

Working Papers

**Understanding Service:
Words in the Context of History and Culture**

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Working Paper 02-1

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**Center for Social Development
Global Service Institute**



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George Warren Brown School of Social Work

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Words in the Context of History and Culture**

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Applied social science is based upon the definition of concepts that reflect a concrete reality. Phenomena are specified such that one can assess their presence or lack thereof. When concepts and variables are not explicitly defined, the ability to capture their presence and measure their causes and effects is limited. Even more basic, the discussion of the phenomena may be misguided and complicated without clear conceptual references and boundaries. Arguably, this is the case with “service.”

The research staff of the Global Service Institute (GSI) has attended international conferences on youth service over the last ten years and participated in workshops and meetings about national and community service where conceptual confusion is common (Ford Foundation, 2000). The lack of conceptual specification has been noted as constraining the advancement of service-related research and understanding about this phenomenon (Clohesy, 1999; Grantmaker Forum on Community and National Service, 2000; Perry and Imperial, 2001). Given that the primary purposes of GSI are to build an international knowledge base and understanding of service and to assist with the design and implementation of policies and programs worldwide, a first step must be the conceptualization and operationalization of “service.”

Because GSI is international in scope, an inclusive definition of service is necessary to reflect the various service experiences and structures that exist in different nations and cultures. Around the world, examples of opportunities for service include programs in Mexico and Nigeria, where service is required of university graduates as a way of harnessing scarce skills for the developmental needs of the country. In some countries with mandatory national service, such as Germany, civilian service is widely accepted as an alternative to military service. Examples of service programs in the United States include Learn and Service America, Peace Corps, Senior Volunteer Corps, numerous faith-based service programs, Habitat for Humanity, Student Conservation Association, Experience Corps, and many others.

The position of GSI is that these service experiences are qualitatively different from what is traditionally considered “volunteering.” The programs specify expectations and length and intensity requirements for the servers; service is a programmatic strategy, not just a behavior. Even though this viewpoint is based on cross-national research and discussions (Sherraden, Sherraden, and Eberly, 1991; Ford Foundation, 2000), it is important that different conceptions of service be further explored.

How is service understood around the world? This paper analyzes languages across cultures and through time by exploring the meanings and forms of service around the world.¹ As with any study that attempts to globally examine a phenomenon, attention must be given to context. Context matters for how people interact with others in society; it influences how people perceive the relationship between their actions and their responsibilities toward others. Culture is the most prevailing context, and language is an expression of culture. Words are the primary way in which civilizations express ideas. In this paper, words are treated as windows to understand the evolution of service in different cultures.

¹This linguistic analysis is one of several methods that GSI is using to define and operationalize service in an international context. Service programs, research, and theories are being reviewed worldwide. Additional reports will be forthcoming.

In order to trace conceptions of service in different cultures and over time, the research must have parameters. Today, service can be defined as an organized period of substantial engagement and contribution to the community, society, or world, sponsored by a public or a private organization, recognized and valued by society, with minimal monetary compensation to the participant.² This definition serves as our frame of reference through which the conceptions can be compared.

In this paper, five cultures and their languages are explored — Greek and Latin, Chinese, Japanese, Swahili, and Sanskrit. These represent some of the most influential languages in the ancient and the classical world.³ They also reflect origins of the major languages spoken today in different regions of the world. To inform this review, interviews were conducted with language scholars. On-line resources such as dictionaries and lexicons supplemented information from interviews. The first section presents the case for examining service through language. The second section explores service in different languages. Given this review, the third section discusses the main findings and the conceptual and empirical implications for understanding service.

Why Language?

Language provides insights into existing and changing social beliefs, values, and attitudes (Skinner, 1989). Our social perceptions are documented in the words we employ. Changes in words and their use signal changes in history and society. Language permits the creation and exchange of ideas not only among people, but also across cultures. Changes in conceptions of words through time influence cross-cultural communication.

A given language's vocabulary is informed by placing words and their meanings in historical context. This can provide clues to the current use and meanings of words. Williams (1983) observes, "If we take certain words at the level at which they are used, and scrutinize their developing structures of meaning in and through historical time, we may be able to contribute to certain kinds of awareness to current social and political debates" (p.15). Thus, translation of the word "service" in different languages may be improved by an investigation of historical change. Historical and linguistic changes are interconnected. Changes in the use of words not only signify a change in social perceptions and attitudes but also may represent political change. Farr (1989) says, "...most of language, in short, is politically constituted by the ends to which it is intentionally put or by the consequences which it is subsequently seen to entail" (p.26).

An example is the change in the use and meaning of the word *charity* in the English language. The word *charity* was introduced to English language in the 12th century from the Latin word *caritas* or the Latin root word *carus* meaning "dear." The use of the word signified both "love" and "dearness of price (Williams, 1985)." However the predominant use of the word was in the

² See Sherraden, M., & Stroud, S. (2000). *Service: A proposal to the Ford Foundation*. St. Louis, MO: Center for Social Development (Washington University in St. Louis).

³ Ancient languages of the Americas such as Mayan are not included in this analysis. Languages of the middle-east such as Hebrew, and Arabic are also not represented here.

Biblical context. Charity symbolized Christian love between a person and God, and between a person and his neighbors (Williams, 1985). Providing help to the needy became a prominent use much later in the 16th century. By late the 18th century, however, the positive meanings of the word changed. Many people believed that such acts inculcated negative self-respect (Williams, 1985). Thus, a word generally used to express love for others came to represent negative class feelings. This example illustrates that change in a language is not only linguistic, but also social and political.

The Vocabulary of Service

Throughout history, how was service expressed, and what forms did it take? This section addresses this question through an examination of words and philosophies in different cultures. The ancient languages of Greek and Latin, Chinese, Japanese, Swahili, and Sanskrit are explored. This cross-cultural analysis extends roughly from 800 B.C. to 8th century A.D. The time period between 700 A.D. and today is not explored due to the major revolutions and cultural transitions that occurred during this time around the world. It is beyond the scope of the paper to substantively cover these issues. If it would better inform the contemporary understanding of service in these cultures, the authors welcome scholars to trace the evolution of the vocabularies of “service” through this time period for any of the selected languages.

Greek and Latin

The Greek and Roman civilizations had a huge and continuing impact on the western world. Their influence is evident in modern systems of education, and most importantly, systems of governance. There is no word for service in Greek or in Latin. The closest word in Greek is a verb – *charizo*, meaning *to do something good* (Freeman, 2001). The Latin word that best represents service is *beneficium* meaning, *an act tending to the benefit of another* (Freeman, 2001), or to put it simply, “doing good deeds.”

There was no formal system of service in Greece or in Rome in terms of opportunities to serve outside the military. In both Greece and Rome, every male citizen had obligations towards the city-state, which had to be fulfilled. Most often, such obligations took the form of military service. Military service was voluntary in the city-states. Peer pressure among the nobility acted as the motivating factor. Military service for the nobility was unpaid. In contrast, the commoners were recruited and paid for the service they rendered. Service in the military was seen positively as service to Sparta or to Rome. The opportunity to serve in the military was seen as a privilege offered by the city-state to the citizen.

Unlike many other religions, neither Greek nor Roman religion emphasized obligation towards fellow human beings. Ritualistic practices such as sacrifices were the only obligations that had to be fulfilled to ensure either a good harvest, or a good fortune. The formalization of service as currently understood came with the emergence of Christianity around the 2nd century A.D. (Christian History Institute, n.d.). Christian beliefs emphasized interconnectedness among people. With the rise of the Byzantine Empire, both Greece and Rome witnessed a formalization of service activities by the Church such as appointment of officials to look after the welfare of the people (Freeman, 2001).

Chinese

Like Greek and Latin, the Chinese language does not have a specific character for service. The idea in contemporary Chinese is captured in the expression, *zuo shan shi*, meaning *do good things* (Chiang, 2001). Chinese language provides an excellent example of how service exists in a synthesis between religion and philosophy. These two factors permeated culture and people's actions in ancient China. The main influences in ancient China were Confucianism and Buddhism.

Confucianism

Confucianism initiated a pattern of thinking among the people that has lasted many centuries. Three main schools of Confucian thought stand out, namely the ones lead by K'ung Fu-Tzu (Confucius), Meng Tzu (Mencius), and Mo Tzu (Hooker, 1996). The fundamental tenet of Confucianism is the perfectibility of the human being through learning. Virtue is the cornerstone of all human activity. The values are based on one concept – *Jen* meaning *humaneness* (Hooker, 1996). It can also mean humanity, benevolence, goodness, or virtue. One attains virtue by following a proper way of behaving. Thus, proper actions and behavior are the cornerstones of Confucianism.

Early Confucian thought emphasized relationships, those between the Emperor and officials (*Junchen*), father and son (*Fuzi*), spouses (*Fufu*), siblings (*Xiongdi*), and friends (*Pengyou*) (Chiang, 2001). Priority was given to these relationships. In an agricultural society, distances between villages were large, and there were few interactions with strangers. These factors coupled with the Confucian way of life created a culture where helping strangers was not encouraged.

Between 372 B.C. and 289 B.C., Confucian thought underwent a transformation. Meng Tzu (Mencius in Latinized form), a student of Confucius added the concept of *I* meaning *righteousness* or *duty* to the original concept of *Jen* (humaneness or benevolence) (Hooker, 1996). He argued that the *Jen* one shows others should be influenced not only by that person's social position but also one's own. Mencius differed from Confucius in that he also added the concept of duty to *Jen*. Unlike Confucius, he believed that a ruler also had certain obligations towards his people and if those obligations were not fulfilled then people were absolved of any loyalty. These ideas later found fertile ground in the rule of Han dynasty (25 to 220 A.D.) (Frankenstein, n.d.).

Mo Tzu (470 to 391 B.C.) believed that all people were created equal and that differences of wealth and status were human. This equality before heaven mandated the ethical principle of universal love, or to love every human being equally (Hooker, 1996). Unlike Confucius' dictates, Mo Tzu's dictates were practical. To love every human being meant providing for the weak and the hungry, avoiding hurtful activities such as war or profiteering, and avoiding any activity that did not take care of someone or something. *Righteousness* or *Jen* for Mo Tzu was not achieved by extending help only to one's family but by helping others in need. He considered the practice condoned by Confucius to be practicing partial love, not universal love

(Hooker, 1996). Within this school of Confucian thought we see a precursor to the modern western idea of service.

Buddhism

Buddhism came to China around the middle of 1st century A.D. (Hudson, 1994). It strongly competed with and also complemented Confucianism. It gained tremendous popularity during the Han dynasty. Buddhism had a much warmer message than Confucianism. Both *Hinayana* (lesser vehicle) and *Mahayana* (greater vehicle) schools of Buddhism arrived in China but the latter dominated.

Buddhism influenced Chinese culture, art, and daily customs. Buddhist doctrines were translated into Chinese and Daoist (or Taoist) words. This linguistic change introduced elements into Chinese Buddhism, which differed from Buddhist practices elsewhere in the world. Buddhism in China emphasized *charity* or *good work*, including working for one's own salvation or *nirvana* by helping all humanity. This was a departure from early Confucian and Daoist thought. Chinese Buddhism emphasized the inculcation of righteousness by doing good deeds, which not only helped humanity but also ensured the person a good fortune in the next life. The nobility who were Buddhists conducted most welfare activities such as building bridges and feeding the hungry. The local government officials encouraged such individual actions by giving them plaques to honor service to the community (Chiang, 2001). This was the predominant form of service activities in ancient China until the arrival of Christian missionaries around the 8th century (Christian History Institute, n.d.).

Japanese

Religion was the main instrument that catalyzed the sanction of community activities in Japan. As in China, Confucianism and Buddhism were important influences in Japanese society. Adopting Confucian ideals, a new set of Japanese customs or *Shinto* (*Way of Gods or Way of Life*) emerged (China, Korea, and Japan to the year 500, n.d.). Shintoism is an animistic religion. The *Shinto* principles gave god-like status to ancestors of a family. According to Shinto beliefs, ancestors who had done exceptional service to community were gods (China, Korea, and Japan to the year 500, n.d.). Temples were built to commemorate the respect for the dead. Within such a framework, service to the state or the Emperor was an extreme form of familial piety (Hendry, 2000).

Buddhism came to Japan through Korea around the 6th century A.D. (Hendry, 2000). Japanese nobility adopted Buddhism as their religion. As a consequence, there was widespread support for activities such as building temples, supporting orphanages, feeding the hungry, and cleaning public streets (Fujiwara, 2001). These activities were considered acts of community service and often had formal sanction. For example, the Soga Clan (574 to 622 A.D.) sanctioned the building of temples as community service (Hudson, 1994, p. 128). By 8th century A.D., Buddhism became the state religion of Japan. It is within this context that the word *hooshi* emerged in Japanese language. *Hooshi* symbolizes *any activity done out of goodwill*, or *an activity done for others without any compensation* (Fujiwara, 2001). *Hooshi* is different from other words such as *Shigoto*, which means *work for compensation*, or even *Gimu* meaning *duty*

(Fujiwara, 2001). Today, *hooshi* has been replaced by a more modern word – *Volunteer* (Fujiwara, 2001).

Swahili

Swahili (or Kiswahili) is the African language spoken mainly by the people of eastern and central Africa. Though its origins are unknown, many scholars consider it to be one of the first coastal languages spoken in the African continent. Swahili is derived from an Arabic term *sâhils-awâhils* meaning *coasts* or *port towns* (Whiteley, 1969, p. 3). Arabs may have used the term to refer to the islands or ports. The word eventually came to be known for the people and later for their language – *ki-siwa-hili* (*language of the island*) (Maznui and Noor, 1994, p. 56).

Swahili as the lingua franca of East Africa was born around 500 A.D. (Nurse and Spear, 1984). The origins of Swahili have been traced back to the people of Eastern and Southern Africa who spoke a language called *khoisan* during the Iron Age (Nurse and Spear, 1984; Allen, 1993). *Khoisan* was spoken in most of sub-Saharan Africa until the arrival of the Cushitic peoples. The Cushites were mostly farmers, hunters and herders. With the movement of Bantu peoples into the land inhabited by the Cushites, Swahili emerged as the dominant language (Nurse and Spear, 1984; Allen, 1993).

Beginning as an oral culture, Swahili adopted Arabic as a script as a result of trade with the Arabs. By the 8th century, Swahili became the lingua franca of most tribes of the east coast and had a written script (Allen, 1993). Due to the efforts of both the colonial powers and the Christian missionaries, Swahili became standardized into Kiswahili (Whiteley, 1969).

Service in Kiswahili is *Kujitolea* meaning *the giving of self for the benefit of others* (Mutonya, 2001). The word is mainly derived from Bantu culture. The Bantu culture necessitates that each person fulfill his/her obligation towards his/her community. The word community is comprised of both the familial unit and also the clan that a person belongs to (Mutonya, 2001). Service provided by the individual received no monetary compensation even though it had significant social value.

Sanskrit

Sanskrit is the oldest language of India and is considered to be the mother of all European languages (Schiffman, 1999). Many of the languages spoken in the Indian sub-continent find their origins in Sanskrit. Sanskrit is an Indo-Aryan language. The Aryans, the nomadic peoples who migrated from Eurasia to India (2000 to 1600 B.C.) first used Sanskrit as a dialect (Hooker, 1996). They used an early dialect called Vedic Sanskrit. Around 400 B.C. it was transformed into its current form, Classical Sanskrit. Classical Sanskrit flourished in India from 500 B.C. to 1000 A.D. Sanskrit comes from the word *samskrta* meaning *prepared, cultivated, purified, or refined* (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.).

The root word *seva* denotes *service* in Sanskrit (Cappeller Sanskrit English Dictionary, n.d.). Other words can also be found in Sanskrit that mean help or assistance. *Upakara* is the word in Sanskrit meaning help (Cappeller Sanskrit English Dictionary, n.d.). Many derivatives of this

word can be found in Sanskrit symbolizing the idea of service to others. For example, *upakriya* means *service or benefit* (Cappeller Sanskrit English Dictionary, n.d.). Similarly, *purvoupakarini* means *one who has rendered a person a service before*.

Like other cultures, links between service and religion in India exist, but they do not appear to be strong. The earliest form of charity in Indian culture was symbolized in the dual concepts of *dana* and *dakshina* (Birodkar, n.d.). *Dana* symbolized the giving away of wealth or sharing of wealth without expecting anything in return. *Dakshina*, on the other hand, symbolized a form of payment for a service rendered by someone. These two cultural practices can be traced to the Vedic period where collective hunting and communal sharing was the way of life. Both *dana* and *dakshina* were always given in the form of cash or trade in Aryan society, never in the form of free physical labor (Birodkar, n.d.). Changes in the Vedantic Age (800 to 400 B.C.) saw the emergence of Hindu religion and the solidification of social stratification as the caste system (Hooker, 1996). The concretization of customs during this period also changed the nature of *dakshina* and *dana*. Unlike the communal practices, these cultural practices came to symbolize service in relation to only one social class – the brahmanas or the priests.

Discussion

We have explored service through languages across different cultures. The historical conceptions of service have implications for contemporary conceptual development. In this section, we discuss the meanings of the words across cultures, and identify similarities in their reference to behaviors, outcomes, and beneficiaries of service (See Table 1). Interactions among words, actors, and institutions are discussed in relation to the evolution of service. Implications for service scholarship are suggested.

Service as an Act

Across the examined languages, service has historically referred to actions of individuals in relation to others, be it other individuals in the community or the government. In Greek and Roman city-states, the nobility were required to show their allegiance to the city-state by actively seeking recruitment in the military. In China and Japan, performing actions in the “public good,” such as building temples, repairing streets, and providing food to the hungry, were considered doing good deeds. Bantu culture emphasized fulfilling one’s obligation towards the community. Similarly, cultural norms developed from the tribal way of life in India emphasized sharing wealth with others.

In all the cultures, individuals were encouraged to provide some form of service by giving of themselves, which could include one’s time, money, or skills. This giving of one’s “self” through service does not appear to be equated with self-sacrifice. Rather, it is seen as the obligation of every individual to render some form of service, be it military or community service. There are differences on who performs the service in the cultures discussed above. However, the underlying motivation for the servers was to perform a service for the betterment of society.

Two main categories of motivation can be identified from the acts of service — religious and non-religious. Buddhism was the main source of service activities in Chinese, Japanese, and in some parts of Indian society. The main motivation was self-improvement or gaining a secure place in the after-life. Religion along with indigenous philosophy played an important role in encouraging “semi-altruistic” action, and invoking feelings of inter-connectedness. Notions of responsibility, duty, and obligation to care for others were considered good virtues. Individuals were encouraged to practice these virtues through their service activities.

In certain cultures, religion did not play a central role. Motivation to serve emerged out of a sense of obligation towards the state or others living in the community. Obligation therefore featured in relationships that were both hierarchical and non-hierarchical. Motivation to serve in the military came from a combination of peer pressure and a sense of obligation towards the city-state. In Bantu and pre-Vedic cultures, obligation towards others in the community motivated acts of giving and sharing. This could have been the result of communal living in these cultures.

Outcomes of Service

The words reveal that acts of service produced outcomes for both the server and the served. Depending on the context, the served were either city-states or individuals in the community. Individuals in all the cultures played the role of service providers. The mutual benefit perceived by the server and the served negates the idea of service as self-sacrifice.

Enrollment in the army by the nobility benefited Sparta or Rome. By defending the interests of the city-states, the nobility in Greece or Rome gained peer acceptance. In China, individuals came to the aid of their communities by providing food to the hungry, building bridges, or repairing streets. The servers in turn were assured of better future in their afterlife, in accordance with Buddhist beliefs. Similarly in Japan, god-like status was given to individuals who provided exemplary service to their communities. In Bantu culture, communities were seen as benefactors. A similar sentiment is echoed in the acts of *dana* of the Vedic period.

Beneficiaries of Service

Different notions of community exist in different cultures. This is apparent when we examine who benefits from the acts of giving and who does not. The state was the beneficiary in Rome and Sparta. In China and Japan, kinship relationships were included as benefactors of service. In contrast, community was defined broadly in Bantu and pre-Vedic cultures.

Notions of community do not seem to be static. Certain cultures seem to have extended their in-group, while others appear to have become more inward looking. For instance, under the traditional Confucian thought, strangers outside the village were not given help. This notion of in-group changed with the inclusion of *I* (*righteousness or duty*) to the Confucian concept of *Jen* (*humaneness or benevolence*). The inclusion of this new dimension emphasized that helping one’s own was practicing partial love.

Changes in Indian society also illustrate this dynamic change in definition and its impact on service activities. When Buddhism was in its zenith in India, state-sponsored service activities

were undertaken which benefited not only the citizens of the state but also visitors. For instance, records indicate that under the rule of King Ashoka, shelters were made for travelers, who were mostly traders from other kingdoms. Within the same society, there emerged a parallel system during the Vedantic Age that narrowly defined in-group affiliation as the Aryans narrowed the concept of *dana* to rendering service to only the priestly class. Similar dichotomies are seen in Japanese society.

Implications for Service Scholarship

The historical conception of service across the languages supports the notion that service was an individual's responsibility as a human, citizen, or community member. Service, in terms of giving of one's time or skills, was a "good" action, because of the consequences it had for the server and the served. In the course of one's day, the opportunity to serve may have arisen, and there was an obligation to fulfill it. This does not mean that governments and nobility did not structure "service" experiences, e.g., building bridges that would be beneficial to the populace. But it is likely that the nobility received the credit for "providing a service," and paid or unpaid laborers built the bridge. The point is that the historical conception of service focused primarily upon the actions and obligations of the individual.

The definition of service suggested at the beginning of this paper, however, reveals a contemporary conception of service that is rooted in *societal* systems of care and governance. Today, structures exist through which an individual may apply him or her self. There are service programs, policies, and organizations through which one may give of one's self. Service can be construed not as "providing a service" but as "performing service." Opportunities exist across cultures for an individual to make commitments whereby service is the focus for that period, e.g., a two-week service project in Colombia or a two-year mandatory service position in Nigeria.⁴

Today, service activities may be more targeted toward outcomes that benefit the server and society in general, e.g., skills training for the unemployed by retired older adults. The historical motivations to serve—religious and non-religious—are bolstered today by minimal stipends, educational incentives, and cross-cultural opportunities through some programs. The meaning of service may have evolved because the forms for its actualization have evolved.

In this study of different cultures, dynamic relationships are revealed among words, actors, and the creation of institutions.⁵ Words act as platforms for launching ideas. Interactions among words, actors, and institutions are apparent in the emergence of Buddhism and its impact on service activities in India, China, and Japan. Buddhists in these countries translated the ideas of virtue into actions of community well being, even though their motivations were not completely altruistic. Buddhist ideas were translated into languages spoken by common peoples, which

⁴ The Global Service Institute is undertaking a project to identify the range of service programs that exist around the world. These are only two examples of the service experiences among a wide variation.

⁵ North (1997) defines institutions as the rules of the game in a society, which impact the social, political, and economic outcomes by providing specific outcomes. Institutions are composed of three main elements: formal rules, informal constraints, and enforcement mechanisms. See North, D.C. (1997). Prologue. In J. N. Drobak and J.V.C. Nye (Eds.), *The frontiers of new institutional economics* (pp. 3-13). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

helped in spreading the Buddhist notions of doing good deeds across borders. Buddhism in these countries also flourished because of the political support that it enjoyed. Ashoka's rule in India, the Han dynasty of China, and the Sogu Clan of Japan catalyzed social norms for helping and created space for certain kinds of service activities in their kingdoms.

Each culture has a different story for how its conception of service has changed. But is the core meaning of service different across cultures? The purpose of this paper is to explore historical conceptions of "service" across different cultures in order to inform an international understanding of service. As there were differences across the languages and cultures throughout history, there are likely to be differences today. If service is a phenomenon that exists around the world, which is poorly understood and not studied, then some effort must be made to conceptualize, operationalize, and generalize it. Generalization may be supported by globalization processes and the development of service programs that span national and cultural boundaries, e.g., the European Union Voluntary Service Scheme and the North American Community Service Program (Sherraden, 2001).

We recommend that the similarities in each culture's conception of service be emphasized and differences in form be captured as variables. Differences in formality or the level of institutionalization of service in and across cultures is an empirical question, which can and should be measured if the causes and effects of service are to be assessed. This specification also has implications for understanding the development of programs and policies that support the expansion of service (Warner, 1995).

Conclusion

An understanding of service has been explored in this paper by examining various cultures and their words and conceptions of service. What this analysis suggests is that the context of culture, language, and time matter for how a concept is understood. Historically, service has referred to actions that are beneficial to others, be they kin, clan, or society. Today, these "good deeds" are more than just being a good family member, person, or citizen. A universal conception of service may be emerging that reflects the structured experiences that exist for giving of one's time and skills to benefit others.

To further explore these contextual issues, GSI plans a working paper series for feedback and discussion with interested scholars and practitioners around the world. A subsequent paper will further explicate the dynamic interaction between words, actors, and institutions, advancing a theoretical understanding of the development of service programs. A definition paper is also forthcoming, which specifies service as a variable. Through global feedback and discussion, a universal understanding of service maybe approached to provide a stronger foundation for service scholarship.

Table 1: Similarity of words and meanings across the languages

Language	Word(s)	Meaning
Greek	<i>Charizo</i>	To do something good
Latin	<i>Beneficium</i>	An act tending to the benefit of another
Chinese	<i>Zuo Shan Shi</i>	Do good things
Japanese	<i>Hooshi</i>	Any activity done out of goodwill; An activity done for others without any compensation; Volunteer
Swahili	<i>Kujitolea</i>	Giving of self for the benefit of others
Sanskrit	<i>Seva</i>	Service ; to serve

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