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Feeling global belonging: Sensorial experiences in global education

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Abstract

Global citizenship education (GCE) seeks to develop critical thinking and self-reflexivity and, crucially, to create feelings of belonging to a common humanity. Although the subjectivity of belonging has been widely recognized, gaps remain around the micro-level experiences and practices that foster global identities. This article addresses these questions through the analysis of the individual's lived experience on an international GCE programme. It will be argued that global belonging is a transformative process of self-identity, shaped primarily through shared sensorial experience where the unfamiliar becomes familiar. The senses here help to create new personal and shared norms building trust, bonds and belonging between individuals from different backgrounds. Thus, in order to understand the journey towards feelings of global belonging, we must look to the senses as key sites of transformation.

Keywords: global belonging, global citizenship, senses, global education, informal learning

Introduction

Global citizenship is a widely used and thus contested term. It has been adapted and interpreted for purpose within a multitude of different platforms: forming parts of government policy on development, used to promote corporate sustainability and positioned at the heart of global civil society initiatives. Unsurprisingly, scholarly debate has centred on its conceptualization, relevance and universality, resulting in a wide interpretation of what global citizenship *is*. Typologies such as that by Oxley and Morris (2013) offer a useful framing of these multiple interpretations, helping to explore some of the key features of the concept and its multiple forms. Although there is not room here to explore these in length, in its simplest form global citizenship has been widely understood as a personal process, one that fosters a sense of loyalty, solidarity and belonging to those who inhabit our world (Le Bourdon 2020; Pashby 2018). Global citizenship thus encompasses ideas of belonging both to multiple global communities and to wider humanity as a whole. In UNESCO (2015: 14), the guidance on global citizenship education (GCE) stated that this 'sense of belonging' is built through political, economic, social and cultural interconnectedness among the local, national and global.

Yet, if we are to understand global belonging as a personal, fluid and often contradictory process, this focus on macro-level dynamics overlooks the importance of everyday micro-level actions and interactions. This article seeks to address this, reconceptualising how and where we locate this transformative shift towards global belonging. Through the analysis of lived experience, it is argued that sensorial

experiences in everyday life shape and reshape one's sense of self and the world around one. In undertaking such analysis, the article seeks to further theoretical discussions, providing empirical evidence of the personal and shared encounters curating ideas of global belonging.

This is explored here through the prism of GCE. Education has been seen as a prime space to honour these identities and harness them to create positive social change. Pedagogical approaches have taken many different forms including human rights education, development education and, more widely, global learning or education. Though often interchanged, nuances between these terms reflect their pedagogical focus (Wintersteiner et al., 2015). For GCE, the inclusion of citizenship puts the learner at the centre, promoting participatory methods of learning (Davies, 2006; Ho, 2009). Here the learner is encouraged to consider their own positionality and role in global issues, to reflect critically on the systems shaping global society and encourage them to become active agents of change. Through learning and reflecting on our interconnected world, it is believed solidarity and belonging are fostered. Pashby et al. (2020: 144) argued through their meta-mapping of GCE that current, and future, research and practices in the field have been limited by 'modern-colonial' imaginaries. In pushing beyond this framing, through decolonial critiques, the scholars argue that we can open up new conversations of how we 'interpret and sense the world' (Pashby et al., 2020: 160). These mappings have progressed theoretical discussions of global citizenship and, consequently, best practices for GCE. Yet gaps remain in understanding the micro-level processes and practices which come to forge these ideas, feelings and identities. This article seeks to address this, arguing that the senses play an essential role in fostering ideas of global belonging through these everyday practices.

Such an argument furthers popular narratives centring our understanding of our cosmopolitan self in the mind, shaped through cognitive reflections or imaginary identities. Calhoun (2016) expanded on the conceptualization of imagined communities (Anderson, 1993), locating feelings of belonging to a cosmopolitan community in the mind. Similarly, expanding the idea that all societies are partly formed through an imaginary (Castoriadis, 1987), Delanty (2006: 25) offered the term 'cosmopolitan imaginaries'. Here relations among the 'Self', 'Other' and wider world are not fixed, but continuously evolving and transforming through our perceptions of our encounters (Delanty, 2006: 25).

Yet such an understanding bypasses the role of bodily experience in shaping these cosmopolitan imaginaries. Fitzpatrick (2002) and Probyn (1996) both highlighted how belonging is most immediately felt through sensitivities of the body when one or more of the five senses are stimulated. They argued that meaningful relationships and connection to another entity are incomplete without visceral feelings of safety, security and validation. For Walmsley (2005: 43), the social relations Delanty outlines are mediated in 'unspoken ways' through sensory experience. Walmsley (2005: 43) claimed that such experience:

indicates sameness and belonging when an experience is familiar and meaningful to all; it marks otherness and difference when it is new to some, and has diverse associations for others. As a culturally embedded, socially shared and physically embodied phenomenon, sensory experience provides a visceral dimension to identity that impinges directly on our daily lives without necessarily entering into dialogue.

Thus the senses act as synapses between experience and memory, helping us identify, process and give meaning to our encounters. In doing so, they are the gatekeepers

to self, other and the world around us. Ratnam (2018: 6) stated that the concept of home is 'created through lived experiences, sensory articulations and the material, underpinned by memory and identity'. Therefore, if home is an idea based on feelings of familiarity and belonging, it is arguable that the senses are central to cultivating and maintaining feelings of global belonging.

The role of the senses in identity forming and community building has been widely researched (see, for example, Trnka et al., 2013). Education scholarship, too, has recognized how sensorial experience comes to create affective learning experiences (Chatterjee and Hannan, 2016; Johnson and Løkken, 2014). Thus this article looks to the context of global citizenship education. To understand the micro-level practices forging one's perspective of global belonging, research centred on capturing an individual's actions, interactions and reflections through GCE. In following the lived experience of individuals through this learning process, it was possible to capture how the senses came to shape feelings of global belonging. In analysing the micro-level practices, it will become clear that shared sensorial experience in learning and informal interactions creates transformative shifts in what one deems familiar, producing new norms, bonds and feelings of belonging. This will not only add to narratives around best practices for global education, but also provide deeper theoretical insight into personal feelings and practices of global belonging.

Methodology

With a key aim of creating solidarity and feelings of belonging to an international community, global citizenship education offers acute insight into the lived experience of these processes. It is important to note that teaching on global issues to empower agents for change has taken many forms. Development education, human rights education and peace education are often used to describe similar pedagogical practices. Wintersteiner et al. (2015) argued that GCE can be seen as an umbrella term combining these pedagogies and encapsulating their key components. This has somewhat shifted towards global education with the recognition of citizenship evoking ideas of exclusivity. This shift is important if we are to understand global citizenship as a continuous process of critical reflection and progression towards inclusive belonging. Although there is not space to unpack these important discussions here, this article uses the term 'global citizenship education', or GCE, as it is the terminology used by the case study organization.

This research utilized GCE as a space in which to analyse how everyday practices in this environment fostered feelings of being part of a global community. The methodology therefore centred on the capturing the lived experience of participants through GCE (Van Manen, 1997). Taking a case study research sought to reach beyond theoretical or generalizable explorations, examining instead the 'person's lifeworld whose experiences are relevant study material' (Van Manen, 1997: 69). 'Lifeworld' here refers to the immediate experiences, interactions and activities that make up the world of an individual (Harrington, 2006; Van Manen, 1997), thus centring on individuals' experience through participant-led approaches. To do this I took an ethnographic approach, examining the following participants through the experience of taking part in an informal education camp. As both a researcher and staff member on the camp I was able to capture the 'unfolding social interactions' of participants (Trafford and Leshem, 2002: 2). In focusing on the details and meaning of reality, observations were undeniably subjective and thus interpretative. However, through establishing an open dialogue and transparent relationship between myself and the participants, I

sought to ensure the latter felt empowered by being part of the research, believing that their opinions mattered and that their thoughts and feelings had meaning (Heron and Reason, 2001: 114). Alongside participants' reflections, my own direct experience provided a rich account of how ideas of global belonging were being formed. As both a researcher and member of the community I was able to experience the sensorial experiences encountered by participants. This is not to say that I could understand the full experience of each individual, but that it provided an additional layer to their reflections (Le Bourdon, 2019; Griffiths, 2016; Vannini et al., 2011).

Children's International Summer Villages International provided a valuable case study to follow this journey. An international not-for-profit organization, CISV International aims to build 'active global citizens' through its internationally attended experiential learning camps. The most popular Village programme sees delegations of four children, aged 11 years old, and a volunteering adult leader from between 7 and 12 different countries around the world come together to live and learn as a group for four weeks. Volunteers arise from a multitude of different backgrounds, depending on the national CISV-represented branch. However, all adult leaders are trained to lead on the organization's core education themes: diversity, sustainability, human rights and conflict resolution. The international team of leaders work together to design and deliver interactive activities on these topics. The group live together for the duration of the camp, often in YMCA hotels, free university accommodation or purpose-built complexes. The setting CISV provides is purposefully designed to emulate a sense of community; participants share living quarters, eat together, take part in group activities and work as a team to design educational content. CISV thus hopes to build a sense of belonging through shared learning and living.

The case study camp for this project was hosted in Lucknow, India. Its participants came from Brazil, Canada, India, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Thailand and the United States. In all, 43 participants attended the Lucknow Village, including 28 children, seven delegation leaders, four junior counsellors, four staff and myself. Ethical consent was obtained formally from each participant and participant's guardian through the legal documents that CISV International requires for attendance. In these documents participants are asked to state whether they agree to partake in the organization's ongoing research projects. In addition, further information was sent to each participant and their guardian, and each participant was also informally approached to ensure that they understood the project. CISV uses English as its lingua franca, so these informal exchanges with adult leaders took place in English. As the key translators for their delegates, adult leaders translated this information to their child participants.

This dynamic is important to note as it limited the scope of the research methods. Adult leaders were interviewed before and after the camp to capture their reflections and experiences. It was decided that only adult participants would be interviewed due to the complexity and ambiguity of the term 'global citizenship' (Baillie Smith et al., 2011) and the language barrier that existed between the child participants and myself. The inclusion of interviews opened a space for participants to unpack their experiences fully, providing a more accurate insight into what was happening on the ground (Trafford and Leshem, 2002). These complemented the ethnographic observations achieved through my own assumption of a staff role; helping with the logistics of the camp enabled me to observe the day-to-day encounters and interactions shaping participants' experience (Gidley, 2009). Such observations included conversations and interactions with the child participants, while interviews with adult leaders included extensive insight on their delegations' experiences and discussion. However, it is

important to note that the children's experiences cannot be understood fully through this analysis. This article consequently focuses on the educators' experience of global belonging and their reflections on their learners' journey.

Examining individuals' lived experience meant data was rich in detail, full of opinions and emotions. I therefore chose to take a thematic approach to analysis, through creating a coding system to elicit the major themes occurring in both the observation notes and interviews. Although this method could be seen as 'messy', it arguably reflects the very nature of qualitative research as a whole (Harding, 2013), allowing for the details of participants' personal accounts to come through (Sumner and Tribe, 2008). This allowed for a rich understanding of participants' experiences, and in doing so added a richer understanding to discussion on global belonging and citizenship.

In particular, findings revealed the importance of personal and shared sensorial experience occurring in the everyday lives of participants. Alongside observation and interviews with participants, my personal researcher reflections highlighted how central the bodily and interbody intensities felt through the five senses were in their impact on the individual's cognitive and emotional understanding of self, other and belonging. Though this was uniquely felt for each individual, this article will highlight how the senses helped to build global belonging through the camp, reflecting on the lived experience of participants and of myself as a researcher.

Sensorial experiences in practice

The body has been widely discussed as central to how we understand experience, engage with the world, others and our sense of self. Our senses act as affective sites for information gathering, meaning making and expression (Kale et al., 2019; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). In a learning environment they serve as information stations, receiving stimuli, processing their energy and unpacking their meaning. This is particularly significant in experiential learning where the senses, as the mediators of experience, are primary sources of knowledge. For GCE, in which intercultural learning and fostering solidarity are central elements, the senses can therefore be understood as powerful tools for shaping ideas of global belonging. This can be clearly seen in this research study, with participants locating feelings of trust, bonds and belonging within the body.

When they [child participants] began to trust each other, you could see their bodies relax. They reached out to each other more ... I don't know how to explain it, you feel physically safe together, part of this community.
(Shail, India)

Pisters et al. (2019: 4) argued that this is 'because constructing an understanding of ourselves and our world requires interaction and dialogue with "otherness"'. Pedwell (2012: 16) similarly builds on Deleuze's (1988) understanding of affective, stating that inter-body intensities create a transformative shift in consciousness and how one interacts with otherness. Due to the immersive environment that CISV International created, these sensorial experiences occurred both within and outside of structured learning activities. In these informal spaces between learning, such as sharing meals, playing or simply travelling around the campsite, further opportunities for interaction were opened. Sensorial experiences were thus both subtle and intense; they were both felt individually and shared with others. The experiences created feelings of familiarity, built trust between participants and created feelings of belonging to a community. This article will now explore three areas of sensorial experience that transformed

participants' feelings of global belonging: creating familiarity through environment setting, exploring trust through the senses and bonding through the senses. What will become clear is how central the senses are in creating affective experiences in one's transformative journey of global belonging.

Learning and the senses

Percy Smith (2012) argued that the context and environment in which children engage and process social learning influences their sense of agency and empowerment, as well as building social connections. This is widely echoed in GCE scholarship, which emphasizes the importance of creating a safe setting in which learners feel able to explore controversial topics from a variety of viewpoints, and to ask uncomfortable questions in a constructive manner (Golmohamad, 2009; Le Bourdon, 2018). Frameworks for best practice for GCE champion experiential learning practices, in which learners engage directly with topics and are given time and space to explore them; here teachers also take a facilitating role in discussions (Hicks and Holden, 2007; Percy Smith, 2012). Such an approach creates a causality effect in which the environment shapes the sensorial experiences that learners encounter and in which these sensorial encounters simultaneously impact the learning environment. Educators on the CISV International camp appreciated this, recognizing that global citizenship was not something one could just learn but needed to experience and feel.

You cannot just teach global citizenship ... you have to create that environment in which they can do and learn ... create that atmosphere for them, to arise curiosity in them. That in turn creates a feeling for community and for learning. (Myra, India)

This meant that the atmosphere of activities was intentionally set through the senses. This was particularly apparent in 'Trust' or 'Team building' activities where the atmosphere was calm and quiet, often set at dusk when the lighting and temperature were more subdued. This resulted in an intimate environment where learners became more tactile, listened carefully to one another and spoke in soft voices. The calm atmosphere enabled difficult topics such as xenophobia and racism to be explored in a safe manner. It also intensified experiential learning, where the participatory methods saw learning being a whole-body experience. Role plays, cooperation games and reflective group discussions meant that learning went beyond gaining knowledge to become an encompassing sensory experience.

Adult leaders simply curated and facilitated a learning setting in which the senses became the key points of information exchange. This created a powerful learning experience for individuals in both overt and subtle ways. Physically interacting through cooperation games, hearing different languages in reflection groups or tasting different foods in cultural learning activities demonstrate obvious examples of learning through the senses. Moreover, following one activity centred on trust, many child participants reflected on how they trusted participants from their own country over those from different delegations. This led to lengthy discussion that reflected critically on our own internal prejudices. Here the combination of the physical experience of the activity and the calm atmosphere in which it was conducted created a safe and stimulating moment for questioning one's relation to self and other. However, the environment created by adult leaders saw the more subtle sensorial exchanges as just as powerful. Participants were able to gain knowledge of various viewpoints directly through sensorial encounters extending beyond the spoken word. A facial expression, the tone of a voice or an instinctive physical interaction help to create a

more holistic representation of one's feelings and thoughts. This did not mean that language and social barriers were not present, but that the senses helped to provide alternative channels of communication, understanding and connection. Here the tone of the setting allowed for these sensorial encounters to be felt more intensely, creating affective learning experiences.

Observations after activities where adult leaders had intentionally focused on the setting of the activity noted a shift in the group.

Notice such a difference and such a group feel ... the atmosphere is so calm and the circle so intimate ... everyone being very loving and tactile.
(Field notes)

A closeness seemed to be achieved, with field notes recording participants claiming to 'feel like a family' and in which the group overall became more tactile with one another. Adult participants cited these activities as the point where they believed global belonging was being fostered and practised in post-camp interviews.

For me, trust games were key times for creating that belonging. That physical need to trust, to trust beyond what they saw but how they felt, both emotionally and physically. It felt like they were communicating on another level; it was pretty special. (Bernie, United States)

Shared sensorial learning and communication through the senses created a collective transformation as discussed by Delanty (2006). The senses therefore played a key role in setting an affective learning environment, where sensorial communication created intense moments of connection for participants. In doing so, they established ideas of global belonging.

The senses in the everyday

Structured learning was only one snapshot of where the senses had a formative role in creating feelings of global belonging. Informal spaces between activities provided important sites for further learning, organic interaction and building strong connections between participants.

As participants became more comfortable in each other's company, discussions from activities began to spill over into free time, furthering learning. Simultaneously, through living side by side, additional opportunities for questions and learning occurred. The senses played a key role in stimulating learning. Eating together, playing together and simply sharing space saw the senses expose participants to the unfamiliar. Mealtimes became intense sensorial experiences: eating different foods, smelling new smells, singing songs in different languages, playing clapping games while waiting, leaning on one another in the queue. These occasions created moments for asking questions, for example 'What do you eat at home?' or discussion on broader global topics. One adult participant stated that conversations at these times had changed his eating habits, to the point where he stopped eating meat. 'I realized we were all part of the problem.'

Similarly, play brought experiential learning into the participants' everyday, an important process in consolidating learning (Göncü and Gaskins, 2007; Percy Smith, 2012; Van Peski, 2012). Creating imaginary worlds, teaching each other dances or bonding over an enthusiasm for a sport connected participants through the senses. Play here furthered learning, creating the sensation of following a cultural dance. It also provided a space in which participants could bond: somewhere they were able to interact with whom they chose in their own time. Connecting over singing a song,

playing games or crafting together saw the senses functioning as a bridge between individuals. The senses also united participants fostering feelings of solidarity, cheering each other on through team games. Interestingly, it also created new habitual norms and practices shared by the group. Participants would collaborate to create new sensorial experiences, bringing together their different cultures. New games, dance routines or chants saw the group develop their own collective identity through these sensorial expressions. Delanty (2009) saw this as a crucial part of transformation towards a cosmopolitan imaginary of global belonging. Here our experiences shape our identity and how we see ourselves in relation to the other.

These new norms were also built through habitual living practices. In sharing these everyday living practices from the moment they woke until the moment they fell asleep, a feeling of community or family was built. It saw the group following similar routines, accommodating one another's needs and establishing new norms. This process saw the unfamiliar become part of the everyday tapestry of an individual's experience. Significantly, it also saw the establishment of new shared norms experienced through the senses, which created a feeling of community. For example, hot milk was provided before bed one night by the Indian staff. Expecting the same the night after, participants from different delegations brought different spices and mixes to add to the milk. This continued throughout the day, becoming a key part of the routine of camp life which participants affectionately called 'Sleepy belly time'. New and familiar smells and tastes took on a new meaning, creating a unique sensorial memory attached to this international community. This was not about simply adopting and thus appropriating culture, but forging and forming ideas of belonging through shared sensorial habits. Delanty (2006) stated this is key for creating feelings of global belonging. He argued that it is not enough for one simply to recognize and respect habitual practices of the other. Instead we must not only respect difference but also, in establishing shared norms, begin to find new ways of viewing the world and our positionality in it. In this example, these new familiarities were experienced and shared through the senses.

The importance of the multisensory experiences in shaping meaning and value to place has been widely discussed (see Crang and Tolia-Kelly, 2010; Cresswell, 2004; Kale et al., 2019; O'Neill and Hubbard, 2010). While Ratnam (2018) stated that habitual practices create memories which shape identities, here the two combine, with ritualized exposure to unfamiliar sensorial experiences expanding one's sensory palate, reshaping what is deemed familiar and creating shared memories. These sensorial memories are felt collectively, thus bonding groups through the shared experience (Sharma, 2011). In the case of CISV International participants, the unfamiliarity of each other's habits and routines became familiar through sensorial exposure and created new collective feelings of what was familiar. It became normal to exchange greetings in multiple languages, to smell spices cooking from the kitchen, to take your shoes off before you entered rooms, to sing and clap in unison.

Sharing these small things every day, you know. We can touch a different culture and create, feel our own, together. (Dan, Japan)

In doing so, the group created sensorial memories which were attached to the group, thus fostering ideas of community and belonging.

Sensing belonging: mutual trust, bonds, belonging

Findings from this research demonstrate how the senses in global education intensify the learning experience; they are tools for communication and provide affective

sites for bonding. At the same time, shared sensorial experiences within everyday life reshape one's understanding of what is familiar. This creates shared sensorial memories which shift one's identity towards being part of a global community. Within these structured and everyday spaces the senses play an integral role in fostering affective moments and lasting feelings of global belonging. Participants within this case study often referred to an intangible sense of belonging, one felt not only emotively but also physically. In explaining this feeling, one interviewee had a visceral physical reaction:

I shared that bonding with each and every child, not just my own children but with each and every child, that bonding we had. It was like we belonged together ... I'm getting goosebumps now! (Shail, India)

The relationship between the mind and body is widely discussed through the theory of affect (Paterson, 2007; Pedwell, 2012; Thrift, 2004). Here feelings are understood through emotions which are both built and expressed through inter-body intensities (Paterson, 2007), while embodiment theory has opened up new ground for progressive educational practice and theory (Tarozzi and Francesconi, 2012). In this article, I want instead to shift the focus from these intensities to the process of global belonging and the role that the senses play in everyday life to transform these intangible feelings. Findings from this research see this as a process which begins with establishing mutual trust, fosters these bonds through shared experience and evolves into intangible feelings of belonging. It is this transformative process that clearly illustrates how the senses come to shape ideas of global belonging.

Establishing social trust, that is trust between persons, is key to laying a foundation for cooperation within groups (Luhman in Warming, 2012). Warming (2012: 45) took this further, arguing that for fostering 'shared horizons' of solidarity and collective participation, mutual trust must be cultivated. Mutual trust is not only about putting faith in others but also about being recognized as trustworthy by oneself and others. This requires experience and reflexivity for individuals first to understand why they do or do not trust someone and second to demonstrate the power of trusting. Delanty (2009) also recognized how trust in one's own actions builds agency and empowers individuals to see the impact that positive participation can have on society. As discussed earlier, trust games saw learners explore their capacity to trust others and built trust between participants through the senses. However, in sharing living space and habitual practices with one another, mutual trust was also built through micro-level interactions on an everyday level. The senses provided tools in which to experience, empower and consolidate mutual trust, as seen through Heleam's example. Here she reflects on how the senses worked as awareness tools and tools of expression to build this trust:

Like anything, if you want use the shower, if you want to walk in barefoot like 'Is it ok for you?', some people just have different culture and I think it would be better to ask them first. Then I know and I will demonstrate my respect ... if we all respect and trust others' actions we become closer, we become one. (Heleam, Thailand)

This everyday sensorial experience made Heleam aware of others' cultural habits. It allowed her to show respect for these differences and demonstrated her own ability to build trust through these micro actions. For Heleam, these small gestures grew an inclusive community where others' needs were recognized and helped to form part of the community dynamic.

The vulnerability of the senses, alongside the sharing of space and experience, saw connections between participants deepen beyond trust. Instead participants would refer to 'bonds' and the process of 'bonding' through shared experience. Poignant moments for bonding occur not only within activities but also in informal spaces, when sensorial experiences are met with heightened emotions. These experiences seemed to leave a lasting impression on participants who would refer back to these 'key moments of bonding' in interviews; observations also noted these same moments as shifting the dynamics of the group. Here the way in which participants interacted with one another through the senses changed. Physical interactions changed from high fives to hugging to holding hands. Laughs became more frequent, spontaneous singing would erupt and affectionate names were exchanged. Another interesting feature was the way in which individuals referred to the group, with many participants describing the group as a 'family' and the site as a 'home'.

This is significant in two ways. First, it demonstrates how the senses were intrinsic for both building and expressing bonds between participants. Second, it shows that the impact of the process resulted in strong feelings of belonging to the group and their environment.

These did not disappear once the camp was over. In post-camp interviews participants spoke of a change in mindset expressed in Myra's quote:

It's a moment that makes you realize that we are connected.. but in everybody's heart, everybody's mind there is still a feeling of belongingness to this global community.

These shared moments had left a lasting impression on Myra, which she connected to and continued to hold even after the camp. Ratnam (2018: 9) argued that sensorial experiences 'build on a homely sense of community and belonging through recollection and remembrance'. In sharing a significant period of living and learning together, these sensorial experiences left affective memories on participants. Critically, these memories not only connected participants but also shifted their outlook towards ideas and intangible feelings of belonging to a global community.

'Intangible' here refers to how participants themselves struggled to articulate how they felt they belonged, yet all indicated a sense of boundlessness to this connection. Many described how the memory of the shared experience left a physical and emotional feeling of attachment to this international community which they then carried with them. Interestingly, O'Neill and Hubbard (2010: 47) argued that while categories of identity are helpful in certain circumstances, one's personal identity is fluid, shaped by 'emotions, aura and affect'. Here Affect is seen as a connecting force rather than a tool for separation. Similarly Sharma (2011: 291) argued that ideas of multicultural belonging are enacted through 'shared experience and affective responses'. In analysing participants' journeys, both through and after the camp, we can see how these shared sensorial experiences came to evolve their identities, opening up a connection to the global. This moves our understanding of what connects us away from shared categorical characteristics towards shared experiences forging communities of identity (Uzelac, 2010). In doing so, we can see how fundamental the senses are in shaping and expressing our idea of belonging to a global community. Visceral interactions and shared sensorial experiences reach beyond social barriers, leaving affective imprints upon individuals. It is here that Delanty's (2009) transformative process towards global belonging can be located, through sensorial experiences which shift perception of self, other and their positionality in the world.

Conclusion

In recognizing the subjective nature of global belonging, this article has sought to look at the micro-level interactions that come to shape one's lived experience (Moosa-Mitha, 2005; Roudemetof, 2005; Staeheli, 2011). As a global education setting seeking to build active global citizens, CISV International provided a fruitful site in which to observe this process. Analysis and subsequent discussion in this article highlight how central sensorial experiences were in fostering feelings of belonging to a global community.

We first turned to the role of the senses in global education. In curating an open, calm space for learning, sensory interactions in the camp were experienced in a more intense way. Subtle encounters through the senses helped to reach beyond socio-cultural barriers to express participants' feelings, leaving an affective impression on those around them (Le Bourdon, 2019). This was further helped by the use of experiential learning practices, in which the senses became a key tool for information gathering and understanding. Many adult participants cited these intimate learning experiences as key turning points for building trust, fostering bonds and opening up ideas of belonging. Thus the senses provided an effective channel of communication, while also intensifying learning through experiential practices. In doing so, participants were able to share affective experiences.

These shared experiences also occurred within everyday practices on the camp. The second discussion session outlines this in detail, demonstrating how informal spaces allowed participants to interact earnestly, establishing natural bonds and friendships. In sharing space and habitual practices, these friendships were given a new meaning, emulating the rhythm of a community or family. It also saw the senses highlighting differences and similarities in lifestyle and routines. Here learners learned through the senses in experiencing these directly, even as they stimulated curiosity and prompted questioning, furthering the global education provided on the camp. Over time we can see how what was once unfamiliar became familiar and how the group began to curate their own new norms. It is here that we can see how vital the senses were in creating what Delanty (2009) stated are crucial shifts towards a global community – a situation where shared sensorial experiences and familiarities are attached to those from different social, cultural and geographical backgrounds.

These shared sensorial experiences left an affective imprint on participants, where participants located intangible feelings of belonging in both mind and body. Though the level of belonging remained entirely subjective to individual participants, it was clear through interviews and observations that the senses played a key role in significant moments of transformation. Here this article presents its primary contribution to our understanding of the process of global belonging: that if feelings of belonging are transformed through shared experiences, then the senses are central sites for stimulating, forming and expressing global identities. It is hoped that such an insight will further emphasize the importance of micro-level experiences in belonging and identity forming, as well as contributing to discussion on experiential learning and informal spaces in global education.

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Declarations and conflict of interests

The author is the journal's Books Review Editor, in which this article is included; all efforts to sufficiently blind the author during peer review of this article have been made. The author declares no further conflicts with this article. Research has been conducted to the highest ethical standard with approval from Northumbria University and all information has written consent for publication.

Originality of article statement

The author declares that this article is not under consideration for publication anywhere else, nor has been published in any form prior to submission to any UCL Press journal. The author agrees that the submission is original except for material in the public domain.

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