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Constructions of Academic Citizenship: Views of UK and Philippine Academics

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Abstract: Discussions in literature on the subject of academic citizenship largely associate it with the service role, an academic function that is wide-ranging but also vague, if not undervalued. Commentators note the changing role of academics because of shifting landscapes in higher education, whilst others challenge the applicability of the tri-fold roles of teaching, research and service in other contexts. Is the third function, service, a fitting equivalent then to capture academic citizenship? The paper offers a questioning of this notion as it explores the meanings ascribed to it by selected academic staff from a UK and Philippine research university. Applying the perspective of persons as participants in structures of social practice (Dreier, 2009), this comparative case study points to the nuanced interpretations of academic citizenship within but also outside of the traditional roles; and the interplay between academics' spheres of community and the undertaking of academic work as citizenship.

Paper: What does it mean to be an academic citizen? The answer to this question seems to be tied to the question of purpose of higher education, and for academics, this purpose is linked to the traditional three roles of teaching, research and service. Discussions of academic citizenship in extant literature has attached it with the third role, service (Boyer, 1990; Ward, 2003; Macfarlane, 2005). Positioned as part of the job and which therefore merits due attention in rewards and promotion (Tagliaventia, Carli and Cutolo, 2019), this service role covers a diverse if not far-reaching set of activities that span pastoral care of students, department/university administration and management, disciplinal engagements, as well as civic engagement including knowledge transfer (Macfarlane, 2007). A different perspective on the other hand is offered from the lens of organisational citizenship behaviour, which sees such service as a discretionary act, but nevertheless contributes to the community's (i.e., department or university) performance and overall functioning (see Hammer, et al., 2019).

Arguments concerning not just the interrelationship and overlap of these three roles but also how these are changing and becoming diversified as a result of shifting higher education landscapes (Whitchurch, 2010; Blair, 2018), not to mention the question of whether these roles adequately capture academic work in non-Western settings (Krause, 2009), invite a questioning of this association of the service role with academic citizenship. Moreover, it calls for a closer examination of the contexts and communities wherein academics belong and find themselves embedded in and where their academic work (including the service role) is located. This is particularly relevant as commentators allude to the increased cosmopolitan attitude of academics (Thompson,

Constantineau and Fallis, 2006) and the structural tensions that are internal to universities but which can also be linked to broader external influences.

This paper aims to present the preliminary insights of an ongoing PhD research project that examines the constructions of academic citizenship amongst selected academic staff from a UK and Philippine research university; and how might the spheres of community of academic work inform these understandings. It considers academics as persons or subjects that participate in the social practice of given contexts from certain locations and positions (Dreier, 2009, 2011). Academic communities such as the university, applying Dreier's view, are contexts with certain social arrangements, rules and agendas, that require subjects to draw on certain abilities, skills, experiences and understandings as they take part in its activities. In so doing, participants as subjects construct ideas of what they stand for and of their participation. Additionally, their participation in this context means that academics can also change or maintain the said context's status quo.

A qualitative comparative case study, data have been gathered through semi-structured interviews from a total of 20 academic staff from the two universities in the fields of business/economics, sociology, mathematics and engineering. Relevant institutional documents have also been analysed. Thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke (2006) is applied to identify patterns of meaning from the transcripts and documents and generate relevant themes.

Preliminary findings point to the nuanced meanings faculty members attach to academic citizenship. Whilst literature has equated it with the service role, most of the participants remark to how the term is not used in both institutional and disciplinal parlance. Many broadly speak of academic citizenship as their work and responsibilities and, interestingly, foregrounds research-related objectives for UK academics and teaching-related ones for Philippine faculty members. In elaborating on these as central to their citizenship, an awareness of the public nature of academic work is surfaced with references to their work (research and teaching) as "contributes to society", "brings people together" and cultivates the learning of students as members of the society.

The reference of British academics to research councils, the Research Excellence Framework and the Knowledge Excellence Framework, point to these as significant wider contextual influences that shape academic work as citizenship both at the university and in the respective disciplines. For Philippine academics, narratives of academic work as citizenship reflect a strong institutional anchoring and identification. Impressions of their activities as situated within the frame of a research university opens up reflections on how they undertake their work as academic citizenship and the way they think of themselves as academics. There are significant implications to be noted with regards the training and mentoring of academic staff members, among others.

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