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## Immersions in Global Equality and Social Justice: A Model of Change

Kevin Guerrieri

*University of San Diego*, kevin2@sandiego.edu

Sandra Sgoutas-Emch

*University of San Diego*, emch@sandiego.edu

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## Immersion in Global Equality and Social Justice: A Model of Change

Kevin Guerrieri & Sandra Sgoutas-Emch

*In the work for global equality and social justice, how should “change” be understood? Who determines what must change or be changed? In the efforts to carry out social change, what is the academy’s relationship with the community, society at large, and the broader world? This article parts from these and other key questions and then proposes a model of change that can be used as a lens for examining any project, program, or organization with the aim of creating positive change that is meaningful, sustainable, and holistic. The article provides both an explanation of the underlying interdisciplinary theoretical framework of the model and a graphic representation. The components and overall structure of the model are designed in such a way that they can be modified and adapted to the needs and circumstances in which it is implemented, from academic contexts—curricular, co-curricular, service learning, experiential learning, study abroad, faith-based activities, etc.—to other institutional and organizational spheres beyond the university.*

Sometimes [we] need to learn to be quiet passengers on this bus. Sometimes we’ll take our turn at the wheel. Sometimes we’ll be the mechanic. But all of us need to get on the social justice bus. [...] Don’t get on the chartered plane. (Farmer, 2013, p. 45)

### Conceptualizing Change

Among the many meanings of the verb “change,” the first few listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* reflect a sense of “exchange” in which one thing replaces or is substituted for another; this includes, for example, “[t]o give or procure money of another kind (e.g. foreign or smaller coin) in exchange for money of some defined kind or amount,” but it also includes the reflexive idea of changing one’s shoes or clothes. A parallel usage might be that of changing directions or changing trains in the metro station. Within the conceptual category of transformation, one finds both transitive uses, which take a direct object—“to make (a thing) other than it was”—and intransitive uses—“to become different.” Next, one finds “to change up, to change down,” referring here to changing gears, and, subsequently, changing speeds. One subentry then shifts to the natural world providing the example of how the moon changes, as it passes through its various phases.

In 2011 many students, faculty, and staff at the University of San Diego (USD) began to grapple with the meanings and nuances of change following its designation as a “Changemaker Campus” by Ashoka U, an organization that describes itself as “an initiative of Ashoka, the world’s largest network of social entrepreneurs.” USD’s administration promptly took measures to incorporate the changemaker designation into its marketing materials and, ultimately, into the institutional identity. The reactions were quite varied across the university to this new initiative, which was focused on forging a “vision for a world where everyone is a Changemaker” and striving to “break down barriers to institutional change and foster a campus-wide culture of social innovation” (Ashoka U). While, at one extreme, some constituencies on campus already spoke the language of social entrepreneurship and eagerly embraced the official discourse, the other extreme was characterized by deep skepticism or outright opposition to what they interpreted as

another instance of corporate encroachment on higher education and drifting from the academic purpose of the institution.

In order to put these contradictory reactions into dialogue and attempt to define “changemaking” in the university context, two professional learning communities (PLCs) were formed by the Center for Educational Excellence and then met independently on a regular basis for over a year. Each PLC was comprised of some 10-12 faculty and staff members who volunteered from a wide range of departments and areas on campus to work together and forge a vision of social change that better aligned with both the university mission and ongoing efforts across campus. One PLC initiated its collaboration precisely by immersing itself below the surface of official discourse, disentangling the nuances of the term change, and posing a number of key questions that would guide the group’s work: In specific terms, what change was desired and, equally important, who determined what that change should be? Should it be conceptualized as exchange? Who were the agents of change? Who or what was changing or being changed (i.e. was change understood as transitive, intransitive, reflexive, or a combination of these)? How was this change to be realized in the university’s relation to the community, society at large, and the broader world?

The PLC also explored some of the points of intersection between the changemaker discourse and the university’s identity. Ashoka U’s objective of fostering “an education that develops interdisciplinary, entrepreneurial, and solutions-oriented skills,” instilled with empathy and directed to the public good, could be discursively aligned with the mission and values of any faith-based or liberal arts institution. The University of San Diego is “a Roman Catholic institution of higher learning that is committed to advancing academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse and inclusive community, and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service.” Similarly, in its vision statement, the university aspires to educate students who are “globally competent, ethical leaders,” and the institution’s core values include promoting “democratic and global citizenship”; protecting “the rights and dignity of the individual”; empowering students “to engage a

diverse and changing world”; and the “commitment to serve with compassion, to foster peace, and to work for justice” (University of San Diego). The university’s mission and vision are informed by Catholic Social Thought/Teaching, whose key themes include the sanctity of human life and dignity of the human person; a call to family, community, and participation in society; rights and responsibilities to human life and society; option for the poor and vulnerable; the dignity of work and the rights of workers; solidarity with the one human family; and the ethical protection and stewardship of the environment (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops).

The PLC was cognizant of the fact that within the university community there are many different approaches to both understanding and materializing the aforementioned institutional values, and among them apparent disconnects and discrepancies do emerge. The value of social change is sometimes articulated in higher education in general with self-oriented objectives. It is problematic, for example, when projects that purport to be addressing issues of social injustice, inequality, and poverty—domestically or internationally—are framed as part of students’ skills development aimed at improving job opportunities and preparing them to become “globally-competitive” employees and entrepreneurs (Cameron, 2014; Langdon & Agyeyomah, 2014; Tiessen, 2012). The concern here is that the work of social change is understood as a mechanism of professionalization for the neoliberal marketplace. However, the opposite extreme also harbors potential dangers: projects based entirely on altruistic intentions but divorced from socio-economic, historical, and political questions may not address deeper issues.

Faced with these and other concerns and in response to the aforementioned questions around the concept of “change,” the PLC ultimately assumed the task of developing an alternative model that could be used as a framework for multiple activities, projects, programs, and organizations aimed at creating positive social change. The model could help guide the immersions below the surface of naturalized language in official discourses and the underlying assumptions of stated institutional values and initiatives. Additionally, it could be used to problematize reductionist approaches to change and help move them towards a commitment to long-term material transformation and the disruption of the status quo. The remainder of this article consists of an explanation of the components and theoretical framework of the model of change.<sup>i</sup>

## The Model

The model (Figure 1) is based on some fundamental principles that constitute its reason for being. First and foremost is the imperative to establish an ethical relationship with the Other, which necessarily includes avoiding the imposition on others of one’s own values, knowledge, and ideas about the path(s) of change as well as the agency and roles assigned to those involved. The model resists ahistorical and depoliticized approaches, while encouraging a (self)reflective and critical analysis of power relations, privilege, the legacy of colonialism, and ongoing colonialities (Castro-Gómez, 2002; Mignolo, 2003). This requires engagement with other epistemologies, the exploration of complexity, and the active deconstruction of hegemonic discourses and dominant systems of knowledge and representation—deconstruction understood not as the exposure of errors, but rather as the constant examination of how truths are produced and naturalized (Spivak, 2004).

Although they are not verbally represented in the graphic of the model, these essential principles constitute its core, and they are reflected in the explanation of the different components. The model is not proposed as a template for homogenizing different projects, programs, and organizations dedicated to promoting social change, but rather as a *lens* through which to examine these with the aim of making change more meaningful, holistic, and sustainable. In the process of implementation, either in academic contexts—curricular, co-curricular, service learning, experiential learning, study abroad, faith-based activities, program development, etc.—or in other institutional and organizational spheres beyond the university, the model calls for adherence to the aforementioned principles as well as the eventual “activation” of all the components of the overall structure.

The visual illustration of the model of change is comprised of four basic components: Fermat’s spiral, an underlying pattern that serves to cohesively link all the remaining components; seven essential capacities (structures, systems, actions, embodiment, discovery, awareness, and mission and values), located on the outside of the spiral and separated by bidirectional arrows; six leaves of change (learning, community, practice, reflection, synthesis, and interdependence) in the center; and, finally, multiple levels across the spiral (personal, local, regional, national, and global).<sup>ii</sup> The use of the leaf metaphor implies the organic and changing nature of those six elements, and each of the seven capacities is required in order to make change holistic. However, it is recognized that the capacities are operative—at both the individual and collective levels—in a developmental manner such that the strengths in one area will be linked to the others in order to bring about effective change.

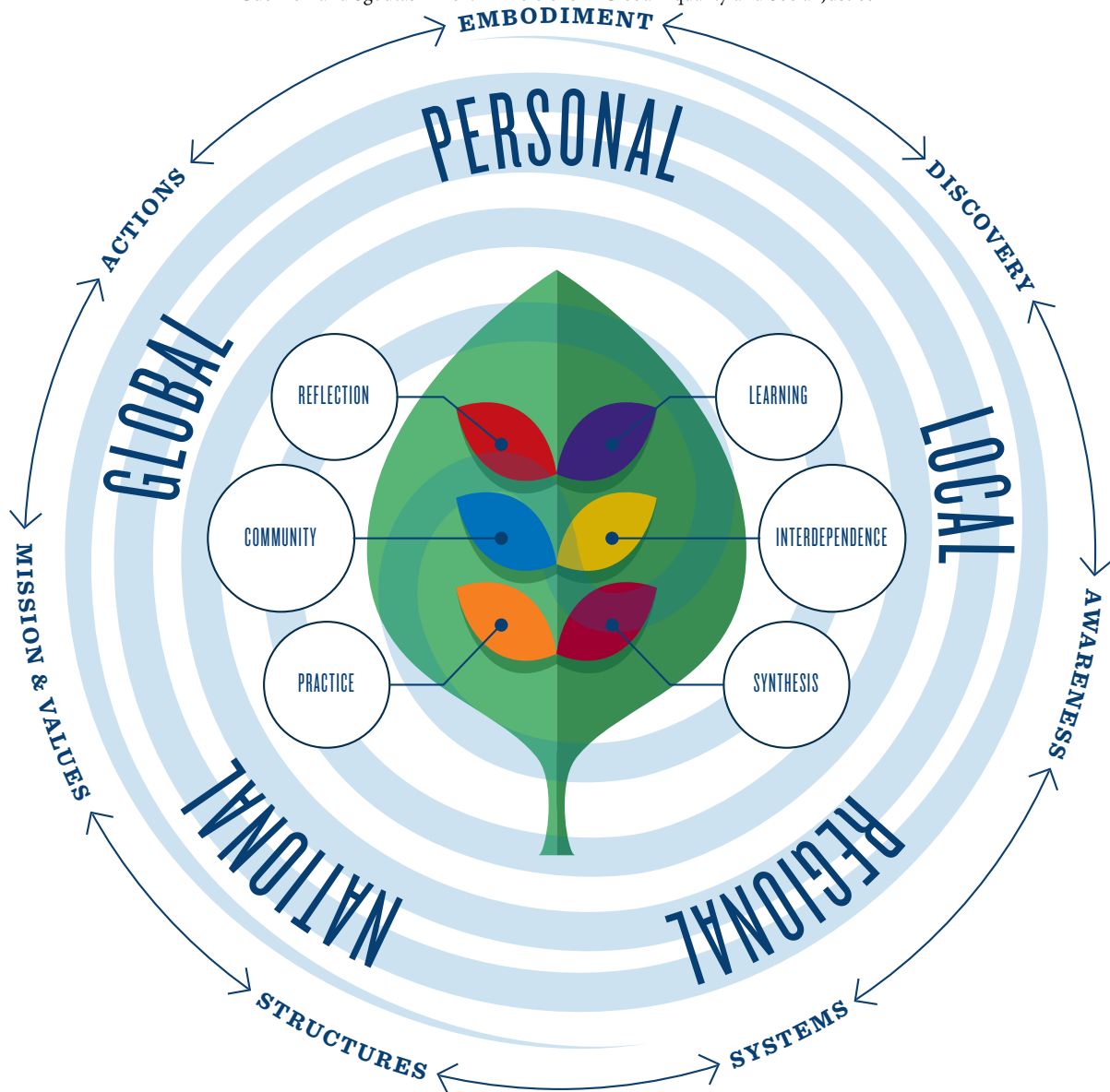


Figure 1: A Model of Change

Fermat's spiral is the graphical representation of a polar equation that contains a spiral within a spiral. The model makes use of this pattern as a symbol of the continuous and interconnected nature of the process; though presented as a unidimensional cycle, in practice the model is an admixture of moments and movements. What makes the pattern a valuable visual metaphor is that the sense of the beginning and end points is a matter of perspective. Similarly, Fermat's spiral resembles the image of yin and yang, both symbolically and mathematically, as the interdependent, complementary, and harmonious union of apparently contrary or opposite forces (Banakh, Verbitsky, & Vorobets, 2010). As such, it is possible to take a view of change from any point in the spiral, recognizing that said point is in balanced tension with the other elements, whether or not they are immediately visible.

As made evident in the spiral and the bidirectional curved arrows, the model is not based on any predetermined rectilinear notions of progress and modernity, but rather it encourages the deconstruction of teleological time (Bhabha, 1992). Accordingly, the model may be "entered" (i.e.

implementation may be initiated) at any point, through any of the leaves of change, the capacities, the different levels, or any combination of these. Finally, it must be noted that the spiral pattern itself should not be conceived of as a closed structure; on the contrary, analogous to a rhizomatic structure—and, thereby, different from a fixed arborescent structure—as described by Deleuze and Guattari (1980), the model continues to extend, beyond the graphic representation, as a subterranean stem that connects infinitely to other components.

A view of the individual as embedded in a network of relationships and the dynamic character of the relationships between individual and collective—as represented by the leaf of community in the graphic—can be seen as a potential point of departure for exploring and implementing the model. One definition of community, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is linked to a specific local environment: "a place where a particular body of people lives," or, analogously, in ecology, it is "a group of organisms growing or living together in natural conditions or occupying a specified area." The distinction that Augé gives to (anthropological) "place" is

significant here, especially with respect to the local level: as opposed to non-places, places are “relational, historical and concerned with identity” (1995, p. 77). Following this idea of (local) place, the model calls for the acknowledgement of and engagement with the relations, histories, and identities that constitute communities.

The notion of interdependence—another leaf of change in the model—is central to an understanding of community, both in relation to the stewardship of and reliance on the natural world, and to the idea of a common human family, as understood in Catholic Social Thought. Unlike approaches that focus on identifying certain individuals as the prime motors of social change, the model emphasizes the dynamic role of individuals in community. Similarly, Andreotti (2011) suggests that self-worth and self-insufficiency need to be understood as inseparable: “a sense of self-worth located in one’s unique, non-predetermined, and always partial contribution to a collectivity, and a sense of self-insufficiency conceptualized not as inadequacy, but as dependency on the uniqueness and indispensability of the Other” (p. 178). In the imperative to establish an ethical relationship to others in community—using community here in broad terms and not limiting it to subaltern or marginalized groups—the model foment the idea of a setting that potentially preserves and juxtaposes dissonant narratives and voices, such as Bhabha’s notion of the “third space” (2004), in which contestatory dialogue and dissensus are not silenced. In this space conceptions of origins, identity, and belonging are neither essentialized (nor idealized) nor rejected, but understood relationally, and the idea of creative synthesis is more akin to Bhabha’s notion of hybridity than to dialectical processes that homogenize difference. Ultimately, an ethical solidarity is sought based on mutuality, reciprocity, and equality—in which the values of different members come into dialogue—but also with the understanding that different members will have different roles in the realization of social change.<sup>iii</sup>

The model emphasizes that social change involves dynamic developmental processes related to individual human development, the communities in which they are enmeshed, and broader social conditions. Greenfield (2009), for example, challenges the assumption in both cultural developmental psychology and cross-cultural psychology that cultures are static rather than dynamic. She posits an “assumption of change rather than stasis” as a key contribution of her theory to present-day cultural psychology (p. 416). As sociodemographic conditions change—such as education, urbanization, commercialization, technology, (im)migration, etc.—cultural values and developmental patterns are transformed both within a lifetime and across succeeding generations. Greenfield’s theory seeks to trace the shifting pathways of socialization, cultural values, modes of learning, and individual development as the socio-cultural environments change in different ways. Work of this type parts from the basic premise that cognitive, emotional, and behavioral systems are interrelated and as individuals adjust to their environments

through their experiences, said environments and systems are also in a constant and dynamic transformation. The model captures this idea visually through the movement of the spiral and the interconnectedness of all the elements, as well as the infinite possibilities that emerge in the convergence of the different levels.

Similarly, the multidirectional movement and convergent levels of the model serve to destabilize the fixity commonly granted to concepts of identity and belonging, but they also disrupt the prevalent binary that locates at one end of the spectrum social issues and problems within determined geographies and populations—from local “problematic” neighborhoods to the so-called “Third World” countries—and, at the other end, the “problem solvers,” who are firmly entrenched in the normative teleological project of Western/Enlightenment humanism, which is the basis of dominant Western epistemologies (Andreotti, 2011). Within this binary, “[p]overty is constructed as a lack of resources, services, and markets, and of education (as the right subjectivity to participate in the global market), rather than a lack of control over the production of resources or enforced disempowerment,” as suggested by Andreotti (2011) in her description of Spivak’s notion of the “worlding of the West as world,” in which Western interests are universalized and naturalized in the rest of the world” (p. 38). This binary is constructed on implicit or explicit racial, ethnic, gender, socio-economic, and class hierarchies, among others, which are justified within and constructed by the logic of the particular mission in any given historical juncture: spiritual salvation, civilization, modernization, development, etc. (Mignolo, 2000).<sup>iv</sup> Such missions are linked to the forces of (neo)colonialism and (neo)imperialism, and, consequently, the benevolent acts of well-intentioned people and organizations often serve to reinforce power differentials and exacerbate the same systemic and structural problems that they seek to resolve. The implementation of the model requires a clear awareness and deconstruction of any manifestations of the aforementioned binary in the context of a given project or program.

The multiple levels—personal, local, regional, national, global—do not appear in the model in a hierarchical or progressive manner. Rather than focusing only on fixed spatial or geographical dimensions, the model calls for the examination of flows and social actors at all levels and of the articulation of their convergence in different contexts. For example, a project focused on the working conditions of employees of a *maquiladora* (manufacturing or assembly plant) in Tijuana, Mexico, would necessarily involve the identities, stories, and experiences of the workers; local and regional circumstances within the Tijuana-San Diego borderlands; national and international issues (commerce and trade, immigration, security, etc.); and global systems and phenomena, including the current configuration of the international division of labor. Thus, the model seeks to avoid reductionism and calls attention to all levels. In this way, emphasis is placed on what Mato (1995) has denominated the “microphysics of the processes of

globalization.” This idea of microphysics in this context—which appears in the work of other theorists of globalization but with different terminology (Appaduria, 1990; García Canclini, 2014; Ortiz, 1998; Yúdice, 2003)—consists of the microanalysis of how processes are globalized and how they result from the interrelations among specific social actors operating or settled in diverse places—from the local to the transnational—as well as their respective systems of representation and practices.

This also entails avoiding superficial or thin uses of terms such as “global citizenship,” which, as Cameron (2014) criticizes, are used in many programs in higher education “with almost no grounding in the political and ethical debates that might give it any real meaning” (p. 21). Merely sending students abroad for a few weeks or even a semester, for example, does not constitute building global citizenship. Even a cursory examination of a handful of studies on the topic reveals the complexities and contradictions in a notion such as global citizenship (Benhabib, 2004; Dower, 2008; Isin & Turner, 2007; Sassen, 2008; Tiessen & Huish, 2014). Similarly, sending students into the community at the local level—for service-learning, a research project, field work, an internship, etc.—in itself does not necessarily constitute civic engagement (Jacoby, 2009; Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011; Stewart & Webster, 2011). Accordingly, the model is predicated on the exploration of such complexities and the microanalysis of the multiple levels in any given context of change.

In the model, this analysis and exploration of the levels encompasses the structures, material and immaterial, that give form to systems; both structures and systems appear as capacities on the outer ring of the model. The immersion into these capacities—through work and dialogue in community, research, and analysis—is paralleled by an immersion into one’s own positionality. The model’s leaf of reflection symbolizes the imperative to recognize and explore the positionality of each individual and the university (or organization) as a whole, not as autonomous entities empowered to independently effect change in the world, but rather as immersed in historical and ever changing contexts.

In relation to these notions of immersion and situatedness, Kapoor (2008)—following both Derrida and Spivak—emphasizes that “[y]ou can never represent or act from an ‘outside,’ since you are always already situated inside discourse, culture, institutions, geopolitics” (p. 54). Likewise, in his analysis of four different development policies—basic needs, structural adjustment, good governance, and human rights—Kapoor indicates that such policies are always cultural artifacts: “They emerge from a time and place, and are framed according to institutionally generated narratives and constrictions” (p. 21). Developing awareness of such positionality—of individuals, policies, values, institutions, etc.—is part of a continual reflective process.

The model also directs reflection onto learning itself—another leaf of change—and the ways in which certain concepts of

learning and knowledge production are naturalized while others are excluded or undervalued. Even under the ideal conditions of academic freedom and protected by the practices of tenure and shared governance, for example, the key academic activities of the university—teaching, learning, research, and scholarship—are subject to infinite circumstances, pressures, and variables that inevitably influence their realization. These activities are always already linked to multiple structures and systems, both intra- and extra-institutional, which has key implications for understanding knowledge production both within and outside the academy. (With regards to the values, specifically, of the contemporary “corporate” university, see Readings (1996) and Rolfe (2013).)

In addition, parting from postcolonial theory, Kapoor (2008) and Andreotti (2011), respectively, warn against the dangers of cultural imperialism implicit in the common binary that places, on the one hand, the repository of data—the “raw materials,” including ethnographic cultural difference—in the “field” (i.e. the community, the Global South, etc.), and, on the other, the production of knowledge and value-added theory in the (Western) academy. Orientalism, which refers to the construction and representation of the “Orient” by the West, as analyzed in Said’s key study (1978), can be understood as one configuration of said binary, for example; Mignolo (2000), in turn, later historicizes Said’s work in relation to the phenomenon of occidentalism within the historical progression of the capitalist world system. In other words, the identification of a system’s Other—at any level, from the local to the global—and the production of knowledge on that Other is a continual process that assumes different guises, and educational institutions invariably play a role in that process.

In response to these forces of cultural imperialism, which have clear linkages to political and economic (neo)imperialism and (neo)colonialism, Andreotti (2011) emphasizes a different approach to knowledge itself: “knowledge is understood as a process (not a product) that is constantly renegotiated in encounters with difference and every knowledge snapshot is at the same time legitimate (in its context of production), provisional, and insufficient” (p. 6). Andreotti’s propositions for actionable postcolonial theory in education (2007, 2011, 2012) are strongly influenced by Spivak’s work, which she describes as a “pedagogical compass,” and include the following three key spivakian notions: *hyper-self-reflexivity*: “This involves a constant engagement with three things: a) the social, cultural and historical conditioning of our thinking and of knowledge/power production; b) the limits of knowing, of language and of our senses in apprehending reality; and c) the non-conscious dynamics of affect (the fact that our traumas, fears, desires and attachments affect our decisions in ways that we often cannot identify)”; *self-implication*: “This entails an acute awareness of our complicity in historical and global harm through our inescapable investments in violent systems, such as modernity and capitalism”; and *accountable reasoning*: “This means upholding an ethical responsibility to being aware of the

reproduction of historical harm through the solutions we propose" (2012, p. 21).

These notions (hyper-self-reflexivity, self-implication, and accountable reasoning) and the basic understanding of knowledge as process, not product—and, more specifically, as a process that involves multiple epistemologies, contexts, and places of production—constitute the fundamental concept of learning in the model. This line of thought intentionally disrupts and complicates the facile proposition that effecting positive change is about imparting the "right" (predetermined) skills and knowledge onto those who lack them.

Awareness and discovery are not conceptualized in the model as ultimate objectives, but rather as moments and degrees within ongoing processes. Whereas the former refers to states of cognizance that confront one's beliefs, exposes one to different ways of knowing, and/or enables new perceptions, the latter refers to those transitions, momentary or long-term, between degrees or levels of awareness. In a study on three different paradigms of service-learning—charity, project development, social change/transformation—Morton (1995) describes the transitions by students among the different paradigms: "the rare move from one to another is experienced initially as dissonance and then as epiphany: the new paradigm makes meaning of the self in the world more persuasively than did the previous paradigm" (p. 24). In their descriptions of intercultural encounters in international experiential learning, Langdon and Agyeyomah (2014), in turn, refer to disorienting dilemmas and cognitive dissonance—they intentionally avoid the term "culture shock," which can be understood as a form of "othering"—as the types of experiences that can "spark the transformation of one's worldview" (p. 64). Finally, Andreotti (2011) describes the notion of hyper-self-reflexivity as a strategy that, upon acknowledging complicities and investments, simultaneously "opens possibilities and offers invitations for signifying, narrating, and relating otherwise" (p. 18). Hence, the model unites reflection, awareness, and discovery as elements of transformational learning that may occur in the individual and the collective.

The leaf of practice contains the notions of repetition, application, and integration into daily, lived life, and the capacity of action underscores the physical realization of change within systems through energy, momentum, and trajectory. The exercise of reflection unlinked from practice and action presents serious limitations. Langdon and Agyeyomah (2014) question, for example, versions of reflection that are only focused on fostering critical thinking and forming better citizens without explicit connections to action—understood as the exercise of political agency—challenging power relations, and seeking to disrupt the status quo (p. 57). The idea here is that the development of deep empathy for others, perhaps based on the cohesive conception of our common humanity, is insufficient in the work of global justice and equality; the authors indicate, building on ideas expressed by Heron (2005), that hyper-reflexivity that does not go beyond the performance

of positionality can actually deepen hierarchies by producing a greater sense of power in the privileged, who now feel more ethical (p. 45).

In her analysis of international experiential learning, MacDonald (2014) expresses a similar concern in relation to privileged travellers' reliance on (marginalized) others' stories in order to destabilize and then re-edify their own sense of self (p. 220). It follows that reflection, practice, and action must necessarily be linked and mutually informing, and lead to the materialization of values. The idea of embodiment then, as expressed in the model, refers to the integration or consistent realization of the other capacities across time and space; in other words, as opposed to a "short-term commitment to righting wrongs," embodiment is about the "long-term involvement to learn from below" (p. 573)—using Spivak's (2004) contrast here. Additionally, the ongoing and cumulative reflective practices are situated into a web of action-reflection processes that occur equally in multiple contexts and at the different levels.

The aforementioned article by Morton (1995) on the three paradigms of service-learning provides an illustrative example for considering some of the motives or justifications for the work of equality and justice as well as for providing some basic indications for implementation of the model of change. In the study, Morton (1995) questions the common hypothesis that there is a continuum from charity to justice along which participants naturally progress in accordance with the typological forms of service activities they do. Such a continuum is commonly presented, as Morton explains, "as running from charity to advocacy, from the personal to the political, from individual acts of caring that transcend time and space to collective action on mutual concerns that are grounded in particular places and histories" (p. 20). The author argues that such a continuum does not necessarily reflect the how and why people do service, and he then proposes that at least three relatively distinct paradigms of service exist, which do not necessarily flow from one into the next: charity, project development, and social change/transformation.

There are a couple of major points to be drawn from Morton's study in relation to the model of change. First, both thin and thick versions exist within each individual paradigm. Similar to their usage in the work of both Dobson (2006) and Cameron (2014), respectively, here the former are shallow and take paternalistic or self-serving forms, fail to address broader institutional and structural inequalities, and have limited, ephemeral impact; the latter, on the other hand, question broader asymmetries and are "sustaining and potentially revolutionary" (Morton, 1995, p. 24). Cameron (2014) draws from deontological ethics—within normative ethics and in contrast to behavioral ethics, "which examine the appropriate forms of behavior for individuals when confronted with particular ethically challenging situations in their daily lives" (p. 25)—and postulates that "action and inaction should be judged on the basis of previously determined moral principles and

obligations” (p. 26). The establishment of such a set of principles—Cameron suggests Rawls’s *The Law of Peoples*—combined with an understanding of causal responsibility within complex global systems is more likely to produce “thicker connections” and lead to the work for global justice with political implications (Cameron, 2014; Dobson, 2006). As Cameron emphasizes, such work involves not only positive moral obligations (“to do good”), but also negative ones (“to not cause harm or benefit from harm done to others as well as to prevent harm”) (p. 28). A fundamental function and purpose of the model of change—and a driving force behind its creation—consists of the imperative to move from thin to thicker projects, programs, and initiatives of change. The effective immersion into each component of the model and the interconnections among them is intended to lead to the complexity required for meaningful, sustainable, and holistic work.

Second, as Morton describes them, each paradigm has a distinct sense of time and space with regard to social change: “charity is out of time and space; projects divide time and space into rational and manageable units; and social change places one squarely in the stream of history leading up to and through the world as it is” (p. 28). It follows that additional paradigms corresponding to different temporal conceptions, cultural markers, and worldviews are potentially equally revolutionary depending on the version, thick or thin. Moreover, it must be reiterated here that there are paradigms—this could be expanded here to say “ethical systems”—that “cannot be readily fitted into the conceptual spaces mapped by Western categories” (Ames & Hershock, 2015, p. 6). An initial step into the model of change consists of the examination of the values that guide the individual(s) and organization(s), which invariably will include multiple sets of principles as well as areas of both overlap and divergence, even within the same community. The idea is not that normative ethics and configurations with universalist pretensions—human rights discourse, humanitarian objectives, Catholic social thought (or any other faith-based principles), social entrepreneurship, etc.—be discarded, but rather that they be deconstructed and not imposed as given absolutes. This helps open the possibility of cross-cultural dialogue and learning and enables the establishment of ethical solidarity for long-term social change.

### Prolegomenon

Statistics tell the story. Today, 40 percent of the world’s assets are owned by just 1 percent of the world’s households; the top 2 percent own just over half the world’s assets, and the top 10 percent more than 86 percent. The bottom 50 percent of households, representing nearly 3.5 billion people, possess just 1 percent of global wealth. In terms of income, the richest 5 percent of the world’s people earn approximately 30 percent of total global income, while the poorest 40 percent of the world’s working

population took home just 5 percent. And, in terms of consumption, the top 10 percent of the world’s people consume more than the rest of the world combined. (Ames & Hershock, 2015, p. 2)

Ames and Hershock (2015) indicate that the separation of economics and ethics is a relatively recent phenomenon that began around the beginning of the nineteenth century; previously, they “were understood as closely allied projects to understanding how best to organize society” (p. 1). While the aforementioned statistics tell only a partial story, they are one indication of the degree to which contemporary global dynamics, characterized by free-market globalization and as the product of long historical processes, currently harbor inequalities and foreshadow exacerbating tendencies for the future. The imperative to critically engage with the distinction between *value* (“as what something is worth”) and *values* (“as determinants of what is considered worthwhile”) (p. 3) becomes increasingly more urgent.

We frame the conclusions of this brief essay as a “prolegomenon” in a self-reflective acknowledgement of both the value(s) and (in)sufficiency of the model of change. The model’s components and its theoretical framework interweave concepts and theories from numerous fields of study: development studies, social work, anthropology, postcolonial theory, mathematics, developmental psychology, comparative philosophy, Catholic social thought, and scholarship of engagement, among others. We view this interdisciplinarity and the values expressed herein as an essential strength of the model. However, it also means that the discussion of each individual idea or theory is inevitably limited to skimming the surface, and, consequently, the text can only allude to the underlying depths of complexity. Even a cursory examination of the bibliography on “social justice” reveals the complexity of the topic (see, for example, Clayton and Williams, 2004).

Accordingly, the functionality of the model must be understood as a series of apertures and tensions, which purposefully include opposing centripetal and centrifugal forces: on the one hand, the model seeks to pull together diverse bodies of knowledge as a necessary function of change (and as an allusion to the vital joining of diverse epistemologies); and, on the other, it simultaneously moves towards openings in multiple directions and calls for deep, long-term immersions. The model is envisioned as fluid and malleable: the components that constitute it are not organized into a fixed and predetermined flowchart, but rather they form an interactive map that calls for the continual generation of critical questions.

Another cause for pause in the presentation of the model consists of its self-proclaimed universalism: the model is explicitly proposed as one that could potentially be adapted to any type of project, organization, or efforts focused on creating positive change. At first glance, this seems to contradict the postcolonial theoretical framework that undergirds the essay,



especially given the fact that it was created by members of a (Western) academic community. Nonetheless, the intended *value* of the model (and its graphic representation) is contingent entirely on the application of the *values* expressed as fundamental principles throughout the text: the establishment of ethical solidarity with the Other; the rejection of ahistorical and depoliticized approaches; the development of hyper-self-reflexivity and an understanding of power relations, privilege, the legacy of colonialism, and ongoing colonialities; engagement with other epistemologies and the active deconstruction of hegemonic discourses and systems of knowledge and representation; and the move towards the thick, complex, and long-term work of social change.

We have focused this article on the explanation of the components of the model, the theoretical framework, and the principles at its core. Due to the space limitations, the article only briefly alludes to some of the possible ways in which to implement it; our intention is that future publications will flesh out the implementation and provide specific case studies. These conclusions, and this text in its entirety, really are a prolegomenon in two senses: first, they preface the research, dialogue, and work yet to come in relation to the model; and, second, while it does have historical milestones, the work of and for social justice does not come with a finish line.

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<sup>i</sup> The professional learning community (PLC) that created the original version of the model of change included the following members: Jane Friedman, Professor of Mathematics; Zachary Green, Associate Professor of Practice and Associate Director of the Leadership Institute; Kevin Guerrieri, Associate Professor of Languages, Cultures and Literatures; Milburn Line, Executive Director of the Institute of Peace and Justice; Moriah Meyskens, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Business; Chris Nayve, Assistant Provost for Community Engagement; Sandra Sgoutas-Emch, Professor of Psychological Sciences; and Mandy Womack, Director of Student Leadership & Involvement, Student Affairs. Prior to the creation of the PLC, a broad campus-wide dialogue focused on the meaning and significance of the changemaking designation took place in August of 2011. During that workshop, the six “leaves of change” were collectively identified as important themes for change. However, at that time these leaves were not defined nor explained. Consequently, when the PLC initiated its work, it assumed the task of defining the terms and integrating them into a comprehensive model. We, the co-authors of this article, have built upon the model created by the PLC and drawn from some of the original language. Therefore, it is important that we recognize here the collective work of the PLC while, simultaneously, assuming responsibility for our own interpretation of the model and the development of the theoretical framework presented here.

<sup>ii</sup> Several different people worked on the design of the graphical representation of the model. Most recently, Juan Carlos Rivas, Assistant Director of the Changemaker Hub at USD, contributed to its development. The final version of the graphic was created by mindgruve ([mindgruve.com](http://mindgruve.com)).

<sup>iii</sup> In dialogue with Readings’s book *The University in Ruins*, Rolfe (2013) postulates some ideas for imagining a “community of dissensus” in relation to the notions of a “community of Thought” and the “paraversity.”

<sup>iv</sup> It is important to highlight here how the notion of “global south,” which may appear to be part of a reductive binary (north-south), is used, in fact, “to demonstrate that poverty and inequality are global phenomena and that the high rate of poverty and inequality in the countries identified as medium and low income in the United Nations Human Development Index are linked to wealth, waste, and injustice throughout the world” (Tiessen, 2014, p. 18). The term tacitly questions the idea that certain phenomena are located only in specific regions and are independent of global systems.