% (*n* = 2) said they had no prior CE experience. With regard to previous brigade experiences, including the trip recently completed, 22 (81.5%) had participated in one USDMB brigade, and 18.5% (*n* = 5) indicated they had participated in two. Twenty-four (88.9%) indicated they would like to participate in another brigade in the future.

The 27 postbrigade surveys showed that, before participating in the trip, 44.4% (*n* = 12) of respondents had made five or more trips outside the United States, 7.4% (*n* = 2) had made four trips; 18.5% (*n* = 5) had made three trips; 25.9% (*n* = 7) had made one trip; and 3.7% (*n* = 1) had never been outside the United States. In addition, 25.9% (*n* = 7) of the respondents said they had lived outside the United States for a period of several months or more.

As on the prebrigade survey, postbrigade survey respondents were asked to indicate their academic major(s). Biochemistry was selected eight times, behavioral neuroscience seven times, biology three times. Six respondents selected the "other" option, with psychology added on three surveys, sociology on two, and marine ecology was added to one. Three respondents said they were undeclared. Regarding the students' future, long-term career plans (Q7), 92.6% (*n* = 25) indicated the health professions, and two were undecided.

Quantitative Data Results

As reflected in Table 2, the top eight motives in the pretrip survey, scoring 4.5–4.3 on the five-point scale (between *extremely important* and *very important*), were all other-oriented except for one, "Learn about another country and culture." The next five in the ranking, scoring 3.7–3.4 (between *very important* and *moderately important*), included three self-oriented and two other-oriented motives. Finally, the seven motives that ranked the lowest, scoring 2.9–1.9 (between *moderately important* and *not at all important*), were all self-oriented. The rankings did not change

significantly in the posttrip survey: The same top eight motives scored 4.5–4.0; of the next five, only one dropped a degree of importance, "Meet new people and network within the profession"; and the final seven scored 2.8–2.0 (between *moderately important* and *slightly important*).

Table 3 illustrates that, when the 20 motives from Q22 were sorted into the eight categories of the PEMM and composite means were calculated, the other-oriented categories collectively scored higher than the self-oriented categories on both pre- and posttrip surveys: 4.5–4.0 (pre) and 4.3–3.8 (post) for other-oriented, and 3.5–2.6 (pre) and 3.7–2.5 (post) for self-oriented.

Qualitative Data Results

In response to the open question (Q23) requesting the main reason that the student "wants" (pretrip) or "wanted" (posttrip) to participate in the brigade, most of the respondents included more than a single motive: The researchers identified a total of 141 motives in the 61 responses from the pretrip survey, an average of 2.31 motives per respondent, and 66 motives among the 25 responses in the posttrip survey, an average of 2.64 motives per respondent. The distribution of motives in the PEMM is reflected in Table 4 as well as two additional categories, created by the researchers, for motives that did not fit clearly into any of the eight categories in the matrix: "Experience—in general" and "Connections and relationships with others."

Table 2. Ranking of Twenty Motives by Mean (Q22)

# in survey	Motive	S[a] or O	Pre-trip mean	SD	Post-trip mean	SD
11	Help others who may be less fortunate than myself	O	4.5	0.7	4.0	1.5
6	Learn about another country and culture	S	4.5	0.7	4.5	0.6
17	Give back to the community	O	4.5	0.7	4.4	1.0
19	Work toward greater equality in society	O	4.5	0.8	4.2	1.2
7	Fulfill the objectives of the specific brigade	O	4.4	0.8	4.2	1.1
5	Help to address specific community needs	O	4.4	0.8	4.4	0.8
9	Help to change society for the better	O	4.4	0.7	4.3	1.1
1	Fulfill the purpose and objectives of Global Brigades	O	4.3	0.7	4.2	1.1
16	Reflect on my own life, identity, and future	S	3.7	1.2	3.7	1.1
2	Develop skills for my chosen career field	S	3.7	0.9	3.4	1.3
15	Support an international service organization	O	3.7	1.1	3.5	1.4
4	Apply academic knowledge to a real-life situation	O	3.5	1.1	3.8	1.0
18	Meet new people and network within the profession	S	3.4	1.3	2.9	1.2
20	Travel to a new or unknown destination	S	2.9	1.3	2.8	1.2
12	Strengthen my résumé for future job opportunities	S	2.7	1.2	2.4	1.3
8	Go on an adventure traveling abroad	S	2.7	1.2	2.4	1.5
10	Improve my language skills (Spanish or other language)	S	2.6	1.2	2.8	1.2
13	Embody my religious or faith-based beliefs	S	2.4	1.5	2.0	1.0
3	Accompany my friend(s) on this trip abroad	S	2.2	1.2	2.2	1.2
14	Get away from everything for a while	S	2.0	1.2	2.2	1.3

Note. The following five-point scale was used: 1 = *Not at all important*, 2 = *Slightly important*, 3 = *Moderately important*, 4 = *Very important*, 5 = *Extremely important*.
[a]S = Self-oriented and O = Other-oriented

Table 3. Degree of Importance Composite Means (Q22) by Motivational Category in the PEMM

Motivational categories from the PEMM	Pre-trip mean (*N* = 61)	SD	Post-trip mean (*N* = 25)	SD
Self-oriented				
Personal enjoyment and adventure (3,8,20)[a]	2.6	1.23	2.5	1.3
Personal growth and reflection (13,14,16)	2.7	1.43	2.6	1.17
Learning and skill development (not specifically career-oriented) (4,6,10)	3.5	1.00	3.7	.93
Professional development and career preparation (2,12,18)	3.3	1.13	2.9	1.27
Other-oriented				
Direct service and charity (11,17)	4.5	.7	4.2	1.25
Project-based — Addressing community needs (5,7)	4.4	.8	4.3	.95
Project-based — Collaboration with organization (1,15)	4.0	.9	3.8	1.25
Social change, transformation, & social justice (9,19)	4.4	.75	4.3	1.15

[a]The 20 motives from Q22 (listed in Table 1) are organized into the eight categories of the PEMM and appear in parentheses for each category description.

Table 4. Frequency of Main Motives in Responses to Open Question (Q23)

Motivational categories from the PEMM	Pre-trip motives (*N* = 61)	%	Post-trip motives (*N* = 25)	%
Self-oriented				
Personal enjoyment and adventure	12	8.5%	9	13.6%
Personal growth and reflection	11	7.8%	10	15.2%
Learning and skill development (non-career)	34	24.1%	14	21.2%
Professional development and career preparation	10	7.1%	6	9.1%
Other-oriented				
Direct service and charity	35	24.8%	12	18.2%
Project-based — Addressing community needs	4	2.8%	1	1.5%
Project-based — Collaboration with organization	9	6.4%	3	4.5%
Social change, transformation, & social justice	8	5.7%	4	6.1%
Additional categories				
Experience — in general	6	4.3%	1	1.5%
Connections and relationships with others	12	8.5%	6	9.1%
Total number of motives in responses	141	100%	66	100%

Discussion

With regard to our first research question, unlike the respondents in Tiessen's (2012) study, students' responses to multipoint Q22 (Table 2) indicated that they were driven significantly by other-oriented motivations to participate in the international service trip. Similarly, Table 3 reflects that all four categories of other-oriented motivations in the PEMM ranked higher than all four categories of self-oriented motivations on both surveys. However, in response to the open question (Q23), the overall frequency of self-oriented motives was greater than that of other-oriented motives: On the pretrip survey 47.5% (n = 67) of the motives listed were self-oriented, and 39.7% (n = 56) were other-oriented. In other words, in their responses to the list of specific questions, students considered other-oriented motivations more important, but when asked to provide their main reason for participating, they gravitated overall toward the self-oriented reasons.

Another important difference emerged in Q23 among the four other-oriented categories. There were references aligned with the "social change, transformation, and social justice" paradigm. For example, students referred to the need to "reach towards a greater equality within our society" and "to make a positive impact in the world," as well as a "sense of obligation to work towards a greater equitable society." However, motives related to "direct service and charity" were listed much more frequently than those in the other three categories, which comprise the "project-based" and "social change" paradigms, all together: 24.8% (n = 35) compared to 14.9% (n = 21). Some examples of this helping imperative, coded here within the "direct service and charity" paradigm, include the need "to enrich the lives of others," "to provide any help I can," "to aid others in another country," and "helping to empower them," among others.

Despite being students at a faith-based institution, the respondents considered the motivation to "embody my religious or faith-based beliefs" only slightly important in Q22, and they did not use these specific terms at all in their responses to Q23. Nonetheless, 12 (19.7%) respondents mentioned a desire to form relationships and connections with other people or to immerse themselves in a different culture. This result is similar to Occhipinti's (2016) findings, in their study of faith-based missionary service trips to the Dominican Republic, that building genuine relationships was a primary objective expressed by participants (p. 265). Likewise, some students in the present study expressed their "passion" for serving others; a desire "to serve the people in the most dignified way"; the purpose of spreading "love to the people within the communities"; and feeling "blessed and happy to be able to have this experience." These sentiments could be interpreted through multiples lenses, including both secular and religious or faith-based.

Students' sense of their own privilege appeared in some responses, usually in relation to the imperative to help others. Echoing Tiessen's (2012) critique of their respondents' "superficial emphasis on luck rather than explorations of global inequality" (p. 16), the notion of privilege was typically expressed in Q23 within a framework of good fortune and bad fortune, including hints of saviorism and paternalism in a couple of responses. In addition, one student expressed a sense of guilt or regret—"I feel like I do not give back enough to my community even though I have countless opportunities"—which corresponds with the protective function ("to reduce negative feelings") that can be served through volunteering, as proposed in the Volunteer Functions Inventory (Clary et al., 1998). Another student emphasized the need to avoid "lip service" and take action: "I think it's important to get out there and help others when possible because actions speak louder than words." Such responses point to the need to guide students in developing a praxis of collaboration, uniting action with critical reflection, such that their work can contribute to counter-hegemonic practices.

Among the four categories of self-oriented motivations, "learning and skill development (not specifically career-oriented)" was considered more important than the other three categories in the quantitative data (Table 3) and appeared more frequently in the qualitative data (Table 4). In addition, "learn about another country and culture" was ranked among the highest of all 20 motives (Table 2). These tendencies were consistent in both the pretrip and posttrip surveys.

With regard to our second research question, Tables 2 and 3 suggest that students' motivations for participating in the international service did not change significantly upon completing the service, and it is worth reiterating that motives within the "social change, transformation, and social justice" paradigm

were considered among the most important. However, as mentioned previously, Table 4 illustrates that the overall frequency of self-oriented motives was greater than that of other-oriented motives, a tendency that intensified in the posttrip survey; almost twice as many self-oriented motives were listed: 59.1% (n = 39) compared to 30.3% (n = 20). The frequency of motives listed in Q23 increased in the posttrip survey for three self-oriented categories in the PEMM: "personal enjoyment and adventure" (from 8.5% to 13.6%), "personal growth and reflection" (from 7.8% to 15.2%), and "professional development and career preparation" (from 7.1% to 9.1%). On the other hand, other-oriented project-based motives decreased overall (9.2% to 6%).

With regard to our third research question on the effectiveness of the PEMM for helping participants to critically reflect on their international service trips, our study design and mixed-methods approach played a key role. The first method served to expose students to a wide range of predetermined motives and collect quantitative data on their responses, but the second (qualitative) method prompted them to identify the main reason and thus initiated the reflective process. As noted, students responded by providing an average of two to three different motives. The study results reflected the complex and fluid movement among multiple self-oriented and other-oriented motivations, spanning different paradigms of engagement. As Allen et al. (2016) indicated, the purposes of mixed methods include both "complementarity," in which different methods serve to enhance and elaborate on each other, and "initiation," which involves "a search for contradiction or contrast between methods" (p. 336). These contradictions and contrasts can produce dissonance that in turn may open a space for deeper critical reflection.

Although an international service trip experience can produce perspective transformation and consciousness-raising (Kiely, 2004; McGehee, 2012; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Portman & Martin, 2015), we argue that guiding participants in the development of critical reflection, using tools like the PEMM and others, is a fundamental imperative for all stages of a program. This need is underscored by the fact that the pilot study's results did not reflect a significant shift, overall, toward motivations aligned with the social change, transformation, and social justice paradigm following the international experience. It follows that integration in the research methodology constitutes a key factor for the reflective process. As Guetterman and Manojlovich (2024) stated, "Integration is the most important characteristic of mixed methods research and refers to the intentional combining of qualitative and quantitative data, methods, results and interpretation such that the two forms of research become interdependent to address research questions" (p. 470). When participants are exposed to the PEMM after completing the survey, they join the researchers in interpreting the results, and more opportunities for critical reflection emerge when different, sometimes diametrically opposed, interpretations are offered.

The notion of "empowerment," for example, appeared among many responses in Q23, reflecting students' desire to help empower the communities with whom they work. This desire can be understood in ways that align with any of the three paradigms (charity, project-based, and social change), but it can also be interpreted as indicative of a paternalistic attitude that infantilizes the recipients of the volunteers' efforts and resources, thus reifying—instead of disrupting—power differentials. On the other hand, it should be noted that the idea of empowering communities to lead their own development and reduce inequalities is a central part of Global Brigades' organizational mission and discourse, which also explains in part students' use of this language. Using the PEMM, students reflect on the dynamics of their own role as volunteers with the NGO but also on historical and current conditions of international development work and the tensions that can exist among international aid, state responsibilities, and citizen rights. This example speaks to the need to continually examine all the relationships involved in any given partnership and setting to ensure that it is truly community-driven through a self-determined model of change. Accordingly, the will to empower is replaced by a will to learn to listen to community residents and collaborate collectively.

Students' future career plans constitute a key area of critical reflection for bridging self-oriented and other-oriented motivations, again using this binary here as a basic heuristic to initiate a deeper investigation of the relations between the individual and the

profession and between the profession and the broader society. As indicated, a large majority of the participants in the present pilot study intend to seek careers in the health professions, which the students consider to be inherently other-centered. Nonetheless, the PEMM leads participants in the USDMB to examine multiple paradigms of engagement in which a given profession can operate, in local and international settings, and key themes within the global health field: health care as humanitarianism (e.g., Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders), the politicization of health care access, and health care as a basic human right, among many others. All professions have epistemologies, power dynamics, and ideologies that directly or indirectly can contribute to inequities and oppression. Accordingly, the imperative here is for students to reflect on their career plans with the purpose of uncovering the hegemonic values of the given profession—in whatever field or sector—deconstructing professional practices and exploring how these might be transformed to make the profession more socially just (Baillie et al., 2012; Brookfield, 2009).

Implications and Conclusions

A key implication of the pilot study at the micro level involves the program's degree of autonomy or curricular integration. Although the PEMM proved to be an effective tool when used with the student group, ideally, these international service programs would not be extracurricular and autonomous, but rather integrated into an academic program with structures to help ensure consistency, continuity, and depth in the ethical approach, contextualization, and critical reflection. In this sense, there are many resources from which to draw in order to examine ethical, philosophical, and ideological considerations; approaches to community partnerships; program structure and logistics; student leadership; and other areas (Green & Johnson, 2014; Hartman et al., 2018; Sumka et al., 2015; Tiessen & Huish, 2014; among others). Additionally, there are many studies focused on ethical considerations in international (medical) service trips, humanitarian volunteerism, community-based global learning, and related areas, as well as calls for clear guidelines to help orient groups involved (Arya & Evert, 2018; Asgary & Junck, 2013; DeCamp, 2011; Gendle & Tapler, 2021; Hartman, 2017; Hartman et al., 2018; Kittle & McCarthy, 2015; Langowski & Iltis, 2011; McCall & Iltis, 2014; Roche et al., 2017). From these and other sources, program leaders and participants can develop an ethical approach, establishing standards and benchmark practices, that complements the critical reflection produced through implementing the PEMM.

The pilot study provided a nuanced examination of the wide range of motives that drive students to participate in international medical service trips and how they interface with different paradigms of engagement. As a theoretical framework that bridges the micro and the macro—from individual cognitive, conative, and affective dimensions to broad geopolitical paradigms such as humanitarianism, development, and human rights—the PEMM supports a "self-to-system" approach. Such an approach encourages participants "to discern both personal aspects related to social justice such as the ways their socialization shapes their thinking, as well as the structural elements of oppression, where power dynamics operate in broader systemic ways" (Boyd et al., 2016, p. 173). As this pilot study is expanded and further developed at the institutional level, examining programs, projects, and initiatives in different disciplines, schools, and areas across campus, the PEMM can be a useful tool for critically reflecting on professional and disciplinary blind spots (Mitchell, 2002), avoiding historically problematic practices in global social justice initiatives (Machado de Oliveira, 2021), and probing the particularities of colonization in specific regions in lieu of employing abstract categories of the oppressed and oppressor (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Study Limitations and Future Research

This pilot study has some inherent limitations. Although the PEMM was designed to be applied in initiatives across the institution, the pilot study focused on a small sample size comprised of members of a single student group. Further data could have been gathered by including subsequent methods following the surveys, such as interviews and focus groups. In addition, the results from this pilot study are not generalizable due to several characteristics of the university and the student group. USD has received the community engagement classification from the Carnegie Foundation and is designated an Ashoka U Changemaker

campus, both of which speak to aspects of the overall institutional culture and commitment to the public good. Furthermore, when the USDMB leadership team selects new members for the upcoming term, they tend to favor applicants whose responses reflect more other-oriented motivations for joining. All these factors speak to the importance of examining the complexity of individual motivations within their broader context, given that they do not function independently of external, situational, and organizational variables, for example, as reflected in studies by Clary and Snyder (1999) and Finkelstien (2009), among others.

Planned future research consists of expanding the pilot study into a multilevel, multisetting inquiry—drawing from aspects of the mixed methodology described by Allen et al. (2016)—in order to implement the PEMM at the institutional level through four interrelated steps. The first involves widening the scope of inquiry by identifying and mapping across campus the international projects, programs, and initiatives—each conceptualized as a unique setting with one or more international sites—related to the global health equity field. The second consists of adapting the previous survey questions to reflect the motivational categories appropriate for each group of participants (students, staff, faculty, administrators) and the nature of their proposed or ongoing activity on the institutional map. The third involves incorporating a sequential design as we build upon the initial survey structure, which allows data gathered with one method to inform further methodological decisions: The active incorporation of findings into subsequent data collection efforts becomes a reflexive process that involves research team members and participants. In the fourth step, the results from different settings are brought together for strategic interplay and interpretation to produce a richer understanding of the complexity of the network of global health work across campus, without sacrificing specificity at any level of analysis. As Allen et al. (2016) emphasized, "multisite work invites both zooming in and zooming out," which enables researchers to search for "both the nomothetic (generalizations across sites) and the idiographic (site-specific findings)" (p. 342). Ultimately, this future research aims at deepening critical reflection on paradigms of international engagement and outreach at the institutional level, counteracting colonial structures and neoliberal tendencies, and developing a network of collaboration for transformative solidarity.

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