

De-centering and Re-visioning Global Citizenship Education Abroad Programs

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Abstract

This paper explores the neocolonial implications of a global citizenship education program that annually sends a group of Canadian university students to volunteer in Thailand. Postcolonial theory is utilized to deconstruct hegemonic notions of globalization, citizenship and global citizenship and explore the ways in which a group of university students challenges and perpetuates imperialist discourses and practices. While the scope of this study is limited to six interviews, the post-colonial theoretical framework provides insight into the ways that such educational programs ought to be modified in order to curtail their colonial trends. In light of these findings, I propose a shift in our 'Western' understanding and enactment of global citizenship and global citizenship educational programs towards inclusion of multiple epistemologies, an ethical concern for social justice and fostering equitable relationships, mutual exchange and reciprocity.

Keywords: global citizenship, globalisation, international volunteering, higher education, post-colonialism, social justice

Introduction

Several writers have described the aim of global citizenship education (GCE) as developing in students a global ethic of social justice (Abdi and Shultz, 2007; Shultz, 2008; Dower, 2003). While the degree of active engagement and understanding of global ethics and social justice varies significantly amongst those claiming to be global citizens, it is the aim of many GCE programs to change or alter the ways in which students understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to a broader context than the nation state. Educators have attempted to achieve these objectives by sending students abroad to work, study and volunteer in regions of Africa, South America and Southeast Asia. As students venture into communities of these regions under the guise of GCE, several questions are raised about the kinds of imperialistic trends that are being reproduced or perhaps challenged in doing so. In order to address such issues and concerns, I designed a qualitative study (Jorgenson, 2009)

with a post-colonial theoretical framework to analyze the experiences and reflections of six students who participated in a Canadian university GCE program in Thailand. To discuss some of the insights from this study, I introduce a conceptual framework of global citizenship and post-secondary GCE programs that send students abroad and consider some of the critiques of these programs that have been prompted by post-colonial theory. This framework is then used to discuss some of the findings from my interviews with the students, in particular, their negotiation of ambivalence pertaining to their identity and agency associated with global citizenship. This discussion reflects an epistemological shift in our understanding and enactment of citizenship. I therefore frame this paper with a broader proposal for de-centering (Lather, 1991) GCE programs from their Western-centricity and re-visioning them with multiple epistemologies and an ethical concern for social justice, equitable relationships, mutual exchange and reciprocity.

Epistemological shift

We live in an incredible period of time, where modernist theories can no longer subjugate the multiple knowledge systems that are emerging through the cracks of Western and modernist paradigms. This is due in part by the multi-directional and multi-dimensional processes of globalization, which have exceeded, extended, and challenged traditional boundaries of national states and institutions (Brodie, 2004; Held, 2002), creating opportunities for people to interact across borders, cultures and traditions. Relationships being formed beyond traditional boundaries have propelled particular shifts in our thinking about knowledge. Lather (1991) alludes to some of these shifts in her introduction to *Getting Smart*:

I write in a time when the formerly unsaid/unheard are becoming increasingly visible and audible. Historical 'others' move to the foreground, challenging and reshaping what we know of knowledge (Lather, 1991: xix).

This shifting of centers and margins, intensified by processes of globalization, has created space for subjugated knowledges to arise and de-center grand narratives (Lather, 1991). The re-emergence of subjugated knowledges in the context of increased global interactions and interconnectivity has challenged conceptions and understandings of what it means to be a citizen in the 21st Century.

Despite its multiple conceptualizations around the globe, the most commonly held understanding of citizenship is still derived from the Westphalian model of state sovereignty in which rights and obligations are extended to members of a circumscribed territory or state (Held, 2002). Within this hegemonic framework, instituted in the 17th Century, states are regarded as independent and free to determine their own fate in matters of internal politics. According to Heater (2004), this model of citizenship goes hand in hand with identity and the power of the state, whereby people living within a bounded territory are given a national identity through birth certificates and passports in exchange for allegiance and duties. These certificates,

which signify identity as well as status, loyalty, rights and responsibilities, support the cohesiveness of a country and the power to serve and protect its citizens. However, given the effects of globalization, such as the proliferation of modes and channels of communication and international travel and migration, citizenship can be conceived much more broadly by concerning complex processes and perceptions of identity and participation beyond borders. Sovereignty, as imagined in the Westphalian system, can no longer account for the transnational processes and movements of people, ideas and goods that occur today, evidenced by formations such as the European Union. Consequently, it is difficult for political communities and civilizations to be distinguished as discrete worlds, as they are 'enmeshed and entrenched in complex structures of overlapping forces, relations and movements' (Held, 2002: 97).

Where one resides in the world has major implications for how citizenship is carried out and experienced. People without access to requisite capital for air travel or communication technologies are often more confined to local spaces, and many people living in contexts considered 'Third World' are often relocated against their will in cases of war, famine and environmental degradation. This unevenness, intensified by processes of globalization, has had a strong bearing on citizenship. While those with capital and certain passports are able to navigate the world and reap certain benefits and opportunities, the majority of humanity 'have their rights, dignity, and personhood denied on a daily basis' (Brodie, 2004:330). What appears at a global scale, then, are complex, multi-tiered experiences of citizenship that are open to debate (Brodie, 2004).

This critical work has opened up the space to critique citizenship from multiple perspectives and envision what Torres (2006:542) calls a, 'comprehensive, dynamic and complex notion of citizenship' that accounts for the uneven, multi-leveled and multi-directional processes of globalization. There is an ontological flaw, Bhabha (1994) argues, in nation-centered views of citizenship in which:

a question of belonging to a race, a gender, a class, a generation becomes a kind of 'second nature', a primordial identification, an inheritance of tradition, a naturalization of the problems of citizenship (Bhabha, 1994: xvii).

This naturalization of belonging to a particular group of people is connected to a similar question of ownership and entitlement to land. We see this play out in conflict after conflict, with warring factions shedding the blood of innocent civilians for entitlements to territories that are increasingly being bordered and patrolled. Despite our inheritance of this style of citizenship, Said (1993) and others have suggested that we must shift our understanding of citizenship and responsibility to and for citizens beyond borders and conceptions of what is 'ours'.

In response to this re-visioning, GCE has emerged in the last few decades as a way for educators to prompt students to think about their rights, responsibilities and identities beyond borders. While GCE, as more fully described below, certainly has

the potential to engage students in relevant and meaningful activities and relationships that enhance global perspectives and help them to contribute to a more ethical, peaceful and just world (Shultz and Jorgenson, 2008), the majority of research and literature in this area is embedded within a Western-centric worldview. For instance, the subject for many studies in this area (including this research), is the Western student and their experiences of developing and understanding global citizenship through various post-secondary programs, most prevalently those that send them abroad. Literature reviews setting the stage for these studies, written predominantly by North American or European authors, conceptualize global citizenship within Western epistemologies and philosophies such as cosmopolitanism. This research appears to mutually reinforce the kinds of educational policies, programming and curricula, such as the one-way transfer of Canadian students to the global south, to educate post-secondary students for global citizenship. This trend has led me to question how we can deconstruct and de-center our narrow conceptions and practices of global citizenship and allow for more global yet multi-centric understandings, experiences and perspectives of GCE to inform our practices.

Global citizenship education: Conceptions, tensions and problematics

Although the foundations of GCE have existed for many years in post-secondary education programs in the form of global education, peace education and volunteer and study abroad, there has been a recent trend over the past decade to attend to concepts and issues of citizenship in conjunction with global issues. In practice, however, the scope of what is meant by global citizenship and how to educate for it is diverse, representing multiple perspectives and responses to an array of global issues and ethical questions (Shultz, 2011). GCE has thus become a kind of 'container' (Shultz, 2011:1) to hold a spectrum of policies and practices that endeavor to develop in students certain kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes attributed to 'global citizenship'. So, what is global citizenship? And what does it mean to be a global citizen?

In literature, the definition of global citizenship is hotly contested. It appears to be situated within a broad spectrum of competing discourses (Hamdon and Jorgenson, 2009) that understand it to be anything from a *status* attained by travelling around the world to an *engagement* in social justice issues at both local and global levels, to an *identity* that has arisen from (im)migration and relocation. Common among many discourses, however, is the recognition that each person has the responsibility to contribute to a global ethic concerning a more equitable, sustainable and just world. It signifies the transformation of national conceptions of citizenship to more transnational ways people can participate and make sense of who they are amidst shifting spheres of influence. It also involves processes of negotiating identities and enacting agency towards the realization of global interdependence that has emerged through globalization.

A common way that educators have envisioned and developed GCE is by taking students abroad, specifically to nations bearing low economic indicators and deemed to be 'poor' or 'developing' to volunteer with communities in these regions. Although such programs vary in their disciplinary focus, intention and format, there is notable convergence in their approach, experience and pedagogy. Programs often begin with a phase of preparation and culminate with a 're-entry' period, both from as little as a day or less, up to a month or so. A typical program runs from three weeks to four months, often geared to the amount of time a middle/upper-class youth (the overwhelming demographic of participants) might take as a summer break or academic semester (Moffatt, 2006). Programs tend to involve varying components of academic input, adventure, community service, group dynamics and individual growth. They often involve hands-on work in overseas communities on literacy, teaching, health or basic clinical work, or physical construction such as building schools, digging wells, or constructing bridges. They could also see a participant taking a leadership role, managing projects and programs. From this perspective, the benefits incurred to students can be plentiful. These programs, however, generally present many gate-keeping mechanisms, such as money, size of group and time required for preparation and travel in the destined region, offering only few and predominantly elite students the opportunity to participate. Despite evidence of scholarships and fundraising in most programs to offset some of these costs, the requisite capital and time appears to preclude many students, and certain demographics, from participating. Zemach-Bersin (2007) found in her research on global citizenship and study abroad programs in the United States, students of color and lower socio-economic status were drastically underrepresented. Based on this evidence, Zemach-Bersin (2007:21-22) argued that:

individuals are constructed into global citizens through their ability to access elitist modes of attaining citizenship ... global citizenship, therefore, is an identity available and granted to some but not to others.

Post-colonial critics have undoubtedly taken notice of such programs, pointing out their potential to reproduce the epistemic violence of imperialist practices by ignoring the ways in which students appropriate the 'developing' world as 'other' as use these experiences to solely benefit themselves. Jefferess (2008), who draws on a GCE project at the University of British Columbia, illustrates how many of these educational practices are a form of imperialism, which castigate the non-West as a deficient Other and an object and recipient of global citizen's benevolence. He states:

the form of imperialism has changed: race discourse and the language of inferiority and dependence have been replaced by that of culture talk, nation-building, and global citizenship (whereby) the global citizen is somehow naturally endowed with the ability and inclination to 'help' the Other (Jefferess, 2008:28).

Andreotti (2006: 5) also alludes to the danger of GCE in reproducing the maladies of colonialism:

in the period of colonisation, a local set of assumptions of reality and of European supremacy was violently imposed on other people as universal, from a post-colonial perspective it can be argued that Northern people may become 'global citizens' by projecting their local as everyone else's global, relating the epistemic violence of colonialism.

Based on this growing concern that GCE programs that take students abroad are masked behind a veil of imperialism, I endeavored in my study to investigate the ways in which an internationally based GCE program perpetuated or challenged a colonial model of engaging with others.

Who speaks? For what? For whom? Reflections on research aim and method

My initial reactions to programs that which take undergraduate students to abroad to volunteer and work with underserved populations were prompted by questions and issues embedded in post-colonial theory. Based on my own experiences teaching English overseas and the self-reflexivity and interrogation of my experience that elucidated my complicity in neo-colonial practices and processes, I began to wonder what kinds of insights students had of their experiences. Were they unknowingly perpetuating imperialistic patterns and processes of knowing and engagement? Or, did their experiences and reflections ignite deep and meaningful understandings of what it means to be a citizen in today's increasingly globalized world? In light of these personal questions and the above query posed by Andreotti (2006), I designed a qualitative, interview-based study that drew on the insights of post-colonial theory to examine a program of global citizenship education with international, cross-cultural experiences by interviewing past participants. The questions that guided my study were: What are the tensions and issues that underlie educating Canadian students for global citizenship abroad? How does educating for global citizenship abroad perpetuate or interrupt a colonial model of engaging with others? In what ways does GCE abroad lead students to critically reflect on their position relative to the rest of the world? And finally, do such programs develop students' understanding and enactment of global citizenship to include ethical concerns for social justice?

Six participants, whom constituted a mixed sample of years that they participated, location of placements and gender, were purposefully selected to participate in a one-hour interview concerning their global citizenship education experience in Thailand. The responses of the participants were interpreted through hermeneutic inquiry and analyzed through a post-colonial theoretical framework. This particular analysis was conducted to help illuminate and improve understanding of the tensions and implications of global citizenship education and ultimately make suggestions for programs to better educate students to more fully understand their identity and capacities associated with global citizenship. In utilizing a post-

colonial theoretical framework, discourse, ideology and inequitable relationships that are rooted in colonial epistemology can be elucidated and problematized. The theories and theorists drawn on to construct my framework were drawn primarily from Bhabha (1994), Said (1979, 1993) and Spivak (1988). Examining the participants' experiences and reflections through this lens helped to illuminate the ways in which colonial discourse is perpetuated through representation, social interactions and practices. It also allowed me to see the ways in which this kind of program has propelled students to become more cognizant of their location, identity and agency. While this theoretical frame was certainly limited in scope, it provided incredible insight into the ways that such educational programs ought to be extended or modified in order to curtail their colonial trends.

With respect to Said's (1989: 212) popular query, 'Who speaks? For what? For whom?', it is important to attend to some of methodological constraints and limitations of this study to contextualize my findings and recommendations. First of all, this study was limited to six participants, four females and two males, who each had a variety of experiences and ways of understanding their experiences. These students, therefore, may not be representative of the experiences of all participants of the program and furthermore, this program does not reflect the experiences of all other programs that send students abroad. Also in conjunction with participant selection, this study's conclusions of and insights into students' experiences of global citizenship education are severely limited by interviewing only Canadian students. By looking at cross-cultural engagement from only one side of the interactions and interpretations, my analysis is extremely limited. Many of the questions explored in this study pertaining to culture and the implications of cross-cultural interactions and understanding would be better investigated and understood by interviewing the people with whom the participants worked and interacted. However, based on my decision not to go to Thailand, this study is limited by my interpretations of the students' reflections of their experiences.

Educating Students for Global Citizenship through Play Around the World

The program that I chose to analyze in my study is called Play Around the World (PAW), which is an experiential, cross-cultural and international GCE program housed in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta. PAW was developed in 2001 to provide global citizenship education and cross-cultural experience in the areas of physical activity and play to senior undergraduate students. Each year, eight successful applicants are selected to become members of PAW and participate in weekly meetings, fund-raising activities and team building exercises throughout half of the academic year (approximately four months). The program then culminates in a three-month placement in Thailand from late May until August, where students volunteer with not-for-profit organiza-

tions and programs to provide opportunities for play and recreation to 'underserved populations' (Play Around the World, 2009). Since 2005, the program has offered students placements in one of two locations: Chiang Mai (northern Thailand) and Pattaya (central Thailand). During the first few weeks in Thailand, past PAW members guide the students through an orientation of the communities and projects that they will be working with throughout their three-month placement. Past projects have included working in orphanages, programs for children living on the street, hill-tribe centers, schools for children with disabilities, and centers for seniors and people with HIV/AIDS.

With four months of preparation and three months of volunteering experiences in Thailand, PAW provides vast opportunities to interrogate, negotiate and develop an understanding of global citizenship. However, when I asked if and in what ways they identified as global citizens, the participants were largely ambivalent and indecisive about whether or not they ascribe to such an identity. This kind of wavering seen in statements such as: '*While I identify as someone trying to achieve global citizenship, I don't know if I would necessarily call myself a global citizen*' (Participant K, cited in Jorgenson, 2009:106) coincided with a similar kind of ambivalence they exhibited when they talked about their encounters with cultural differences. According to Hall (1997:238), difference is inherently ambivalent and necessary:

for the production of meaning, the formation of language and culture, for social identities and a subjective sense of self... and at the same time, it is threatening, a side of danger, of negative feelings, of splitting, hostility and aggression towards the other.

How students worked through their ambivalence in relation to their identity, agency and relationships, provides considerable insight into the theory and practice of global citizenship.

Identity

The interdependence of culture, identity and citizenship illuminates some of the complexity and ambiguity of global citizenship. The theorists drawn on in this study argue that culture and identity are too fluid and hybrid to institutionalize into conventions of national citizenship or other essentialized identities. While global citizenship transcends more confined boundaries of national citizenship identity, it also imbued with the same problematics of essentialization and exclusion that are embedded in other forms of identity or processes of identification. As I saw in participants' reflections, the identification process of global citizenship is neither fixed nor unified (Hall, 1996), but rather constructed by and through different subject positions and practices. The experiences in Thailand led all participants to a better understanding of their identity as both students and citizens, but the depth of their negotiation induced by their ambivalence had a tremendous impact on the complexity of their understanding. During the conclusion of each interview, I asked how their experiences from PAW affected or shaped their identity as a global citizen.

After they had spent some time throughout the interview thinking about and reflecting on their experiences, some very interesting responses emerged, in particular when they tried to make sense of their identity as a 'Canadian' *and* a 'global' citizen.

One extremely reflexive participant who self-identifies as being of mixed ethnicities stated that struggling to identify as a Canadian has helped her realize and solidify her personal identity. Through reflection and seeking the advice of an elder, she understood identity as an ever-evolving hermeneutic process that takes elements from the past into the present and the future. Nation-building was also integral to the processes of identity as she negotiated who she is amidst complexity, hybridity and transformation. In her response to my question of how her experiences from PAW affected her identity as a global citizen, she stated:

I would think that global citizenship is ... I have difficulty understanding it because right when I said that I think about if I identify as a Canadian, but I never did identify strongly as a Canadian. There are so many contradictions there for myself to identify with a country that hasn't apologized for its past injustices... Global citizenship to me is contradictory. It goes back to 'What is it that I am imposing on other cultures?' from my experience of having other cultures being imposed on me. It is really looking at what is under global citizenship. (Participant R, cited in Jorgenson, 2009:107)

In spite of the struggle to conceptualize global citizenship and identify with it, this participant raised some interesting questions about the nature of citizenship. Reflecting on the intersections of local, national and global citizenship, she developed a rich understanding of her multiple and dynamic identities. In spite of her initial ambivalence, her reflections on her experiences in PAW helped her to articulate an understanding of, and identity with, global citizenship more profoundly and begin to interrogate and work through some of the larger tensions that underlie notions of citizenship and identity.

Despite the contrasting notions of what global citizenship is and how individuals identify with or as a global citizen, it seems to provide some people an alternative way to conceptualize and understand who they are and what they can do given the expanded spheres of influence vis-à-vis globalization. Whereas narrowly defined cultural and national constructions of identity often constrict people's ability to identify and lead to unjust and exclusionary practices, global citizenship provides a space for individuals whose identity is not in a culturally or nationally defined box, but in a liminal space of in-betweenness and hybridity, to conceptualize and exercise citizenship in more meaningful ways. For two participants, global citizenship transgressed binary conceptions of identity and allowed for an understanding of citizenship that they could see themselves reflected in, and their roles and responsibilities to challenge injustice beyond borders.

The majority of participants, however, did not exhibit this kind of self-reflexivity and negotiation and conversely relied on prescriptive notions of a global citizenship identity they were taught in preparatory seminars and subsequently worked hard to

'achieve'. These participants had a comparatively static notion of global citizenship that constituted certain knowledge, skills and attributes, and their ensuing identity as a global citizen was largely defined by the attainment of these characteristics. Also for most of these participants, characteristics such as traveling, living in a different culture, volunteering, etc., were all associated with their experiences in PAW. As one participant noted:

The majority of my global citizenship has been me going to Thailand and being part of it. If I didn't do this, I wouldn't appreciate or learn about global citizenship. (Participant V, cited in Jorgenson, 2009:110)

While these participants were also ambivalent when I asked more questions about their identification process, they lacked the deeper understanding about the complexity underpinning notions of identity and citizenship that were offered by more reflexive students. Another repercussion of this approach to global citizenship is that it is quite exclusionary. If global citizenship was only attained by traveling to, living and volunteering in another country and culture, the vast majority of humanity would be precluded from ever being a global citizen.

Agency

In conjunction with their reflections on their identity and experiences in PAW, many of the participants began to see their roles and responsibilities in global citizenship as creating spaces for people to play beyond borders. In light of their experiences, they began to understand that everyone has the capacity to play and it is their role to make spaces to play that are inclusive of gender, ethnicity, ability and socio-economic status. Play and inclusion thus became central components to the students' understandings of their agency and how they identified with global citizenship. Although cultural differences induced feelings of ambivalence, where they were not really sure if certain cultural practices such as gender segregation in the classrooms were 'right' or 'wrong', their mandate for creating inclusive spaces to play helped to form concrete and universal beliefs that transcended cultural relativity. This learning experience also helped students to discern and clarify other beliefs and corresponding actions to affect change. As one participant noted about the overall experience: *'It has helped me to think about the things that I value and what I want to stick to'* in terms of future endeavors (Participant B, cited in Jorgenson, 2009:142).

The impacts of PAW on the participants are diverse and ongoing. One of the often-cited benefits of PAW was that as the participants enter new classes, jobs or relationships, the learning experiences gained in Thailand have provided them with added confidence to take leadership positions in their current studies or occupations. As one participant noted:

I understand that I might not see the lesson now, but I may see it tomorrow or 5 years down the road. It helps me to have a bit more faith and confidence (Participant R, cited in Jorgenson, 2009:143).

The experiences of navigating through the unknown in Thailand and having to adapt and change have given the participants confidence to act when circumstances are unknown and to be flexible, reflexive and creative when encountering new challenges. Catherine Moffatt (2006), a director of an overseas exchange programs for students at a Canadian post-secondary institution, affirms this development of confidence in a post-colonial light, stating that after their international placement, students return with 'renewed (or newfound) confidence, having succeeded in their mission, conquered their space in the South and benefitted tremendously from the encounter' (Moffatt, 2006:221). While I did not get this sense of 'triumphalism' (Kapoor, 2004:630) from the research participants, many of the benefits and learning experiences reflected by the students were permitted under the pretext of helping others. Hence, while participants generally garnered feelings of self-worth, morality, and satisfaction for contributing to global justice and rectifying global inequities, the general lack of reflexivity on the nature of their complicity in global inequity and existence of local social inequities in Canada incites apprehension about the depth and nature of their learning experiences and transformation.

The participants' reflections on their agency and sustainability of their personal transformations they talked about, illustrate the tenuousness of international experiential learning. One of the questions and predicaments that the students faced when they returned from Thailand was what to do with this experience and how to integrate the transformational aspects into their lives in Canada. Although there was intention to remain engaged and committed to issues of social justice that they encountered in Thailand, all the participants mentioned that they are not as engaged as they would like to be and some individuals felt that they had reverted back to their old patterns of behavior as time went by. This predicament coincides with issues associated with experiential education. As one of the first theorists of experiential education, Dewey (1938) argued that in order for learning to happen through experience, continuity and interaction must happen. Continuity suggests that learners ought to connect their present experience with past experiences and think about future implications. Interaction means that learning always happens in tangent with the environment that the learner is situated in, 'an experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment' (Dewey, 1938:41). Thus, learning is a process of interaction between experiences and environment, and must not be seen as a set of outcomes. In light of these principles of experiential education and the potential for 'mis-education' (Dewey, 1938) to occur in their absence, it is important that educators look closely at the pre and post education processes as much as the 'international' experience to help students to make sense of their experiences and integrate this learning into their lives.

Relationships

The universe attests to the idea that everything exists and can be understood only in the context of relationships. Nothing exists in isolation (O'Sullivan, 1999:72).

In both the literature and my study, relationships are a vital component in fostering global citizenship. Whether it was through friendships with the Thais or camaraderie with other PAW members, the relationships that the participants developed throughout their program enabled them to work through their ambivalence and difficulties that living and working in a different culture presented them. However, it was mostly through the 'other', the hospitable Thai teachers, Thai children or the kind lady working at the 7-11 that the participants negotiated identity and difference and began to better understand themselves, their location, roles and responsibilities as a global citizen.

Relationships, however, are undoubtedly complex and are shaped by imbalances of power. Most of the participants acknowledged this imbalance, especially in regards to their relationships with the Thai leaders and teachers, but many did not know how to deal with it because they did not fully understand the nature of the power imbalance. While there was an acknowledgment for the need to foster reciprocity and mutual exchange, as one participant noted:

My major concern is that we don't go to other countries and cultures and use them as an experience. We need to appreciate and acknowledge the reciprocity in that we can learn from them and they can learn from us. (Participant V, cited in Jorgenson, 2009:96)

This recognition needs to be expanded upon by addressing the impacts and power relations of cross-cultural exchange on both sides. Notions of reciprocity cannot be looked at critically without recognition of the power that is embedded in relationships and identity.

Lastly, it is important to note that the six participants negotiated cultural differences and relationships, as well as their identity and agency, in different ways. One of the reasons for this variation is related to their prior knowledge about Thailand and previous experiences with negotiating cultural differences. A couple of the participants who were evidently not as well informed about the socio-cultural and historical context of Thailand relied heavily on stereotypes to signify the other and interpret their social surroundings. For instance, as one participant was describing the Thais and Thai culture, he stated:

You'll see these Thai prostitutes and they are really nice, but they all want something from you and you know it. So, it's sort of like a fake nice. (Participant M, cited in Jorgenson, 2009:118)

The manner in which this student represented culture and utilized the stereotype of the 'fake nice' Thai prostitute, demanded an articulation of difference that signified an 'other'. Instead of understanding and implicating himself and his location in these encounters and relationships, by signifying the other as 'fake' and wanting something from you, the processes of Orientalism were reinscribed and reinstated.

Moving beyond the colonial towards social justice

While there are many arguments that justify the elimination of such programs for their colonial and elitist trends, the stories captured in this study (Jorgenson, 2009) suggest that despite some deeply problematic issues, there is incredible merit in some of the impacts and profound learning experienced by the students. My belief then, is that we can do better. Based on the post-colonial theoretical framework utilized in this study and the insights of my participants, I offer a few additional recommendations for how to carry out this work that is more premised on critical reflexivity and social justice.

As evidenced in the literature and the experiences of students, global citizenship is neither a neutral nor simple concept. It entails all the complexities associated with globalization and citizenship and involves processes of identity and determining action amidst this complexity and ambiguity. As a result of globalization, internationalization and programs such as PAW that have increased cross-cultural communication and exchange, people have become increasingly implicated and complicit in the lives of others. In order to make sense of this complexity, implicate themselves in and challenge social inequality, students need to be both informed and reflexive. Background knowledge on globalization, citizenship, human rights, language as well as historical and social information about the host country would better enable students to make sense of social phenomena that they encounter. Having this information as part of the preparation process would help to prevent the mis-education that experiential learning can bring about. Also requiring reflective practices throughout the program, such as the peer debriefings and journaling exercises centered on critical questions would help students to integrate the knowledge gained from their preparation and experiences.

Based on the ambivalence and ambiguity that the participants in this study experienced with identifying as a global citizen, there is a need for fostering a more hybrid understanding of, and orientation to, culture, identity and citizenship. Dichotomies between us/them, centre/periphery that are used to construct identity ought to be deconstructed and understood in more meaningful ways that include hybridity and interconnectedness. One student insightfully approached this issue by placing herself at the intersections as opposed to the narratives and conceptions of citizenship that are unquestionably passed down through societies. Through processes of globalization that have increased interconnectivity and interdependence, the promotion of identity, which values hybridity, not purity (Davies, 2003) is extremely important. To achieve this, educators need not instruct students to understand their identity as being simply hybrid or global, but engage them in reflexive exercises to question what Bhabha (2007) calls imagined constructs of identity.

Finally, it is important in the face of globalization and the reproduction of inequality to orient GCE toward social justice. People are continually faced with the

ambivalence of wanting to work towards social justice, yet not wanting to give up their power and privilege, which is often reinforced by educational structures and practices. In order to transcend this ambivalence, education programs and the students in these programs ought to orient relationships as reciprocal and interdependent. Centre-periphery relations and orientations need to be acknowledged, delegitimized and replaced by reciprocity to guide people's actions and interactions with others. Sending Canadian students to countries like Thailand perpetuates the centre's penetration of the peripheries without reciprocal opportunities for Thai students to travel to Canada and play with underserved Canadian children. Although interactions between the Canadian students and the Thais provided new ways of engagement and realizing interconnection and relationships beyond boundaries, such programs ought to extend this engagement to include discourse and practices premised on equity, reciprocity, human rights, multiple epistemologies and opportunities for mutual exchange and travel to achieve GCE premised on social justice.

Conclusion

While the insights drawn from this study have helped to problematize some of the issues associated with internationally based GCE programming and see some of its inherent value, it has more importantly illuminated the need for more research and theorizing of GCE, which aims to de-center increasingly hegemonic conceptions and colonial practices of global citizenship and be more inclusive of multiple epistemologies and experiences. In light of my research, the analysis of GCE through a post-colonial theoretical lens was severely limited by only interviewing select Canadian students who participated in the program. Although the responses I collected were rich and insightful, pointing to several recommendations for how to more critically educate students for global citizenship in programs that send students abroad, my research questions were only partially answered. Questions such as, 'How does educating for global citizenship abroad perpetuate or interrupt a colonial model of engaging with others?', would have been better investigated and understood by interviewing the people with whom the students worked and interacted. This limitation adds to a growing gap in the literature, research and practice; the highly concentrated use of Western theories, experiences and programs to understand a 'global' phenomenon such as global citizenship.

The prevalence of 'global' terminology, which signifies the development of a new transnational reality, must incorporate a shift or 'de-centering' from a dependence on 'western' conceptualizations of social, political, economic, and environmental realities toward a more inclusive, collective and shared understanding (Shultz and Jorgenson, 2008). Uncritical conceptions of global citizenship, such as cosmopolitanism which presumes everyone to be included because they are a citizen and live on the planet, or global competency which understands global citizenship to be

the acquisition of certain international and intercultural skills and competencies to be acquired through international travel, negates the complexity and contestation of what it means to be a citizen in different parts of the world and fails to address issues of exclusion and the diversity and complexity of indigenous and non-Western ontology and epistemologies. In response to the relatively narrow scope of global citizenship discourse, it is imperative that alternative conceptions, theories and practices of global citizenship from multiple locations are sought out and included in one's analysis and discussion of what it means to be a 'global citizen'.

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