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IT'S ALL GOOD—BUT FOR WHOM? EXAMINING THE PRESENCE OF PUBLIC  
GOOD WITHIN DISSERTATIONS FROM PUBLIC RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

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YASHANDA SCRUGGS  
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IT'S ALL GOOD—BUT FOR WHOM? EXAMINING THE PRESENCE OF PUBLIC  
GOOD WITHIN DISSERTATIONS FROM PUBLIC RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

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Dr. Juanita Gamez Vargas, Chair

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Dr. Kirsten Edwards

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Dr. Derek Houston

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Dr. Courtney Vaughn

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Dr. Neil Houser

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## Dedication

This work is dedicated to those who have paved the way for me to participate in higher education. Your labor has not been in vain.

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I have an amazing tribe that has encouraged and supported me along this journey. Mother, thank you for showing me that love is an action word. You are a queen. I love you, dad. I will forever be your princess. Sister, you are a great mother and I am blessed to have you as my big sister. To my longsuffering husband, Louis, you are my rock. Words do not adequately express how thankful I am to have you as my partner. You have been supportive and patient with me throughout this process. I hope that I can make the next season of our lives the best yet. I love you, boo.

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this exploratory research project is to explore if university research extends “beyond the walls” of research universities and seeks to address the social matters relevant to the greater community. The researcher examined knowledge development through research by analyzing dissertations from students who were enrolled in doctoral programs and attended public research institutions with clearly stated missions related to commitment to the public good. The researcher used constructivist grounded theory to analyze the data to explore how the greater community was considered or omitted through these research contributions. By examining the data through three levels of analysis, the researcher was able to consider the way the data stood individually and collectively to paint a picture about the presence of public good in dissertations. The presence of public good work was most frequently seen by those students at HBCUs, and the presence of this work was often infused with a voice of advocacy. While there was a more proportionate representation of minority institution work in the data set, one would see that the HBCUs represent a smaller proportion of the number of institutions in the higher education system. However, such schools are offering more work for public good when compared to other institutional types. Despite having institutional missions that specifically state a commitment to research for the public good, overwhelmingly, the majority of the dissertations did not have explicit language showing work done for the public good. In summary, this study demonstrated that many public research institutions are not paying attention to the public good in the ways that reflect institutional missions. This problem perpetuates inequity, the cycle of oppression, and does not serve the greater

public community in the way that is consistent with respective institutional missions.

The researcher argues that university professors and administrators must be intentional and consistent with their efforts to aid the greater community -- this includes educating graduate students about research design, institutional mission, and the importance of research for the public good.

The work presented in this study has the potential to (1) modify current teaching practices, (2) expand public good themes, (3) revise institutional policies and practices to support public good work, and (4) strengthen the communication with and service for the benefit of the public good.

## **Chapter I: Introduction to Study**

*It's all good!* is a colloquial expression used within urban contemporary culture that conveys the message that regardless of the situation, all things will have a positive outcome; however, in its general application, the phrase may be inaccurate and misleading when attempting to explore the true status of a situation. Such generalizations can be problematic if one is trying to understand the impact of one's actions on others. For example, in the microcosm of higher education, a general belief exists and is professed by supporters that society is the recipient of "good" outcomes and resources of the university, that it's all good, although this assumption may no longer hold true.

### **Neoliberalism in Higher Education**

Educational institutions are foundationally and historically considered to produce public benefits (Chambers, 2005; Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Kerr, 2001; Rhoten & Calhoun, 2011; Rudolph, 1990). The university has helped produce knowledge that has advanced the social, economic, and political landscape of the country, not limited to scientific and technological innovation. Several authors contend that a neoliberalist ideal exists in higher education research and that this approach ultimately devalues the public good mission of institutions of higher education (Canaan & Shumar, 2008; Giroux, 2014; Giroux & Giroux, 2004; Hensley, Galilee-Belfer, & Lee, 2013; Ikenberry, 2009; Lambert, 2014; Lather, 2010; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997).

## **Defining Neoliberalism**

For this study, neoliberalism is defined as the invasion of economic and market-driven practices into the public domain of higher education, resulting in the shift away from actions and services for the public benefit (Winslow, 2015).

Like many theologies, the interpretation and use of the term neoliberalism has evolved with time. Coined nearly 80 years ago by the German scholar Alexander Rüstow, neoliberalism took stage during a conference of Germany's leading economic association in a speech entitled "Freie Wirtschaft-tarker Staat" (Free Economy, Strong State). Rüstow's vision required a strong state - but limited role for the state. For Rüstow, excessive interventionism was to blame for the economic crisis Germans faced. His speech was the rejection of state that involved economic processes. In its place, Rüstow "wanted to see a state that set the rules for economic behavior and enforced compliance with them" (Hartwich, 2009, p.17). In his writings, Rüstow's explanation of neoliberalism would fit somewhere between liberalism and socialism tenets for governance. The core of neoliberalism was the rejection of unchecked, free-market power, and the call for market police. Rüstow envisioned using inheritance tax to help redistribute wealth to help fund free education for all.

By the 1950s the German economy saw a boost with the policies that did put strict policies for market power. During this same time, people often used the term neoliberalism interchangeably with the concept of Social Market Economy (a philosophy more socialist in nature). Eventually, the term left public discourse.

## **Evolution of Neoliberalism**

Chiapello (2017) addressed, today, neoliberalism is often discussed from three theoretical approaches: first, as a phase of capitalism in Marxist tradition, secondly, as political discourse using the concepts of ideology or hegemony, and thirdly, in dialogue with the Foucauldian manifestation of liberal governmentality (p. 51). Presently, the term is used to explain the introduction of economic and market-driven logic into social and especially public domains previously not characterized by economic relations (Krzyżanowski, 2016, p. 310). Indeed, Rüstow's definition of neoliberalism is in complete contradiction to how many presently use the term.

Hayes (2016) asserted that neoliberalism in America led to the infusion of state law with capitalist ideologies, resulting in laws associating the poor with indolence, privatization of the commons, and the argument to eliminate restrictions on trade and commerce was in the best interest of all citizens (p. 3). Although the ability of industry to establish the cooperation of the state waxed and waned with the political challenges afforded by the labor movement and other populist democratic efforts (Gabbard, 2007), the turn of the 20th century was a period of industry ascendance, wherein business and industrial values held a position of influence resulting in a saturation of public institutions with business practices (Callahan, 1964). Hence, although neoliberalism is characterized by conditions specific to the late 20th century such as globalization, many of the ideologies foundational to neoliberalism were applied during the turn of the 20th century, extolled as scientific management, business models, or efficiency (Hayes, 2016, p. 3).

At its base, neoliberalism is an ideology of free-market capitalism that emphasizes pro-business and limited government (Winslow, 2015). Nonetheless, this ideology often serves as a means to further actions that support the exclusion of the underserved, disenfranchised, marginalized, and by and large, those without the means to produce, purchase, or provide information and services that can continue to move all of society forward. The majority of research points to neoliberalism as an ideology to promote capitalist behavior, as discussed extensively in Pasque's (2010) book on American higher education and the public good, which includes an analysis of 200 articles on the topic. Conversely, a small portion of literature speaks directly to the nature of this philosophy's support of a system that reinforces the imbalance of power that adversely affects public domains (Giroux, 2014; Preston & Aslett, 2014; Winslow, 2015; Lieberwitz, 2005).

The problem with neoliberalism in higher education is that it introduces economic and market-driven logic into a domain previously not characterized for economic relations and shifts its discourse and actions from the public (Krzyżanowski, 2016, p.310). Krzyżanowski (2016) notes neoliberalism results in many ideological – and conceptual – discursive struggles that serve to create, as well as legitimize, an image of non-agentic or perhaps even, invisible social/community change (p. 311).

Checkoway (2009) reports there are serious obstacles to community change for diverse democracy. There are people who defend paradigms that perpetuate present patterns of power and privilege, just as there are those who accept the given order of things and cannot conceive of alternative approaches or of themselves as a group that can create change (Checkoway, 2009, p.17). Such obstacles, whether placed



intentionally as a means to further strengthen systems of power and oppression or used, solely, to promote capitalistic behavior, do not support a diverse democracy.

Higher education should work for the advancement of a diverse democracy; however, a neoliberalist environment contributes to the lack of focus on work for the public good. While an extensive discourse on the evidence and effects of power and oppression is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to acknowledge that the researcher in this study views neoliberalism as a vehicle to continue the systemic actions and behaviors that support profit over the needs of the greater community. Moreover, neoliberalism is discussed as a detractor to public good.

### **Support of and Opposition to Neoliberalism**

As with any ideology, there are proponents and opponents of neoliberalism in higher education. Supporters of neoliberalism argue in favor of efficiency and cost-saving for actions taken to improve the fiscal effectiveness of higher education. Indeed, many neoliberalists highlight the ideals of efficiency as funding from national and state sources continues to decline (Luke & Stewart, 2011; Council on Governmental Relations, 2014; American Academy of Arts and Sciences 2015; McMahon, 2015).

Proponents “have suggested that the intertwining of science and commerce is both inevitable and beneficial, and that a university environment infused with codes and practices from the business world might offer great advantages—particularly with regard to economic development” (Kleinman, Feinstein, & Downey, 2012, p. 2386). Fish (2009) summarized the belief of critics and concluded that the neoliberalist approach is “the passage from a state in which actions are guided by an overarching notion of the public good to a state in which individual entrepreneurs “freely” pursue

their private goods, values like morality, justice, fairness, empathy, nobility and love are either abandoned or redefined in market terms.” (para. 10)

Castell (2007) expands on Fish’s point and emphasizes that given the dominance of global enterprises and their powerful commitment to privatization, a market-driven neoliberal shift involves a weakening of organizations serving the public good.

Opponents to the market-driven approach to education suggest that the pursuit of the economic value above all, results in a loss to local, state, and national interests. For example, Lather (2010) argues that economic growth had stood as the central promise of neoliberalism and that “the educational face of this neoliberalism appears to be ever-increasing accountability, testing, and efficiency” (p. 244). Further, Kezar (2005) discusses the perspective of those who support a more market-driven approach to higher education and offers a counter to the philosophy. Kezar (2005, p. 325) addressed that higher education has always been market driven and that this is what facilitated the innovations that make it the premier higher education system in the world. Kezar further stated that higher education has long diverted from the teaching missions toward research; yet, the historical context reminds us that the market forces have never been allowed to operate unfettered (Kezar, 2005, p. 325). It is this challenge that faces the movement—to be the voice that tempers market forces and engages the nation in a dialogue that will ensure that higher education continues to emphasize the public good, however that is defined (Kezar, 2005, p. 325).

Regardless of one’s perspective on the neoliberalist approach, it is necessary to consider how this ideology is affecting the current climate of higher education because

this approach is altering the values and beliefs of those in the institution of education, and, ultimately, affecting those outside of the institution (the public).

### **Neoliberalism Effects on Higher Education Research**

While a portion of commercial entities use higher education to create information that can be used to improve operations in higher education (i.e. Lumina Foundation and Carnegie Foundation), most are using these resources to develop knowledge solely for the use in their companies. Perhaps more disconcerting, commercial entities may at times use them to prevent the public from receiving vital information about their products and services. Research conducted for commercial (non-public) benefit has the potential to cause a conflict of interest for public institutions, particularly those institutions whose mission is to conduct research for the public good.

Alarm over neoliberalism in university research has led to the discussion of possibly compromising core institutional values and beliefs in pursuit of financial ventures (Blumenstyk, 2011; Blumenstyk, 2012; Cole, 2010; Kenney & Patton, 2009; Powers & Campbell, 2011). Such compromises pose a threat to the academic freedom needed to conduct work for the public good. This is a viable concern for discussion because commercial entities are growing in the use of institutional research resources (Calhoun, 2011; Kezar, 2004; Lerner, 2008; McMahon, 2009; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

A great example of this conflict of interest occurred in 2006 at the University of California (UC) regarding research on tobacco use sponsored by tobacco companies. Dr. Stanley Glantz, Director of the Center for Tobacco Research Control and Research

at UC of San Francisco and UC Board of Regents Member, Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante sought the Board of Regents to ban the acceptance of funding from tobacco companies. Glantz expressed to the Board members his concern that the tobacco industry could use the research to deceive or misinform the public and thereby, harm anti-smoking efforts. The data included findings from research studies and court cases supporting his concerns. Colleagues who supported receiving funding from tobacco companies contended that funding from any specific industry or company was an infringement on academic freedom. The colleagues argued that the individual researcher, not the institution, should decide the acceptance of funding from commercial entities. Dr. James Enstrom - a University of California, Los Angeles cancer researcher - stated that this matter was an academic freedom issue. He maintained that “the whole purpose of a university is to provide an environment where people can pursue the truth.” Enstrom stated that to dictate what research is done at a university destroys the objectivity of a university (Jaschik, 2006, para.6). However, Glantz (2006) argued for a strong commitment to institutional purpose and the greater good of the community (public good).

Glantz argued that there was a strong and well-documented ongoing pattern of systematic manipulation of the scientific process to serve the tobacco industry's political and economic needs involving a massive worldwide public relations effort. This issue was not simply regarding an unpopular industry. Glantz stated, “knowing what we know now, is it consistent with the University's fundamental academic mission and Regents policy to continue as a supporting player with the tobacco industry?” (Glantz, 2006, p. 2).

Particularly for a research institution, should the academic mission be a key factor in the undertaking of research? More pointedly, how can the research at hand be used for advancement of society (Rhoten & Calhoun, 2011; Checkoway, 2001)? In the contemporary university, outside funding is often used to finance research projects. Preventing the public from harm and ensuring advancement of society has been a core value of the public research institution; however, as outside funding comes to the institution are institutions still keeping the commitment to doing work for the public good?

Furthermore, without constant funds in place for public research universities, social progress could be impeded because scholars will not be drawn/enticed to the fields of study that consider these broader issues (discussed further in Chapter 2). With faculty and graduate students working on more studies and projects for commercial interest, there is potential for commitment conflict that manifests as a matter of intellectual property, which means that the greater community will not get the benefit of its work. The financial gains available to university researchers, and the pressures arising from industrial support of university research, have mixed intellectual property rights into the equation and added new layers of complexity. Neither the universities nor the associations representing research communities have fully dealt with the new challenge. Consequently, the social charter could be lost, not considered, or demanded by the public (Calhoun, 2011; Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Kezar, Chamber & Burkhardt, 2005).

Higher education institutions undoubtedly produce goods. Even so, there is room to question who benefits from the knowledge created within the hallowed halls of

the Ivy Tower. Although access to colleges and universities has increased for more underrepresented populations (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013), the university benefit and benefit to individual companies (i.e., the private good) have been on the rise for the past 30 years. There is evidence that the knowledge constructed within the university has not focused as much on the greater community benefit (Lewis & Hearn, 2003; McMahon, 2009; Pasque, 2010). In this case, increased access to education is useful; however, if the benefits of the education are limited to individuals within institutions or corporations, then there could be an absence of research benefiting local communities – or the public at large (i.e., the public good).

In the literature related to globalization and the public good, Castells (1997) asserts that we live in a new age defined not only by powerful organizations but also by markets and networks. He suggests that the nation-state is destabilized in an era dominated by neoliberalism, as market forces and global initiatives challenge the autonomy of national governments. Further, a market-driven neoliberal shift involves a weakening of organizations serving the public good, given the dominance of global enterprises and their powerful commitment to privatization and entrepreneurialism (Castells, 1997). As a global vision expands in power and influence, organizations committed to the larger social good are also forced to act within a market environment that increasingly seeks to privatize services. Such a shift leads to increased economic competition, a trend not always consistent with serving the larger social good.

### **Statement of the Problem**

With more research universities depending upon resources outside of state or federal funds, increased focus on non-public good (i.e., private good) in university

research, and a documented rise in commercialized research where the focus of research has shifted from community improvement to individual and private benefit, the problem, particularly for the greater society, is that public good — once a seminal theme for research — could be minimized in public higher education research institutions — not just in sponsored research, but even the most basic, unfunded level of research. If this increase in research for the private good continues, research institutions could unintentionally slight, or potentially eliminate, research that benefits the public good. Thus, gains for the greater society may be lost without the examination of such inequities.

Throughout history, university researchers, students and resources have been a force in the advancement of society (examined in chapter 2). This advancement has not been limited to scientific and technological innovation, the university has helped produce knowledge that has advanced the social, economic, and political landscape of the country. While private entities may have many influences that drive when, where, and how they value their current or potential customers, higher education institutions, when functioning with public good as a central value, pay attention to the issues that are essential to the continued development of the country. Further, because of the continuation of racial and socio-economic disparities within higher education institutions (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013), research and knowledge development may perpetuate service to those already in this system; in this way, the most vulnerable, underrepresented, and marginalized populations in society could be left to solve complex issues without the benefit of support from the researchers and scholars whom

these citizens' dollars often help pay to support. Consequently, we do not exist as a diverse democracy, which is our highest calling to continue the advancement of society

### **Purpose for Study**

Instrumental to solving complex societal issues are higher education institutions, particularly research institutions who have equipped and trained individuals to address such matters (Cameron, 1997; Checkoway, 1997, 2001; Kerr, 2001). Of particular concern are the public research institutions that have been the recipients of public funds and support and are being challenged to provide more accountability to the public (Kallison & Cohen, 2010; Smith & Korn, 2000). The benefits to universities and individual companies (private good) have been on the rise for the past 30 years and, while access to colleges and universities have increased for more underrepresented populations (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013). There is evidence that the knowledge constructed within the university has not focused as much as it should on the greater community benefit (public good) (Lewis & Hearn, 2003; McMahon, 2009; Pasque, 2010). However, if benefits are limited to individuals within institutions or corporations, then there is an absence of research benefiting actual local communities. Or more specifically, people who do not attend the university but may otherwise benefit from research contributions to a public good do not.

The purpose of this exploratory research project is to examine if university research goes “beyond the walls” of research universities and seeks to address the social matters relevant to the greater community (the public good). By doing this, the researcher explores the ways public research universities are living up to their historical, and for these institutions, self-expressed commitments (or not).



Additionally, the ways in which public research universities' commitment to notions of the public good are demonstrated in research or knowledge development is analyzed. The researcher is not taking the stance that private good is bad, wrong, or detrimental. Indeed, there are some benefits when privatization and third-party funding occur. However, the goal is to examine what remains for the masses who could benefit from the work done by those serving at state-funded research institutions.

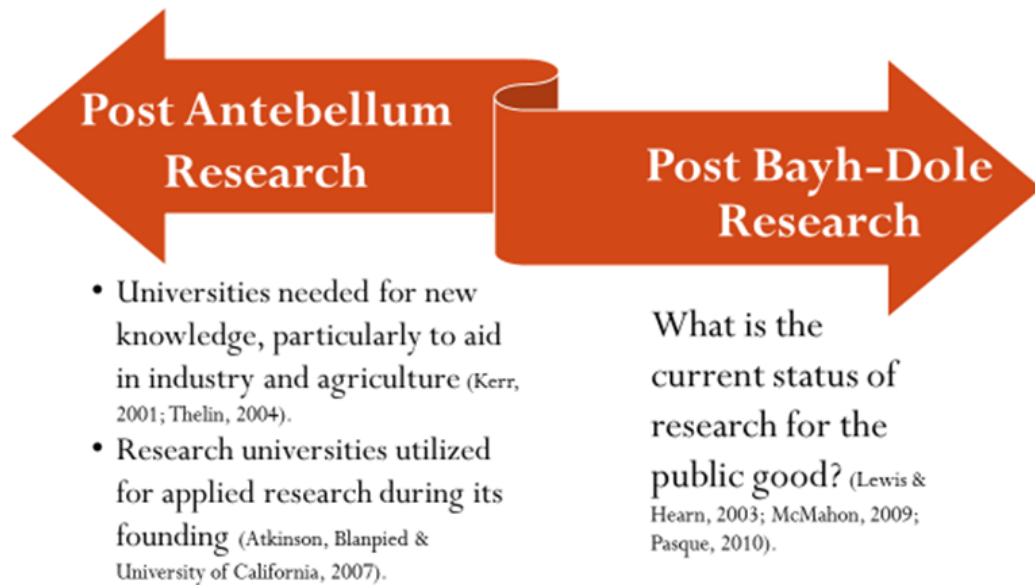
### **Significance**

By examining the works of graduate students, one is able to see current research trends and obtain some insight about the way in which those being trained as researchers are (or are not) considering the greater community in research. By studying this phenomenon, the community may have evidence that the academy is producing the public good outcomes as pronounced in research, in which case it would be a legitimate and impactful way to justify our cause for a continued need for funding from state and federal sources and higher education supporters. Should there be a lack of such evidence, research would provide a platform to discuss the intentional steps needed to bring work for the public good back into research. In order to study this topic in detail, the researcher turns to the ways in which public good is reflected in knowledge production through research at institutions supported by public funds. Specifically, what are the actual research contributions toward the public good produced by doctoral students attending public research institutions?

As previously mentioned, there are several authors who have noted the shift to more research that benefit the private good. While there are several scholars exploring the complexity of higher education public good, and stakeholders' perspective of the

concept (Chambers & Gopaul, 2008; Hensley, Galilee-Belfer & Lee, 2013; Pasque, 2010; Pasque & Rex, 2010), there are fewer studies being conducted on specific forms of public good research. Specific studies on public good in research focus on it as a means for institutions to fulfill engagement (Fretz, Cutforth, Nicotera & Thompson, 2009) or how agricultural at land-grants could be doing less research for the public good (Glenna, Shortall & Brandl, 2015; Rausser, Simon & Stevens, 2008). There is limited research that exclusively explores the public good focus of research by public universities in a qualitative manner using extant text as data. Graduate-level work, such as dissertations, are a form of research that can provide insight on current works for the public good -- how higher education for the public good is actualized, particularly in research and knowledge development at public research universities. As the future of university research, it is telling if graduate students at institutions with an expressed commitment to public good are engaging in research that benefits the greater community.

## Orienting Research Question



*Figure 1.* Orienting Research Question. The figure is a visual representation of the guiding question regarding the status of university work for public good in the modern research university. Public research universities in the post-antebellum period produced social, cultural, and economic services and goods that benefits the community. Over the past 35 years, since the Bayh-Dole Act was enacted, there has been a growing body of work exploring how universities are growing in non-public good works. This is the guiding question for the researcher as she explores public good themes, or the lack there of in the dissertations.

## **Research Questions**

To inductively explore the concept of public good concept, this study poses the following questions:

1. If present, how is the concept of public good discussed?
  - What issues are being addressed in the research? What notions/themes are expressed in research? What ways do local and global communities have the potential to be impacted by the research?
  - If not explicitly stated, does the work still address matters of public good? If so, how?
  - How does the approach to the study differ from other researchers who address the same or a similar topic?
2. Is there a voice of advocacy in the research?
  - How does the language show support for or challenge actions affecting a particular underrepresented group?
  - How does this work give voice to the concerns of populations that have been overlooked or underexplored in the research?

## **Approach to the Research**

The researcher focused on work by doctoral students at public institutions with missions that explicitly state a desire to serve the public good, in order to explore if and how the public good is being considered in the research. The research draws from Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory, which is a methodology that explores the ways "people construct texts for specific purposes and they do so within social, economic, historical, cultural, and situational context" (p. 35). In this way, data (in this

study of publications/articles from public research HBCUs and public research PWIs) are not neutral but reflect the conditions and positions from which data are constructed.

Defined as constructivist, this methodology recognizes contextual elements that are needed to critically analyze secondary data. The constructivist grounded theory process entails (a) data collection; (b) a detailed coding process; (c) memo writing; (d) theoretical sampling, saturation, and sorting; and (e) theorization. This approach is best suited for this study as (1) there is nominal research on public good research by graduate students and (2) the researcher aims to explore the subjective “what” of the data and theorize, rather than to take a positivist approach and summarize without context—a challenge that can occur when using only a method such as content analysis.

In this study, the inclusion of contextual information is vital in the interpretation of meaning. Therefore, the data analysis process included the examination of documents created within an institution concerning the institutional history, mission, and goals. Taking such contextual information into account as part of the research process provides insight into how a particular view or perspective has been shaped or influenced. Such contextual analysis complements the researcher’s constructivist approach to data analysis.

To locate dissertations from selected institutions, after defining the parameters in the search function, the researcher identified works published from 1980–2017 available through the ProQuest database (available to the researcher through OU Libraries). The specific date range spans the time frame since the enactment of the landmark Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, which increased partnerships between universities and commercial interests.

Part of the research process involved the work of reviewing content to explore institutional founding, mission, vision statement, and current institutional demographics. This process provided the researcher with contextual information to consider in the research process that the researcher uses to analyze the dissertations; and provides a means to inductively identify codes and themes that emerge in the institutional materials about the institutional interpretation of public good – in materials published by institutional staff and historical actions. This is a reflection of what McGhee, Marland, and Atkinson (2007) meant when they discussed the inductive–deductive interplay, where “ideas inductively derived from the data form mini-theories, which are then either confirmed or refuted by subsequent theoretically sampled data.” (p. 335).

In this study, the existing literature and definitions of higher education for the public good is etically placed over the institutional materials in a deductive manner to determine the ways in which the institutions are or are not expressly stating a commitment to higher education for the public good. Simultaneously, the themes and codes about higher education public good (HEPG) that exist within institutional materials emerge and, as such, may be quite different than (or overlap with) what is found in existing literature.

Throughout levels of coding, constant comparison method was used to establish analytic distinctions, and make comparisons at each level of analytic work (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54). While coding the data, this process allowed the researcher to compare data with data to find similarities and differences. In this manner, the researcher critically explores the inductive and deductive reasoning that has emerged from the data, and also thinks about the data in new ways that may differ from the dissertations writer’s

interpretation and builds new categories for further exploration. The qualitative analysis software NVivo was used to organize information included in the data set, help generate tables, and assist in the coding process for the study.

While no researcher can fairly be held responsible for how someone will interpret and use the research study findings, it is the researcher's goal in this study to clearly communicate what is being explored, why it is being explored, and how findings from the study can fill a gap in the body of work on higher education public good.

### **Researcher's Assumptions**

The greatest funding for research is available from commercial interest, consequently, broader social issues could be largely overlooked. Without constant funds in place, societal progress will be impeded because scholars will not be drawn/ attracted to the fields of study that consider these broader issues. With faculty and graduate students working on commercial interest, there is commitment conflict that manifests as a matter of intellectual property, which means that the greater community will not get the benefit of its work. Consequently, the social charter could be lost, not considered, or demanded by the public.

With the public not as aware or interested in the public good of higher education, it becomes harder to discuss why the public should invest in higher education, since, as some purport, they mostly identify the individual and private benefits (Chambers, 2005). Based upon the data showing growing work in research that is private-good focused, it necessary that one consider what exist in research that stills is public-good focused. The researcher suspects that research that is focused on public good will be limited, however, the greatest interest of the researcher lies in exploring

how the public is considered in research, and how this may differ across institutional type, and in different subjects/ topics.

Positionality causes the researcher in this study to consider how her experiences may affect the relationship to the study topic. The researcher is an African American woman who attended a historically black college during her undergraduate studies. While attending the historically black college, she was exposed to the “to whom much is given, much is required” doctrine. This doctrine asserts the belief that if you are fortunate to receive something (in this situation, an opportunity to receive a college education) you should give back and/or give service in some way to one’s community (the public). This belief causes her to consider the ways in which she can give back to her community considering the opportunity she has been given to obtain a college education. Furthermore, she views this work as a means to contribute to the community by examining how those with the means to develop work that can be used to positively impact the community do so; or if researchers do not, bring this to their attention in hopes of inspiring an intentional connection back to the community through research.

As research is a seminal piece of her graduate student experience, she considers how her beliefs about helping her community, which includes those outside of the university, could impact her approach to the study. Such exposures, beliefs, and experiences have been her inspiration for this work, and she acknowledges that this must be disclosed and reconciled with in the process of conducting research.

### **Definition of Public Good**

Exploring the concept of public good within higher education requires attention to the critical ideas of both *public* and *good*. The researcher presents a more thorough



review of the historical concept of public good as it applies to higher education in Chapter II, however, to expose the reader to the perspective behind the concept of public good, the following contains a brief introduction to the foundational idea.

Public Good Theory was published by Paul Samuelson (1954), a renowned American economist. Samuelson defined public good theory, a good was defined as public if it had one or both of the characteristics: non-rivalrous and/or non-excludable (Pickhardt, 2006). Further explanation of the notion of non-excludable was described that it is difficult to keep people from consuming the good once it has been produced, and jointness in consumption means that once it is produced for one-person, additional consumers can consume at no additional cost (Holcombe, 2000, p. 2). Goods that are joint in consumption are also called collective-consumption goods or non-rival consumption goods. For most people who hear it, including economists, the term conjures the image of a good available for all citizens to consume (Holcombe, 2000, p. 3).

Samuelson's (1954) public good theory also argued that goods with rigorously defined characteristics of publicness could not be produced efficiently by the private sector of the economy (Holcombe, 2000). Such a presentation stands contrary to the beliefs of Holcombe (2000) who opposed several elements of the public good theory, particularly, the logic that public goods can be produced more efficiently in the public sector than in the private sector, and that the government or other public-sector entities do not have the characteristics of jointness in consumption. Holcombe (2000) further argued that the theory was a tool to further government legitimacy and is used as a tool for education institutions to promote theory.

Even though not explicitly stated, Holcombe's (2000) argument that the private-sector has greater ability to produce a product for public good has an undertone of neoliberalism. This concept, particularly in an educational system, according to proponents, allows for private entities to partner with institutions and produce great outcomes while reducing the burden of cost to the public.

Although Samuelson's public good theory (1954) speaks of good in terms of a universal definition, several scholars have utilized the definition within the context of higher education and university outcomes. Because there are several stakeholders with contrasting perspectives -- administrators, faculty, board members, graduate students, etc.-- the manner in which they describe higher education public good varies. For example, Jonathan (1997) stated that an educational public good is "something of benefit to all which cannot be subdivided into individual shares and can thus only be effectively provided by all, for all" (p.71). An example of this would be graduates who tend to participate in more community service over their lifetime than non-college graduates (IHEP, 1998); the good is for everyone (those who serve and who are served) and boundaries between who is and is not impacted are not necessarily distinguishable. Similarly, Checkoway (2001) defines university public service/good as work that develops knowledge for the welfare of society.

In an alternative perspective, it is expressed that policy makers and citizens view education as a public good from which a collective return on investment was expected, such as state contributions to a public institution and the expectation that a graduate will have a higher tax contribution to the state economy and the gross national product (Jonathan, 1997). Jonathan juxtaposes this with educational theorists, professionals, and

citizens who have envisioned participation in education as a private good for personal development and private advancement – the same graduate’s individual salary is seen as an individual benefit, which is typically higher than the salary of non-graduates. In these examples, it is the same increase in salary for the graduate that makes the contribution; however, it is the policy maker or professionals’ differing perspectives of that same increase in salary that distinguishes between if it is seen as a public or private benefit.

For some the idea of higher education as a public good is linked to the notion that without state intervention, the market would fail to provide adequate provision for all citizens (Jonathan, 1997). Moreover, public institutions’ commitment to public good is especially highlighted when state funding cuts to higher education institutions are considered. Chandler and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU, 1998) echo that research and public service directed toward the public good has been an integral part of the mission of public institutions for many years. The AASCU suggest that decreases in funding will limit research, technology transfer and graduate education; each is a valid point for an argument about the benefits of higher education, but not all of the highlighted outcomes are primary public good outcomes. They point to the function of public institutions as a social and political force that produces a more enlightened and public-spirited citizenry; a trained and adaptable workforce; the knowledge that sustain our culture and undergirds our economic and technical leadership; and the means for promoting social equity (Chandler & American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1998, p. 5). Notably, such a presentation highlights the secondary public good that stem from private good outputs of higher

education. Touting public good as the main goal, while treating it as a secondary outcome of higher education — second to the private good — shows a shift away from the founding call for public good, particularly in research and knowledge development (Checkoway, 1997; Fisher, 2006).

Although public good can be categorized into sections of public, private, individual and social benefits (IHEP, 1998; Pasque, 2010), at the heart of the researcher's interest is the call for attention to matters of broader societal problems. As Pasque (2010) has illustrated elsewhere:

Higher education needs to play an instrumental role in researching and addressing myriad issues facing the world today in order to live each institutional mission and participate as conscientious community members in a diverse democracy. In this way, higher education may support the “quality of life on earth” for all, not just a few ... In this sense, the pressure on higher education is twofold: (1) to tackle the innumerable issues confronting students, institutions, and the system of higher education and (2) work collaboratively with local and global communities to address complex issues such as health care, the environment (land, air, and sea), incarcerations rates, drugs and human trafficking, educational and economic inequities, food and water sustainability, and other issues of disparities and social justice. (p. 5)

The sentiment expressed by Pasque is echoed by Lather (2010) who offers a new theory she refers to as “post-neoliberalism” which brings back a strong role for the state social concerns (p. 11). Samuelson's public good theory (1954) and the newly offered post-neoliberalism both value serving the greater community. They theories are

central to the notion of higher education acting as a public good for the public good and form the lens through which the researcher views the concept of public good in research in this study.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher defines higher education public good research as:

- (1) research conducted that has a clearly expressed intent to address a larger societal problem; or
- (2) research conducted with the broader society (not just those participating in higher education or those who use a service/resource from a private entity or commercial interest) in mind; or
- (3) research that intentionally expresses/ highlights how the research can have significant implications for the greater community (including those in and outside of the university).

In addition to defining public good, below are terms related to the concept that should be defined:

**Diverse Democracy:** an inclusive, multicultural society whose members are willing and able to take action to close the gap between these ideals and the practices that violate them, such as social, racial, cultural, and economic inequality.

**Advocacy:** the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal, or challenging actions affecting a particular underrepresented group.

## **Direction of the Work**

This study commences the process of exploring how researchers are considering the public in research. The researcher has highlighted the problem of possible loss to research or the public good, outlined the purpose of this study, and provided information regarding the current context of the public good in research. The focus on graduate work provides a unique opportunity to explore what is being done and how future researchers are continuing to work for the public sake.

Having introduced the context of this research project, along with its basic problem and purpose in this chapter, the following two chapters discuss the concepts and literature the researcher reviewed; and outline the research design, focusing on the need for the constructivist approach to grounded theory in order to analyze all the related information in a meaningful way. This includes reviewing the relevant contextual information (institutional history, demographics, website content, and expressed commitment to public good in research), and dissertations in the analysis process.

Chapter II provides a historical review of higher education public good in research and provides a review of literature related to graduate student socialization and research. This information is provided to examine orienting concepts about public good, higher education, socialization, and graduate student work, because the constructivist approach to grounded theory begins with exploring opening research questions and sensitizing concepts and disciplinary perspectives (Charmaz, 2006).

Chapter III outlines the research design, focusing on the need for the constructivist approach to grounded theory in order to analyze all the related

information in a meaningful way. The study findings gathered from the review of the dissertations and related materials are detailed in Chapter IV. A discussion of the study themes and findings are contained in Chapter V. Chapter VI concludes the study with implications and recommendations for future study.

## **Chapter II: Sensitization and Orientation to Concepts**

It is important to situate this study within the rich historical context of higher education research and knowledge development as it relates to the relationship between university and society, explore the ways in which higher education acts as a public good, and discuss present studies and literature on the topic of higher education public good in research. Although the researcher has discussed the effect of neoliberalism in higher education, additional literature discussing challenges to public research universities acting as a public good, particularly in research is presented. The chapter concludes with a review of the few research studies that examine the conceptualization of higher education public good and concludes with an offering on the need for this research study, and intentional steps to keep public good outcomes in university environments.

### **Higher Education and the Social Charter**

Since its founding, the American higher education institution has had a reciprocal relationship with society. The earliest institutions were seen as the Mecca of learning and training for society's directive class – educators, preacher, and politicians — who were instrumental in the leadership and progression of society (Komives, Woodard & Associates, 2003). As higher education institutions have grown and expanded in size, enrollments, and curriculum offerings, so have the learning outcomes for students and the possibility to directly benefit society in development and advancement. This is particularly true of for public universities that were founded as a public good with public responsibilities and accountability (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003). Because such institutions were funded in part by state assets, the benefits to the



greater community or the public good were a vital part of the relationship between the public university and society and were part of the basis of their social contract. Language that speaks of the relationship of the university to the public is often discussed as a social charter. The current charter “informed by the industrial model of higher education needs articulation and attention by government, the private sector, student, parents, and educational leaders” (Kezar, 2005a, p.25). Some scholars purport that neoliberalists are offering a charter that devalues the public good mission of higher education—this is harmful for society ((Kezar, 2005a; Lather, 2010). Moreover, as markets and networks with neoliberalist values have increased included in the university affairs the threat to public good work is ever-increasing. Castells (1997) went on to argue that a market-driven neoliberal shift involves a weakening of organizations serving the public good, given the dominance of global enterprises and their powerful commitment to privatization and entrepreneurialism. As a global vision expands in power and influence, organizations committed to the larger social good are also forced to act within a market environment that increasingly seeks to privatize services. Such a shift leads to greater economic competition, a trend not always consistent with serving the larger social good.

In the following sections, the reader is provided with a history of the relationship that the university has had with society and how that relationship has evolved as the university expanded and aged - moving from an idea of good public that helped transform the national landscape to examine how the neoliberalist climate continues to shape research practices within the university.

## **Establishment of the American Research University**

The formal university was established in the 1300s in Europe. As Atkinson and Blanpied (2007) discussed, universities “were devoted to the transmission, rather than the production, of knowledge” (p.2). These institutions were primarily teaching facilities that often featured lectures from prominent members of clergy and, eventually, non-clergy accomplished citizens. The inclusion of secular presenters connected science research to the world of higher education. For example, the Academie Francaise (1635) and the Royal Society of London (1660) — institutions primarily concerned with the preservation of French language — were affiliated with great scientist such as Isaac Newton, and physician/scientist William Gilbert. It was not until the late 16th and 17th century that the study of science appeared as a result of the increased interest in natural philosophy.

As Kerr (2001) discussed, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Germany became the catalyst for change in the university model and curriculum. Prussia shifted the emphasis of study to philosophy, science, research and graduate instruction. Atkinson and Blanpied (2007) addressed that German idealist philosophers believed that “a balanced development of state and society was only feasible with educated citizens trained as students in a neutral atmosphere of truth-seeking” (Atkinson and Blanpied, 2007, p. 4). This was the belief incorporated in the University of Berlin which was established in 1809. By the 1820s the University began to focus on scholarly research, particularly in the areas of philology and linguistics. The first scientific laboratories for teaching and research were established by German chemist Justus Liebig at Giessen in 1826. As technology-based industry progressed, and Germany grew and unified in the

1860s, scientific research facilities were a vital element in addressing the country's industrial challenges (Atkinson and Blanpied, 2007). Consequently, the university "now carried with it two great new forces: science and nationalism" (Kerr, 2001, p.9).

The United States began its higher education journey in 1636 with the establishment of Harvard University. Similar to its European colleagues, the connection of universities and science scholars was instrumental in the introduction of science and research in the current model of higher learning. In 1743, Benjamin Franklin established the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia -- this organization was similar to the Royal Society of London. Likewise, in 1790, John Adams established the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Boston. Franklin thought minds should be developed for commerce and exploring science (Kerr, 2001).

Although outside scholars helped connect the notion of research to universities, it would take a member of the university to push for the establishment of the research institution. Professor George Ticknor tried to reform Harvard to the model he had studied under while at University of Gottingen (a German institute), but this battle was not won. Similar unsuccessful charges for change were launched by Francis Waylon at Brown University in the 1850s and Henry Tappan at the University of Michigan (Kerr, 2001).

The first semi-research universities in the United States appeared as a result of the first Morrill Act. As Atkinson and Blanpied (2007) explained, proceeds from their sale of land were used to establish colleges (and later, universities) to teach practical science, primarily in agriculture and the mechanical (p.4). Faculty member at these institutions were also expected to conduct research on their areas of specialty (primarily

in agriculture) and to create outreach programs to disseminate the results of their investigations to farmers in their respective states (p. 4). Around the same time, the US government developed the National Academy of Sciences. This organization was comprised of expert scientists who would advise the government on matters when requested. Such organizations occasionally contracted work with research universities (specifically faculty with specialized skills and interest) to assist with projects.

The charge for an absolute research university was finally fulfilled when Daniel Coit Gilman took the helm at the recently founded John Hopkins University in 1876. The university focused on graduate studies and research. As Kerr (2001) addressed, the Hopkins idea brought with it a graduate school with exceptionally high academic standards in what was still a rather new and raw civilization. In addition, it jump started the renovation of professional education, particularly in medicine, the establishment of the preeminent influence of the department, and influenced the creation of research institutes and centers, university presses, learned journals and the “academic ladder” (p.11).

Following Gilman’s lead, Harvard University President Charles Eliot also emphasized the tenants of the graduate school and research. Eliot contributed to the evolution of higher education by creating the elective system which allowed students to select their own courses to study (Kerr, 2001). Other leaders at several universities quickly followed in this new research model: Cornell University, University of Michigan, Columbia University, Stanford University, University of Chicago, and the University of California.

## **Government Support for Research Universities**

In the late 1800s and early 1900s the US established some state and regional academies of sciences (Atkinson and Blanpied, 2007). After World War I, industrial research by private sector had grown, conducting mainly applied research. As a result of the Great Depression, both institutional and private sector research greatly declined but was revitalized in the 1940s. Research universities were aided by the commitment of government funds to aid in the creation of new knowledge; this would be overseen and conducted by a new government agency, the National Science Foundation.

Much like the founding of American higher education, the American research university came about as a result of innovation in the university model from abroad, and the need for new knowledge – particularly to aid in industry and agriculture. Although almost solely utilized for applied research during its founding, the depth of study at research universities has expanded and, at several institutes, been supplemented by the use of government funds to develop information for public good.

With the founding of Harvard University, the American higher education legacy began. This institution and those established shortly thereafter, were responsible for preparing the next generation of the directive class.

## **Land-Grant Universities and the Creation of the First Black Institutions.**

For the next century, universities expanded and blacks were not a part of the education experience. During the Revolutionary War (1776-1783) Americans began to debate the morality of slavery (Lovett, 2011, p.1). The anti-slavery movement affected the establishment of the first black colleges, “indeed education became a central focus and a liberating force in the abolitionist movement” (Lovett, 2011, p.4).

The shift of the anti-slavery movement to the North influenced the acceptance of blacks into colleges. The Society of Friends, a faction of the Quakers, published *The Declaration of Sentiments* (1833) in which they called for equal treatment of persons of color. Religiously-affiliated colleges were among the first to accept blacks. As Lovett (2011) expressed, these institutions had a profound effect on the development of HBCUs because they educated much of the early faculty members of the schools. A college that was instrumental in pronouncing the education of blacks — and graduated several blacks who went on to assist in the founding of HBCUs — was Oberlin College. Founded in 1833, the college began admitting blacks in 1835, and “reported a four percent Negro enrollment by 1855” (Lovett, 2011, p.8). That same year Berea College was established. This institution also openly promoted the admission and education of blacks and was the undergraduate institution of black scholars such as Carter G. Woodson (Lovett, 2011; Brooks, 2011). Other black educating institutions include Mayville College and Franklin College, both located in Tennessee.

The history of Berea College — specifically, the legal battle that led to the expulsion of black students — highlights the struggles faced on and outside of the college campus when promoting equity and the value of a desegregated college. Although there were a few colleges that admitted blacks, there was still a strong sentiment about the inferiority of blacks and their right to obtain education (Lovett, 2011; Brooks, 2011).

A few years following the founding of Oberlin College, the first college exclusively serving blacks was established – Cheney College. In 1837, the Institute for the Colored Youth was funded in Philadelphia with funds donated by a Quaker

philanthropist. The school was to educate blacks in mechanic arts, trades and agriculture. Later, the school relocated to a farm on George Cheney's land in 1902 and became State Normal School at Cheney in 1921. The school officially became Cheney College in 1959 (Lovett, 2011).

Lincoln University for Negroes was chartered in 1854 as Ashmun Institute. The school admitted students in 1856, and it boasted that it was the first institution to provide education of arts and sciences for blacks. Lovett (2011) states that "by 1900, Lincoln University graduated 600 students, many times more than any of the 33 degree-granting HBCUs" (p.12). Lincoln's graduates went on to start other colleges with a focus on educating the nation's poor and minority population, such as South Carolina State University, Livingstone College, Albany State University, and several others (Lovett, 2011). Lincoln University is also credited for graduates founding colleges and universities internationally. Other antebellum HBCUs include Avery College (1849), University of the District of Columbia (1851) and Harris-Stowe State University (1857) (Brooks, 2011).

The Civil War (1861-1865) was a major catalyst for the expansion of black education and the development of HBCUs. During this time freedmen who had served in the war were often left destitute without even basic essentials. Lovett (2011) notes that a Union general asked northerners to send help for the freedmen. The result was the creation of clinics and monetary donations from northern missionaries and blacks used to provide amenities for the freedmen. As union-occupied areas, northerners and some local blacks established classes in the contraband camps. This process began the establishment of freedmen schools and HBCUs (Lovett, 2011, p.14). There were several

religious and social-change groups instrumental in supporting endeavors to expand the education opportunities for blacks during this time. The American Missionary Association (AMA), founded in 1846, was a nondenominational Christian agency that aided sixty-three Negro schools, including three seminaries and three colleges. Likewise, the Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Board of Missions for Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church supported the funding of primary, secondary, and graduate schools for blacks. Supported by said religious and social groups, the curriculum, faculty, and leadership of these institutions were overseen by European Americans. The first presence of blacks in administration occurred when Wilberforce University, founded in 1855 by the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC), was later purchased by the African Methodist Episcopal Church and became the first college to have a Negro president with AMEC Bishop Daniel Payne at the helm.

Religious organizations were not the only entities actively supporting the growth of HBCUs. Blacks in the 62<sup>nd</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> US Colored Troops donated funds to help establish Lincoln University (institute) in 1865 in Missouri. The institute was receiving state aid by 1871 and became the state's first black Morrill Land grant institution in 1891 when adding agricultural and industrial curricula (Lovett, 2011).

As previously mentioned, early HBCUs curriculum reflected the religious educational philosophies of Northerners, and questions arose if this did anything to prepare blacks for university work (Lovett, 2011; Brooks, 2011). Many thought the industrial education made blacks work as they did during slavery. This was most evident in the differing approaches to education by prominent black scholars Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. Washington felt that blacks must prove themselves in



order to survive; along with academic courses, students had industrial training in fields such as agriculture, blacksmithing, painting, and machinery. Contrarily, DuBois highlighted the lack of blacks in programs he believed prepared them for advancement in society and encouraged enlightenment. As HBCUs evolved, the curriculum endured much reform and slowly incorporated more work that prepared blacks for careers outside of education and agriculture.

In 1865 the US Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands “took over function heretofore carried out by the Army and the missionaries” (Lovett, 2011, p.22). The agency created institutions such as Atlanta University, Fisk University, and Howard University. Less than five years after its establishment, the organization was phased out as a result of its primary funding source going bankrupt. Support from northerners was also on the decline as attention was turned to “transforming the base of the American economy from agriculture to industry” (Lovett, 2011, p.24). This shift was harmful to the progression of the HBCU and black higher education initiatives.

### **Land-Grant Universities and Federal Funding for Agriculture Research.**

During this same time of reconstruction, Senator Justin Morrill, in 1862, introduced legislation to improve access to and the variety of public higher education (Collins, 2012). Morrill spearheaded a movement to improve the state of public higher education throughout the United States, putting an emphasis on the need for institutions to train Americans in the applied sciences, agriculture, and engineering (CollegeView, para. 2). The Morrill Land-Grant Act gave federal lands to the states for the purpose of opening colleges and universities to educate farmers, scientists, and teachers, and, although many such institutions were created, few were open or inviting to blacks,

particularly in the South (CollegeView, para. 2). Northern states used funds to create institutions that accepted both blacks and women. Conversely, southern states, recently readmitted to the Union, also began receiving funds but refused to admit blacks (Brooks, 2011; CollegeView; Lovett, 2011). Of the states that used funds to found colleges, only Mississippi created a land-grant institution for blacks, Alcorn State University.

Land-grants were infused with federal dollars through the first Morrill Act, and emboldened with federal support over the next few decades to expand outreach and support for the common citizen, who during this time period, were primarily farmers. Although this funding was not given to land-grant institutions, the Hatch Act of 1887 was another key piece of legislation that directed federal dollars to states; funds were used to create agricultural experiment stations within the land grants in the respective states (National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, 1995). To create a system to disseminate knowledge developed from research done within the experiment stations, in 1914, the Smith Lever Act created a cooperative extension service that was associated with the land-grant institutions. Administered through the United States Department of Agriculture, the federal funds aforementioned were key to the agricultural advancement of the nation—and it was done through the work of the university to benefit the greater community.

In 1890, the second Morrill Act was enacted. This legislation required states receiving land-grant funds to have equal treatment of the races, either admissions of both races or the creation of a school to serve blacks (Brooks, 2011; CollegeView; Lovett, 2011). This effort established 16 exclusively black serving institutions. On a

local level, in 1897, the land-grant act supported the establishment of the Oklahoma Colored Agricultural and Normal University. This institution would later be named for Oberlin College graduate John Mercer Langston, an abolitionist, attorney, and politician.

For black Americans, entry into college did not occur until nearly two hundred years after the founding of the first American higher education institutions. The support of northerners, religious organizations and the efforts of freedmen were the catalyst for the first HBCUs and the education of blacks. Such efforts were compounded following the War and the subsequent need for resources for new freedmen. Government intervention -- via emancipation, voting rights, and service agencies -- assisted this process, through the most significant boost to the growth of HBCUs occurred with the enactment of the Morrill Acts.

### **Reflection**

Much like the founding of American higher education, the American research university came about as a result of innovation in the university model from abroad, and the need for new knowledge. Similarly, the land-grant university, and by de facto most black colleges, were also founded out of the need for societal advancement -- particularly to aid in industry and agriculture. Although almost solely utilized for applied research during its founding, the depth of study at research universities and land-grants was expanded and been supplemented by the use of government funds to develop information for public good.

## **Evolution of Higher Education Public Good**

While higher education institutions have some fundamental tie to and ability to function for the public good, public research institutions — by nature of historical founding and charge — have a particular interest in good for the public (Rudolph, 1990; Chambers, 2005; Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Kerr, 2001; Rhoten & Calhoun, 2011). For example, the Morrill Act of 1862 founded public land grant institutions that were to “promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life” (National Archive, Sec. 5). It was the Morrill Act of 1890 that provided cash instead of land and supported the evolution of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). As such, public land grants and HBCUs are expected to utilize government funds in order to contribute to the public good.

The founding of the historically black college and the research university in the United States reflects a profound, yet differing, approach to the evolution of culture and industry in America. Although both were established out of a need for public good, the specific approach to and reasoning for support differ. The American research university was founded because of the need for new knowledge, particularly for the new frontier of agriculture and industry following World War I (Atkinson, Blanpied, & University of California, 2007). The government invested in these institutions primarily for the advancement of productivity and consumption (Atkinson, Blanpied, & University of California, 2007), both of which are generally categorized as economic benefits of public good (Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), 1998). Conversely, the historically black college came about because of the need to educate newly freed

enslaved people (Brooks, Starks, 2011; Lovett, 2011). Advancement and expansion of HBCUs was supported by the government to increase social cohesion and tolerance.

### **The Wisconsin Idea**

In the late 1800s, there was a strong relationship between politicians and business leaders. So much so that policies created favored friends rather than focusing on the needs of citizens (Weerts, 2016; Harkavy, 2015). Historians assert that progressive republicans “believed that the government’s job was to serve the people” and they sought to “restrict the power of corporations when it interfered with the needs of citizens (Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2004, para 2). In this way, keeping government control and influence over entities such as universities was key to ensuring that the greater community was at the center of the work of public and state-funded organizations.

Robert La Follete, a leader in the progressive republican circle, served as governor of Wisconsin from 1901-1906. Governor La Follette was a former classmate of then University of Wisconsin President Charles Van Hise who, in 1905, delivered an address before the Press Association which is considered to be the origin of the Wisconsin Idea. In this speech, La Follette expressed the need for the university to service as a resource to the state, and more important, he saw the faculty and staff of the university as tools who are instrumental in the work of addressing the complex societal challenges of the state. Van Hise stated:

[The university] is supported that they may become better fitted to serve the state and the nation. It is supported that the knowledge and wisdom of the generation, as well as the achievements, may reach all parts of the state... I shall

never be content until the benefit influence of the University reaches every family of the state. This is my ideal of a state university. If our beloved institution reaches this ideal it will be the first perfect state university. (Van Hise, 1905, p. 5)

The Wisconsin Idea embodied the belief that entities, such as a state university, were key to developing knowledge and serving as a resource to the community who helped support it. At the University of Wisconsin, the Idea was manifested in many ways. One of the most impactful was through the development of the extension division, which provides educational opportunities not just for those seeking college degrees, but course and training for citizens seeking to improve community challenges.

University researchers were heavily involved in work to address state-wide issues. Faculty knowledge was put to use by helping doing research and training legislators on researching information to improve the quality of laws. This worked was housed in the Legislative Reference Bureau, that was led by Charles McCarthy—the author of the book *The Wisconsin Idea*. The work by faculty and legislatures “help draft many influential and groundbreaking laws, including the nation’s first workers’ compensation legislation, tax reforms and the public regulation of utilities” (University of Wisconsin- Madison, para 4). The Idea was replicated internationally and served a model for how the university can be a part of and greatly impact the community.

### **The Multiversity**

While the Wisconsin Idea was created and prevalent in the first few decades of the 1900s, the value of the state funded university for the community’s benefit was continuing to grow. Understanding the benefits of pairing with trained faculty and

maximizing the use of reach facilities, government entities began to partner with university faculty to advance the nation in fields such as agriculture, technology and industry. These increased opportunities for research also marked the shift from a higher education model focused on undergraduate education to research and knowledge development. The University of California and its growing student body and research capacities epitomized the university and government reach relationships of the 1950s. Chancellor of the University of California-Berkeley Clark Kerr (from 1952-57) was at the helm during this time of great investment and transition at the university, and he was a strong advocate for the researchers of the university being used to benefit the greater community. Kerr saw higher education as a tool for moral uplift, not merely a vehicle for personal or career. Kerr coined the term “multiversity” to describe this evolution of the university and its ability to serve the many needs of those in and outside the institution. In 1963, Kerr offered his own views of American higher learning and foreshadowed its future with his Godkin Lectures at Harvard University. His lectures underscored the new role of the federal government in university goals/outcomes. He believed that the university was a "prime instrument of national purpose.” Kerr described the multiversity as a city of infinite variety consisting of several different, sometimes conflicting, communities that ultimately serve society, and are more geared toward service industries, science and research, and government grants than to teaching (Kerr, 1963, p. 31).

The multiversity was central to the further industrialization of the nation, significant increases in productivity, the extension of human life, and to worldwide military and scientific dominance of the United States (Kerr, 1963, p.199) Another

positive feature of the multiversity is that, along with the further industrialization, research, and ties with industry, come large government grants, and subsequently, prestige and status for the university. Kerr also argued that the multiversity is best seen at work, in how it has adapted, grown, and responded to the massive impact of federal programs following World War II (Kerr, 1963, p.34). While much good came from the multiversity, Kerr acknowledged that such a structure and culture created competing visions of the organization's primary purpose. Kerr stated that the university served as many things to so many different people that it must, of necessity, be partially at war with itself (Kerr, 1963, p.7). Furthermore, he addressed the central focus on research had created non-teachers - meaning that teaching became less central than it once was, while research has become more important (Kerr, 1963, p. 32).

### **Post Bayh-Dole Act**

Governmental agencies were not the only groups to understand and desire to partner with universities on research projects. Because there were hundreds of unused patents derived from federally-funded research, an opportunity was created for nonprofit research institutions and small business to retain patents and commercialize inventions (Grimaldi, Kenney, Siegel & Wright, 2011; Kenney & Patton, 2009; Kumar, 2010). In the last 35 years, since the enactment of the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, research partnerships -- particularly with private, commercial entities -- drastically increased. Considering this in the present context and at a local level, such partnerships are not only growing but are also presented as solutions to education and research funding shortages. They also suggested means to get services and products to the masses in a more efficient and effective manner. A reporter at one of Oklahoma's largest



newspapers wrote the following about a partnership between a state university's research centers and commercial partnerships:

Bayh-Dole gave institutions like [the center], rather than the government, the right to take ownership of inventions that had been backed by federal funding. With that right to take ownership came the right to pursue commercialization opportunities. On its surface, Bayh-Dole sounds inequitable. The government pays institutions to make discoveries, then the institutions get to reap the benefits of that work.

But under the old regime, the government reaped no benefits; it failed to transform a single discovery into a health care product that reached hospitals and clinics. And, more importantly, neither did America's patient population, which saw no therapeutic benefit from all the tax dollars invested in research. (Prescott, 2017, para. 5-7).

The writer continues to explain how the partnership with commercial entities has benefited university research, stating that since Bayh-Dole was first enacted, federally-funded research was generated over 200 vaccines and drugs that are in the market. The author discussed that the institutions where these medications are developed receive a small royalty fee from sales. Referring to the royalty, he then states that "this system has helped diversify and stabilize the research funding base at institutions like [the research foundation] (Prescott, 2017, para. 7). And that "while small relative to our overall research budget, these additional dollars from commercial sources do help protect against the ever-shifting winds of federal funding" (Prescott, 2017, para. 9).

To underscore the economic impact of this partnership, Prescott (2017) references a report by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization and Association of University Technology that found that over the past two decades, licensing by academic and nonprofit institutions to industry has contributed \$1.3 trillion to the U.S. economy and supported up to 4.2 million American jobs (para 10).

The aforementioned narrative paints commercialized partnership as a means to get services and resources to the people, nevertheless, evades the idea that it is possible for this to occur by the public researchers working to create a means to deliver medicine to the public without commercial industry assistance. Moreover, it could mean that vital medical breakthroughs and services could be only available to those without the financial means, should the innovations cost too much, or that the option will only be made available to those in the circle of influence, excluding potentially the neediest populations from receiving treatment. This approach further perpetuates the commercialization of work and contributes to a system of oppression driven by capitalism, done in the name of innovation and efficiency.

### **Reflection**

The historical and, often, mission-rooted ties that public universities have to public good is evident, yet, the current literature does point to a time of negotiation of what the social charter entails. This occurs when the public values “the economic and individual benefits of higher education, but does not value as highly, or possibly recognize, with the nonmonetary benefits” (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003, p. 9). Additionally, this is being done at a time when higher education is competing against other social needs (Duderstadt and Womack, 2003). Several authors suggest that higher

education take immediate action to connect with the public and discuss the public good outcomes of the university (Chambers, 2005; Kezar, 2004; Kezar, 2005a; Kezar, 2005b).

### **Present Context of University Research**

The previous sections in this chapter have walked the reader through the historical context of American higher education establishment, evolution, and involvement in work for public good. The forthcoming sections provide the reader with information about the current environment of higher education, with specific attention to the challenges facing higher education research for public good.

### **Neoliberalism Demonstrated in Higher Education**

It is important to situate this study in the present context of higher education and highlight challenges to public research universities acting as agents of public goods through research. While there are infinite issues related to higher education and the public good, the effects of neoliberalism most highlights the challenges of balancing a commitment to serving the public good and moving to a place of expressed autonomy and efficiency (Canaan and Shumar, 2008; Fish, 2009; Giroux, 2014; Kleinman, Feinstein, & Downey, 2013; Preston and Aslett, 2014; Winslow, 2015). Kleinman et al. (2012) discussed privatization (the shift of responsibilities to a private industry) and deregulation (the relaxation of controls over private activities/business) as important neoliberal factors in higher education. Indeed, issues of privatization, commercialization, and corporatization are key elements that inject neoliberalism in the university context, which affects university functions, including university research efforts. In this section, the researcher discusses the factors contributing to universities

moving toward an increasingly neoliberalist approach to education. Issues of funding for higher education (decreasing in state and national funding) are catalysts for the rise in neoliberalism in the university context. The researcher also provides insight on these issues and concludes with an offering on the need for intentional steps to keep public good outcomes in university research environments.

### **Privatization.**

Knowledge is the business of the research university; however, concern over the universities' commitment to academic values has come into question as institutions have become more privatized. Privatization is a response to the forces changing public higher education in an era of globalization—a balancing act between the old way of envisioning a public university as the “people’s university,” funded by and solely accountable to the state, and a new public-private partnership that is funded by and accountable to multiple stakeholders (Lambert, 2015, p.8)

Often addressing matters of decreased state funding, public university officials have expressed that as state support becomes an increasingly smaller proportion of their budgets, many public institutions want to be freed from governmental constraints that lead to inefficiencies in their operations and to have the freedom to make economic decisions that will improve their ability to compete with the privates (Ehrenberg, 2006, p. 49).

To accomplish this, institutions have increasingly outsourced certain responsibilities or entered into agreements with a private entities to fulfill elements of their business operations (privatization) (Breneman, 1997; Breslauer, 2016; DeAngelo, 2000). According to proponents, privatization, particularly in an educational system,

allows for private entities to partner with institutions and produce great outcomes while reducing the burden of cost to the public.

Although some short-term benefits in cost occur from privatization, scholars argue that these savings come at the expense of devaluing the public good charter (Ehrenberg, 2006; Ikenberry, 2009). The charter is at risk because academic values such as research objectivity, academic freedom, and liberty to dispense and discuss study findings, are crucial as it pertains to research that benefits the greater community and is vital to fulfilling a commitment to public good in research (Chambers, 2005).

### **Commercialization of research.**

Growing privatization can lead to institutions functioning as a private business, resulting in a commercialized campus culture. Many questions have been raised about the impact of commercialization on the public good as the business elements of research in the university have increased. Research partnerships — particularly with private, commercial entities — drastically increased after the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, in which industry surveys showed tangible increases in “collaboration with and funding for university-based research activities” (Kezar, 2004, p. 441). University research conducted on behalf of commercial interests has been on the rise for more than thirty years (Blumenstyk, 2011; Blumenstyk, 2012) and so have concerns over its impact on innovation in science (Powers & Campbell, 2011), scientific entrepreneurship (Cole, 2010; Kenney & Patton, 2009), and academic freedom. Since that time, several researchers have documented the rise in commercialized research conducted on college campuses, (Calhoun, 2011; Kezar, 2004; Lerner, 2008; McMahon, 2009; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) where the focus of research has shifted from community improvement

to individual and private benefit (Giroux & Giroux, 2004; Ikenberry, 2009; Kuntz et al., 2011; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoads, 2004).

### **Corporatization.**

Today, many university missions have shifted from public-social to private-economic (Chambers, 2005, p. 26). This is compounded by more corporate-affiliated trustees who can influence decisions that emphasize profit rather than learning outcomes. This is particularly problematic because power (decision-making) in institutions has become further centralized (Rowley & Sherman, 2007) and the role of university presidents has become increasingly focused on fund-raising than being the “intellectual and moral leaders for their community” (Chambers, 2005, p. 27).

Universities have adopted corporate strategies, which can be beneficial in some areas, but the focus on competitiveness and cost effectiveness can be detrimental to maintaining certain academic ethical standards. Values such as research objectivity, academic freedom, and liberty to dispense and discuss study findings, are crucial when one discusses the idea of research that can benefit the greater community; they are vital to fulfilling a commitment to public good in research (Chambers, 2005). Powers (2009) offers that there is a set of beliefs contrary to the norm in university research with an approach that includes particularism, solitariness, self-interestedness, and organized dogmatism. Such behavior is contrary to the social contract between the university and the community, and harmful to research for public good.

To support his claim, Powers (2009) discusses his research findings on the analysis of 125 university/industry/technology contracts with various industries. He identified four major themes that highlight the challenges of public responsibilities:

transparency of the financial terms of the licensing deal, exclusive licensing to single firms for technological developments, university/faculty acceptance of stock in a license company, and publication oversight rights by licensee companies. The study highlights the issues of work done by research institutions and private interests. The challenge and conflict of pairing with private entities is that higher education institutions often lose freedom/autonomy in research and may be confined to a predetermined approach to research, which could lead to influenced study findings (Longenecker, 2005).

Therefore, the private sector may not be willing or able to be public-good focused.

### **Funds and Support for Higher Education**

There has been much discussion about the local and state disinvestment in higher education (Kallison & Cohen, 2010). Decreased public funding for research, and the overall decline of state support of institutions, has been highlighted as a contributor to the focus on commercialized research. State funding for higher education historically rises and falls with the economy, but institutions are still more than 25 percent below the funding level prior to the 2008 recession (Douglas-Gabriel, 2015). A report by the United States Government Accountability Office (2014) found that from 2003 through 2012, state funding for all public colleges decreased while tuition increased; public colleges collected more money via tuition than state funding in 2012. Overall, state funding decreased by 12 percent while median tuition rose 55 percent across all public colleges (United States Government Accountability Office, 2014). As the cost of attending a public institution increases and perceived accountability decreases, the idea of the institution as a private good becomes more plausible. As the cost to attend university increases and there is a perceived lack of accountability, legislatures'

questions if public institutions are achieving “what it means to be public: accessible, affordable, and inherently connected to the needs of the people” (Lambert, 2014). The steady decline in state funding may be extremely challenging to stop as more entities and social obligations compete for a portion of state appropriations.

For example, research by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2016) showed that public college, during 2015-16, often saw funding levels that what were given during the recession on 2008. After adjusting for inflation, 46 states spent less per student than they did before the recession. And the average state spent \$1,598, or 18 percent less, per student than before the recession. For nine states, that per-student funding was down by more than 30 percent since the start of the recession (Mitchell, Leachman, & Masterson, 2016).

In addition to the increased competition for funding, the present perception of the benefits of higher education by those in places of influence also could impact current funding issues. Jonathan’s (1997) work highlighted that policy makers envision participation in education as a private good for personal development and private advancement – the same graduate’s individual salary is seen as an individual benefit, which is typically higher than the salary of non-graduates (Jonathan, 1997). Such a view of higher education as primarily a private good by policy-makers proves crippling, particularly at a time when state funding for universities has been steadily declining (Luke & Stewart, 2011; McMahon, 2015).

Lambert (2015) interviewed legislatures and staff in three states with major public research institutions regarding the perspective of higher education and privatization. Lambert (2015) found that majority of legislators he interviewed pointed



to the long history of public support for the flagship university over two centuries as evidence of a commitment to supporting public higher education. Yet, legislators described a feeling that university leaders were “ungrateful” and had an attitude of “what have you done for us lately?” (Lambert, 2015, p. 12). Lambert (2015) reported “that most legislators do not see any measurable move away from serving the public good as a result of privatization. Some of those who follow higher education most closely—state policy analysts, national think tanks, and former leaders of institutions—have seen noticeable, if not seismic, shifts in the commitment to the public good by many public universities” (p. 11).

### **Emphasis on Private Benefits of Education**

With the public less aware or uninterested in the public good of higher education and primarily identifying its individual and private benefits, it becomes harder to discuss why the community should invest in it (Chambers, 2005). There is evidence that higher education entities are helping to send this message to the masses. Saichaie and Morpew (2014) examined the websites of 12 four-year institutions in the United States to assess what they communicated about their institutional mission and purpose. Although this study focused on websites marketing to potential students, the overarching question considered the qualities being marketed to the public on websites; an area that has had limited research. Saichaie and Morpew identified three categories of outcomes in the study: democratic equality, social efficacy, and social mobility. Democratic equality and social efficacy represent public goods because they benefit the greater community, while social mobility is associated with private because it is associated with individual benefit. Saichaie and Morpew (2014) used content analysis

and found that the majority of institutions of higher education were promoted as training grounds for skill acquisition so learners will be prepared to serve private-sector outlets, a focus on the private good benefits of learning. Although public institutions of higher education were more likely than private institutions of higher learning to emphasize their role in providing services to community or regional areas, economic development, and preparing graduates for the local and regional workforce page, few references to democratic equality and social efficacy appeared in the sample.

Overall, institutions in the sample portrayed themselves as levers for individual advancement and enjoyment as opposed to broader instruments for improving communities and society. As Saichaie & Morpew acknowledged, institutions of higher education play an important role in society, which aligns primarily with democratic equality in terms of teaching, research, and community engagement. However, the messages on the websites de-emphasize the public mission and purposes that institutions had chosen. The message portraying that higher education is focused on job advancement, is a message that is “consistent with legislation and state-level policies that suggest that some academic majors and degree programs - as a function of their tight link with jobs – are more equal than others” (Saichaie & Morpew, 2014, p. 525). The findings support the need for more conversations among higher education professionals about the purpose of education, particularly as it relates to communicating the public good outcomes of higher education, and benefits to the general public.

### **Challenges to Faculty Research for the Public Good**

The ability to keep higher education institutions, particularly a research university, involved in work for the public good requires intentional action by

stakeholders to ensure that the mission, vision, policies, and corresponding personnel actions reflect a commitment to the greater community. While administrators and faculty have different roles and functions in the university, both are on the frontlines of research activity and are instrumental to the shaping of public good outcomes in research.

A former public university president discussed her experiences while attempting to keep public good at the forefront of the institutions actions (Gilliland, 2005).

Although she had woven public good into the vision of the institution, she discussed that she had to take “a stand” for the vision over and over again. Gilliland emphasized that leadership members must constantly talk about the vision, using it as context for every decision made, and clearly communicate to others the relationship of the decision to the vision. She affirms that there are many external factors that affect the ability of many institutions to serve public good, highlighting the challenge of faculty attempting to be seen as successful by professional association rather than being judged for their impact on public good, and the rising cost of higher education as major distractors to efforts for public good.

With diminishing resources from state and federal funds, faculty find themselves focused on securing funding from outside sources that often have different core functions and values than the public university. Moreover, faculty recognition opportunities for writing and researching and tenure processes, by and large, do not focus on contributions to public good. Work by O'Meara, Kaufman & Kuntz (2003) expressed that faculty feel overwhelming pressure “to teach more, collaborate more and to engage in activities for which the traditional faculty reward structures have had little

regard” (p. 18). Consequently, as universities give money and promotion to faculty who obtain grant funds, pressure over tenure and promotion come into discussion about faculty research for public good. Canaan & Shumar (2008) discussed the struggles of university personnel in this way:

Researchers/teachers/administrators find themselves interpolated as calculating, competing individuals who are judged and monitored and encouraged to judge and monitor themselves and others according to such dictates and structure... The effect has been to transform researching, teaching, and administrating into commodities to be scrutinized and measured rather than processes through which (at least with regard to the first two activities) teachers derive intrinsic pleasure and realize their identities. Yet teachers do not simply submit to such interpolation; they also refuse, rework and resist it in a number of ways. (Canaan & Shumar, 2008, p. 6)

In order to keep public good at the heart of work by public university researchers, administrators and prominent faculty must begin to reward efforts that address societal challenges. This includes making modifications to tenure requirements, faculty engagement requirements, and even recognition opportunities to award work for the public good (O’Meara, Sandmann, Saltmarsh & Giles, 2011; O’Meara, 2006; O’Meara, Kaufman & Kuntz, 2003).

### **Reflection**

Higher education has also been crucial to the development of the nation’s cultural, social, and economic capital. Where university leadership and staff have seen past opportunities to utilize their resources and talents to benefit the greater community,

shifts in federal and state funding have caused university faculty and administrators to seek other funding sources. Consequently, many faculty and administrators are doing more research for private benefit and potentially, slighting opportunities to benefit the public good.

### **University Research as a Contributor to a Diverse Democracy**

Instrumental to solving such complex issues are institutions of higher education. Particularly, research universities have the best equipped and the most qualified individuals to address such matters (Cameron, 1997; Checkoway, 1997, 2001; Kerr, 2001). In order to address these problems, researchers must be equipped with a multicultural view and approach of the world.

Multicultural conditions have shown to produce better educational outcomes in environments of higher education, and such exposure in educational training also promotes thinking that embraces understanding and connection to the community—and the notion of community change. Checkoway (2009) discusses the importance of community change to truly embrace and support a diverse democracy. Community change through a multicultural change approach requires that people become aware of their social identities and group membership, learn about the identities of different groups, gain knowledge about structures that affect the relationships between the group, and last, but most important, the ability to dialogue with one another (p.12).

Diverse democracy requires people who can communicate with others who are different than they, discuss concrete issues, and find common ground (Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004) without these intentional actions, civil society will decline (Checkoway, 2009, p.16). Within the university, for example, issues of inequity must be both

acknowledged and addressed in community and university relationships for community change for to occur (Pasque, 2017).

Duderstadt and Womack (2003) offer that education and research are the keys to meeting the service role of the public university. In the present day, the majority of the nation's campus-based research is done at public universities (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003). Because of the continuation of racial and socio-economic disparities within higher education institutions (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013), research and knowledge development may perpetuate service to those already in this system; in this way, the most vulnerable, underrepresented, and marginalized populations in society could be left to solve complex issues without the benefit of support from the researchers and scholars whom these citizens' dollars often help pay to support. Power dynamics of inequity need to be both acknowledged and addressed in community and university relationships for community change" (Pasque, 2017, p. 79). When those in academia are able to connect to the community and address problems that affect the common man, then research contributes to a diverse democracy, which is our highest calling and need to continue the advancement of society.

### **Graduate Student Work for a Diverse Democracy**

Graduate students are not only essential to the functioning of the universities but also add to the growth of a diverse society -- in and out of the university walls.

Graduate students, many whom may be graduate assistants, assist in teaching undergraduate courses, help in lab research, and contribute through service-learning, are adding to the rich learning environment at a research university; contributions that are seen by university administrators to be vital in the statement and growth of the

institutions. At a local level, such contributions by graduate students are being studied and presented by Provost Harper:

Graduate students ... journal publications, public performances, books, and other accomplishments represent a substantial part of OU's research and creative activity each year. Their work is crucial for building our national and international reputation. (Provost Task Force Report on Graduate Education Funding and Competitiveness, 2017)

Such scholarly contributions have the potential to extend beyond the wall of the institution and add knowledge that can be consumed by the public.

Research and interviews done with doctoral students underscore and support the need for students to do work that helps connect and engage to the community (Nyquist & Wulff, 2000; Golde, Dore & Wisconsin Univ., 2001; Marsteller, 2005). A study done by Golde, Dore & Wisconsin Univ. (2001) found that although the training doctoral students received prepared them to conduct quality research, the educational experience did not prepare students for the PhD professoriate, or other career responsibilities. Highlighted in this work is that doctoral students were not prepared for major career responsibilities such as teaching and service to the university and the community. Bloomfield (2014) discussed the importance of public engagement in graduate education. In his work on public engage and graduate education, he outlined 10 principles for engagement. While all principles discussed the importance of graduate students contributing scholarly work that can benefit the greater community, the first principle is the cornerstone of the logic of graduate work for good is "connection with the public is crucial to the future of higher education, including graduate education and

the contributions that graduate education can make to society” (Bloomfield, 2014, p. 2). Bloomfield (2014) recognizes that university research depends on public support, even though there is a growing perception of higher education private good. This tenant emphasizes that without connection to the community, and work for the community, the university will lose connection and support from the public (Bloomfield, 2014, p.2). Moreover, the public good loses the benefit of having scholars address societal challenges.

Banks et al. (2017) discussed, students should be taught about democracy and democratic institutions and provided opportunities to practice democracy. Prior to practicing and demonstrating such actions, the students must be taught and shown how to contribute to a diverse democracy. In a university setting, this education occurs not just through the course work on constructs such as public good but is socialized through behaviors observed and learned.

Graduate school is a place where academic career socialization occurs and is often the starting point for one’s understanding of the faculty profession or higher education career (Austin, 2002, p. 96). As Austin (2002) suggests, if this is the place where students begin to form values and perspectives as academics, it is critical that a clear and meaningful understanding of public good, and what research/knowledge creation for the public good entails. The research mission of the American university depends in part upon the work of graduate students who serve as research assistants for professors (Austin, 2002, p. 95) but who also are directly contributing scholarly works that can contribute to the benefit of a diverse democracy.



## **Studies on Public Good in Higher Education**

With a growing body of research addressing the rise of neoliberalism in higher education (Brenner & Fraser, 2017; Fish, 2009; Glenna, Shortall, & Brandl, 2015; Hayes, 2016; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Powers, & Campbell, 2011; Slaughter, & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Winslow, 2015) there are several scholars discussing the current status of university work for the public good (Marginson, 2011; Nixon, 2011; Quaye, 2005; Rhoten, D. & Calhoun, 2011).

Although there are several scholars exploring the complexity of higher education public good, and stakeholders' perspective of the concept (Chambers & Gopaul, 2008; Hensley, Galilee-Belfer & Lee, 2013; Pasque, 2010; Pasque & Rex, 2010), there are fewer studies being conducted on specific forms of public good research. Many of the studies on public good in research focus on it as a means for institutions to fulfill civic service engagement (Fretz, Cutforth, Nicotera & Thompson, 2009) or explore how agriculture efforts at land-grants benefit the public good (Glenna, Shortall & Brandl, 2015; Rausser, Simon & Stevens, 2008; Collins, 2015). Research is limited that exclusively explores the public good focus of research by public universities in a qualitative manner, and the researcher has not found studies using extant text as data. Within this section, the researcher walks through several studies that address some of the works addressing higher education public, research for public good, and graduate works for public good. With this information, the researcher highlights the need for the current study as means to add scholarly work to a less explored piece of university research for the public good.

## **Definitions of Public Good**

It is important to study the meanings/interpretations of higher education public good. This is critical as we look to convey to the public our relevance, and commitment to producing outcomes that benefit the greater community. Kezar (2005b) offers that “society needs intentionally designed conversations or dialogues designed about how higher education can serve the public good” (317). She suggests that if all stakeholders - student, faculty, staff, policymakers, and the general public -- do not have a clear understanding of why investing in the public good is necessary, other priorities, especially in matters of public policy, will take priority. Chambers & Gopaul (2008), and Pasque & Rex (2010), discuss the evolving perspectives of higher education public good.

To begin a conversation with the public about the good of higher education, it is imperative that one understand public leaders’ and professionals’ views on the public good. To begin this analysis, Pasque & Rex (2010) explored discussion among 150 higher education leaders on higher education public good with the goal of strengthening relationship between higher education and society. Their study posed two questions: (1) In what ways does this group, in talking together, construct higher education for the public good? and, (2) How are participants’ individual views presented because of their interactions with each other?

From the findings, the authors developed a categorical framework that reflects where, how, and when participants thought changes should be made to improve higher education public good (HEPG): (1) locating HEPG - refers to where to make change to improve HEPG; (2) actualizing HEPG - refers to concrete ways of how to go about

making those changes; (3) self-relation HEPG - refers to where participants viewed their relationship to HEPG differently (internal vs. external); and (4) sustainability HPEG - refers to operationalizing for change. As the authors discussed, uncovering various visions of higher education's relationships to society is paramount during this time of dramatic change in higher education in order to consider alternative perspectives and additional action strategies. The authors purport that this study can "inform future conversations between the public and higher education leaders...in order to maintain the momentum toward understanding higher education both as and for the public good" (Pasque & Rex, 2010, p. 94).

Indeed, how public good is framed within the context of higher education can have important implications for public policy, institutional practices, community relations, curricular and co-curricular offerings to students, and the choices and quality of relationships of institutions with other social entities. A previous work by Chambers & Gopaul (2008) also addressed how knowing the possible meanings of the construct of higher education for the public good could assist institutional leaders, supporters, and public decision makers in setting an informed course of action for institutions and the broader system of higher education, as they relate to social improvement, or the public good. They offer that "examination of how the public good of higher education is interpreted and internalized will help those involved in and committed to the higher education enterprise sort out and make conscientious decisions about what public good role(s) we want higher education to play" (Chambers & Gopaul, 2008, p. 62).

In this study, to explore the meaning of higher education public good, content analysis of 217 descriptions of higher education for the public good from faculty,

administrators, graduate students occurred. Four major themes emerged: (1) Higher education and the community - collaborative relationships, service to the community, support community diversity, improve quality of life; (2) Higher education and society - economic benefits, education for work, regulation for of social change, transmission of culture; (3) Higher education and knowledge - knowledge creation, dissemination of knowledge, critical reflection, diversity of thought; and (4) Nature of higher education - democratic citizenship, civic participation of graduates, social responsibility, broad access, and inclusiveness.

Results of the study highlight the contrasting views by various stakeholders, and how certain elements of the notion of public good were more salient, which was evident by the number of responses. In the study, faculty as a group offered more perspectives consistent with the theme “higher education and knowledge,” as well as its subthemes, than they offered for any of the other themes, and more than any of the other groups offered on this theme. While knowledge is not the exclusive purview of faculty, those faculty who did overwhelmingly positioned themselves in line with the ‘knowledge’ creation, dissemination, and application role of higher education in society” (Chambers & Gopaul, 2008, p. 79). Although they did not specify a particular form of knowledge, “many expressed a general sense that knowledge dissemination for social improvement was a main responsibility of higher education and one for which the larger public should hold higher education accountable (Chambers & Gopaul, 2008, p. 79). Unfortunately, evidence – empirical studies – to show accountability, particularly in research, was not found in the review of literature.

The purpose of both aforementioned studies was to help those involved in the higher education enterprise make conscientious decisions about what public good role(s) they want higher education to play. The works of Pasque & Rex (2010), and Chambers & Gopaul (2008) both address the complexity of higher education public good and can be used to discuss some of the seminal ways stakeholders see higher education public good conceptually. Such research is limited. While this research is minimal, it is vital in the study of the conceptualization of higher education public good.

### **Public Good in Higher Education Research**

Although there are some scholars studying the meaning of higher education public good and promoting the need for higher education public good, there is nominal work studying how it is actualized in university efforts. As mentioned in Chapter I, the study by Powers (2009) highlights the issues of work done by higher education institutions and private interests, specifically, the study explored why higher education institutions doing research with private can be conflicting. Powers (2009) discussed his research findings on the analysis of 125 university/industry/technology contracts with various industries. Four major themes highlighted the challenges of public responsibilities: transparency of the financial terms of the licensing deal, exclusive licensing to single firms for technological developments, university/faculty acceptance of stock in a license company, and publication oversight rights by licensee companies. The study highlights the issues of work done by research institutions and private interests. The challenge and conflict of pairing with private entities is that higher education institutions often lose freedom/autonomy in research and may be confined to a predetermined approach to research. This study is vital to understanding the

challenges presented in partnership with private and commercial entities, however, such work does not speak to what higher education institutions are doing in research for the public good.

Presently, there are several studies that address how students are prepared/educated to participate in civic engagement via service learning (Pasque, 2010, p. 27) (Fretz, Cutforth, Nicotera & Thompson, 2009), but there is minimal work being done to study other forms of public good effort. Equally as important is the exploration of what higher education public goods are presently being produced. A scan of studies did not yield research that is exploring actualized higher education public good. Toof (2012) used case study method to examine if the research centers at a few public universities were fulfilling the civic mission and sought to identify characteristics if a center that fulfilled this mission. However, there was no study located that examined how public research institutions are contributing to the greater society in research.

Because of the natural and documented ability for public research institutions to benefit the public, Scruggs & Pasque (2013) had a particular interest in how this vital form of public good is currently being actualized. In their study, they explored the ways in which public research universities' commitment to notions of the public good are demonstrated in research or knowledge development. Fifty-eight dissertation abstracts from public institutions with missions that explicitly state a desire to serve the public good were analyzed in order to explore if and how the public good is considered in the research contributions. Dissertations abstracts were analyzed through an etic approach. Findings showed that public research institutions devote more scholarly research to improve matters for private practices and/or select pockets of society.

## **Reflection**

The works of Chambers and Gopaul's (2008) and Pasque & Rex's (2010) facilitated the discussion of what role higher education will play in public good, with the thought that this information helps higher education supporters figure out how to tell the public who we (those in the academy) are. These studies explore what higher education practitioners and leaders *say* their responsibilities are to public good. Conversely, the researcher in this study explores what higher education practitioners (doctoral students) *do* for public good via a form of knowledge development that can be impactful within the greater community. Currently, there is nominal work studying how it is actualized in university, and those works focus on higher education institutions and private good.

### **Research design and methodological differences.**

In addition to a different research focus on the concept of higher education public good, the researcher in this study takes a fresh approach to the research design and methodological approach demonstrated in other studies. Because studies had different intents, questions, and desired outcomes, it is reasonable to expect a different approach to the study design (Creswell, 2014). Interestingly, many of the studies in this chapter use a form of grounded theory or content analysis in their respective study designs; however, its usage achieves different purposes and utilization in the studies. For example, Chambers and Gopaul (2008) asked what meaning HEPG has for an individual. This question was posed to a group of individuals who had a working knowledge and interest in the concept of higher education public good. The authors chose to gather data from these participants to explore how they conceptualized HEPG.

In their study, the authors used grounded theory and phenomenology as theories to situate their study and used content analysis and relational analysis for data analysis as a means to identify patterns, themes, and relationships amongst the data about the concept of public good.

Examining data through means such as content analysis provides meaningful information about discourses. Some researchers have noted the need to look at contextual information in order to interpret the meaning of the text better; this may be particularly important if the researcher is exploring the public good (Chambers & Gopaul, 2008; Charmaz, 2006; Lambert, 2015). As Chambers and Gopaul (2008) note, combinations of social, political, economic, personal, moral, historical, and institutional factors influence an individual's view of higher education for the public good. As such, "decoding the combination of factors serves to strengthen the relationship between higher education and the broader publics" (p. 88). Moreover, exploring such factors during the analysis also provides a more centered and comprehensive idea of a concept.

The researcher in this study used Samuelson's public good theory and the notion of university public good as lenses for the study and used constructivist grounded theory for data analysis as a means to identify codes and subsequent themes in the data that spoke to public good. This methodology is interpretive and takes into account how the researcher and research participants' standpoints and positions affect our interpretation., Scruggs and Pasque's (2013) study findings take such contextual information into account as part of the process adds insight about how a particular view/perspective was shaped/influenced. This approach is different than the studies on public good, and the use of existing documents (dissertations) is an approach that is less



frequently used but provides perspective of current works by the developing researchers – a less explored topic in current research.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Figure 2 (see p. 72) provides a visual representation of the framework that underpins the study. Weaving together theory, historical context, and the application of scholarly work, the Euler diagram displays the relationship between ideas that are the cornerstone of the research. The diagram symbolizes the overlapping of concepts and the complete inclusion of the dissertations by doctoral students with public good focus, its connection to the broader notion of higher education works for the public good, and ultimately, the work’s contribution to a diverse democracy. Moreover, the diagram provides a means for the researcher and the reader to see the logical argument is both valid and true concerning the concepts examined in the study (Mineshima, Sato, Takemura & Okada, 2014; Eastern Illinois University, 2014). The remainder of this section focuses on explaining the connection of concepts presented in the framework.

Samuelson’s public good theory (1954), and the ideology of post-neoliberalism, emphasize the idea of serving the greater community. Although Samuelson speaks of good in terms of a universal definition, several scholars have utilized the definition within the context of higher education and university outcomes. For example, Jonathan (1997) stated that an educational public good is “something of benefit to all which cannot be subdivided into individual shares and can thus only be effectively provided by all, for all” (p. 71); here, the good is for everyone—both those who serve and who are served—and the boundaries between those who are impacted and those who are not are often indistinguishable. In addition, university public service or good is defined as

work that develops knowledge for the welfare of society (Checkoway, 2001). These definition is at the heart of higher education that seeks to act in service of the public good, and the lens through which the researcher approaches this study.

Throughout history, university researchers, students and resources have been a force in the advancement of society (as examined in chapter 2). This advancement has not been limited to scientific and technological innovation, the university has helped produce knowledge that has advanced the social, economic, and political landscape of the country. While private entities may have many influences that drive when, where, and how they value their current or potential customers, the higher education institutions, when functioning with public good as a central value, pay attention to the issues that are essential to the continued development of the country. The historical information of higher education points to an understanding of the connection between the university outcomes and the advancement of society. This historical connection paves way for a framework of higher education force for the public good.

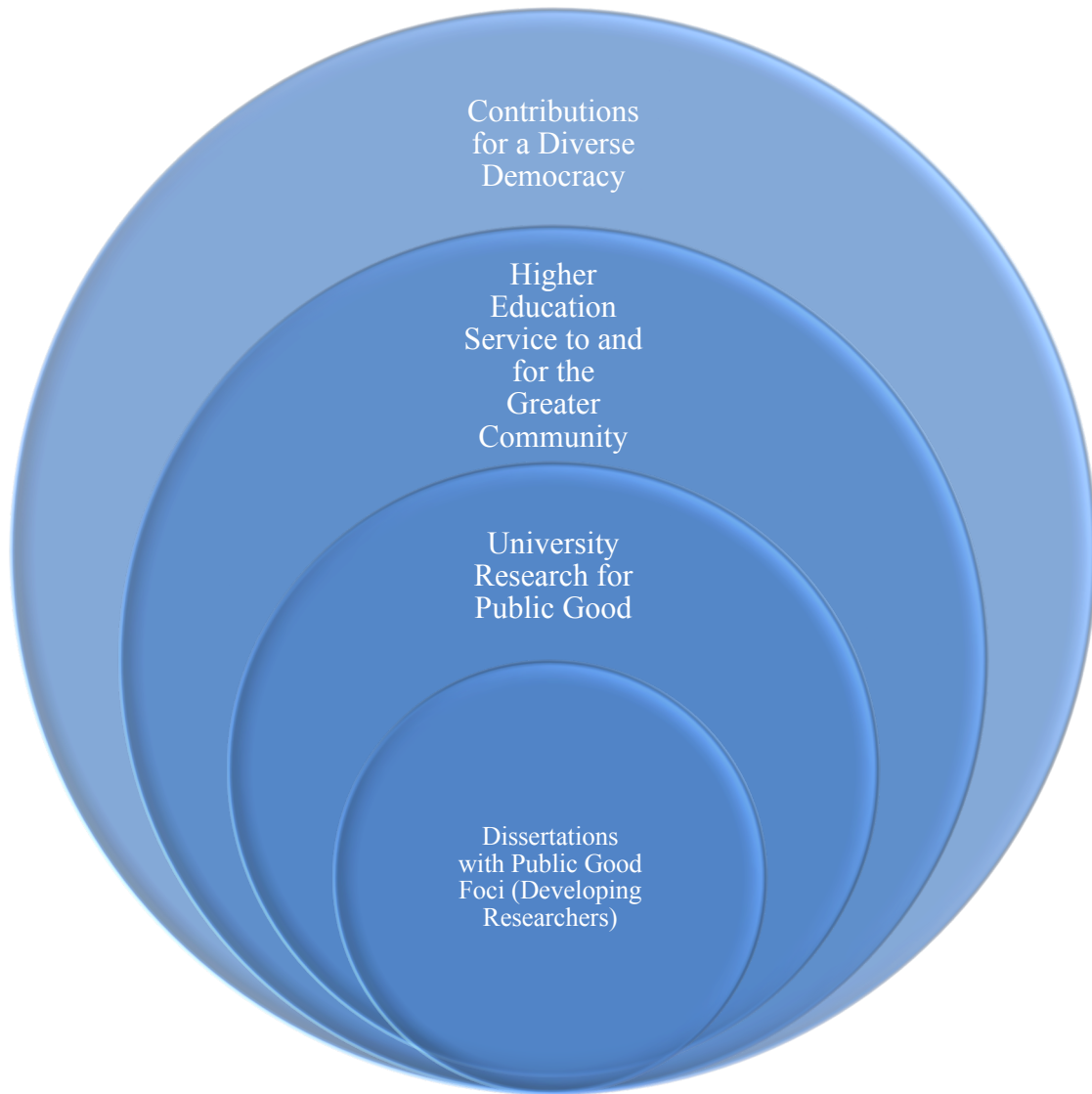
The researcher contends that higher education has a role in public good, specifically via research, that has been established historically and that it is often still pronounced and stated in missions, and in public and internal discussions of institutional roles. Higher education public good takes many forms, but arguably the most relevant and intertwined with institutional goals, particularly for research institutions, is research and knowledge development for public good.

The researcher in this study functions from the belief that the university can go to the people, rather than hoping the people will seek out the university to derive benefit. Therefore, this research study examines whether knowledge development

through research efforts goes beyond the walls of research universities and in efforts to address the social matters relevant to the greater community (public good) and in this way, contribute to the advancement of a diverse society.

Consequently, an important goal of citizenship education in a democratic multicultural society is to help students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to make reflective decisions and to take action in order to make their nation-state more democratic and just (Banks, 1997). Becoming a knowledgeable and engaged citizen is a process, and education should facilitate the development of students' civic consciousness and agency (Gonçalves e Silva, 2004; Gutmann, 2004; Parker, 2003). In this situation, exploration of agency is looked at through the work by the graduate students.

## Conceptual Framework: Research Connection to Public Good



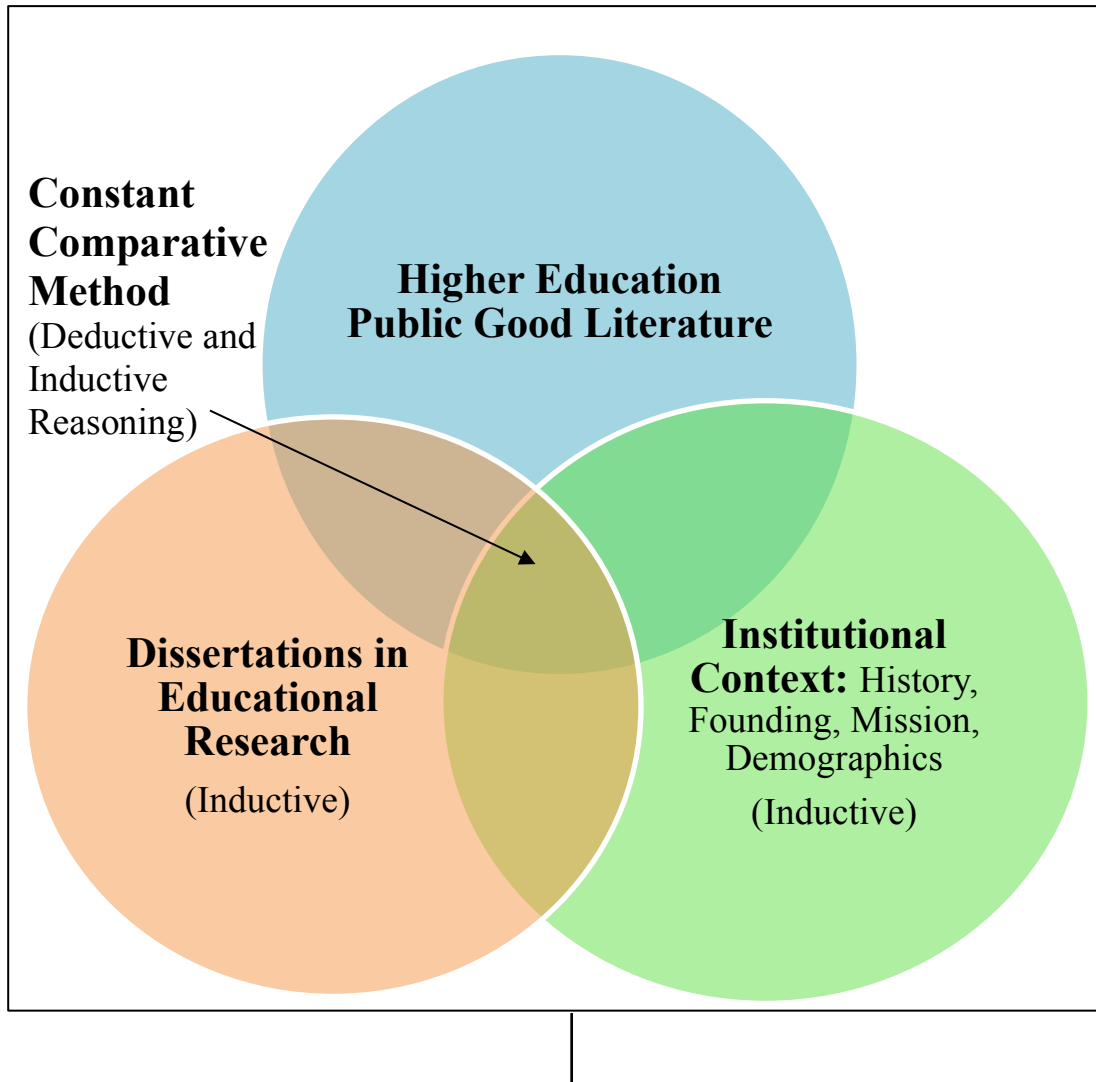
*Figure 2.* Research Connection to Public Good. The non-scaled diagram symbolizes the overlap of concepts and the complete inclusion of the dissertations by doctoral students with public good focus, in connection to the broad notion of higher education works for the public good (a contribution to a diverse democracy).

### **Chapter III: Research Design**

For a research institution, doctoral research is one of the many forms of knowledge production that seek to address contemporary social issues and fill a void in current literature. The researcher in the study analyzed doctoral dissertations in education, as they represent the fundamental research activities of the university, the mentoring of the next generation of scholars, and do not necessarily require direct industry funding or partnerships. The researcher focused on work by doctoral students at public institutions with missions that explicitly state a desire to serve the public good, in order to explore if and how the public good is being considered in the research.

In this study, the inclusion of contextual information is vital in the interpretation of meaning; constructivist focus on the specific context in which people live and work to understand cultural and historical setting (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p.43). Therefore, the data analysis process included the examination of documents created within an institution concerning the institutional history, mission, and goals. This followed Lambert's (2015) suggestion that researchers must examine contextual and core elements such as mission, history, and the culture of an institution and its state to understand the institution fully. As Lambert wrote, "when we jump too quickly to issues . . . it is easy to overlook the historical tethering between public colleges and universities and the states in which they were born and raised" (p. 9). Taking such contextual information into account as part of the research process provides insight into how a particular view or perspective has been shaped or influenced. Such contextual analysis complemented the researcher's constructivist approach to data analysis. Figure 3 on the following page provides a visual representation of the research focus.

## Research Focus



Explored through constructivist grounded theory methodology

*Figure 3.* Research Focus. The visual displays the interconnection of the data used in the research project. Specifically highlighting the interplay of the deductive and inductive analysis process through constant comparative method.

## **Methodology**

The researcher drew from Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory, which is a methodology that explores how "people construct texts for specific purposes and they do so within social, economic, historical, cultural, and situational context" (p. 35). In this way, data (i.e., the dissertations) are not neutral, but reflect the conditions and positions from which data are constructed. Regardless of paradigmatic differences, grounded theorists base their practice on interconnected features, including theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling, constant comparison of data to data, and developing theoretical constructs (Whiteside, Mills, & McCalman, 2012, p. 505). Researchers come to any study with a number of assumptions but in an inductive research design such as grounded theory, the researcher has no preconceived hypothesis to prove or disprove. Rather, issues of importance to the substantive area of enquiry are identified through theoretical sensitivity (Whiteside, Mills & McCalman, 2012, p. 505).

The common tenet of grounded theory methodology is the process of developing a theory that is grounded in data through simultaneous data collection and analysis techniques. The three primary forms of grounded theory (Glaserian, Straussian and Constructivist), vary in their stance regarding the relationship of the researcher and the studies phenomena, participants and the interpretation of data. Grounded theory by Glaser is the pioneer of grounded theory. This form of grounded theory promotes the distancing of the researcher from the research process in order to prevent bias or preconceived notions. Furthermore, reviewing of literature is encouraged to occur after data has been collected and analyzed. With Strauss's grounded theory, the researcher recognizes that bias or preconceived notion might exist for the research, however the

researcher is expected to acknowledge this and still ascribe to an objective approach to the research. Both of the aforementioned approaches to grounded theory promote a positivist approach to research, and lead to the adoption of a third approach to grounded theory that acknowledges and embraces that the researcher and the participant are co-constructors of data interpretation. This third method, described as constructivist grounded theory, is the approach the researcher has used in the study.

Constructivists believe the world consists of multiple individual realities influenced by context. This approach differs from traditional grounded theory because of its epistemology; traditionally, a researcher is seen as an interpreter, not a co-creator of the information. Ontologically, relativist and epistemologically subjectivist, constructivist grounded theory “reshapes the interaction between researcher and participants in the research process and in doing so brings to the fore the notion of the researcher as author” (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006, p. 9). Charmaz (2006) emphasizes that the voice of the participants must not be lost in the presentation of the final text, advocating for a writing style that is more literary than scientific in intent.

As a constructivist approach was taken in this study, the methodology incorporated additional contextual elements to analyze secondary data critically.

Charmaz (2006) explains:

Text does not stand as objective facts although they often represent what the author assumes were objective acts (Prior, 2003). . . . Texts draw on particular discourses and provide accounts that record, explore, explain, justify, or foretell actions, whether the specific texts are elicited or extant. . . . Researchers can compare the style, contents, directions and presentation of material to a larger discourse of which the text is a part. As accounts, text tell something of intent and have intended—and perhaps unintended—audiences. (p. 35)

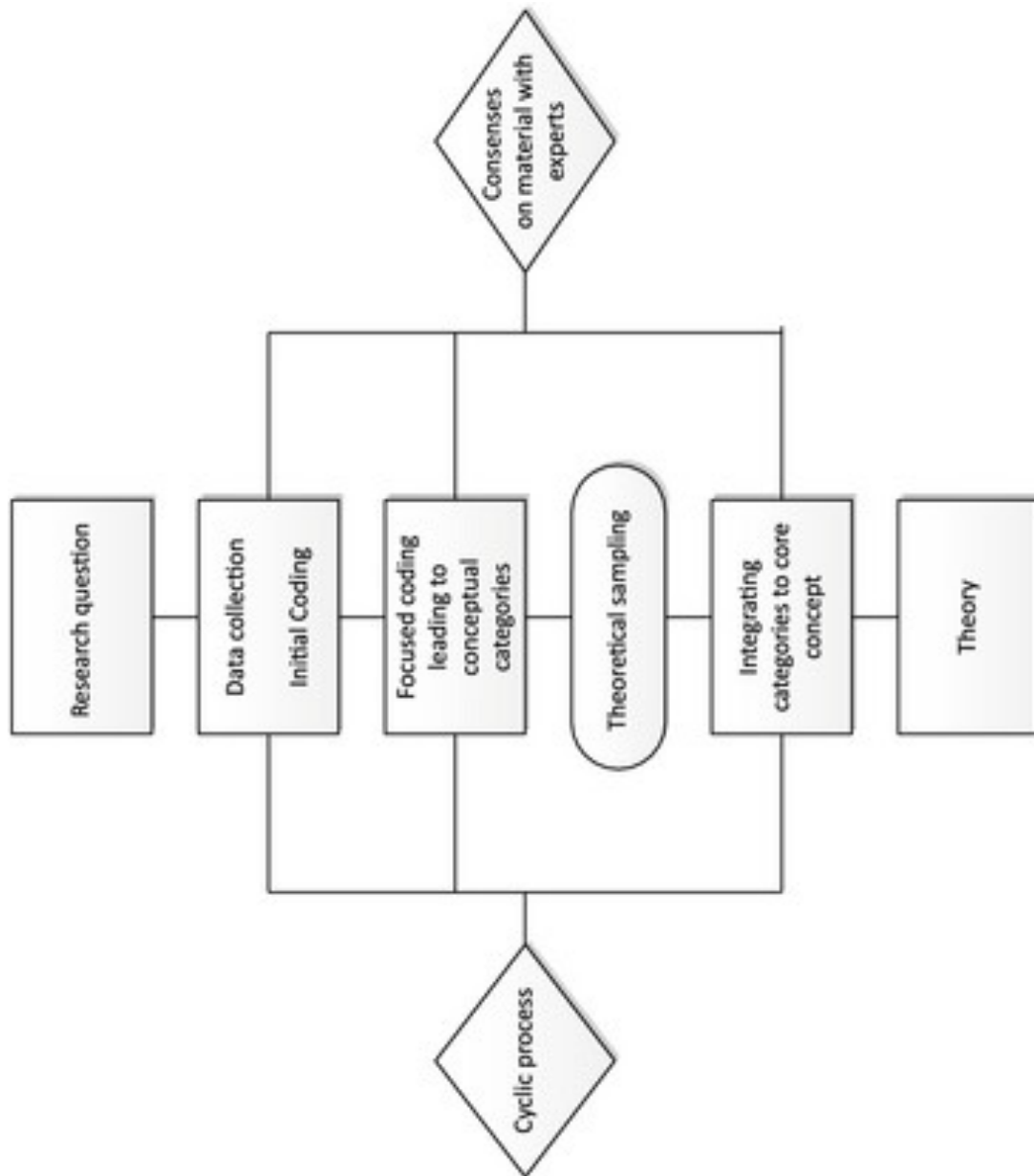


While examining data through means such as content analysis provides meaningful information about discourses, some researchers have noted the need to look at contextual information in order to interpret the meaning of the text better; this may be particularly important if the researcher is exploring the public good (Chambers & Gopaul, 2008; Charmaz, 2006; Lambert, 2015). As Chambers and Gopaul (2008) note, combinations of social, political, economic, personal, moral, historical, and institutional factors influence an individual's view of higher education for the public good. As such, “decoding the combination of factors serves to strengthen the relationship between higher education and the broader publics” (p. 88).

A constructivist approach asserts that the world consists of multiple individual realities influenced by context (Wertz et al., 2011). This approach suits this study, as the researcher examined both doctoral dissertations and the contexts in which they were produced (e.g., university mission, historical background, local context, demographics). The constructivist approach represented the researcher's ontological, epistemological, and axiological beliefs, as it embraces the inclusion of contextual data as a part of the analysis process and seeks to generate theory through exploration, rather than affirm or deny an existing theory (Stern & Porr, 2011).

Figure 4 illustrates the constructivist grounded theory process, which includes: (a) data collection; (b) a detailed coding process; (c) memo writing; (d) theoretical sampling, saturation, and sorting; and (e) theorization. This approach is best suited for this study as this research explored the subjective “what” of the data and theorize, rather than to take a positivist approach and summarize without context—a challenge that can occur when using only a method such as content analysis.

The grounded theory process according to Charmaz (2006, p.11).



*Figure 4.* The grounded theory process according to Charmaz. The figure provides the steps taken with Charmaz’s constructivist approach to grounded theory. Throughout levels of coding, constant comparison method is used to establish analytic distinctions, and make comparisons at each level of analytic work. Theoretical sampling entails both inductive and deductive reasoning, helping the researcher grapple with and what ideas, gaps, ambiguities, and questions arising from the coding process, and guide the researcher to follow-up on analytic leads. The sampling process to develop properties of categories until no new properties emerged. Sampling and data gathering ceased when categories are saturated.

## Secondary Data Analysis

Charmaz (2006) further discussed extant text (e.g., dissertations) and encouraged such data to be approached with a set of questions in mind including:

- What meaning is embedded and how does it reflect a particular social, historical, or organizational context?
- What kind of comparisons can you make between texts?
- What, if any, unintended information and meaning might you see in the text?  
Who benefits from the text? Why? (p. 39)

Qualitative secondary analysis entails using already produced data to develop new social scientific and/or methodological understandings (Irwin, 2013; Bowen, 2009). Although there are numerous reasons why researchers may use qualitative secondary analysis, for the researcher in this study, questions of extant qualitative datasets which they had no role in producing provides insight on a sensitive topic and allows a critical analysis of the embeddedness of methodology and explanation in historical and theoretical context (Irwin, 2013).

Secondary analysis of past research allows the researcher to write the theoretical and is relevant to solving present problems. Glaser (1962) suggest that secondary analysis widens the potential applicability of past research by changing its limits from data presented to data collected. And, that social scientists can take existing data that sits unused in cabinets and drawers and use it to increase the amount of past research that can be brought to bear on the operating problem (Glaser, 1962). For researchers undertaking secondary data analysis, it is important to orient to the project through accessing available literature on the project by the originating researcher, including

understanding the research objectives, design and the research questions and methods used for data generation (Irwin, 2013). It is useful to understand any implicit as well as planned ways in which the sample was structured. By analyzing dissertation, the researcher has access to a relevant document that should contain the original researcher's purpose and design of the study in order to understand how and why the information was constructed in study.

### **Data Collection**

This section details the process the researcher followed to search, and filter information to develop a data pool for the study. Sections of the collection process are placed in overarching categories to differentiate between steps and actions taken to obtain data for the deductive analysis and inductive analysis processes. While information is generally written in separate sections of the analysis and review processes, it is important to note that the steps taken to collect information for the differing processes often occurred simultaneously, and the separate analysis processes where ultimately used to compare data with data through constant comparative method (described later in the chapter).

### **Sensitization to Data for Analysis**

Charmaz (2006) recognizes that the first step in the constructivist approach to grounded theory involves collecting rich data, as it provides “solid material for building a significant analysis; rich data is detailed, focused and full” (p. 11). Moreover, Charmaz (2006) asserts that data be placed in relevant situational and social contexts. In this study, the researcher examined how public good is reflected in knowledge production through research at institutions supported by public funds; specifically

asking what are the actual research contributions toward the public good produced by doctoral scholars at public research institutions? The constructivist approach to grounded theory begins with exploring opening research questions and sensitizing concepts and disciplinary perspectives. Charmaz (2006) sees the exploration of the literature as a step to help in the process of data examination. Indeed, the use of literature or any other pre-knowledge should not prevent a grounded theory from arising as a result of the inductive–deductive interplay at the heart of this method (McGhee, Marland, & Atkinson, 2007, p. 334). This is why the researcher included data in Chapter I about neoliberalism, and in Chapter II that addressed public good theory, student socialization theory, the higher education public good benefits model, and historical information regarding the evolution of the research university. Such concepts are key to exploring the research question which centers on the idea of higher education public good.

### **Data Selection Criteria for Inductive Analysis**

The public research universities selected for this study are located in the United States. The researcher sought to use a merited, categorical system to identify potential criteria-meeting institutions. Therefore, the Carnegie Classification was used to identify institutions for the data pool.

### **Carnegie Classification of Institutions**

The Carnegie Classification stated purpose is to help those conducting research on higher education reference information on U.S. colleges and universities and identify somewhat comparable institutions. This system was first developed in 1970 by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, the framework was developed to support

the Commission's program of research and policy analysis. The "framework has been widely used in the study of higher education, both as a way to represent and control for institutional differences, and also in the design of research studies to ensure adequate representation of sampled institutions, students, or faculty" (Carnegie Classification of Institution of Higher Education, 2016). Its current version, 2015, includes Title IV eligible, degree-granting colleges and universities in the United States represented in the National Center for Education Statistics IPEDS system that conferred degrees in 2013-14.

The Carnegie Classification uses information taken from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data, which is maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics. Annually, data is gathered from colleges and universities that receive federal aid on variables from enrollment to institutional finances. The classifications "are not considered quantitative rankings but rather reflect important qualitative differences for research and policy-making purposes" (IU Bloomington Newsroom, 2016, para. 16). The classification system always customization of listings and filters to assist those conducting research on institutions. The Carnegie Classification has six major description categories: basic classification, undergraduate instructional program classification, graduate instructional program classification, enrollment profile classification, undergraduate profile classification, and size and setting classification.

Of the descriptions, (1) basic classification and (2) graduate instructional program classifications were the primary descriptions the researcher needed to identify public research universities. The basic classification helped the researcher initially

identify schools classified as doctoral universities. Institutions that awarded at least 20 research and/or scholarship doctorates were given the doctoral university designation in the Carnegie Classification. The graduate instructional program classification helped the researcher to identify if the school awarded research doctoral degrees in education and at least a single program other than education. While the Classification had several options to filter with specific focus on mix of programs across various field of study, the researcher's threshold was met by filtering based upon the criteria aforementioned.

The researcher verified that all of the institutions included in the sample pool were currently classified as (1) public institutions and (2) research universities through the Carnegie Classification website (<http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/>). In reviewing IPEDS data, the researcher gleaned the following definitions of public institutions and research universities that was used to identify data for the collection and analysis process:

**Public Institutions:** An educational institution whose programs and activities are operated by publicly elected or appointed school officials and which is supported primarily by public funds.

**Research Universities:** Institutions that awarded at least 20 research/scholarship doctoral degrees during the update year (this does not include professional practice doctoral-level degrees, such as the JD, MD, etc.).

While the Carnegie website classifies research universities at different levels according to research activity, "it is important to note that the groups differ solely with respect to level of research activity, not quality or importance" in the rating. (Carnegie, 2010, para. 10) As such, level of research was not a factor of inquiry in this study.

## Identification of Sample Data Pool

Having defined the qualifiers, the researcher began the process of identifying potential universities that met the selection criteria. Using the filter criteria to select doctoral programs and discarding any institutions with graduate education programs; the researcher then filtered the list to contain only public institutions. To filter the list to include only those institutions that are public, the researcher culled the list by the level of control: public, private for profit, private nonprofit.

The researcher intended to focus on institutions in the south and eastern parts of the United States, in order to obtain a great cross section of institutions from varying founding types. To do this, the researcher filtered by regions. Using the selection filters, the researcher selected institutions that are located in southeast, Mideast and northeast regions of the United States. Following those parameters, a list of 84 institutions were found to meet the section criteria. Below is a table identifying which states are in each of the respective regions.

Table 1

### *States in Carnegie Regions*

| <b>Region</b> | <b>States</b>   |
|---------------|---|
| New England   | Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont   |
| Mideast       | Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania  |
| Southeast     | Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia |

*Note:* Data compiled by use of Carnegie Classification regional filter option.



Having reviewed the institutional classification information of the 84 universities, the researcher recognized the importance of including as many of the institution types in the data pool and reduced the number of institutions included in the data set to explore how institution type may affect graduate work for the public good. The researcher decided to focus on land-grant, historically black, and minority serving institutions. In order to filter for these criteria, the researcher used the filter for population served to find HBCUs and MSIs. The filter *Institutional Affiliations* was used to identify institutions that were categorized as land grant. Although not a criterion for selection in the data pool, the Institutional Affiliation filter is also where the designation for community engagement was listed.

In reviewing IPEDS data, the researcher gleaned the following definitions that were used to shape the data collection and analysis process:

**Land-grant universities** – Institutions that has been designated by its state legislature or Congress to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. The original mission of these institutions, as set forth in the first Morrill Act, was to teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so that members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education.

**Historically black colleges and universities (HBCU)** - Any college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation." Federal regulations (20 USC 1061 (2)) allow

for certain exceptions to the founding date.

**Minority serving institutions (MSI)** – institutions in which students in at least two of the four individual minority groups (Black, Asian, American Indian/Alaska native, Hispanic) constitute at least 25 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment or minority students combined constitute at least 50 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007).

Carnegie also a community engagement classification that 361 institutions have received. The classification highlights:

the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. (New England Research Center for Higher Education, 2017, para 7)

Because this designation is obtained through a voluntary application process, the classification was not used to deduce data in the pool but was used as a factor of consideration in the data analysis process.

Table 2

*Classifications of the 84 Institutions*

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Land-grant  | 26 |
| Historical black colleges and universities                      | 6  |
| Minority-serving institution                                    | 11 |
| Community engagement<br>(This is a self-nominating designation) | 48 |

*Note:* Classification breakdown of institutions in data pool. Institutions can have multiple designations.

After review of the institutional classification information of the 84 universities, the researcher recognized the importance of including as many of the institution types in the data pool as she reduced the number of institutions included in the data set. The researcher decided to focus on land-grant, historically black, and minority serving institutions. A total of 32 institutions in the pool fit the criteria. Next, the researcher began the process of reviewing information on the respective institution's websites to identify information showed:

- (1) A stated mission that explicitly includes a commitment to research for the public good, and
- (2) information confirming the institution have a higher education doctoral program that is similar in type and content to other institutions.

The researcher verified that institutions have similar programs of study that could be included in the data set. Potential programs were compared based upon program descriptions listed on the university websites and comparison of coursework for degrees. Comparison of program descriptions and course offerings was vital because the researcher recognized that degree titles may vary but institutions have similar degree

program focuses. Significant program differences were used to determine program categories that were noted in the table detailing programs of study included in the research.

Upon verifying the institutions' Carnegie classifications, and selecting institutions that had similar programs of study, the researcher created a table to list the schools in the data pool. All of the 32 institutions reviewed met the desired criteria.

### **Institutional Descriptions**

Part of the research process involved the work of reviewing content to explore institutional founding, mission, vision statement, and current institutional demographics. This process provided the researcher with contextual information to analyze the dissertations and provided a means to inductively identify codes and themes that emerged in the institutional materials about the institutional interpretation of public good – in materials published by institutional staff and historical actions. This is a reflection of what McGhee, Marland, and Atkinson (2007) meant when they discussed the inductive–deductive interplay, where “ideas inductively derived from the data form mini-theories, which are then either confirmed or refuted by subsequent theoretically sampled data.” (p. 335).

The founding of the historically black college, land-grant institutions, and the research university in the United States reflect a profound yet differing approach to the evolution of culture and industry in America as described in the previous chapters. Although each institution was established out of a need for public good, the specific approach and reasoning for support differ, potentially affecting the institutions' commitment and support for public good. As the researcher considered the dataset, she

explored the historical founding mission and demographics of the institutions examined in order to offer relevant contextual information. This information was collected and analyzed (see below section for more details). In addition, this information provided the researcher with insight of how the institution's perspective of the concept of public good has been initially established. Such information is vital to the deductive process of examining institutional materials for public good and helped the researcher reduce the data set to focus on institutions that were founded in, and continue to express, a commitment to higher education for the public good.

Table 3 details the institutions historical founding type (land-grant, MSI, HBCU, etc.), and institutional and student population demographic information. Although all information is obtained from public sites and searchable databases, pseudonyms are used for each institution as the information is part of a data set for examine.

The use of the category predominately white institution in this category only reflects that the institutions was not a land-grant, historically black, or minority –serving by the definitions utilized by Carnegie. Of this list the breakdown of institutional type occurs in the following manner.

Table 3

*Institutional Profiles*

| <b>Pseudonym</b> | <b>Classifiers</b>  | <b># of Dissertations Analyzed</b> |
|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Institution A    | Historically black / minority-serving institution           | 4                                  |
| Institution B    | Predominately white/ land-grant                             | 5                                  |
| Institution C    | Historically black university/ land grant/ minority serving | 5                                  |
| Institution D    | Predominately white   | 5                                  |
| Institution E    | Minority serving institution                                | 5                                  |
| Total            |   | 24                                 |

*Note:* The table lists the classifiers associated with each institution as well as the number of dissertations randomly selected to analyze from each university.

**Dissertation Identification**

To locate dissertations from selected institutions, after defining the parameters in the search function, the researcher identified works published from 1980–2017 available through the *ProQuest* database (available to the researcher through OU Libraries). ProQuest partners with over 700 universities to disseminate and archive of more than 90,000 new graduate works each year. These works were available through library subscription databases and were made available to the researcher through her university library.

*Dissertations & Theses*® is a service for universities whose graduate students actively publish their doctoral dissertations and/or master's theses with ProQuest Dissertation Publishing. As a doctoral student, the researcher had access to the dissertations and theses published through ProQuest in full text in PDF format.

The specific date range used to identify dissertations spans the time frame since the enactment of the landmark Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 (discussed in Chapter II of the dissertation), which was put into place in order to increase partnerships between universities and commercial interests. Additionally, the researcher filtered for (1) full text, (2) dissertations (3) the subject of higher education. These filters were necessary in order to focus on selecting complete dissertations on the topic of education to organize information included in the data set, generate tables, and assist in the coding process for the study.

The researcher initially had not plan to reduce the dissertation sample pool, however, a randomized selection process was necessary to choose dissertations for analysis, given that there were several hundred dissertations in the specified range for the 32 criteria-meeting institutions. Because the researcher desired to have the most diversity in terms of institutional type included in the data set, she elected to reduce the institutions included in the pools with preference given to institutions classified as minority-serving, historically black universities, and land-grant universities. Therefore, using the random number generator at Random.org, the researcher identified 10 institutions from the list of 32 schools to be used in the final data set. Three public research institutions from the original list of 84 institutions that did not have any designations (only being a public research institution) were randomly selected using Random.org added to the data pool to add addition comparison points in the study. These schools were then given the designation, for identifying purposes, public research university only; the use of the label only reflects that the institutions were not a land-

grant, historically black, or minority-serving institution by the definitions utilized by Carnegie (see Table3).

As Stern and Porr (2011) addressed when discussing sample size for grounded theory, the study was not about the data unit per se, but rather about identifying the overall process of management of the central concern (p. 52). In order to limit the scope of this exploratory research study, the researcher began the initial review of data from dissertations through a deductive analysis process, estimating that a group of approximately 25 dissertations would have more in-depth analysis based upon the evidence of codes for public good. This number was contingent upon availability of dissertations for each institution. Because most dissertations had a vast range in the number of pages between 120-250, and number of pages dedicated to specific chapter and sections in the dissertation, the researcher determined it best to do a randomized pull of dissertations, not giving a preference based upon dissertations length.

Furthermore, in order to provide each institution, regardless of size and number of dissertations in ProQuest the same attention in the study, the researcher decided to select no more than five dissertations per institution. The researcher created a table illustrating the number of dissertations available from all five of the criteria-meeting institutions selected and their institutional information for descriptive purposes.

To summarize, 24 total dissertations were analyzed from the five institutions in the final data set. The researcher used Charmaz's constructivist approach to code the (1) abstract, (2) purpose and/or significance (3) implications and/or recommendations (4) and conclusions sections if included in the dissertation. While the dissertation contains several sections that address what the researcher has studied and/or considered in the



research study, these sections were selected because each speaks to the intended purpose of the study, how the researcher sees such work impacting a particular population, and what steps or actions the researcher suggests undertaken to accomplish such goals.

### **Data Analysis Methods**

The constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2006) recognizes that methods are tools to examine data. Constructivist grounded theory includes an initial coding as well as focused coding. *Coding* “is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 40). Through coding, a researcher defines what is happening in the data and begins to grapple with its meaning. In this study, the researcher used coding to identify any written text that speaks directly to public good, codes of the benefits of higher education, and/or advocacy. The existing literature and definitions of higher education for the public good were etically placed over the institutional materials in a deductive manner to determine the ways in which the institutions are or are not expressly stating a commitment to higher education for the public good. Simultaneously, the themes and codes about HEPG that exist within institutional materials emerge and, as such, could may be quite different than (or overlap with) what is found in existing literature. See Figure 5.

#### **Deductive Analysis**

To deductively explore codes that speak to the public good the researcher took the concepts and themes presented in the review of literature in Chapter II to examine the data. This process first identified codes in a deductive manner, showing concepts as expressed in the literature discussed in Chapter II of the dissertation. The researcher

used the NVivo to conduct a line-by-line analysis of the dissertation abstract, purpose, significance, implications and conclusion sections of the dissertation (see Figure 6). Through this process, the researcher sought to identify provisional, comparative codes grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 40).

This process entailed coding of the selected dissertations sections for language addressing issues of the public good (whether those specific words were mentioned or not). For example, if a dissertation mentioned any of the “public good” categories – greater productivity, increased workforce flexibility, increased community service – outlined in the IHEP Array of Benefits, then it was coded accordingly. Although not encompassing of all the concepts the researcher’s considered in the coding process, the IHEP model highlighted many of the significant ways higher education public good was actualized. The model was utilized as a framework rather than a definitive tool for etic or deductive process; this serves as a sensitizing tool to enhance the researcher’s ability to know what she is looking at, not what she is looking for (Stern & Porr, 2011, p. 32).

#### Array of Benefits Model.

Published in 1998, *Reaping the Benefits: Defining the public and private value of going to college* was the first paper in a series of publications framing work to help improve public understanding of the value of higher education. This work was created in hopes of increasing governmental and social investment in collegiate learning (Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), 1998, p. 3). In the document, the authors focused on the collective and individual benefits of university attendance.

The Array of Benefits model included in the Reaping the Benefits document, was a tool that explicitly presented forms of public good benefits from higher education

(see Figure 3 for the Array of Benefits). Often referred to as the IHEP model, the Array of Benefits model was created to assist in the conversation with the public about the benefits of higher education to promote a better understanding of the benefits/goods from investment in higher education (IHEP, 1998, p. 3). While the authors acknowledged that the development of the categorized list would not be all inclusive of benefits, this initial work was key to providing policymakers and the public “with a clear framework for understanding how investment in higher education benefits individuals and society can significantly enhance the public dialogue” (IHEP, 1998, p. 13). Although the benefits are outlined by participation/attending university, the benefits are categorized as public economic benefits, private economic benefits, private social benefits and public social benefits.

In the researcher’s study, attention was given to the public good benefits of higher education. Public economic benefits were those that can be broad economic, fiscal, or labor market effects. These benefits resulted in the overall improvement of the national economy, or major segments of the economy, as a result of citizens’ participation in higher education. One stated public economic benefit was greater productivity. The authors of the model stated that nearly all of the increase had been attributed to the overall increased education level of the workforce, and that various studies had estimated that increases in educational attainment had offset what otherwise would have been a serious decline in the growth in U.S. productivity (IHEP, 1998).

Public social benefits were benefits that accrue to groups of people, or to society broadly, that were not directly related to economic, fiscal, or labor market effects. Examples of social benefits included (1) improved ability to adapt to and use

technology and (2) social cohesion/appreciation of diversity. Improved ability to adapt to and use technology asserts that higher education levels associated with society's increased ability to adapt to and use technology (IHEP, 1998). This benefit included research and development of products and services that enhance the quality of others' lives and promoted the diffusion of technology to benefit others. The category social cohesion/appreciation of diversity recognized significantly more trust in social institutions and participation in civic and community groups at much higher rates than others (IHEP, 1998).

Having a framework to explore the public benefits of university was necessary in the analysis process of this study. The use of the Array of Benefits model was critical to the deductive approach in the researcher's work.

Array of Benefits Model. (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998, p. 20)

|                 | Public  | Private   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| <b>Economic</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increased Tax Revenues</li> <li>✓ Greater Productivity</li> <li>✓ Increased Consumption</li> <li>✓ Increased Workforce Flexibility</li> <li>✓ Decreased Reliance on Government Financial Support</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Higher Salaries and Benefits</li> <li>✓ Employment</li> <li>✓ Higher Savings Levels</li> <li>✓ Improved Working Conditions</li> <li>✓ Personal / Professional Mobility</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Social</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reduced Crime Rates</li> <li>✓ Increased Charitable Giving / Community Service</li> <li>✓ Increased Quality of Civic Life</li> <li>✓ Social Cohesion / Appreciation of Diversity</li> <li>✓ Improved Ability to Adapt to and Use Technology</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improved Health / Life Expectancy</li> <li>✓ Improved Quality of Life for Offspring</li> <li>✓ Better Consumer Decision Making</li> <li>✓ Increased Personal Status</li> <li>✓ More Hobbies, Leisure Activities</li> </ul> |

Institute for Higher Education Policy. (1998). *Reaping the benefits: Defining the public and private benefits of value of going to college.*

Figure 5. Array of Benefits Model. The model provides descriptions for economic and social benefits of public and private good.

The researcher coded the pages of dissertation content for language that matched the criteria of addressing issues of the public good (whether those specific words were mentioned or not). For example, if a dissertation abstract mentioned any of the “public good” categories – as greater productivity, increased workforce flexibility, increased community service – outlined in the IHEP Array of Benefits, then it was coded. Use of the qualitative analysis software NVivo aided the researcher in the sorting and analysis process. The researcher followed the practices of Bazeley & Jackson (2013) to organize and code information in the analysis process. In this way, the researcher first identified new and relevant codes that emerged in the dissertations, assigned a theme/phrase to represent the information, and then documented why the code was important, including memoing about the importance of the code (see Attachment B for examples of the coding process).

### **Inductive Analysis**

After completing the deductive analysis process the researcher began the process of looking for codes that arose from the researcher’s works from reviewing current literature, institutional histories, missions and other related content. The researcher conducted focused coding for the inductive process, which was more directed, selective and conceptual than line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). Charmaz (2006) defines focused coding as “using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data. Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely” (p. 57).

The researcher intentionally coded for language that spoke with the voice of advocacy where advocacy was illustrated if the language showed support for, or challenged actions affecting a particular underrepresented group. The researcher drew from Pasque's (2010) findings that explored the discourse of higher education leaders, where she found that some leaders spoke about elements in the IHEP Array of Benefits models and others spoke from voices of advocacy when in discussion about the relationships between higher education and society (p. 31-49).

For example, a land-grant historically black university used words such as "collaboration," "global reach," and "community-focused initiatives" in expressing the university mission. Words such as "change the world," "solve problems," "enhance the quality of life" were used to express the purpose of the university works.

Throughout this process, the researcher engaged in memo writing, as it prompted the researcher to analyze data and codes early in the research process (Charmaz, 2006, p. 72), and assisted in identifying other areas of consideration of addressing the research question (see Attachment C for parent codes).

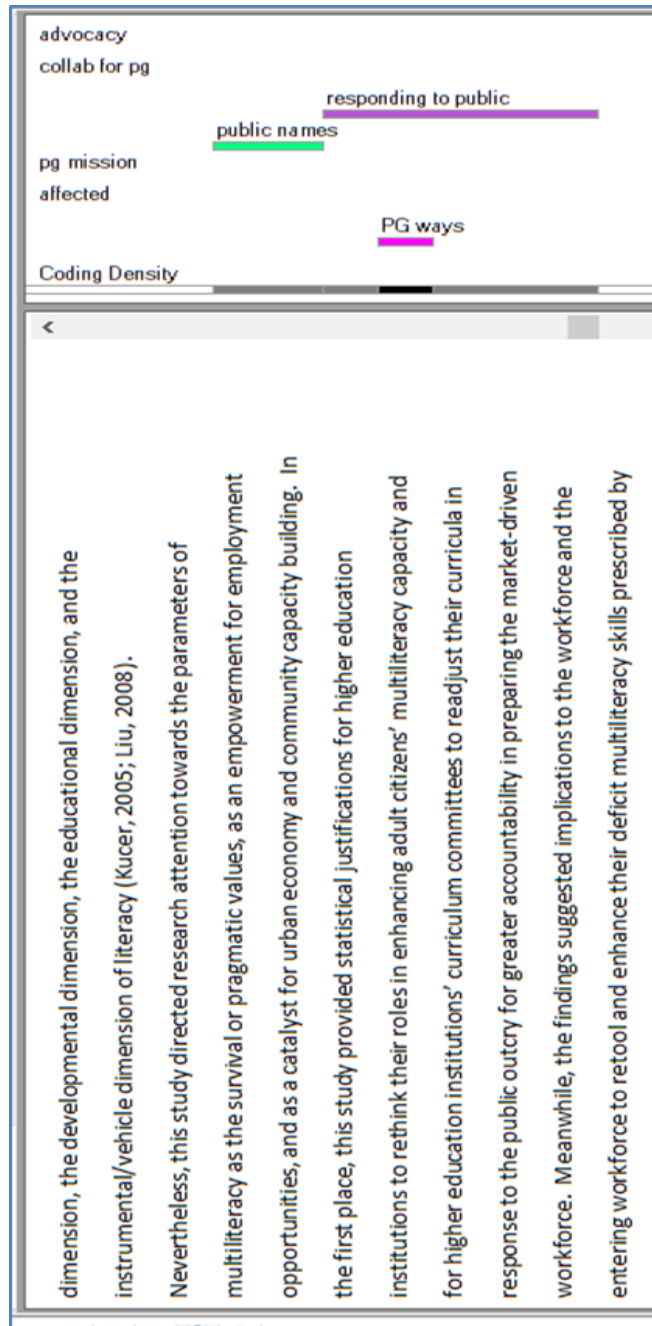
### **Constant Comparison Method**

The deductive aspect of constructivist grounded theory was important as it etically and intentionally explores the ways in which the existing literature about HEPG exists in the data. The inductive, or emic approach to constructivist grounded theory was equally important – where the notions of HEPG emerged from within the data itself (Johnstone, 2002; Pasque, 2010). Given the importance of both approaches to the exploration of the topic and the researcher's constructivist approach to the study, the use of constant comparison was vital to identifying analytic evidences in the data.

Throughout the levels of coding, constant comparison method was used to establish analytic distinctions, and make comparisons at each level of analytic work (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54). While coding the data, this process allowed the researcher to compare data with data to find similarities and differences. In this manner, the researcher critically explored the inductive and deductive reasoning that had emerged from the data, and also thought about the data in new ways that might differ from the dissertations writer's interpretation and build new categories for further exploration.



## Coding Process in Nvivo



*Figure 6.* Coding Process in Nvivo. The left panel shows the section of text analyzed. The right panel shows the codes to which relevant text was assigned. The row of horizontal words at the top of the right panel are codes found in the document. The colored strips distinguish the length of the coded text.

Theoretical sampling was also vital to the analysis of the data. This process pertained to conceptual and theoretical development (Charmaz, 2006, p.100), and was utilized to help address the incomplete and/or gaps in analysis that the researcher identified in memo writing. This process elaborated and defined categories constituting the researcher's theory (Charmaz, 2006, p. 96), and prompted the researcher to predict where and how s/he could find needed data to fill gaps and to saturate categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 103). In this process, the researcher paid close attention to critical issues related to the logic of theoretical sampling, particularly: (a) the establishment and explanation of the relevant criterion on the basis of which selection of units made, and (b) the strategy ensuring that data are not selected just to support the developing researcher's account/perspective (Schwandt, 2007, p. 270).

While Charmaz (2006) recognizes that theoretical sampling entails both inductive and deductive reasoning, this process specifically strengthened the inductive reasoning within this work by helping the researcher grapple with and what ideas, gaps, ambiguities, and questions arising from the coding process, and guided the researcher to follow-up on analytic leads (Charmaz, 2006, p. 104). In this study, the researcher utilized the sampling process to develop properties of categories until no new properties emerge (Charmaz, 2006, p. 96). Sampling and data gathering ceased when categories were saturated; this occurred when "gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of these core categories" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 113).

Because this study was structured with only extant text, the researcher undertook additional action to ensure that theoretical leads were still explored. First, because of the

extensive switching contained in the dissertations, and the purposeful writing to explain the purpose, significance, and implications of work, the researcher was able to have relevant and meaning codes to develop categories and construct theory. Moreover, the researcher used open coding when analyzing the university materials. When determining a data pool, the researcher was purposeful in selecting institutions for the original data pool with differing classifications considering that these variances would provide rich data for coding. Since the researcher randomly selected dissertations from a pool within a nearly 30-year range of publication dates, the variation of the years added assurance that the dissertations pulled were reflective of a circumstance that was not confined to a single year or set of years. After coding and writing initial summaries for each respective university, the researcher reflected on the codes that had emerged from the deductive and inductive process. This process provided the researcher the opportunity to gain sight theory that was emerging.

Additional opportunities for theoretical sampling occurred because the researcher had access to additional dissertations. The researcher pulled a dissertation abstract to compare the categories found in the dissertation in the data set and found, with little variance, that the emerging theory was consistent. For example, the researcher had a study on the topic of placement scores by a student at a PWI in the data set and pulled an abstract from on the same topic from another PWI to see if similar codes were present, or if there was inclusive language about the public good. This theoretical sampling of data was reached when data saturation occurred (Whiteside, Mills, & McCalman, 2012). Next, the researcher began the process of sorting memos written through the research process; this entailed creating and refining theoretical links

to suggest comparisons between categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 115). For example, as the researcher identified themes that addressed an inclusive environment or providing necessary technology education, the researcher identified these categories addressed preparedness for a diverse workplace and/or learning environment.

Having completed this process, the researcher began to theorize from the data. For this next step, the researcher “reached down to fundamental, up to abstractions, and probe into experience” (Charmaz, 2006, p.135). Because the researcher maintained a constructivist approach to research and theory development, the researcher chose a reflexive stance and considered how and why the expressions/meanings of public good were constructed in the data. Following Charmaz’s recommendations, an interpretive approach to theory included conceptualizing the concept of public good to understand it in more abstract terms; articulating theoretical claims pertaining to scope, depth, power, and relevance; and acknowledging subjectivity in theorizing, and hence the role of negotiation, to offer an imaginative interpretation (Charmaz, 2006, p. 127).

The constructivist approach also assumes that the theorist acknowledges that “data and analysis are social constructions that reflect what their production entailed” (Charmaz 2006, p.131); thus, the researcher was aware of “their presuppositions and to grapple with how they affect the research” (Charmaz 2006, p.131). Steps taken to address trustworthiness of the research are detailed in the following section.

### **Criteria for Evaluating Research**

Charmaz’s (2006) approach “explicitly assumes that any theoretical rendering offers an interpretive portrayal of the studied world” (p. 10). Charmaz’s (2006) approach does not ascribe to any particular criterion for evaluating research; rather

criteria should depend on who formed them and their purpose. However, to address concerns about distance from cultural and contextual specificity from the contexts in which primary data are generated, the researcher was intentional to continually critically reflexive and analytic and use such data and analysis to generate questions (Irwin, 2013).

Although Charmaz did not ascribe to a particular form of evaluation, she asserted that a strong combination of originality and credibility increases resonance and usefulness, and the subsequent value of the contribution (Charmaz, 2006, p. 183). The following sections address additional steps taken to ensure trustworthiness.

### **Credibility and Originality**

Credibility addresses “the issue of the inquirer providing assurance of the fit between respondents’ views of their life ways and the inquirer’s reconstruction and representation of the same” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 299). Charmaz (2006) listed some criteria that researchers could consider to address credibility in grounded theory studies:

- Has the research achieved familiarity with the setting or topic?
- Are the data sufficient to merit your claims? Consider, the range, number, and depth of observations contained in the data.
- Have you made systemic comparisons between observations and between categories?
- Are there strong logical links between the gathered data and your argument and analysis?
- Has your research provided enough evidence for your claims to allow the reader to form an independent assessment—and agree with your claim? (p. 182).

Such questions about credibility and originality were relevant to the study and were considered in the research process.

Additionally, Charmaz (2006) offered the following questions for evaluating originality in grounded theory studies:

- Are your categories fresh? Do they offer new insight?
- Does your analysis provide a new conceptual rendering of the data?
- What is the social and theoretical significance of this work?
- How does your grounded theory challenge, extend, or refine current ideas, concepts, or practices? (p. 182)

As Lather (2012) advocates for, this study was approached in a manner outside of the traditional positivist qualitative methods and paid attention to the local knowledge and had the potential for applied social science that could “engage strategically with the limits and possibilities of the uses of research for social policy toward the improvement of practice” (Lather, 2010, p. 247). The examination of overlooked data (or in this case secondary data) “opens a door to complicate the overly simplistic and tidy stories that we weave from quantitative data that capture little about the messy reality of people’s lives” (Lather, 2010, p. 247).

Through the researcher’s explanation of the need for the study, examination of the current context of university research, and explanation of the research design, the reader was exposed to the framework of this study and insight of how and why the researcher considered this work to be a scholarly contribution. Additional insight on the originality is discussed as the researcher continued with the development of the research study.

### **Positionality and Reflexivity**

Researchers should openly acknowledge the influence of prior work or experience on their perspective (Charmaz, 2006). By discussing her positionality and reflexivity, the researcher provided credibility to the study. Positionality explores the relationship of the researcher to the participants and the topic of concern. For the researcher in the study, this entails describing her philosophical stance, and

acknowledging her interest in and exposure to the research topic (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006).

The constructivist approach to grounded theory is representative of the researcher's ontological, epistemological, and axiological beliefs and embraces the inclusion of contextual data as a part of the analysis process and seek to generate theory through exploration, rather than affirm or deny an existing theory (Stern & Porr, 2011, p.40). Epistemologically speaking, the researcher held a constructivist stance because she considered her role a co-creator of the information. Although she was examining secondary data, she acknowledged the interaction of participant and researcher as attached and an important part of the research process. The researcher's axiological beliefs placed value on writing descriptively and safeguarding the voice of the participant.

Positionality also caused the researcher in this study to consider how her experiences may affect the relationship to the study topic. The researcher is an African American woman who attended a historically black college during her undergraduate studies. The researcher was exposed to the "to whom much is given, much is required" doctrine. This belief caused the researcher to consider the ways in which she could give back to her community considering the opportunity given to obtain a college education. Furthermore, she viewed this research topic as a means to contribute to the community by critically examining how those with the means to develop work that could be used to positively impact the community do so; or if researchers were not, bring this void to their attention in hopes of inspiring an intentional connection back to the community through research. As research was a seminal piece of her graduate student experience at

the state's largest, predominately-white public research university, she considered how her beliefs about helping her community, which included those outside of the university, could impact her approach to the study. Such exposures, beliefs, and experiences have been her inspiration for this work, and she acknowledged that this be disclosed and reconciled with in the process of conducting research.

Memo writing, a part of the constructivist grounded theory methodology, also addressed the concept of reflexivity, by helping make researchers aware of their own potential effects on the data (McGhee et al., 2007, p. 335) and lend dependability to the work (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Throughout the research process, the researcher used memo writing to explore the data.

### **Conformability**

Conformability is “concerned with establishing that the data and interpretations of an inquiry were not figments of the researcher’s imagination (Schwandt, 2006, p. 299). This entailed linking assertions, findings, and interpretations to the data in discernable ways (Schwandt, 2006, p. 299). Conformability was added in this process to the researcher’s use of theoretical sampling and extensive memoing in order to note codes/themes that arose in the data and then exploring theory to interpret the data.

### **Summary**

In this chapter the reader was walked through the research design, given insight about the data collection and analysis process, and shown the steps taken to ensure trustworthiness of the research. Moreover, the researcher provided information about the fit and purpose of the methodology and methods used, focusing on the need for the constructivist approach to grounded theory in order to analyze all the related



information in a meaningful way. The study findings gathered from the review of the dissertations and related materials are detailed in the following chapter.

## Chapter IV: Findings

This chapter details findings based on the analysis of student dissertations from five institutions. The purpose of the study was to explore dissertations for the presence of public good focus language and/or work. Through the use of an inductive and deductive analysis process, the researcher was able to critically analyze the dissertations and find rich data that addressed the research topic. As a result, the researcher examined the contextual information in a meaningful way to identify the findings presented in this chapter. Below, is a brief overview of the analysis process, and most significantly, summary information about the findings of the study.

The analysis process included a deductive, as well as, an inductive process. The deductive process, taken with a constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2006) included a line-by-line analysis of the dissertation sections, seeking to identify any written text that spoke directly to the public good. Initially, any codes of the benefits of higher education that were reflected in the IHEP (1998) “Array of Benefits” model were identified (see p. 79).

In the second level of analysis—the inductive process—the researcher further coded for and differentiated between emerging data that benefited the community of university students and professionals (benefits internal to higher education institutions only) and data that also addressed the concerns of those outside of higher education (benefits to society, external to higher education institutions).

The researcher used the following questions to find emergent data:

If present, how is the concept of public good discussed?

- What issues are being addressed in the research? What notions/themes are expressed in research? What ways do local and global communities have the potential to be impacted by the research?
- If not explicitly stated, does the work still address matters of public good? If so, how?
- How does the approach to the study differ from other researchers who address the same or a similar topic?

Is there a voice of advocacy in the research?

- How does the language show support for or challenge actions affecting a particular underrepresented group?
- How does this work give voice to the concerns of populations that have been overlooked or underexplored in the research?

### **Findings Overview**

In spite of having institutional missions that specifically state a commitment to research for the public good, overwhelmingly, the majority of the dissertations did not have explicit language showing work done for the public good. However, the dissertations from students at HBCUs provided the overwhelming majority of work that showed expressions of public good. Conversely, the PWIs focused on matters exclusive to professional development and student performance in upper division courses and standardized test scores - all almost exclusively did not consider the public good.

When comparing expressions of public good between the five research institutions, PWIs had significantly less public-focused language, and the presence of

such language was covert and often with fewer codes in the later section of the dissertation.

Overwhelmingly, the “non-public good” dissertation content was focused on matters exclusive to the profession of education and expressed benefits in terms of personal professional development, not considering the positive impact such training could have on the public good. This non-public good theme was often evident in works that defined professional development as the improvement of personal and profession-related skills that focus first on the benefits of the individual and last, or not at all, on the benefits of individual students.

Most of the PWI dissertations addressed concepts of the public good related to professional development as a means to improve student engagement and those benefits to the greater community (public good). While the majority of dissertations from the MSI did not address public good, dissertations did contain more inclusive language, such as the words “community” and “engagement” to describe involvement with campus members (see Attachments D, E, and F for word frequency examples). However, notably, when addressing public good, the HBCUs had more dissertations that sought to study effects on particular underrepresented groups in higher education or considered how the work related to a larger societal issue. This was evident in the language used throughout the dissertations, as well as, in regards to the purpose of and results achieved through the students’ research.

The data was reviewed with three different lenses, first by respective institution, then compared among institutions, and then considered as a whole; therefore, the researcher first presents findings for each institution type, then those findings from

institutional comparisons, and lastly a summary of salient findings from the collective group.

The section below provides findings from reviewing the dissertations from the listed institution -- a brief institutional profile for each university is provided prior to mentioning initial findings. The contents of the profiles are not intended to create an anthropomorphic university but rather, paint a picture of the environment and purported goals of the schools that serve as the development grounds and creation space for the scholars attending them.

### **Institution Profiles and Initial Findings**

#### **Institution A**

Classifiers: Historically black university, minority-serving institution

Publication years of dissertations analyzed: 1998, 2006, 2010, 2010

Founded in the 1870s, Institution A was originally established to improve educational opportunities for Christian leaders of colored people. The university's mission statement includes language that states a goal of creating "global leaders who think critically, address societal problems and compete effectively." The mission also includes language addressing the desire to create a diverse and ethical student population. The vision statement of the institution identifies such students developing by participation in research that entails collaborative learning teams which "serve the global community."

Presently, 90 percent of the student population is identified as African American; graduate students account for approximately 23 percent of the student body in 2016 according to data retrieved from the university's website.

### **Initial findings.**

Three of the four reviewed dissertations by students at this institution had various expressions for the public good. This finding was the greatest percentage of the institutions in the study. Notably, the authors discussed the implications of the work for not only future researchers, but the majority also discussed implications for policy and practice that impact the broader campus environment and the community. Such implications were often present whether listed in a section in the chapter by this title or not.

Emphasis was given to the connection between university and state, specifically for directions and decisions to impact the public good. While some writers wrote about the importance of changing curriculum or testing to better gauge individual performance, students at Institution A were intentional to make the connection of the dissertation topic/theme potential impact to improve matter for the greater community (public good). Two dissertations had language that tied the mission of the institution to addressing the needs of the community or public good. For example, one author wrote:

... entrepreneurship education is a vehicle for advancing the mission of HBCUs and contributing to the sociology of entrepreneurship in the African-American community.

Furthermore, the dissertations tended to include community partnership for issue resolution, including the state/legislature as a part of the solution to address systemic and complex issues. One author expressed the issue in this way:

Finally, proper input from different parties, such as the employers and the employees, the students and the faculty, the higher education institutional administrators and the state legislature, is recommended to form a seamless system of extensive university-community collaboration to pool the internal and external resources for job-oriented multiliteracy development.

Two authors specifically called upon legislators to address funding needs. One author stated:

HBCU administrators should lobby for legislative changes which generate funding for capacity building in entrepreneurship education ultimately increasing the number of African American entrepreneurs.

Another wrote:

State policymakers can also play a positive role in providing adequate funding for qualified faculty to ensure that the needs of under-prepared students are met at all levels.

### **Institution B**

Classifiers: Predominately white/ land-grant

Publication years of dissertations analyzed: 1988, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2016

Founded as the state's agricultural and mechanical college, the university's current mission states the goal of serving "students from all sectors of the state's diverse population" and those from national and international locations. The mission also includes offering "excellent programs." The vision statement of the institution addresses the desire to be "globally aware and involved, accessible and responsive" to the needs of constituents. Furthermore, the vision of the institution also includes a desire for the institution to be "integrated" in the development of the state -- intellectual, social, and economic development. Again, the desire to have excellent programs was a goal contain in the school's vision statement.

The 2016 statistics on the university's website states that minority enrollment accounts for 25 percent of student population. Graduate student enrollment accounts for approximately 16 percent of the overall enrollment.

### **Initial findings.**

Of the five analyzed dissertations from students at this university, none had language that spoke to the notion of public good. While the dissertations did not explicitly address public good, the researcher identified two dissertations that showed the potential to recognize public good by addressing entrance of underprepared populations and their persistence in higher education. For example, one author wrote:

Reading plays a significant role in higher education and life in general. When first-year college students experience deficiencies in reading comprehension, this adversely affects their academic performance. Low academic achievement in some of the other academic courses is likely, too.

While the author addressed this issue and its impact on college student performance, there was no language as to how this research could be applied to issues with reading comprehension outside of the university, how this issue affects underprepared populations persistence in higher education and/or how this work could impact such populations. Another author wrote:

In summary, there is a growing number of freshman college students who need remedial reading instruction to succeed in college. This study addresses the impact of word-meaning strategy on reading comprehension of unfamiliar words for college freshman remedial reading students.

While the author of the above selection recommends institutional practices for addressing reading deficiencies in college students, there was not any advocacy for a marginalized group or most impacted groups, such as the academically underprepared student. There was a lack of language addressing how the proposed reading strategies could be used to help underprepared students enter the university, or as an actionable step, how such practices could be applied to develop a pre-college entry program to help students better prepare for entrance test and first-year courses.



Conversely, although the next dissertation from Institution B was not initially considered to be for the public good, advocacy and community action steps were included in the recommendation section of the dissertation by one author:

Stakeholders such as local advisory committees, community businesses, and high schools should be involved with college application requirements. How underprepared college students impact the available workforce pool and the local economy should be discussed, and these businesses should be enlisted to suggest avenues for improving testing outcomes and college success.

### **Institution C**

Classifier: Historically black university, land grant, minority serving

Publication years of dissertations analyzed: 1996, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2012

Founded as an agricultural and normal school, this institution was established during the creation of the first wave of land-grant universities. The university's mission stated the aspiration for the college to "achieve national and international prominence" and also building on its heritage and prepare leaders for a global society. The university vision statement addresses the desire to foster "scholarly inquiry and research, lifelong learning, and a commitment to service."

The 2016 statistics on the university's National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) profile shows that minority enrollment account for 87 percent of student population. Graduate student enrollment accounts for approximately 20 percent of the overall enrollment.

### **Initial findings.**

Three of the five dissertations contained language for public good. More voiced an advocacy for studies of marginalized populations and how these populations and how this impacts a broader community of people:

As a nation, America is struggling to prepare students for college. Research suggests that college retention has become more difficult and graduation rates lower despite many approaches to intervene. Although the entire nation is suffering, the African American community is having the hardest time in comparison to other ethnicities. The researcher feels that it is important to research factors that affect this population.

Another writer spoke of creating a more inclusive environment:

The information will be used to help educators identify their misconceptions and stereotypes about multicultural education and become aware of their actions toward students from various cultural backgrounds. [...] This study was designed to share ways of understanding and tolerating differences among diverse student populations in America's higher educational institutions.

Another author discussed the need to work with the community resources to address student needs:

Educators and students should identify community and school supports to assist students in areas that are need of improvement to ensure academic success. Educators should also make themselves more aware of techniques and tools to assist their students.

### **Institution D**

Classifier(s): Predominately white

Publication years of dissertations analyzed: 1996, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2007

One of the first public higher education institutions in America, the mission of this university expresses the schools goal of “conservation and enhancement of the state’s and nation’s intellectual, cultural, and environmental heritage.” The institution mission further states preparing students - “for professional pursuits, educates future

leaders, and prepares citizens for lifelong learning.” Additionally, discussed is the commitment to knowledge development and providing “extraordinary experiential learning opportunities and supports the work of faculty tackling the challenges of an urbanizing nation and world.”

Per information about 2016 enrollment from the university’s website, graduate enrollment accounts for 24 percent of the student population and diverse populations accounted for 27 percent of the student enrollment in 2016.

**Initial findings.**

Four of the five dissertations analyzed did not contain information for public good. Two dissertations used the codes “student-centered” and “inclusive environment,” however the terms were used to describe topics that only affected those in higher education, not advocating for a marginalized group or the public good.

The single dissertation that addressed public good focused on depression of those with learning disabilities in the university. The author wrote:

Students with learning disabilities are profoundly effected in all aspects of daily living: cognitively, academically, emotionally, and socially (Reid, 1988). Because learning disabilities is such a comprehensive condition, not only are students with learning disabilities effected, so are their families, friends, teachers, and co-workers (Gray, 1981). As students with learning disabilities become adults, the effect becomes cumulative.

The author made connection to the experiences of those with disabilities outside of higher education settings, however the information in the implication and recommendation section of the dissertation did not specifically address the concerns of similar populations outside of the institution, even though the work had the potential to do so.

Touching briefly the idea of public good, another dissertation addressed continuing education training for social workers:

For the first reason with regard to the NASW assertion that the basis of CE is to help the social worker be able to provide knowledgeable and skillful assistance to their clients, outcome data indicated that social workers are in accord with the NASW. Social workers chose serving clients better as their number one reason for participating in CE.

While the work contained language that expressed that social workers identified serving clients as their primary reason for participating in continuing education, the work also expressed that the social workers did not find the training beneficial. Furthermore, there was a lack of language to express how this training was explicitly tied to developing skills that would improve client-worker relationships or practices that benefit the public good. For example, the author of the dissertation did not address if/how improved continuing education better prepared professionals to serve the public or how training improved the social workers' ability to address the need of clients.

### **Institution E**

Classifier(s): Minority-serving institution

Publication years of dissertations analyzed: 1998, 1999, 2007, 2014, 2016

This university, founded in the early 1900s as a normal school, strives to be “learner-centered.” The institution endeavors to provide “high quality” experiences “while pursuing new knowledge through research, artistic expression, and interdisciplinary and engaged scholarship. The university’s vision expressed desire to be known for its “comprehensive, innovative academic programs” and for “capitalizing on its urban setting and region to address the challenges of our global society.”

The 2016 statistics on the university's National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) profile shows the minority enrollment account for 50 percent of student population. Graduate student enrollment accounts for approximately 19 percent of the overall enrollment.

**Initial findings.**

One of the five dissertations analyzed address public good by discussing the experience of a minority population in higher education. The author wrote:

Limited research has been done regarding the career development of Japanese college students. Since a high unemployment rate is a serious problem in Japan, the study of college students' career development could contribute to the field of career counseling as well as Japanese society in general. For these reasons, research was needed to examine variables related to Japanese college students' career indecision.

In the selection above, the author considered how this work connected to the public, however this notion is not referenced throughout the work or written in other sections to express this notion was at the forefront during the research process. As a result, an important connection may have been overlooked because this lens was not used.

Community collaboration for addressing student needs was also discussed by authors, but this collaboration was a means to assist those in the university, not stated as a means to build relationships and apply information to the community need. For example, one author wrote:

Assessing student satisfaction with advising is key to appropriate assessment which will more likely lead to informed decision-making as it pertains to academic advising needs [...] for students, advisors, and relevant departments within the institution that provide support and resources that are an essential in providing quality advising services. When this mission is fulfilled, everyone benefits. While the primary stakeholders are students, other stakeholders, i.e. parents, the institutions, business (profit and nonprofits), as well as a host of governing bodies (local, state, and federal) also benefit from a well-educated populace...

The remaining dissertations did not have public good themes. Two of the four dissertations did have language that provided initial thoughts toward actionable steps for proposed institutional implications for study findings. One author wrote:

Being aware of what factors have bearing on leadership and the implementation of results may help departments and the university administration to develop strategies to overcome the barriers to using the program review results. Such strategies would improve department morale and encourage participation in future planning and program reviews at the department level.

In this section the researcher provided initial findings from each institutional analysis. The next section provides insight gathered as the researcher began to analyze and reflect upon what emerged when comparing findings between the institution types.

### **Group Findings**

In spite of having institutional missions that specifically state a commitment to research for the public good, overwhelmingly, the content of the dissertations focused on matters exclusive to professional development in education and expressed benefits to private good. This study was conducted as qualitative; however, the researcher included descriptive statistics and offered the percentages within the table below as a way to provide immediate contextual information and content before diving into the qualitative themes.

Table 4  
*Institutional Descriptions and Public Good Data*

| <b>Pseudonym</b> | <b>Classifier(s)</b>  | <b># of Diss. Analyzed</b> | <b># for Public Good</b> | <b># with Overt Public Good</b> |
|------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Institution A    | Historically black / minority-serving institution           | 4                          | 3                        | 2                               |
| Institution B    | Predominately white/ land-grant                             | 5                          | 0                        | 0                               |
| Institution C    | Historically black university, land grant, minority serving | 5                          | 3                        | 3                               |
| Institution D    | Predominately white   | 5                          | 1                        | 1                               |
| Institution E    | Minority serving institution                                | 5                          | 1                        | 1                               |
| Total            |   | 24                         | 8                        | 6                               |

*Note:* Provides institutional descriptors related to founding and student population demographics according to race. The table details the number of dissertations analyzed from each institution, with breakdowns detailing evidence of public good. The data shows a third of the dissertations contained some language for public good.

When comparing expressions of public good between the five research institutions, HBCUs had a greater percentage of dissertations for the public good – this is further discussed in a later section. Of the 24 dissertations analyzed from the institutions, overall, eight contained language that addressed public good. It is important to note that the percentage of “good” only represents the presence of good, not differentiating between explicit versus vague language. If considering this factor, the number of public good dissertations decreases, impacting the PWIs the most in terms of decreasing the percent.

Overwhelmingly, the non-public good dissertation content was focused on matters exclusive to the student population attending university or to the profession of education and expressed benefits to private good. This non-public good context was often evident in works that focused on improved pass rate for courses or professional development, was defined as the improvement of personal and profession-related skills that focus first on the benefits of the individual and last, or not at all, on the benefits of individual students.

When addressing public good, the HBCUs had more dissertations that sought to study effects on particular underrepresented communities and ethnic cultures, specifically their learning experiences. Although minimally present in dissertations, when present, the PWI dissertations addressed concepts of the public good related to professional development as a means to improve student engagement for an underrepresented group in higher education. The MSI in the study had more dissertation that addressed private good with a similar approach to professional development and student success than that of the private/individual good focused dissertations at



predominately white institutions; the single PWI dissertation that was public good focused advocated for an underrepresented group in a way that was similar to those dissertations produced by students at HBCUs.

As previously mentioned, when considering the percentage of public good-focused works among the five research institutions the historically black universities and minority serving institution account for seven of the eight dissertations, or 87 percent. This percentage would be promising for those scholars interested in university commitment to the public good. The analysis of the origin of the majority of the public good dissertations is significant.

#### **Limited Codes Found with Deductive Analysis**

Nominal codes were identified using the language and themes from the IHEP, although some distant connections to IHEP themes could be argued for. Mainly, the public social category of “social cohesion / appreciation for diversity” could be viewed as an overarching theme for the codes that addressed supporting diverse populations in higher education. Similarly, the public economical category of greater productivity could arguably be an overarching theme for training students to work in demand fields, especially those that provide public assistance/service. However, because the vast majority of codes in the dissertations were not intentional about doing work for the public good, the researcher could not reasonably consider the codes to be appropriate or accurate.

### **More Robust Codes Found with Inductive Analysis**

Through the inductive process, when present in the research from the institutions reviewed, concepts of public good, including some description of equity words such as “multicultural,” “diversity,” and “collaboration” - emerged.

What also emerged was significant language that spoke with the voice of advocacy. Advocacy in this study was demonstrated if the language showed support for or challenged actions affecting a particular underrepresented group. This concept of advocacy was drawn from Pasque’s (2010) discussion of advocacy within a framework for the connection between higher education and the society (p. 31-49). While the concept of advocacy is not a theme or category for the traditional IHEP model, it is important to note that advocacy is a central theme for institutional and community advancement. Furthermore, advocacy was present in the majority of dissertations that address topics affecting minority and underprepared populations in higher education. Within the more detailed analysis of these specific dissertations that contained language of public good, there were three themes that arose from the coding processes. The most salient were (1) understanding diverse student college experiences, (2) policy and practice changes for supporting diverse population, and (3) working to meet workforce needs. More rich data was found in the purposes and implications sections of the dissertations to show the desire to improve understanding of phenomena that affect the greater society and learning to foster understanding of different cultures. These three themes are further discussed below.

### **Understanding diverse populations.**

The most salient theme in the dissertations that spoke to public good addressed the understanding of diverse populations. In this context, understanding was defined as practices that include teaching multiculturalism, and seeking perspectives of the learning and social experiences of minority populations. Further, public good language showed a concern for improving quality of life through improved academic and support services for underrepresented groups and the education of the general population on matters affecting those groups. An example came from a dissertation that focused on depression in students with learning disabilities. The dissertation related to the public good because it showed a commitment to an underrepresented group in the community and sought to address the quality of life for the group beyond the college environment.

Particularly with the dissertations produced at historically black universities, there was explicit terminology supporting and/or advocating for minority groups. The authors were intentional to include language that showed support and/or advocacy was tied to a broader societal issue. One author wrote:

As America continues to prosper in this post-civil rights era, there is a growing economic disparity between African-Americans and their white counterparts. Conley(1999) found that this disparity is evidenced in the percentage of African-Americans who own, on average, one-twelfth the amount of property as Whites. Invariably, the ancillary effects of such disparities among disenfranchised groups impact society as a whole.

Morial's (2006) view on this impact is stated as follows:

When one community in America suffers, our entire economy suffers. W.E.B. DuBois identified the color line as the great challenge of the 20th century; our great challenge in the 21st century is the economic line between blacks and whites; rich and poor; the haves, have-nots, and have-mores (pp.167-8).

Another dissertation focused on the experiences of minority educators and their experience working in predominantly white institutions. In the study, the author was

intentional to mention the importance of gaining perspective of black faculty experiences in order to improve job satisfaction for minority faculty. The author wrote:

..., within the next decade, the majority of children in the United States will complete elementary and secondary school without encountering a minority teacher... initiatives must be established now to assure a more culturally enlightened nation in the future

In this example, the emphasis was not solely on what an educator thought about the topic of minority tenure, but the end result was to explore systemic practices and include more persons of color and underrepresented culture in receiving tenure. This dissertation directly addressed a matter of social cohesion and appreciation of diversity, which is an area of social public good explicitly defined in the IHEP model that was used in the deductive analysis process in this research study.

#### **Meeting the needs of today's learners.**

The dissertations addressing this second concept expressed the need to prepare learners to meet the needs of today's society. A number of dissertations discussed the public good by focusing on helping students acquire skills to meet workforce needs – not focusing on benefits related to individual benefits such as increased income. The subject of meeting the needs of today's learners was also addressed in several dissertations as a private good, and in these dissertations, the authors focused solely on participants in higher education and did not translate it into a public good as represented in the IHEP model. Importantly, several codes emerged which addressed improving the educational experience and/or reinventing the educational experience of students in higher education. This code was defined as a public good because it discussed the need to adapt to the use of new technology or learning methods as means to enhance student

learning and their future societal interactions. This language is reflective of the original IHEP model. For example, one author wrote:

This study was designed to assist undergraduate students themselves in assessing how . . . confident they are that they have acquired the necessary technology knowledge and skills needed for the workplace, and their perceptions of the programs they are completing.

This statement spoke to using new methods to improve student preparedness for a diverse society and workforce. The codes within the dissertations containing the theme of meeting learners needs showed commitment to a fulfilling a crucial void in workforce. The research was not focused on an individual school or programs unique needs (non-public good). The full discourse in the dissertations show an interest in helping to meet the needs of students with various barriers to achievement and getting the knowledge needed to function in today's society.

As one author wrote in the Significance of the Study section:

This study adds to the emerging scholarly research in the field of connecting adult job-oriented multiliteracy development and urban higher education curricula to prepare the market-demanded workforce under the increasingly information- and technology-mediated environments.

Within this statement, there is a connection between expectation for student success in the university, and consideration that students will be able to benefit society by filling a gap for people with a set of skills and knowledge. Such language/consideration was key in identifying works that were for the public good. In the works identified for private good, the benefit to society was not considered.

#### **Meeting workforce needs.**

Whereas, preparing citizens for the workplace is a way to provide individual private benefit that has potential for public good, the concept of meeting workforce

needs speaks to the university's commitment to the social charter and advancing society. This third concept was most often seen in the works by students at HBCUs. For example, Institution A tied the work to the institutional mission and the benefit of public good:

... entrepreneurship education is a vehicle for advancing the mission of HBCUs and contributing to the sociology of entrepreneurship in the African-American community.

The author expounded upon this idea by explaining:

Universities have a civic responsibility to engage in the development of neighboring communities (Mullins and Gilderbloom, 2002). Through entrepreneurship education, institutions of higher learning can engage with the community to renew the spirit of enterprise. Higher education can serve as a key contributor to the [...] rebuilding strategy by leveraging intellectual capital. Presently, these institutions are geographically positioned to empower individuals and communities to become active participants in a capitalistic society and global economy. An investment in human capital vis-à-vis workforce development can build capacity, stimulate innovation, create new technologies, and improve standards of living (Roche, 2001). This premise supports the urgent need for improving entrepreneurship education at HBCUs.

### **Summary Findings**

As previously mentioned, the majority of the dissertations addressed private good benefits, specifically the benefits to the development of individual college students such as improved learning outcomes, increased success rates in courses, and improved collegial experiences for select populations. Further, three dissertations expressed some interest and/or advocacy for a marginalized group but was focused on the experience of such populations in the context of the university experience and did not translate these benefits to the public good. For example, a few dissertations discussed improving the learning and and/or college testing experience of students on campus. However, most dissertations made no mention of how such experience would benefit the greater

community. Those dissertations did not discuss that supporting specific marginalized or underrepresented students would help the individual student as well as the public good in terms of social cohesion or lead to increased quality of civic life beyond graduation, as illustrated on the IHEP model.

Interestingly, in the dissertations on matters that were clearly focused on the public good the writers tended to have less description of the purpose or implications within the abstract itself. This information was often found through the more in-depth analysis in the purpose section. Abstracts that were specific to a particular community — students in a statistics course, for example — tended to have more detailed information about implications for the studied group within the abstract itself. However, some authors only discussed public good in the implications/recommendation sections of the dissertation.

While the aforementioned paragraphs highlight the overarching themes and findings related to present themes of public good in the dissertations, there were significant findings related to the quality and quantity of language for the public good in the dissertations reviewed. The following subsections provide information the researcher identified when considering what was identified when looking at the complete dataset in dissertations, in terms of the lack of public good and the potential for some dissertations to be modified and directly address concerns that affect the greater community (the public good).

### **Few Examples of Clear Public Good**

Overall, the themes of the dissertations reviewed were focused on private good. The public research institutions that have some of the larger graduate programs and

mission focuses for global good/support/outreach had the lowest number of dissertations that addressed the public good, so this finding is particularly problematic.

### **Overt Vs. Convert Public Good**

Another significant finding was the variance in the frequency and presentation of public good themes in dissertations by students at the differing institutions. Public good codes were first present in the abstracts of HBCUs and the MSI, whereas, codes were first in the body of the dissertation of PWIs. Moreover, PWIs often had fewer codes and were more likely to use vague language when addressing public good themes. In this way, some dissertations only had a single line in the implications/recommendation section that referenced the notion of public good. This minimal reference occurred most with the dissertations by students attending PWIs.

### **Public Good Themes Differences among Institution Types**

The study also showed a difference in the public good-focused works when comparing the PWIs and MSI with the HBCUs. What emerged is that the majority of dissertations from the HBCUs, whether for public or private good, contained more language that spoke with the voice of advocacy. Most often, these dissertations focused on the educational and social experience of racially and economically marginalized populations and their experience in higher education, with emphasis on improving experiences. Land grant status showed a complete contrast versus a PWI with the same classifier. The HBCU that was also a land-grant had the most number of dissertations for public good; conversely, the PWI that was a land-grant had no dissertations that spoke to public good. While the MSI had only one dissertation with explicit public



good, the language used in the majority of dissertations from the institution was more inclusive, using words such as *partner*, *community*, and *engagement*.

### **Quasi-public Good**

Another finding was the identification of several dissertations that were quasi-public good, meaning the work explored a topic that could be beneficial to the greater community and/or advocated for a group but was focused on the experience of such populations solely within the context of the university experience. For example, a few dissertations discussed improving the learning and social experience of individual international students on campus. However, most made no mention of how such experience would benefit the greater community – that supporting international students would help the individual student as well as the public good in terms of social cohesion or lead to increased quality of civic life beyond graduation, as illustrated on the IHEP model.

### **Chapter Summary**

By examining the data through three lenses, the researcher was able to consider the way the data stood individually and collectively to paint a picture about the presence of public good in dissertations. The presence of public good work was most frequently seen by those students at HBCUs, and the presence of this work was often infused with a voice of advocacy. While there was a more proportionate representation of minority institution work in data set, when one would see that the HBCUs represent a smaller proportion of the number of institutions in the higher education system. However, such schools are offering more work for public good when compared to other institutional types. Having now presented the findings of the analysis process, the next chapter

provides insight into the reasons for the presence of public good work in the manner found in the data set.

## **Chapter V: Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine if knowledge development through research efforts by doctoral students goes beyond the walls of research universities and seeks to address social matters relevant to the greater community (i.e., the public good). Furthermore, the researcher sought to gain a have a sense of the state of current efforts of state-supported institutions to serve the public in what are true to their historical and currently expressed mission. Therefore, the researcher explored the ways public research universities are living up to their historical, and self-expressed commitments.

In the previous chapter, the researcher explored the reader through the emerging data identified through the theoretical sampling, saturation, and sampling process as developed by Charmaz (2006). Through these processes, what emerged was that when addressing public good, the HBCUs had more dissertations that sought to study effects on particular underrepresented communities and ethnic cultures, whereas most of the PWI dissertations addressed concepts of the public good related to professional development as a means to improve student engagement and those benefits to the greater community (public good).

Furthermore, when comparing expressions of public good between the five research institutions, HBCUs were significant in public good. PWIs had significantly less public focused languages, and the presence of such language was overt and often with fewer codes in the later section of the dissertation.

Overwhelmingly, the non-public good dissertations content was focused on matters exclusive to the profession of education and expressed benefits to private good. This was often evident in works that focused on professional development, which was

defined as the improvement of personal and profession-related skills that focus first on the benefits of the individual and last, or not at all, on the benefits of individual students. Overwhelmingly, content of the dissertations by those at PWIs focused on matters exclusive to professional development and student performance in upper division courses and standardized test scores, expression of non-public good.

Having identified the aforementioned findings, in this chapter the researcher moves to theorization as defined by Charmaz (2006). “When you theorize, you reach down to fundamental, up to abstraction, and probe into experience. The content of theorizing cuts to the core of studied experiences and poses new questions about it” (Charmaz, 2006, p.135). An interpretive approach is taken when theorizing and the researcher covers not only overt processes but delved into implicit meanings and processes and is most evident then.

Theorization in Charmaz’s constructivist approach “takes us outward yet reflecting about it draw us inward, and with grounded theory, leads us back to the world for a further look and deeper reflection” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 149). Charmaz recognizes that regardless if one follows a positivist or interpretive tradition, one does not “gain an autonomous theory, albeit one amenable to modification” (p.149). In this way, the researcher is part of the constructed theory, and the theory reflected the vantage points inherent in our varied experiences, whether or not we are aware of them.

For example, in this study within constructivist theorization the researcher considered the meaning of the concept of public good not just in a current use of the word but allowed the representation of words to be considered outside of ordinary explanations and understandings. For instance, the concept of advocacy speaks to the

process of supporting a cause or proposal, or challenging actions affecting a particular underrepresented group. Considering the ways the concept was used and expressed in some dissertations, the term was transcending the traditional meaning of advocacy and also embraced social inclusiveness that would be considered a public good.

The following sections of this chapter gives interpretive insight about the findings noted in the previous chapter. The researcher sought meaning behind the findings. Critical steps in this process includes (1) seeking patterns amongst the findings (2) making use of descriptions and interpretation, and (3) synthesis of the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 238). The researcher used Bloomberg's interpretation outline process to help consider the findings in a deeper way (Charmaz, 2006, p. 236). This process prompts the researcher to question each finding, and the various aspects of it, by asking *why* and *why not*, exhausting the possibilities that might explain the findings. The results below are organized with three overarching themes (1) evidence of public good, (2) the distant public, (3) communication with the community, and disconnection from the public. The discussion on evidence of public good expanded on how the current themes, teachings, reward for, and expectation of work for the public good have potentially shaped what was been found in the dissertations analyzed. The latter sections explore the relationship of the academy, and the students learning there, to the community we have the potential to assist. Both sections reflect critical questions the researcher considered in the study, and the memos written by the researcher in the analysis process.

## **Evidence of Public Good**

### **Overlooked Public Good Themes**

What emerges from the study is that there are still many themes that are not formally recognized as part of the social and/or economical public good benefits. With such gaps, the academy is missing the opportunity for inclusiveness and promote works that are beneficial to the community. To close these gaps, the academy must first work with stakeholders (such as faculty, community supporters, and legislatures) to develop more current and inclusive public good models. By exploring how stakeholders (faculty, community supporters, and legislatures) discuss and describe the concept of public good, Chambers and Gopaul (2008) and Pasque & Rex's (2010) work facilitates the discussion of what role higher education will play in public good. This knowledge will assist higher education supporters to determine how to tell the public how we are attempting to explore issues affecting the public. The academy must also ensure that steps are taken to update documents and teaching of information about public good to those within the academy.

The following sections discuss the importance of developing public good models that include diverse language about the way public good is actualized. The section also discusses the importance of teaching inclusive models to current and future researchers. Furthermore, the discussion emphasizes the importance of sustaining actions for public good by rewarding work for public good and implementing policy to ensure such steps are continually prioritized and practiced.

### **Public good models.**

Nominal codes were identified using the language and themes from the IHEP; although some distant connections to IHEP themes could be argued for. While the IHEP model provides examples of the overarching category themes, it is critical to ensure continued evaluation and considerations of how language and meaning evolves. These, important themes of public good must be included in the category themes.

The researcher looked at dissertations that were created by students in doctoral education classes. While there were no dissertations that were focused on applied science or technology, there were themes present that were deemed to benefit the public good. The researcher observed how the research topics fit into the categories benefiting public good. This analysis highlights the need to assess the relevance and inclusiveness of public good models and frameworks. In this study, dissertations show examples of economic and social public good themes that ensure that the current society can see the connectedness of work to a purpose.

While the concept of advocacy was not a theme or category for the traditional IHEP model, it was a central theme for institutional and community advancement. Furthermore, advocacy was present in the majority of dissertations that addressed topics affecting minority and underprepared populations in higher education. Such topics continued to be discussed in research as higher education and the nation became more diverse. Pasque (2010) purported the inclusion of advocacy in a modified model similar to IHEP. Further discussions about concepts would benefit the academy and the community if the goal was to have shared and/ or mutually understood terms to explain works that benefited the public good.

## **Teaching Public Good**

Another find was the identification of dissertations that were deemed quasi-public good, meaning the work expressed some interest and/or advocated for a marginalized group, but was focused on the experience of such populations solely within the context of the university experience. Although the institutions examined in this study purport some level of commitment to community/public good, there was either disconnect, disinterest, or confusion about what serving the public good meant and how to directly reflect this in research.

The researcher questioned who and how universities are defining public good, and how students are – or are not – exposed to the concept of public good, particularly as it relates to research. As Austin (2002) addressed, student graduate school is a place where academic career socialization occurs and is often the starting point for one's understanding of the faculty profession, or higher education career. As Austin suggested, if college is the place where students begin to form values and perspectives as academics, it is critical that a clear and meaningful understanding of public good is defined, and what research/knowledge creation for the public good entails.

Faculty should make an effort to bring attention to public good. They should be advocates, bridging the connection between how individual students can make a contribution to the larger public good. Failure to do so in the academy creates a missed opportunity to educate the next generation of education professionals on an important institutional mission, thus further perpetuating a system that does not include the issues of the greater community in research. This absence of advocating for public good



further neglects the needs of marginalized populations and contributes to the divide between university and community.

Although the goal of education was to make them see how expanded thoughts could make their work have greater reach and impact, the researcher recognized that not all students will elect to produce public good themed works. In conclusion, the dissertation was intended to be an extensive body of work that was formed with guidance from a committee of scholars. Therefore, faculty were critical in encouraging public good scholarship. The next section continues the discussion of encouraging public good work through reward opportunities.

### **Rewarding Public Good Efforts in Traditional Scholarship**

Public good research is not acknowledged or rewarded in the way that profit-generating and/or commercial research currently is. Contextual information was also critical in the data analysis process and contributes to the strength of the study. In reviewing information on the websites of each institution, the researcher found webpages and press releases that promoted the research produced at the colleges and often touted the community engagement (mostly via civic engagement projects). Although it is important for public good, no work was found for non-applied science or technology scholarship by student. This lack of work could be reflective of the financial resources from STEM based research and instant gratification benefits of some community engagement projects. Little attention was given to other forms of work for public good.

As discussed in Chapter II, in order to support the institution's mission for public good, administrators and prominent faculty must begin to reward efforts that

address societal challenges and the public good. These efforts include making modifications to tenure requirements, faculty engagement requirements, funding opportunities, and even recognition opportunities to reward work for the public good (O'Meara, Sandmann, Saltmarsh & Giles, 2011; O'Meara, 2006; O'Meara, Kaufman & Kuntz, 2003). Such recognition and reward actions should also be considered with student and their scholarship efforts. Institutional priorities are often rewarded financially and also with public recognition. Promoting such practices with graduate work could help bolster intentional efforts in faculty and student work for public good.

### **Promoting Public Good Work**

As mentioned in Chapter II and in Chapter III, the founding of the historically black college and the research university in the United States reflect a profound, yet differing, approach to the evolution of education culture and industry in America. The researcher considered that although both were established out of a need for public good, the specific approach and reasoning for support differed. This history could affect the institutions' commitment and support for public good. Indeed, each institution founding as either a HBCU or PWI was salient and significant in the way public good was presented in the dissertations.

As discussed previously, the anti-slavery movement affected the establishment of the first black colleges. Education became a central focus and a liberating force in the abolitionist movement. HBCU institutions were founded to meet the needs of an emerging underrepresented voice. HBCUs' focused commitment to addressing community needs may be the catalyst behind the advocacy found in the majority of the dissertations analyzed. This is important to note because even if institutions had faired

equally in percentage of dissertations that addressed experiences of minority students in higher education, the dissertations from the HBCUs were intentional to advocate for the needs of marginalized students. As Pasque's (2010) work shows, there is a difference between being supportive of the public good and speaking with a specific 'advocacy' voice. Such advocacy was intentional and is important to develop an inclusive public good model.

Advocacy requires more than just speaking about or studying a particular group; rather, it requires one to speak out about challenges that affect equity for an underrepresented group. The majority of dissertations from HBCUs, regardless of public/ non-public good focus, do speak from an advocacy voice. Based on the experience of the faculty and staff in the institution and the intentional teaching by some faculty of the "to whom much is given, much is required" doctrine, students may feel more driven and/or supported to allow their scholarship to be a vehicle for giving to the community.

The PWIs in the study were less likely to have a public good focus. PWIs did not demonstrate the voice of advocacy in comparison to the HBCUs. As a whole, public research institutions devoted more scholarly research to improve matters for private practices and/or select pockets of society. This finding was supported by statements from Pasque (2010), Checkoway (1997, 2001) and Fisher (2006) who expressed concern for the state of university commitment to public good and provided evidence that the private good prevailed over public good dissertations. The next category explores the challenge of addressing the mismatch of a mission statement for public good and actions that do not show a commitment to fulfill the mission.

## **Institutional Mission and Action**

The findings showed that the stated commitment to public good in institutional missions and website materials did not necessarily match the dissertations analyzed. This finding was mirrored in the PWIs that used words such as “global” and “national” in describing works that could imply public good. HBCUs mission and vision statements had localized verbiage such as “community” and “partnership.” The researcher learned that as institutions become larger, in terms of institutional goals for more national involvement in research, as expressed in mission and stated goals, focus on work for the public good became less important, or at least emphasized. This finding reflected Saichaie & Morpew’s (2014) work on mission and website information in which the messages on the websites de-emphasized the public mission and the purposes that institutions had promoted.

College mission was one consideration, but the call to action and identification of action steps to address public concerns were critical in the analysis. While the college’s mission and actions should align, the study showed that a disconnect existed. As highlighted in the findings section (p. 125), the HBCUs mission and vision statements had specific public good content and supported a voice of advocacy. Even more revealing, this public good content was tied to implications and actions. Given the history of the HBCU and the significant percentage of diverse and underrepresented populations there was an intentionality to address matters that affected the most disenfranchised. Historically, blacks have continued to fight for equality and access to education. Therefore, it is understandable the intention to encourage public good learning, research, and identifying ways to resolve identified issues. Because of the

history of power and oppression that originally kept minorities out of education, and later kept HBCUs underfunded, blacks' educators understood that systemic issues need system change. This change required advocacy and call for attention to policy and practice. Therefore, there is often the promotion of certain culture expectations (teaching a "give back" doctrine) and a push for affecting policy by faculty that encourages those in the university to not only discuss but consider action or the benefit of the greater community that is less present at other institutions.

Without intentional action to promote public good work, such works continue to become less explored. Ultimately, becoming a distant memory. The next section explores the way in which this distance appeared in the data analyzed.

### **The Distant Public Good**

The most interesting finding was the language that discussed non-public good. This was concerning considering there were several dissertations deemed quasi-public good. The dissertations overlooked opportunities to address issues that affected the greater community, and the public was treated as an option rather than a priority. While many researchers sought to improve practices that affected the day-to-day practices and experience of university students, few dissertations considered how this work could be generalized or scaled to impact the community outside of the university walls.

Furthermore, the majority of dissertations that contained an implications section, did not discuss how their work could impact the public good. This may have occurred because of the previously stated non-public good focus in research by PWI students. The research contends this void occurred because the concept of public good has not been emphasized as the PWIs have become more globally ambitious and seek more

opportunity for addressing concerns presented by commercial entities. Consequently, less action is given to the public, and the public further divests in higher education. This speaks to the concerns presented by Chambers (2005) the public not aware or interested in the public good of higher education and primarily identifying its individual and private benefits. As a consequence, it becomes harder whom? to discuss why the community should invest in it (Chambers, 2005).

The aforementioned showed that the public was less of a priority of research, but an optional audience when conducting extensive research as a dissertation – something in the distance. The following section explores how the push for more global connection and recognition could be negatively affecting the universities connection to local communities.

### **National Advancement over Public Ties**

The researcher found that public research institutions devoted more scholarly research to improve matters for private practices and/or select pockets of society. This finding was reflective of statements by Pasque (2010), Checkoway (1997, 2001) and Fisher (2006) who expressed concern for the state of university commitment to public good and provided evidence that the non-public good dominates dissertation research. This finding was most evident with PWIs that had verbiage in the mission and visions statements that spoke of the public from a global perspective.

Based upon the differences of public goods, the researcher reviewed the mission and goals of the respective institutions. The researcher also wondered if there was difference in the presence of public good between smaller intuitions and the larger schools with a greater number of graduate students and degree options institutions. The

researcher theorized that as institutions become larger, in terms of institutional program offerings and goals for more national involvement in research, focus on work for the public good became less important, or at least emphasized. This finding was supported in the work of Scruggs & Pasque (2013) and appeared to be present regardless of institutional founding type. While the production of fewer work for public goods may not be intentional for larger institutions, such actions affected the works that impact the community. The public is something to serve, however without having an understanding or connection to the community, it will be challenging to ensure that public good is being serve. The following section explores the relationship between the university and the community.

### **Connection to the Community**

The next finding was the college's mission and its connection to the community. As discussed in Chapter II, the majority of HBCUs were established through the Morrill Acts. These institutions were established in rural communities. These schools were the entry way for the minority population into higher education, and those in minority populations offered pooled resources to help loved ones attend college. The university staff, and those in the community, often pulled together to support the development and expansion of the university. With unrelenting community support, the institution continued to expand and acquired more land and resources. Despite limited support from the state in financial support and political influence, community support was the cornerstone of progression of education in black communities. Therefore, the town and gown relationship existed in a more intimate way than just considering the financial benefits of these relationships. The town and gown relationship strengthened the ability

to serve a greater purpose of creating paths of success for the most underrepresented populations. Such a strong connection would lend to the continued efforts to take actions that would affect the local community.

HBCUs, drastically underfunded in comparison to traditional PWIs, served as the launch pad for future black leaders who later paved the way in activism on the local, state, and national fights for systemic change in service equity. HBCU graduates were often on the frontlines creating change for their communities. For example, the public service and civil rights advocacy of Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher, Nancy Randolph Davis, and Clara Luper, a few Langston University (OK) graduates, highlight the stories of a connected college and community that helped lead change in education and the greater community.

Black churches and colleges were the center for resources and development opportunities for minorities (Brooks & Starks, 2011; Hoffman, Snyder & Sonnenberg, 1992; Lovett, 2011). This relationship created a bond that connected the college to the community in a public good way that many other institution types have not. Such a bond explains why public good was more prevalent in the research of HBCU students. The final paragraphs of this section explore the loss of public good research.

### **Loss of Public Good Research**

Although institutions were not mandated to designate a certain number or percentage of research and knowledge focused on the public good, what must be remembered was that higher education institutions, particularly public research universities, were founded with a goal to serve the public good. If few public institutions were inclusive of public good in research and information disseminated



throughout the communities, then it cannot be anticipated that private institutions would pick up the mantle and fulfill the calling for research in the interest of public good.

Therefore, it is imperative that if one were to display a chart of “good” outcomes for public higher education institutions, it would highlight that public good is an important and significant proportion of the composition of “good.” Thus, it would be “good” for the public.

The unfortunate lack of explicit public good serves as a reality check to higher education advocates that they have been promoting an unfulfilled mission and agenda. When public good was not considered, or merely presented as a byproduct of private good, we further the disconnect between us (the entity of higher education) and them (the community). The final section in the chapter discusses the lack of connection to the public that the institutions in the study purport to serve.

### **Disconnection from the Public**

This study showed a disturbing trend for research regarding the public good in institutions with multiple degree programs. Although HBCUs are the voice of and/or advocates for underrepresented populations, the overall outlook for research on behalf of those outside of the community of higher education is unpromising. Cameron (1997) suggested that by finding ways to enrich the public through scholarship, the concept of community was served in ways that had been forgotten. “Society is no longer treated as something outside the academy but rather something of which the academy is a part” (p.8). This research showed that higher education has some disconnect with the greater society and must find a way to be engaged in the most basic form of knowledge development as interconnected with the greater public community.

## Theorization

Constructivists study how--and sometimes why--people construct meanings and actions in specific situations. As explained in Chapter II, a constructivist approach means more than looking at how individuals view their situations. It not only theorizes the interpretive work that research participants do, but also acknowledges that the resulting theory is an interpretation (Bryant, 2002; Charmaz, 2000). The theory depends on the researcher's view; it does not and cannot stand outside of it. The acts involved in theorizing fosters seeing possibilities, establishing connections, and asking questions. Interpretive theorizing may cover overt processes but also delves into implicit meanings and processes (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher's analysis was intuitive and impressionistic, a common slant with a subjectivist, interpretive approach.

Considering all the aforementioned findings, the researcher theorized there was a disconnect between what universities described as their commitment to public good and the current production of dissertation research. This disconnect was particularly true among institutions with larger graduate student populations and larger doctoral degree programs and had a stated commitment to more national and global studies. This commitment to the public good was affected by its historical founding as either a PWI or HBCU. Furthermore, HBCUs intentionally discussed the experience of underrepresented and marginalized populations in their research and wrote with a voice of advocacy.

Regarding the discovery of emergent language that speaks to public good, the researcher concluded that the texts which speak to the idea of social good and economic good for the public simultaneously addressed the experience of underrepresented

populations in higher education or considered how to equip learners with skills needed to help create a diverse, thriving workforce. This information will be helpful for further research as we in the academy attempt to better understand the state of public good research.

## **Chapter VI: Implications and Conclusion**

The following sections of this chapter discuss implications, recommendations, and considerations for future research.

### **Implications**

As Checkoway (2001) addressed, “our research universities have intellectual and institutional resources that are the envy of the world [...] We have faculty members with credentials in academic disciplines and professional fields [...] who possess potential for problem solving and program planning” (p.127). With such resources not being used to address matters of interest to the greater society, there is a missed opportunity to serve an ever-evolving diverse community and forsake a calling to serve for the betterment of the public.

In particular, public research institutions must remember their mandate to serve public good and ensure that knowledge for the greater society is a driving force behind its efforts. As Pasque (2010) stated, “it is not enough to educate for the public good; higher education institutions must also operate as a public good” (p.25). People in positions of influence are needed to help identify, recommend and implement the bridges that connect us to the community, reach out to those who are intentional with work for the public good, and who are able to make actionable steps toward a greater connection/collaboration with the public.

The work presented in this study has the potential to (1) modify current teaching practices, (2) expand public good themes (3) revise institutional policies and practices to support public good work, and (4) strengthen the communication with, and service

for, the benefit of the public good. These topics are described in greater detail in the following sections.

### **Current Teaching Practices**

This study has the potential to influence the teaching methods and curriculum that graduate students (particularly those at public research universities) take while developing research skills. Teaching the concept of public good is critical to developing a culture that understand and promotes the public good in research. This research study shows there were some missed opportunities for students to connect their work to the public good. Furthermore, since doctoral students are future researchers and faculty members, it is necessary to set an expectation of connection to community and public good scholarship. Therefore, faculty must incorporate course content in methodological training about the public good. While neoliberalist practices will always be in the environment, it takes intentional training and preparation for continuance of public good scholarship and research.

### **Expanding Public Good Themes**

Findings from the research have significant implications for the continued study and modification of public good models. The study highlights the need to assess the relevance and inclusiveness of models in order to ensure that the current society can still see the connectedness of work to a purpose. As our institutions become more diverse, we have the potential to gain new ideas and perspectives on ways to do scholarship and research for public good. Having a diverse democracy allows for new language and inclusion of such terms in the working documents and guiding materials that are used to educate and communicate about the notion of public good.

Particularly for those who are doing work in non-STEM areas, it necessary to promote the notion of community impactful work because scholarly work in areas such as the social sciences and education have a strong impact on addressing social and political issues in this country. While the majority of funding for research is still devoted to non-public, commercialized research, efforts for public good still have to be promoted, with improved, continued communication to the public, more funding could be given for such efforts on behalf of the public.

### **University Policies and Practices**

Institutional policies and practice could also be reviewed and modified based upon information regarding the lack of public good work. Without taking action in policy, it is challenging to ensure that efforts for public good is truly embraced and incorporated into the university. In this way, policy must not only ensure curriculum includes information about public good scholarship and research, it should also be a partial factor in considering how faculty promotion and institutional recognition are awarded to faculty.

### **Communication with the Community**

As discussed in Chapter II, overwhelmingly, state investment in higher education continues to decline. From this study, there is information that has implications for the ways in which those in the academy can approach communication about the work being achieved in the university that could affect the social and economic benefits of higher education.

As Chambers (2005) discussed, with the public not as aware or interested in the public good of higher education and primarily identifying its individual and private

benefits, it becomes harder to discuss why the community should invest in it. As communities become more diverse and inclusive, it becomes more important to ensure that we have language to communicate with the public about academy efforts, and that the academy is connecting with the community to discuss mutual concerns. This interaction with the community is vital to the understanding of how both the university and the public are vital to one another, and the advancement of society.

### **Recommendations**

Having outlined the implications for the study, the following section provides a list of recommendations for to address the concerns highlighted in the study.

#### **Inclusion of Public Good Curriculum in Doctoral Training**

Public good curricula should be intertwined in the teaching of qualitative and quantitative coursework that graduates students are required to complete for their degrees. Such curriculum should not be a stand-alone optional course, but content should be presented as students are learning about study design, and the importance of developing actionable steps in the study. This commitment ensure students are exposed to this concept in their studies at university.

#### **Community Education and Outreach**

University faculty and graduate students must ensure that they consistently find ways to communicate to a diverse community efforts taken to address great societal need. This effort could occur through annual media releases, coupled with committee listening sessions in various communities in and around the university. This process is intended to improve communication between the two parties.

## **Institutional Policy**

Policy must be written to ensure that an annual review of work, including assessments from community members, on the status of communication of public good effort is conducted with particular emphasis on scholarship and research by faculty and graduate students. Furthermore, considering that fewer grants are often available for public good research, a review of public good work should be part of consideration for funding for travel, professional development, and priority requests for additional program and/or department funding.

## **Delimitation**

The purpose of this study was to explore how the concept of public good is being considered in the dissertation work of students at public research institutions. As such, the study centered on exploring what is identified using deductive and inductive approaches to analyzing information. The study was not designed to explore what the students felt about the concept of public good. However, provide a springboard for further research on graduate work by first reviewing what is being pursued by students during the most exhaustive research project in the graduate process.

Now that the study has been completed, this research can be used as a foundation to explore what factors can help shape the student's understanding and motivation to create work for public good. Similar studies could be pursued with a larger pool of dissertations from a greater number of public research universities, with attention to different classifiers such as research activity levels or self-identifying recognition such as those for community engagement. Furthermore, research could explore dissertations submitted to other forums, such as open access sites. Researchers



could also focus on a different field of study in social science or areas such as STEM. Additionally, researchers may incorporate interviews of the writers of the dissertations to clarify any lingering questions about the manner in which certain concepts were presented in the study.

### **Considerations for Future Research**

Throughout this study, the researcher was able to find significant information regarding the presence of work for the public good by doctoral students at public research universities. Prior to this study, limited information was present regarding graduate student research for public good. Building upon the study findings, future research could now explore the following areas.

1. Explore ways in which current doctoral students have or have not been exposed to the notion of public good, and explore the ways faculty purport to expose students to the topic.
2. Identify ways committee members affect the direction of work and how institutional priorities shape work (goals such as publishing articles, writing a book, obtaining funding for future work, etc).
3. Examine how other institutional types, such as private entities, explore the concept of public good in doctoral research. How do these approaches compare to the findings of this study?
4. Explore if institutions with a designation of community engagement in the Carnegie Classification have different policies and practices related to public good when compared to institutions without the designation.

5. Examine how students at minority serving institutions are being exposed to public good concepts and advocacy through research.
6. Explore how current doctoral students at public and private institutions are exposed to public good in their research studies? How has this evolved (or not) since becoming a doctoral student?

### **Conclusion**

In summary, this study demonstrated that many public research institutions are not paying attention to the public good in the ways that reflect institutional missions. This problem perpetuates inequities, does not interrupt the cycle of oppression, and does not serve the greater public community in the way that is consistent with respective institutional missions. The researcher argues that university professors and administrators must be intentional and consistent with their efforts to aid the greater community -- this includes educating graduate students about research design, institutional mission, and the importance of research for the public good.

While the institutions that were examined purport some level of commitment to community/public good, there was either a level of disconnect, disinterest, or confusion about serving the public good. Although institutions may not have designated that a certain number or percentage of research and knowledge must address public good, what must be remembered is that higher education institutions, particularly public research universities, were founded with a goal to serve the public good. If fewer public institutions are inclusive of public good in information disseminated to the masses, then one cannot anticipate that private entities will pick up the mantle and fulfill the calling for research in the interest of public good. Therefore, it is imperative that the

hypothetical “good” outcome chart for public higher education institutions does not show that public good as a minimal and decreasing percentage of the composition.

The unfortunate lack of explicit public good serves a reality check to higher education advocates that they have been promoting an agenda that they do not even ascribe to. With gains in technology, the community – local, state and national – is smaller and the need to find a way to strengthen relations and bring equity amongst its members is more important than ever. When public good is presented as a byproduct of private good, we further the disconnect between us (the entity of higher education) and them (the community). As Checkoway (2001) states, our research universities have intellectual and institutional resources that are the envy of the world. Universities have faculty members with credentials in academic disciplines and professional fields who possess potential for problem solving and program planning. Educating and promoting the use of such talent and resources for the benefit of the public good has to be a priority in graduate education – especially at public research universities. With such resources not being used to address matters of interest to the greater society, we in the academy miss an opportunity to serve an ever-evolving diverse community and forsake our calling to serve for the betterment of the public.

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## Appendix A (1): NVivo Coding Samples

Look for  Search In  Find Now Clear Advanced Find

| Nodes                       |         |            |            |                    |             |                     |     |
|-----------------------------|---------|------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|-----|
| Name                        | Sources | References | Created On | Created By         | Modified On | Modifi              |     |
| advocacy                    |         | 2          | 6          | 11/23/2017 11:01 A | YAS         | 11/27/2017 8:36 PM  | YAS |
| affected                    |         | 3          | 5          | 11/11/2017 1:48 PM | YAS         | 11/24/2017 4:38 PM  | YAS |
| collab for pg               |         | 2          | 3          | 11/24/2017 4:56 PM | YAS         | 11/26/2017 6:01 PM  | YAS |
| improve institute practices |         | 1          | 1          | 11/25/2017 9:27 AM | YAS         | 11/25/2017 9:27 AM  | YAS |
| inclusive enviroment        |         | 3          | 8          | 11/11/2017 2:13 PM | YAS         | 11/27/2017 9:44 PM  | YAS |
| pg mission                  |         | 1          | 2          | 11/24/2017 4:53 PM | YAS         | 11/24/2017 4:58 PM  | YAS |
| PG ways                     |         | 3          | 9          | 11/22/2017 8:55 PM | YAS         | 11/26/2017 5:00 PM  | YAS |
| public names                |         | 2          | 6          | 11/11/2017 1:55 PM | YAS         | 11/24/2017 4:38 PM  | YAS |
| quasi pg                    |         | 2          | 3          | 11/25/2017 8:40 PM | YAS         | 11/26/2017 11:54 AM | YAS |
| responding to public        |         | 1          | 2          | 11/22/2017 9:01 PM | YAS         | 11/27/2017 8:13 PM  | YAS |

## Appendix A (2): NVivo Coding Samples

View | Coding | Query | Visualize Node

Look for [ ] Search In [ Nodes ] Find Now Clear Advanced Find

**Nodes**  inclusive enviroment

| Name     | Sources | Refer |
|----------|---------|-------|
| advoca   | 2       |       |
| affecte  | 3       |       |
| collab f | 2       |       |
| improv   | 1       |       |
| inclusiv | 3       |       |
| pg mis   | 1       |       |
| PG way   | 3       |       |
| public   | 2       |       |
| quasi p  | 2       |       |
| respon   | 1       |       |

Drag selection here to code to a new node

Reference 2 - 0.10% Coverage  
atmosphere that is non-threatening and that promotes interaction

Reference 3 - 0.03% Coverage  
student-centered

<Internals\tennessee> - 5 4 references coded [0.76% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.07% Coverage  
culture shock adaptation

Reference 2 - 0.08% Coverage  
culturally diverse curriculum

Reference 3 - 0.06% Coverage

## Appendix B: Study Code Book

| Name                             | Description   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Advocacy                         | Argues for or supports a cause or policy to help a underrepresented population or entity    |
| Affected                         | Expressed desire to improve services/outreach for an impacted group                         |
| Collaboration for public good    | Connecting /working with the public to address an issue                                     |
| Improved institutional practices | Changes to practice, policy, or procedure to support public good                            |
| Inclusive environment            | Creating a space where all cultures are welcome and supported                               |
| Public good mission              | Statements expressing a commitment to fulfilling the university mission                     |
| Public good ways                 | Steps/actions to engage or support public good  |
| Public names                     | Terms used to describe the public   |
| Quasi-public good                | Potential to address public good matters, but writer did not do so                          |
| Responding to the public         | Meeting the need of learners to address gaps caused by vacancies for in-demand fields/areas |

Appendix C: HBCU Top 30 Word Frequency Art







Appendix E: MSI Top 30 Word Frequency Art

