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**PREFIGURATIVE POLITICS AND REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICES WITHIN
INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF THE CIEE
THAILAND PROGRAM ON DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBALIZATION**

A Dissertation Presented

by

KONI F. DENHAM

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2021

College of Education

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A Dissertation Presented

By

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DEDICATION

To my life partner for continuing to make my life extraordinary.

&

To my students whose bravery is a well of inspiration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I reach the grand finale of this dissertation process, I would be remiss if I didn't reflect upon the people who guided me along the journey of becoming who I am. The completion of this "book report" is the result of many friends, colleagues and family members who have supported, asked, pushed, harassed, and flat out demanded to see it done. It is a result of people who have believed in me, mentored me, inspired me, taught me and encouraged me to get to this point. Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

PREFIGURATIVE POLITICS AND REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICES WITHIN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF THE CIEE THAILAND PROGRAM ON DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBALIZATION

MAY 2021

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Today's colleges and universities are prioritizing the preparation of students for global citizenship. To meet this need, institutions are focusing their study abroad and international service-learning programs to provide students with international experiences (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011). Government support for such programs is driven by advancing globalization, promoting economic competitiveness, and ensuring national security (Hantzopoulos & Shirazi, 2014). The problem, however, is that participation in service-learning does not guarantee that students will engage in further social action activities upon their return (Hartman & Kiely, 2014). A contributing factor to this lack of engagement is because participants are not gaining transferable skills that would inform their work in support of social justice at the conclusion of the experience (Cermak, Christiansen, Finnegan, Gleeson, White, & Leach, 2011; Hartman & Kiely, 2014; Kiely, 2004).

This case study fills a critical gap in the research regarding how a critical international service-learning program prepares students for continued social justice work in communities upon their return. The research consisted of in-depth interviews, a review

of documents, and an examination of artifacts from a specific service-learning program. Data was collected from seven participants who participated in the CIEE Thailand Development and Globalization program. The participants provided important insight as to how the program prepared them for their engagement in Thailand and how that prepared them for future activism and organizing.

Unlike other international service-learning programs, the CIEE Thailand program provided students with a number of transferable skills, which included processing skills (facilitation and listening), self-development skills (confidence and self-direction), communication skills (research, writing, and grant writing), and community building. Additionally, students developed an understanding of how to work in solidarity with community members. The results of this study can offer insights for other critical international service-learning programs to draw from to support the engagement of students upon their return from an experience abroad.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

If our institutions of higher education do not build a richer network of human connections it is likely that our dealings with one another will be mediated by the defective norms of market exchange (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 291)

Higher Education institutions in the United States are prioritizing preparing students for global citizenship. Colleges and universities have turned to their service-learning and study abroad programs, which have explicit goals to create educational opportunities that promote civic responsibility and global citizenship, to meet this demand (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011). Through the expansion and convergence of both of these fields emerge international service-learning programs, a unique pedagogical approach to encourage student growth in the areas of cross-cultural learning and civic engagement (Niehaus & Crain, 2013). Such programs facilitate a global experience for students, while simultaneously offering civic engagement opportunities and service-learning courses that connect students with local communities. International service-learning programs couple global competencies with civic engagement into one overall experience. The problem with international service-learning programs is that they fail to direct student global engagements toward decolonization and, at the same time, reinforce neoliberal hegemony.

Maintaining U.S. economic dominance is based on increased global competition in a knowledge-based economy. Nations, regions, and communities are forced to compete with one another, and their survival is contingent upon their ability to commodify and

own knowledge. The driving force behind the increase in international education experiences is propelled by the global nature of the challenges that the U.S. faces, including the economy, military, and diplomatic relations.

Corporations and government agencies are pushing to have more educated citizens able to navigate international relations (Pless, Maak, & Stahl, 2011). To meet these needs, colleges and universities are tasked with the responsibility of developing competent, globally aware individuals (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2020; Shultz, 2007). The rationale for international study abroad programs is to prepare the next generation of American experts to be responsible for managing the political, economic, and cultural ties in strategic geopolitical regions (U. S. Department of State, 2015; 100 Thousand Strong Foundation, 2016). Corporations and government agencies are reliant on the availability of skilled workers who produce goods and provide services to knowledge-based corporations (Shear & Brin Hyatt, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Higher education institutions are under considerable pressure to meet the needs of the market, human capital development, and revenue generating research (Aronowitz, 2000; Giroux, 2007). This shift, particularly technical training programs, has resulted in institutions focusing on instrumental learning, credibility building, and occupational preparation. In doing so, they fail to critically examine educational goals and practices that exist within a democratic society (Hysop-Margison & Sears, 2006). As a result, students are not critically examining societal problems and instead are focused on the skills needed to gain employment in increasingly competitive international and domestic job markets (Giroux, 2007).

To prepare students for the global marketplace, study abroad programs expose students to cross-cultural situations and provide them with opportunities to navigate those experiences. However, there is no guarantee that cross-cultural experiences translate into an understanding of oppression or an ability to recognize social injustices (Kiely, 2004). In reality, students who are privileged enough to study abroad are able to because of their nationalities, which are institutionalized through their passports, cultural capital, and socioeconomic statuses (Chakravarty, Good, & Gasser, 2020). Conversely, the majority of young people globally do not have the resources, time, access, or capacity to study abroad (Merkx, 2015). While privileged students may be observing the cultures, they are living and learning in, they are doing so from a distance (Ogden, 2007). Their privileges are rooted in the historical foundations of colonialism and capitalism. Consequently, these future leaders, with the material resources to study abroad, are likely to adopt the theoretical underpinnings of neoliberalism to frame their governance and policy-making practices.

Service-Learning Programs

While colleges and universities have been expanding their study abroad programs, they have also focused on reinvigorating their civic commitment to local communities through service-learning programs (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008). Traditional service-learning programs and courses are a pedagogical approach to teaching, deeply rooted in theories of experiential learning, that attempts to deepen student learning through engagement in the community. While research has shown that service-learning has a positive impact on the academic (cognitive), social (affective), spiritual, and professional

development of students (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999), there is little evidence to suggest that service-learning brings about lasting social change.

Underlying the nature of service-learning is the assumption that change will occur, either on individual, institutional, or societal levels, as a result of the service activity. Stoecker (2016) suggests that service learning, in its institutionalized form, was “founded on a mission of liberating students” (p. 5). Furco (2011) suggests that the notion that service-learning is an effective strategy for developing students. However, service-learning often takes the shape of formalized charity (Bruce, Martin, & Brown, 2010; Kendall, 1990; Mitchell, 2008) whereby students engage in activities that reproduce structural inequalities and power dynamics and thus maintain hegemony (Marullo & Edwards, 2000; King, 2004; Wade, 2001). This approach is shaped by neoliberal ideologies (Bruce & Brown, 2010) and it leads to the further exploitation and oppression of marginalized populations. The new learning that students experience as a result of their participation reinforces patterns of hegemony, ethnocentrism, ahistoricism, depoliticization, salvationism, uncomplicated solutions, and paternalism (Andreotti, 2012). Moreover, participation in service-learning is eclipsing student interest in activism (Cermak, Christiansen, Finnegan, Gleeson, White, & Leach, 2011). Traditional service-learning programs support neoliberal hegemony by co-opting alternative points of view that are in opposition to it. Ultimately, higher education's commitment to the neoliberal ideology inhibits the ability of the civic engagement movement to “achieve democratic and justice aims” (Kliewer, 2013, p. 72).

The default approach to service-learning activities is direct action, which does not mean acting in solidarity with communities or advocating for alternative solutions to

community problems (Keith, 2005). Research suggests that unless students address the root causes of social problems, aside from making participants feel good, service-learning activities have little impact on the community (Mitchell, 2005) or may even compound existing issues (Christopher, Wendt, Marecek, & Goodman, 2014) so that the community could actually suffer as a result of the service-learning activities (Stoecker, 2016).

Critical Service-Learning

Critical service-learning provides a critique of traditional service-learning, the foundations of which are rooted in Paulo Freire's (2002) work around power and the importance of incorporating the voices of the oppressed. Critical service-learning diverges from traditional service-learning because it focuses on identifying and explicating the root causes of the oppression that led to students providing service in the first place (Santiago-Ortiz, 2019). The core components of this approach include: be attentive to social change, work to redistribute power, and strive to develop authentic relationships (Mitchell, 2008). It is a social-justice oriented approach that engages students in examining the structural causes of injustices and in doing so develops critical thinkers who can become agents of change and promote solutions that bring about justice (Bruce, 2013; Mitchell, 2008).

Critical service-learning is not without its own critiques. The approach contributes to the reproduction of inequalities (Bruce & Brown, 2010). According to Santiago-Ortiz (2019), the various approaches to critical service-learning fail to "explicitly address settler colonialism in the United States and acknowledge the inherently colonialist nature of service-learning, including its critical strand" (p. 43). It maintains a hierarchical relationship with students perceived as givers of service, while communities are the

recipients of that service (Bruce, 2013), which is particularly important in a North-South engagement.

International Service-Learning

Colleges and universities have coalesced their efforts around developing students' global and cultural competence (international education), providing students with educational experiences abroad (study abroad), and promoting their civic responsibilities in the community (service-learning) to create international service-learning programs (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011). International service-learning research on outcomes focuses on identity development related to being a global citizen, changes in intercultural sensitivity, and global competence (Dunlap & Webster, 2009; Kiely, 2011; Plater, 2011; Tonkin, 2011; Twombly, Salisbury, Tumanut, & Klute, 2012; Nickols, Rothenberg, Moshi, & Tetloff, 2013). International service-learning outcomes in academic learning and career aspiration (FERENCE & Bell, 2004; Fitch, 2004) inform the fields of Development Studies (Chapman, 2018), Nursing (Noone, Kohan, Hernandez, Tibbetts, & Richmond, 2019), and pre-service teacher education (Knutson-Miller & Gonzalez, 2010). Students articulated gains in language proficiency and knowledge of their host communities and countries (Kiely, 2004; Steinberg, 2002). Research also demonstrates that international service-learning experiences contribute to transformational learning and shifts in their emerging worldview (Kiely, 2004; Kiely, 2005). In addition to students' personal gains, research on outcomes emphasizes gains in vocational training that students receive as a result of engaging with communities abroad (Boyle & Springer, 2001; Domask, 2007; Fairchild, Pillai, & Noble, 2006; Hayward & Charrette, 2012; Maltby & Abrams, 2009; Mbugua, 2010).

International service-learning draws from the same principles of international development. Unfortunately, models of development have largely been omitted from the literature on international service-learning (Crabtree, 2008). These are models that are rooted in colonial history and result in local corruption by the comprador bourgeoisie class, unfair trade policies, destructive structural adjustment policies, and the silencing of indigenous voices (Amin, 2006; Stiglitz & Squire, 1998). International service-learning is complicit in the failed history of development given that many of these programs are development work by their very nature. International service-learning programs are in need of decolonization as programs may operate with a “development from above” approach, which is devised by those individuals who come from a background of privilege with the intent to help those who do not (Kintz, 1999, p. 52). In reality, Kintz (1999) argues, research shows that these communities are continually making attempts to find their own solutions to the issues that are impacting them.

Drawing from Santiago-Ortiz’s (2019) critique of service-learning, for international service-learning to move toward decolonization programs need to reframe student-teacher-community relationships so that programs “center communities and seek transformation beyond that impacting the students” (p. 43). Unequivocally, the knowledge of marginalized people around the world is intentionally missing from program development, particularly the voices and experiences of indigenous people and those excluded because of race, gender, and sexuality. In reality, it is these programs promulgate colonized knowledge, presented as truth, that is shared through colonized relations. Hall & Tandon (2017) emphasize the importance of acknowledging the existence of other epistemologies and affirming the multiplicity of forms they can take.

They assert that a just and healthier world necessitates recognizing the power of other epistemologies and making this knowledge accessible to anyone who needs it.

International service-learning programs have the potential to produce citizens who buy into the neoliberal approach to global domination, as well as promote service-learning as charity work on a global scale. Such college experiences almost guarantee the development of the next generation of stalwarts for neoliberalism who will perpetuate its hegemonic rationality. Santiago-Ortiz (2019) argues that service-learning programs perpetuate settler logics, that reinforces assimilation of communities to uphold the status quo. Settler colonialism according to Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill's (2013) is "a persistent social and political formation in which newcomers/colonizers/settlers come to a place, claim it as their own, and do whatever it takes to disappear the Indigenous peoples that are there" (p. 12). Veracini (2013) argues the primary difference between colonialism and settler colonialism is that colonialism separates the colonizer from the colonized, while settler colonialism focuses on the indigenization of settlers, thus no longer seen as settlers. Therefore, Santiago-Ortiz (2019) suggests that community-university partnerships shift to more horizontal and solidarity approaches to their engagement and this is true for international service-learning programs, as well.

While traditional service-learning experiences, domestic and international, are thought to teach students about the importance of tolerance, altruism, and cultural awareness, they presume that social injustices are addressed in the process of learning. Neururer and Rhoads (1998) suggest that it is a mistake to believe that participation in service-learning will lead to the development of a critical analysis of community problems. Empirical studies (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kiely, 2004; Rhoads, 1997) found

students who were transformed by their service-learning experience developed a desire to put their transformation into some form of concrete action. However, according to Kiely (2004), participants' "initial intention" to translate their perspective transformation into action was often accompanied by significant conflict and tension between desired actions and external constraints" (p. 16) once they returned from an international service-learning experience.

Cermak, Christiansen, Finnegan, Gleeson, White, and Leach (2011), in their research on international service trips, contend that students who participate in international service trips leave with a feeling of dissonance: it is outside of their capacity to develop more awareness of the injustices that exist, and they do not have the skills or strategies to address social problems that they observe. They also contend that students who engage in service activities in the community consider these to be charitable acts, which they prefer over activities they deem to be associated with activism. As a result, the authors argue service activities stifle student involvement in activism.

Clearly, most service-learning programs and international service-learning programs sell themselves as social justice agents that encourage change and are in actuality reinforcing the inequities that exist within society (Densmore, 2012). However, the literature does not examine the experience of those students who do gain skills related to community organizing and activism from their participation in international service-learning programs and who utilize these skills to enact social change. For example, The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) program on Development & Globalization in Khon Kaen, Thailand, breaks the mold and focuses their program on giving students the skills to enact social change upon their return from abroad. In this

dissertation, I explore how the CIEE program in Khon Kaen, Thailand, is preparing alumni of the program to use their learning to challenge social injustices.

Purpose of the Study

This study explored a unique program that places students in local organizations that are working in solidarity to end the oppression that community members are facing. As a result of participation in The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) program on Development & Globalization in Khon Kaen, Thailand, students are walking away with tangible skills that help prepare them for engagement in their own communities upon their return. Many of the alumni of the program went on to be actively engaged in their communities to address the social injustices that exist there, as well as continuing their engagement globally. It was the intention of this study to focus on this program and to explore the experiences of alumni who participated in order to understand how it prepared students for future community engagement work to create a more socially just society. If higher education is intentionally preparing college students for their involvement in a global neoliberal environment, it is important to explore alternatives and identify the outcomes of programs that emphasize knowledge, skills, and awareness and that focus on solidarity and justice in their curriculum.

CIEE launched their Thailand study abroad program in 1995. The program is located in the city of Khon Kaen, Thailand, which is situated in the Northeast region of the country. This area is ethnically and culturally both Lao and Cambodian, given that this Lao territory was annexed by Bangkok in the nineteenth century. It is also made up of mostly large, poor agrarian communities. The study abroad program was born out of and inspired by social movements in this region.

Leaders of networks such as the Non-Governmental Organization Coordinating Committee on Rural Development (NGO-CORD) and the Assembly of the Poor were instrumental in developing the CIEE Thailand program (Altman, Boonjear, Chupkhunthod, Herat, Jongrak, Kaewrakmuk, Leavell, MacGlashan, Mangis, Premrudeelert, Roggemann, & Streckfuss, 2006). Their organizing work with indebted farmers, slum communities, people with HIV/AIDS, landless farmers, and other oppressed groups was foundational to the model and objectives of the study abroad experience. The model for their program is rooted in community-based and experiential learning theories (2006). The objectives of the semester experience included:

- Providing a space where students can learn to struggle and grow together as a community.
- Providing a space for meaningful cultural exchange.
- Providing opportunities for active learning by giving students first-hand experience with the interconnected issues of globalization and its impact on the communities of Northeast Thailand.
- Foster global responsibility by helping students reexamine their roles in globalization.
- Challenge students to reexamine their perception of what education is and how they learn.
- Connecting present and previous students to help them carry the lessons and skills learned here back home.
- Being an empowered presence and ally to communities (2006, p. 3).

The significance of the CIEE Thailand program is that it is not designed to be dependent on the Northeast Thailand context. The model is a “holistic and comprehensive approach to issues of social justice, solidarity, and civic engagement” and can be transferred to any context (2006, p. 4).

The purpose of this study was to explicate the experiences of alumni who participated in the CIEE Khon Kaen, Thailand, program with the intention of understanding what outcomes resulted from their experience. Where are these individuals now and how are they, if at all, employing the skills they learned from the program to enact social change in communities? While traditional service-learning is thought to teach students about the importance of tolerance, altruism, and cultural awareness, it presumes that social injustices are addressed in the process of learning. Neururer and Rhoads (1998) suggest that it is a mistake to believe that participation in service-learning will lead to the development of a critical analysis of community problems. Critical service-learning on the other hand is the intentional connection between service-learning experiences and a social justice orientation in the analysis of the community issue (Mitchell, 2008). Mitchell (2008) articulated the process and components of a critical service-learning experience. These components include community and classroom experiences and individual reflections. By incorporating these components into a critical service-learning experience, students are more likely to develop a social change orientation and authentic relations. These students also work to redistribute power within society. More importantly, this experience initiates a continual process of students having experiences and then making meaning of them.

This research was designed to study the connection between the educational experiences of students who participated in the CIEE international service-learning experience and how this prepared students for future involvement in communities upon the conclusion of their trip abroad. My research question focused on the central question:

Central Research Questions

The overarching question guiding this dissertation is:

1. How do international service-learning programs prepare students for social action and ongoing involvement in social justice programs and actions upon their return?

To explore this question, I focused this dissertation on the CIEE Thailand program on Development and Globalization. The questions that guided this research were:

- a. What do participants identify as the specific characteristics of the program that led to their learning?
- b. What activities do participants identify to demonstrate employment of the learning they acquired from the CIEE program?
- c. How do the students enact social action upon their return from the program?
 - i. How do they understand their experiences in the program?
 - ii. How do they understand their learning in the program?
 - iii. How do they connect these experiences with their current approaches to social justice?

In this study, I explored the educational components and program practices and how they were employed so that they can inform other global service-learning programs and be utilized in the development of such programs.

Due to my interest in understanding the learning experiences of students in the real world, qualitative research is the most appropriate (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Specifically, I conducted a case study of one specific international service-learning program, The Council on International Education's (CIEE) Development & Globalization in Khon Kaen, Thailand. A case study provided me the opportunity to examine a bounded system or a case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection that relied on a variety of sources and techniques for gathering data (Creswell, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The sources of primary data were collected through in-depth interviews of alumni of the program, an in-depth interview with the program director, and a review of course documents and other artifacts that demonstrated the employment of strategies and tactics for creating social change. Such documents included news articles, written reports, and campaign materials.

Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to the fields of critical international service-learning to improve service-learning courses and activities both domestically and abroad. It will shed light on those components that are necessary for program designers to accomplish the elusive goal of lasting social change in the community. As a result of this research, new insights into the international service-learning field will allow educators to think more critically about the design and delivery of their programs.

Overview

In the next chapter I explore the influences of neoliberalism on higher education over the last 50 years. I examine how the historical purpose of higher education has been transformed by neoliberal ideology and its impact on student participation in civic

engagement activities in the community. I include a critique of U.S. involvement in international development. I also provide a historical overview of service-learning and its limitations, as well as its alternative, critical service-learning. Next, I explore international service-learning and its impact on students. Finally, I explore different frameworks for transformational learning. Chapter 3 outlines the research method and design utilized for this study. In Chapter 4, I provide insight into the local context of organizing in Thailand, provide a program overview, and details about the participants of this study. In Chapter 5, presents data analysis of the interviews and materials reviewed. Chapter 6 discusses implications of the findings, conclusions, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

“No one is born fully-formed: it is through self-experience in the world that we become what we are.” – Paulo Freire

International service-learning is a growing field within higher education as colleges and universities place emphasis on developing and promoting programs that provide students with global experiences. The expansion of such programs is driven by expectations that institutions provide preparatory experiences, so students are more globally connected and oriented (Peterson & Helms, 2013), experiences which include students gaining language skills and cultural awareness. In doing so, students are prepared for an ever-expanding global job marketplace. Additionally, through their experiences at service sites, students become witnesses to the oppressive conditions in which others live; however, these programs are often not designed to give students the skills to navigate these situations, nor do program outcomes translate into action upon students' return from these experiences (Kiely, 2004; Hartman & Kiely, 2014).

Preparing students for justice work is what sets the CIEE Thailand program on Development and Globalization apart from other international service-learning programs. It is the intention of this literature review to provide an overview of the interconnecting fields that contribute to international service-learning with a brief critique of each. It also examines diverging positions on the historical purpose of education, critical service-learning, and settler-colonialism. This literature review elicits how the CIEE Thailand Development and Globalization program both frame social action and provide the

necessary tools to students to support their work in addressing social injustices upon their return.

Historical Context of Education and the Emergence of Service-Learning

In framing the discussion on the CIEE Thailand program, it is important to understand the historical context of higher education in the U.S. and the foundations of service-learning practices. It is important to identify the historical tensions between education as a cornerstone of democracy and the commodification of learning, especially as these tensions play out in the development of service-learning programs. Historically, higher education institutions have educated the elite in society and marginalized others (Thelin, 2004), quite intentionally. Here, I want to focus specifically on the work of Jane Addams in communities as it serves as a model for solidarity work and provides the seeds of service-learning. It is important to note that much of the literature on service-learning is grounded in the work of John Dewey and experiential education (Saltmarsh, 1996). However, Dewey's work was shaped and influenced through his engagement at Hull House, which was founded by Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in 1889 (Stengel, 2007). Her approach to solidarity work provides an important lens through which to explore the CIEE program.

In Jane Addams' 1904 essay titled "The Humanizing Tendency of Industrial Education," Addams pondered the potential of higher education if it adopted the practices of Hull House, where knowledge and lived experiences were shared with people who came into the settlement. In the essay, she reflected on the experience of Italian women learning to speak English while simultaneously teaching their neighborhood tutors "how to cook macaroni" (Addams, 1994, p. 120). These cultural exchanges were the foundation

of building relationships, and through them, she sought to humanize the emerging industrial society that was outside of Hull House (Villadsen, 2018). Addams centered the needs of the community at Hull House, and she did not hesitate to identify the racial and class divides that existed in society (Hamington, 2001). At the heart of Addams' work was a belief that education should be seen broadly, relationally, and publicly (Daynes & Longo, 2004).

This period of industrialization brought a great deal of uncertainty as society was in constant change, and Addams' perspective on education emerged from this environment: it was a direct challenge to the traditional beliefs about rugged individualism and material concerns of capitalism (Hamington, 2001). She critiqued the notion that people, particularly women, should only focus on the self or the family, and instead advocated for people to also focus their attention on the community. She advocated for people "to make a second adjustment between family and the social claim, in which neither shall lose, and both be ennobled" (Addams, 1902, p. 75). Democracy, Addams argued, was the appropriate response to strict, authoritarian learning environments, which were rooted in the daily experiences of the time. As she said, "we are under a moral obligation in choosing our experiences, since the results of those experiences must ultimately determine our understanding of life" (Addams, 1902, 9-10). In this environment, education not only engages students in a process of discovery, to explicate knowledge, but fosters the intellectual and moral development of students (Boyer, 1990; Duderstadt, 2000), as well helps students renegotiate their membership in society (Bruffee, 1984).

Addams believed that people needed to be interdependent, and through her work she explored the relationship between the individual and society and sought to find the balance between individual autonomy and social solidarity (Villadsen, 2018). She addressed the problematic nature of philanthropy and criticized how charity undermined relationships between people. As she said,

We find in ourselves the longing for a wider union than that of family or class... but we fail to realize that all men are hoping; and are part of the same movement of which we are a part. Many of the difficulties in philanthropy come from an unconscious division of the world into the philanthropists and those to be helped. It is an assumption of two classes, and against this class assumption our democratic training revolts as soon as we begin to act upon it (Addams, 1899, p. 62).

Solidarity came through developing relationships across identities and cultures and through developing an understanding of the lived experiences of individuals and communities.

While Addams was advocating for more holistic learning, the steady march of industrialization and the growing emphasis on accuracy and precision science was also shaping ideas about education and higher education. Professors like E. L. Thorndike at Columbia University and John Franklin Bobbitts at Columbia University were demanding efficiency in educational assessments and curriculum. In 1898, Thorndike began experimenting with objective tests, quantifiable scales, and efficiency surveys to assess learning. He advocated for more scientific measures in education and believed that society would benefit from systematic identification and segregation of students according to their intellectual abilities (Hanson, 1993).

Bobbitts (1918), a leader of the Social Efficiency Movement, argued that schools should eliminate waste by not teaching students material that they will not use later in

life; instead, they should be taught according to their capabilities and future prospects. He demanded that teachers use a “scientific technique” (1918, p. 42), which he argued was already being used in other fields. He believed that principles of scientific management, which were used to maximize efficiency in factories, should be applied to the curriculum. At the crux of Bobbitts’ work was that the role of schools should be to prepare students for their future vocations, as opposed to requiring them to think critically about the human condition. The problem with this approach to education is that it socializes young people into roles as workers, thereby reproducing the existing social class hierarchy (Franklin, 1982). Of course, all of this would later become the basis for standardized testing and accountability standards within education.

Progressive educators, like Addams, advocated for a curriculum that emphasized the importance of the connection between communities and schools. Education was a place of protest and liberation. As Addams said, “The settlement is a protest against a restricted view of education” (Daynes & Longo, 2004). Leaders of the progressive movement, including Dewey, who expanded upon Addams’ work, pushed to integrate education and service in communities. However, they failed to gain enough support for this approach to education, and they were further set back by the economic reforms that were shifting the economy, particularly in post-World War II America.

The Rise of Neoliberalism in Education

To effectively explore the experiences of participants in the CIEE Thailand program it is important to identify the larger socio-political environment that has shaped their learning and education, an environment that emphasizes individual freedom and accomplishment. This study explores how the CIEE program encourages students to

question the value of individualism and the harms it brings to communities. There were many scholars, like Addams, who opposed classical liberalism because it failed to guarantee individual liberty (Mill, 1909), Acknowledged only economic contributions to society (Dewey, 1935a; Dewey, 1935b), and undermined the lives of People of Color (Du Bois, 1940). Now almost a century later, modern-day scholars are critiquing the role neoliberalism plays in shaping and influencing student learning, both domestically and abroad (Apple, 2007; Aronowitz, 2000; Chomsky, 2000; Giroux, 2005). Therefore, it is imperative that this literature review contains a section on neoliberalism, a philosophy born out of classic liberalism.

Neoliberalism emerged as an economic philosophy in the 1930s in an attempt to create a middle ground between the failures of classical liberalism that led to the Great Depression (Plehwe, 2009) and Keynesian economics. In the last fifty years, the emphasis on market values has intensified with the rise of radical capitalism and market fundamentalism (Giroux & Giroux, 2004), which plays a significant role in shaping education. Neoliberalism is described as a body of economic theory and political practice that prioritizes corporate interests over public sector institutions (Harvey, 2007; Kotz, 2000). The rise of neoliberalism redefined the role of social, cultural, and political institutions to reinforce the shift toward market logic and the prioritization of economic outcomes (Aronowitz, 2000; Giroux, 2005). At its core, it promotes the belief that people thrive best when they pursue their individual economic interests within an economy that supports strong private property rights, a free market, and free trade.

Coupling political action with economic policy enables government leaders, economists, academics, and intellectuals to organize and structure a global society that

benefits their self-interests. Neoliberalism has reversed many important gains made by labor and social movements in the post-WWII era. This resulted in social regression; a decrease in workers' wages, leading to inequality and growth in personal debt; eroding integrity of democratic practices; an increase in political chaos; and an extensive power shift from the state to corporations and global financial institutions (Amin, 2008; Dumenil & Levy, 2011; Harvey, 2005; Palley, 2005). Today, these same patterns are emerging in communities all around the world and having dire consequences. The CIEE program focuses on asking students to examine the consequences of neoliberalism and centers the student learning experience around this examination.

Neoliberalism provided the basis for hegemony because it successfully redefined the purpose and role of social, cultural, economic, and political institutions (Apple, 2001; Aronowitz, 2000; Giroux, 2005; Harvey, 2005). Scholars identified varied dimensions of neoliberalism that have enabled this redefinition, including ideology, academia, governance, and globalization (Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009; Bourdieu, 1998; Dumenil & Levy, 2001; Dumenil & Levy, 2011; Foucault, 2008; Harvey, 2005; Harvey, 2007; Klein, 2007; McChesney, 2004; Plehwe, 2009; Steger & Roy, 2010). In a later section, I explore these dimensions and their connection to traditional service-learning and international service-learning. But first, I discuss the converging field of international service-learning.

Converging Fields of International Service-Learning

To understand the emergence of international service-learning, it is important to identify the converging fields that contribute to it. Bringle and Hatcher (2011) developed a conceptual model to explain the role that study abroad, international education, and service-learning play in informing the field of international service-learning programs.

Each field provides a particular element of the pedagogical design of international service-learning programs. In this section I provide a brief overview of study abroad and international education, as well as an extensive overview of traditional service-learning.

Study Abroad

Study abroad is a form of experiential education and a central vehicle of the internationalization movement of colleges and universities (Watson, Siska, & Wolfel, 2013). As a result of globalization and the expansion of the capitalist global economy, colleges and universities for the last forty years have been pressed to develop students' global awareness by encouraging them to think and act globally (Stearns, 2009). The growth of study abroad programs has gone from 75,000 students in 1990 to 332,727 U.S. students for the 2016/17 academic year, a 2.3 percent increase from the previous year (Institute of International Education, 2018). The majority of students in this study, 64.6 percent, participated in short-term programs (eight weeks or less), which is a 1.6 percent increase from the previous year. It is important to note that participation in semester study (one semester or one or two quarters) and long-term study (academic or calendar year) dropped by 1.6 percent (1.5 percent and .1 percent, respectively). This surge in student participation in short term programs was the result of government concern, increased emphasis on student benefit, and augmented institutional value (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011).

The federal government's support for education abroad is rooted in historical events, including the Cold War and those post-September 11, 2001. Globalization, economic competitiveness, and safeguarding national security have all affirmed the federal government's support for students studying abroad (Hantzopoulos & Shirazi,

2014). The government is keenly aware of the fact that there is a short supply of students who are interculturally competent and linguistically prepared for global employment and able to undertake government positions (Steinberg, 2007). This deficit in potential workers is a driving force behind recruitment for study abroad programs. In November 2005, President Bush and Congress formed the bipartisan federal Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program that set a goal of one million students studying abroad by 2016-2017.

The rationale behind the Commission's (2005) goal of sending so many students abroad was to increase students' global engagement and competence, which they deemed "vital to the nation's well-being" (p. v). It makes a case for increasing student participation in study abroad by outlining a number of factors, which include: a new age and different world with advances in modern science, technology, internationalization of labor and commerce; globalization and economic competitiveness; national security; U. S. leadership; domestic support for American foreign policy; educational value of study abroad; and active engagement in the international community (2005).

The Commission report provides a clear indication of the connection that the government makes with regard to how study abroad programs support globalization and neoliberalism. As the report states, "It is no secret that the American economy is buffeted by international forces. Our economic, military, and diplomatic problems have become global concerns (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005, p. 5). Specifically, the Commission highlighted four overarching concerns that have the ability to impede U. S. success in the global market: the growth of a global labor force that has the ability to improve other nations' technological systems

and manufacturing productivity, an increase in competition to access natural resources, an escalation in volatile regions with the potential to limit access to oil, and a more well-educated labor force receptive and hospitable to foreign investment. The report supported the case of corporations needing people who have international experience and skills to help them succeed.

In 2006, the U.S. Senate unanimously voted on Resolution 308 to declare 2006 as the “Year of Study Abroad” (Government Printing Office, 2005). On April 11, 2019, The Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act (S. 1198) was introduced in the U.S. Senate to ensure students have international skills and understanding to be successful in the global economy. The bill twice passed in the House of Representatives and it maintains the one million students studying abroad goal, but it also mandates increased diversity in study abroad participation and destination. If institutions want funding, they have to comply with program expectations. Furthermore, diversification is dependent on colleges and universities’ commitment to making changes related to curriculum, faculty involvement, institutional leadership, programming and resources. The rationale behind government support for study abroad is that students gaining global skills and experiences contribute to improved diplomacy with other nations, national security, international peace, and economic competitiveness (Bingle & Hatcher, 2011).

Support for study abroad also centers on the perceived benefits to students who participate in such programs. As a result of being connected to academic institutions, students often receive academic credit for their participation in programs abroad, which counts toward the completion of their degrees (Albers-Miller, Prenshaw, & Straughan, 1999; Arnett, 2013). The benefits that students also receive from participation in study

abroad programs include cultural appreciation, language acquisition and proficiency (Aveni, 2005; Engberg, 2010; Lafford & Collentine, 2006), critical thinking and cognitive development (Engberg, 2010; McKeown, 2009), intercultural competence and empathy (Knutson, 2006; Williams, 2005), and improved interpersonal communication (Engberg, 2010). Regardless of the difference in duration of program, type of program, or location, studies indicate that students gain increased intercultural awareness and tolerance by participating in study abroad programs (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Moreover, a particular rationale is the prospect of gaining marketable skills that will position students to secure employment in the global economy (Adams, Banks, & Olson, 2011).

While on the surface, a number of positive outcomes result from participation in study abroad, several recent studies have cast doubts on whether or not such programs are achieving their intended outcomes. Students are not actually achieving significant improvements in second-language acquisition, nor is there much growth in intercultural learning (Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). There are a few reasons for this limited gain. As previously mentioned, most students participate in programs less than eight weeks; accordingly, Kehl & Morris (2007-2008) argue that if colleges and universities wish to encourage student growth in global mindedness then they should direct students to semester-long programs. Additionally, Olson and Kroeger (2001) argue that higher intercultural competency or sensitivity comes from substantive stays abroad, which includes repetitive visits to the same site or stays that last a minimum of three months. Personal interactions with community members also play a significant role in the

experience of students. Williams (2005) argues that intercultural capabilities can only be developed when students actually interact with local community members.

Half of colleges and universities promote programs that follow the “island” model of administration, a model which “replicates most aspects of the American college/university learning context in a self-contained context, a bubble, within the host country” (Norris and Dwyer, 2005, p. 121). Thus, there is also increased concern that study abroad providers, college administrators, and universities focus more on expanding study abroad opportunities for students than on providing evidence of the benefits of study abroad experiences (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006). The underlying problem with study abroad is that it wants to provide practice for students to navigate culturally diverse settings, as opposed to students developing real empathy and a will to address the issues they are observing while living abroad. As Ogden (2007) argues, those students privileged enough to study abroad do so from a distance because they are merely observing the cultures where they are living and learning for the period of time that they are there. What is missing from this learning is an emphasis on understanding the lived experiences of the community members during their time abroad.

International Education

The second area of Bringle and Hatcher’s model (2011) is international education. There is wide support for colleges and universities to reorient institutional policies, programs and curricula from a national focus to one that is more global (Green, 2013). The emphasis on internationalization drives colleges and universities to compete for international students and create a process to prepare students for global engagement (Hanson, 2008). International education is not a focus on study abroad alone, although it

is often most associated with it. Instead it consists of a variety of processes, activities, and curricular topics that may never take students out of the country, or classroom for that matter. International education encompasses a broad range of terms to describe the attempt of colleges and universities to provide students with international experiences, including global competencies, global consciousness, and global perspectives (Gacel-Ávila, 2005; Hunter, White, & Godby, 2006; Lunn, 2008). The intent of internationalization is to develop complex competencies, like critical thinking to address real-world problems, effective cross-cultural engagement, and acting ethically to carry out one's personal and social responsibilities (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2016).

Research in international education has largely been centered on the role of universities in creating international learning experiences, either through policy or dominant Western approaches to teaching and learning (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Knight, 2004; Van Gyn, Schuerholz-Lehr, Caws, & Preece, 2009), with less focus on student-centered approaches (Croese, 2011). While higher education institutions identify internationalization goals, they remain silent on what students are actually learning. In fact, colleges and universities place greater emphasis on inputs as opposed to outputs (Dietrich & Olson, 2010). In contrast the goal of a student-centered approach is to provide students international experiences that help them to navigate successfully a globalized world and international marketplace. This approach emphasizes the knowledge and understanding, attitudes and values, and skills gained through the program (Croese, 2011). Brooks and Becket (2011) suggest that knowledge and understanding is gained through students' ability to develop knowledge of different

cultures, as well as an understanding of the multiplicity of ways to see the world and the contemporary issues impacting societies. Attitudes and values refer to respect for human differences and cultural wealth. Skills focus on the competencies needed to actively participate in society, locally and globally, in order to make informed, ethical decisions.

An important aspect of international education is a focus on citizenship. Rhoads and Szelenyi (2011) described citizenship as existing within the framework of two intersecting axes: (1) ranging from individualist to collectivist and (2) ranging from locally informed to globally informed (in terms of the forms of understanding that frame one's thoughts and actions). They argue that action alone does not signify global citizenship, but it is "the nature of one's understandings and the commitment to broader concerns that constitute global citizenship; thus, we see global citizenship as being marked by an understanding of global ties and connections and a commitment to the collective good" (p. 27).

Global education programs vary based on intent and approach. Program designs fall into three approaches, neoliberal, radical/conflict, and transformational (Shultz, 2007). The primary objective of a neoliberal approach is to connect students to experiences that promote participation in the global economy. This is based on a belief that individuals should be able to move freely around the world to enjoy rewards without consideration for national origin and boundaries (Shultz, 2007). The challenge of this approach is that it is void of any consideration of power, access, and privilege; students thus often fail to see that their personal and social capital are reflections of natural status and an indication of their success (Schultz, 2007). Neoliberal models of citizenship have little prospect of teaching student participation in noneconomic causes for the good of

society (Suspitsyna, 2012). Critics of these models also point at neoliberal democracy's limited capacity to advance any public interest if that interest goes against the needs of the market (Magnusson, 2000). Much of the literature on international education focuses on topics related to curriculum and to professional practice (Renn, Brazelton, & Holmes, 2014).

The radical global citizen approach focuses on the inequities that exist in the North-South divide, which is the result of unequal globalization (McGrew, 2000). This approach explicates global structures that create and reinforce North-South inequalities. It calls students to act in opposition to global structures that perpetuate inequality, specifically financial and corporate institutions. A radical global citizen recognizes the structures that perpetuate the economic hegemony of the global North, which include the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Schultz, 2007). Radical change is contingent upon students understanding the connection between oppression and the political economy (Shultz, 2007).

A radical global citizen works to identify and actively organize to dismantle those systems that perpetuate oppression, specifically the above financial institutions and the Structural Adjustment Programs they instituted. According to Schultz (2007), citizens have to recognize how political, economic, and social oppression is directly connected to the economic activities of these institutions in order for there to be a radical shift in North-South relations. The ability of a radical global citizen to act is contingent on their understanding of the complex relationships between global financial institutions and the local communities who are on the receiving end of oppressive economic policies. Schultz

(2007) suggests that one primary challenge to this approach is that these relationships cannot be narrowed down to just “victors, villains, and victims” (p. 254).

The transformational approach recognizes that globalization is more than “a new form of imperialism or merely a path to a single global market economy” (Shultz, 2007, p. 254). A transformationalist global citizen orientation recognizes that oppression does not only exist in the global South, but instead that oppression exists in communities in the global North, as well. The reality is that we live in a time where world leaders are promoting hyper-patriotic and nationalistic viewpoints, which in the U.S. are driving the country toward isolationist policies. While nationalism and patriotism have long been a part of discussions around citizenship education, when they are “coupled with an ignorance of the world outside the United States it leads to a perpetuation of U.S. ethnocentrism and exceptionalism” (Barrow, 2017, p. 163).

The effects of globalization on international, national, and local relationships has established “new patterns of inclusion and exclusion” (Shultz, 2007, p. 254-255). Shultz (2007) argues that these new realities call for new approaches to negotiating between global and local needs, conflict resolution, and most importantly working in solidarity. She suggests that the global citizen with a transformationalist perspective recognizes the importance of building relationships by recognizing and accepting our global diversity and finding a shared purpose that transcends national and political borders. At the heart of this approach is the process of acting in solidarity with those who are oppressed and marginalized to address those institutional structures that preserve the social inequities. Programs with a focus on transformation identify the ways in which globalization perpetuates and reinforces inequality and injustices, which are the result of systems and

structures designed to maximize exploitation, enforce disempowerment, and eliminate difference (Andreotti, 2006). To address the White supremacy and hetero-patriarchal order, Gaztambide-Fernandez (2012) argues that educators need to play a more active role in creating new experience that “both opposes ongoing colonization and that seeks to heal the social, cultural, and spiritual ravages of colonial history” (p. 42). With this foundational perspective, students learn about cultural context, power relations, and participation – who gets to participate in decisions and who does not.

Traditional Service-Learning

The third component of Bringle and Hatcher’s (2011) diagram is service-learning. I am referring to this as traditional service-learning because within the literature there is a distinction between traditional service-learning and critical service-learning (Mitchell, 2008). I will discuss critical service-learning later in the literature review. The development and promotion of traditional service-learning programs is a priority for colleges and universities. Over the last forty years, colleges and universities have promoted traditional service-learning programs as a means to reinvigorate the civic commitment of higher education to local communities (Saltmarsh, 2001; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008). Additionally, these institutions are pushing global service-learning experiences as a means to provide students with international experiences that promote cultural understanding and develop the knowledge, skills, and awareness to help them successfully navigate an expanding global society (Braskamp, Braskamp, and Merrill, 2009). It is important to understand what service-learning is and its contribution to student learning.

Civic engagement, of which service-learning is an aspect, encompasses a broad

range of public, community, democratic, social, political, and moral engagements (Berger, 2011). The gamut of service-learning opportunities organized by colleges and universities may include one-day service projects, internships and practica, service-learning courses, alternative spring breaks, alumni activities, or summer service programs. Traditional service-learning has come to be understood as “a form of experiential education that engages students in organized service activity, is connected to specific learning outcomes, meets specific community needs, and provides structured time reflection” (Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002, p. 6).

The utilization of service-learning as a pedagogical approach to teaching college and university courses has increased significantly. According to Campus Compact (2016), of the 1,002 member institutions, 58% reported that some portion of their graduating class had participated in a community-based course prior to their graduation. Fifty-one percent of the participating members identified outcomes for students who participate in community engagement. Of those that responded, outcomes included critical thinking (80%), civic or democratic learning (77%), engagement across difference (77%), global learning (64%), and social justice orientation (62%). Additionally, 81% of members indicated that they track the number of students that participate in curricular and/or co-curricular community engagement. Sixty-six percent indicated that they are tracking the number of hours that students engaged in community engagement activities.

Traditional service-learning courses result in a number of positive outcomes for students (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Research reveals that academic courses that incorporate a service component within the curriculum have greater benefit to students than those that do not. Several studies suggest that students develop a deeper understanding of course

content when it is connected to authentic activities that encourage the application of the content to meet the needs of the community (Balazadeh, 1996; Brindle & Hatcher, 1995; Eyler & Giles, 1999; McKenna & Rizzo, 1999). Thus, service-learning enhances the ability of students to apply academic course materials to new situations and real-world problems (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Rasmussen & Skinner, 1997; William, Youngflesh & Bragg, 1997). The incorporation of service in courses also has a positive impact on problem identification and analysis, as well as the ability of students to develop practical strategies to organize and solve community problems (Boss, 1994; Bhaerman, Gomez, & Cordell, 1998; Bransford & Schwartz, 1999; Mabry, 1998). Participants of service-learning projects and programs improve their writing and critical thinking skills over the entirety of their college education (Astin, Vogelgesand, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000). It helps students with their professional success (Lim, 2018; Prentice & Robinson, 2010). Additionally, long-term effects of service-learning include socialization across racial lines with an emphasis on racial understanding (Myers-Lipton, 1996; Hurd, 2008). Students develop a heightened sense of racial awareness (Chang, Anagnostopoulos, & Omae, 2011; Endo, 2015), a greater ability to get along with people of different backgrounds (Sax & Astin, 1997; McKenna & Rizzo, 1998), and an increased awareness of their own biases toward these individuals and groups (Rice & Brown, 1998).

In exploring the effects of traditional service-learning, the impact on communities is also relevant. Research has found that service-learning programs increase the capacity of community organizations in a number of ways, which include developing relationships between the university and the community, providing community organizations with access to financial resources and information that support their work, bolstering

connections between other community agencies, supplying volunteers to fulfill project needs, increasing visibility of the organization, and improving service delivery to their clients (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Calderon & Farrell, 1996).

A core principle of traditional service-learning is reciprocity (Sigmon, 1979). The focus on reciprocity in traditional service-learning experiences is intended to bring about win-win relationships between the community members and the students (Donahue, Bower, & Rosenberg, 2003). Such relationships are expected to be mutually beneficial whereby both parties gain something from the relationship. However, it is important to question whether or not the benefit is equal to both parties, those who serve and those who are served. Varlotta (1997) argues that traditional service-learning utilizes reciprocity as a means to suggest equality between all members of a service relationship, including the faculty, students, and community members, and that power is shared equally among them. In reality, however, a power difference is present within service relationships as they are likely to be one directional, with students providing a service and community members being on the receiving end of that service. Donahue, Bowyer, and Rosenberg (2003) suggest that this is an attempt on the part of service-providers “to change the values and actions of the receivers of power, to make the receivers more like themselves” (p. 15).

The root of reciprocity is a product-centered relationship (Clifford, 2017), resulting in an experience that emphasizes outputs as measures of success. Outputs focus on quantitative documentation of programs and activities in terms of numbers of participants and number of hours served, not on emphasizing social change with the communities that these students are serving. Additionally, focus may be on learning

outcomes of students, with service outcomes being secondary (Clifford, 2017). While many practitioners are now articulating core components of service-learning activities and programs, there is little emphasis on creating social change.

Critiques of Traditional Service-Learning and Connection to Neoliberalism

Traditional service-learning is increasingly scrutinized as researchers have identified a number of issues with it. Practitioners and researchers have contributed significantly to the development of the service-learning field, either to improve the pedagogy or to strengthen the mission of colleges and universities to give back to communities. As a result, research focuses primarily on the structural aspects of service-learning courses, including course assessments and evaluations, and community partnership models. Additionally, research centers on student outcomes, including learning outcomes, cultural understanding, and political commitment (Butin, 2010). However, there the literature largely fails to address the relationship between service-learning and the neoliberal context that drives colleges and universities to uplift service-learning programs (Kliwer, 2013; Raddon & Harrison, 2015). In this section, I discuss these critiques through the dimensions of neoliberalism, which focus on ideology, academia, governance and globalization.

Neoliberal Ideology

First, neoliberal ideology legitimizes and defends the merger between economic and political power and the concentration of income and wealth established by the dominant power structure (Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009; Dumenil & Levy, 2001; Dumenil & Levy, 2011; Giroux, 2014; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Queiroz, 2018; Steger & Roy, 2010). This control protects corporate interests and indoctrinates individuals by

propagandizing values, beliefs, and behaviors that promote the interests of larger institutional structures within society (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; McChesney, 2004). Neoliberal ideology is codified by establishing a framework to essentially absorb all forms of resistance to it (Larner, 2000; Coulter, 2009). Corporate and political leaders are able to spread their ideological beliefs about the free market by effectively deflecting critique (Larner, 2000). Those in political power undermine oppositional viewpoints by emphatically declaring that more effective alternative options do not exist (Bourdieu, 1998; Young, 1991). By deflecting critique and attacking the role of government, the neoliberal era has transformed the ways in which society navigates collective hardships.

Traditional service-learning reinforces the dimensions of neoliberal hegemony. Neoliberal ideology influences and shapes the service-learning experience of students because it effectively silences alternative options and beliefs. The most effective tactic of any ideology is to exclude any rival forms of thought that are in opposition to it (Eagleton, 1991). By excluding other beliefs, neoliberals are able to regulate and restrict any potential alternatives from emerging into public discourse on issues. Therefore, as students engage in service-learning activities to address social problems, their solutions are confined to those ideas that fall within the context of neoliberalism. For example, students who participate in traditional service-learning courses may operate with the belief that marginalization can be eliminated through engagement in the community by those who hold privilege (Scott, 2004). Morton and Bergbauer (2015) argue that “service-learning experiences reinforce the values and perspectives of neoliberal culture by emphasizing personal over collective agency and treating public life and democracy as extensions of the marketplace” (p. 19).

For example, student tutors who are sent into low-income communities are often White students or students from higher socioeconomic families. They are sent into predominantly Black communities or communities with lower socioeconomic families. The tutors are sent in large numbers to help marginalized students improve their performance on standardized tests. These standardized tests force marginalized populations to use the language of the oppressor, and the knowledge gained in this scenario is controlled by those who are serving in the marginalized communities or schools (Freire, 2005). Those student tutors perpetuate the original injustices that were constructed in the first place. It is difficult to challenge the structural oppression that is created by such programs when the dominant culture controls the narrative. Resistance to such programs would entail students attacking neoliberal ideology with no viable alternative to turn to because all others have been deemed ineffective.

Mental confusion is created by the dominant culture when criticizing marginalized groups for using their own hegemonic strategies. This notion of mental confusion is important in regards to service-learning because students both participate in an oppressive institutional structure while simultaneously “helping” disadvantaged populations. Additionally, marginalized communities are flooded with large numbers of typically White, middle-class students with unclear goals and objectives as to why they are in these communities other than to learn something or feel good about themselves for helping those less fortunate.

Additionally, service-learning programs may be poorly designed and implemented, leading to the reinforcement of stereotypes (Furco, 2011). Freire (1970) even referred to this as “false generosity” whereby the oppressed are the recipients of

service and humanitarian aid, which ultimately only reinforces the status quo. Such programs lead to re-centering whiteness (Cole, 2012) by focusing more on the intelligence of white tutors than how unprepared they are for providing cultural context to the materials they are covering in their tutoring sessions with youth (Cann & McCloskey, 2017). Centering whiteness also leads to a white-savior mentality. As author Teju Cole (2012) said about Western do-gooding, “The white savior industrial complex is not about justice. It is about having a big emotional experience that validates privilege” (Global Section, para. 6). By failing to address structural oppression, those students who come from privileged backgrounds fail to challenge the system of privilege that supports their status in society (Brown, 2001), thus securing the overall structure (Roschelle, Turpin, & Elias, 2000). More importantly, however, by engaging students in civic engagement activities that are depoliticized and that fail to critique structural oppression, service-learning has the potential of “normalizing and civilizing the radical tendencies” of citizens in democratic societies (Robinson, 2000b, p. 146).

Traditional service-learning also teaches a false understanding of need, which perpetuates a simplistic understanding of social problems and makes invisible the strengths and resources of communities. By defining the problems within marginalized communities, the dominant culture maintains the authority to control the narrative and create the programs, such as service-learning courses, to help people living within these communities. Eby (1998) suggests that because students enter into communities from the outside, service-learning reinforces the notion that communities are lacking internal resources to support itself. Additionally, as the focus of service projects is to support the needs of a specific population or address a narrowly defined problem within the

community, they fail to address the larger systemic problems that are impacting the community. As a result, programs do not appropriately respond to the needs of the community. This has detrimental long-term effects, not only on participants, but also the field of service-learning.

Academia

The second neoliberal lens is academia. In examining traditional service-learning through this lens, it becomes clear that programs often end up serving the needs of the institution, faculty, and students before they address and meet the needs of the community (Eby, 1998; Mitchell, 2014). Service-learning programs on college and university campuses are an example of corporate brand, with direction coming from the top (Raddon & Harrison, 2015). The state also incentivizes service with national recognition (Raddon & Harrison, 2015) like the Presidential Volunteer Service Award, which is given to volunteers for completing a set amount of service hours. Higher education institutions further incentivize engagement in the community by offering students academic credit for their work, which students can demonstrate through electronic portfolios, transcripts, and resumes (Cambridge, 2010). Colleges and universities then encourage students to use those experiences as a means to market themselves to future employers.

Academic institutions benefit from service-learning programs because they are used as a recruitment tool, for retention purposes, and as a fundraising mechanism. For some higher education institutions, service-learning is very campus-centric in that they are more concerned about the number of service hours that students perform and courses that are taught by faculty than the actual social change that occurs within the community

(Butin, 2010). The assumption then becomes the more hours that students perform in the community, the more effective the service. This of course is false. Instead, what is occurring is that institutions are receiving awards and recognition for the number of service hours and not the quality of the service or the achieved transformation. There are a number of examples in the literature that suggest that institutional constraints inhibit the effectiveness of service-learning, which can actually end up being harmful to communities. Students are often released into the community without adequate oversight from institutions, constrained by academic calendars from working with community members and restricted by their limited level of knowledge and skills from taking certain project responsibilities (Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002; Grossman, 2005; Howard, 1993).

There are several methods that the dominant group utilizes to ensure they are able to retain societal power (Aronowitz, 2000; Bowles & Gintis, 1977; Rodney, 1972). In educational institutions, these methods are shrouded in deception and contradictions. As students are taught through education to preserve the capitalist hegemony, they are also encouraged to participate in acts of charity and volunteerism through programs supported by colleges and universities. It is not uncommon for students to enter into community settings with limited understanding of the population they are serving, which results in stereotypes and misconceptions going unchecked before entry into these communities (Cone & Harris, 1996; Strand, 2000). Pompa (2002) suggest that, if service-learning programs lack intentionality, they have the potential of reproducing and reinforcing with their students the injustices that already exist.

Unless facilitated with great care and consciousness, 'service' can unwittingly become an exercise in patronization. In a society replete with hierarchical structures and patriarchal philosophies, service-learning's potential danger is for it to become the very thing it seeks to eschew (p. 68).

As colleges and universities are adopting neoliberal policies and procedures that reinforce a system that supports market interests, such as commodification, commercialization, and marketization of the educational experience (Giroux, 2007), less focus is put on the value of service. Rather than make research contributions to support the public good and improve public life, academics focus on meeting the needs of corporations (Giroux, 2007). Colleges and universities place greater emphasis on academia shaping corporations than shaping the identities and values of students (Etzkowitz, 2003; Giroux, 2007). In the neoliberal era, learning for work and learning for personal fulfillment are interconnected (McCafferty, 2010). The corporatization of higher education has led to the subordination of academic programs to the interests of the private sector (Lustig, 2005). The current academic system blurs the lines between training, education, and learning (Aronowitz, 2000). Aronowitz (2000) suggests that college administrations have modeled their institutions after the modern corporation as a solution to overcoming fiscal constraints and unstable employment markets.

As a result, colleges and universities have “thrust training to the fore and called it education” (Aronowitz, 2000, p. 158). Student educational experiences are influenced by the emphasis placed on the market. Sears (2003) argues that education reforms reinforce hegemony by encouraging students to “develop a self in relation to the market rather than the state” (p. 11). Scholars argue that the corporatization of education is a direct threat to democracy (Aronowitz, 2000; Etzkowitz, 2003; Giroux, 2003, 2006; Lustig, 2005; McChesney, 2004). Considerable pressure was put on colleges and universities to place greater emphasis on meeting the needs of the market, job training and technical education, and revenue generating research (Aronowitz, 2000; Giroux, 2007). These

shifts, particularly technical training programs, resulted in institutions focusing on performativity, instrumental learning, credibility building, and occupational preparation, at the same time that they fail to critically examine educational goals and practices that exist within a democratic society (Hysop-Margison & Sears, 2006; Servage, 2009). This is a clear shift away from democratic or civic education, which is perceived to be the previous focus of higher education institutions. Finally, there is greater emphasis on students receiving marketable skills that would increase their chances of finding employment in their areas of interest upon graduation. (Giroux, 2007; Sears, 2003).

By emphasizing specialization and uniformity, schools serve to reproduce, justify, and preserve the dominant social structure (Cassell & Nelson, 2013; Chomsky, 2000). In doing so, those members of the dominant group profit from the exploitation and suffering of others. Education also serves hegemony by formalizing power in order to reinforce hierarchical race and class relations (Apple, 2007). hooks (1994) argues that through traditional methods of teaching, educators reinforce individual, institutional, and societal beliefs about race, class, and gender. Mitchell (2012) describes how service-learning activities that are rooted in a pedagogy of whiteness, have little impact on the community and “result in mis-educative experiences for students” (p. 613). She argues that in such programs, White students' perspectives on racism go unchallenged, Students of Color have isolating experiences, and educators miss the chance to create a truly transformational experience for students. To this end, subordinate groups accept, adopt and internalize the hegemonic group's values and norms as their own. As a result of this normalization, organized labor and social movements are undermined, dissent is criminalized, and policing and incarceration is expanded (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005).

Governance

This leads to the third dimension of neoliberalism: governance. Neoliberalism as a rationality for government promotes a “specific form of freedom as a way of integrating the self-conduct of the governed into the practices of the government” (Nicoll & Fejes, 2008, p. 13). Governmental power is utilized to shape citizens in the ways that will ensure achievement of economic policies and to direct their behavior (Foucault, 1991; Fougner, 2008) by promoting such values as individual responsibility and social entrepreneurialism (Raddon & Harrison, 2015). This reduces the role of government in matters of social welfare and sanctions the privatization of social needs and issues (Olssen, 2008).

Governance is based on a set of core values that include individualism, competition and self-interest, and it embraces the ideals of consumerism and a self-regulating free market. Such principles intentionally disconnect economies from the social realities of citizens (Bourdieu, 1998) and instead create a different “truth” for citizens so they act in a way that supports the interests of corporations and the state. Fougner (2008) argues that states in the contemporary global economy “are acted upon as subjects with a rationality derived from arranged forms of entrepreneurial and competitive behavior” (p. 308). Individuals’ conceptions of markets and trade are normalized over time. Thus, neoliberalism undermines effective governance by valuing competitiveness, institutionalizing ethics, and emphasizing self-sovereignty (Bruno, 2009; Pestre, 2009; Tallacchini, 2009). In terms of neoliberal governance’s impact on higher education, Wright (2014) argues that there is a burgeoning meaning superimposed over this initial meaning whereby it is actually the “government that defines the

contributions of universities to the competitive state, the ways that the institution should be organized and managed, and the appropriate behavior for ‘responsible’ academics and students to adopt” (p. 294-295).

The expansion of service-learning into higher education curricula in many ways is a product of the advancement of neoliberal economic and social policies. Neoliberal governance influences service-learning programs in a few different ways. First, the civic identities of students are in sync with the needs of the state (Dennis, 2009). As the state reduces its role in the welfare of the community, students step up to provide support through charity work and volunteerism. According to Baines (2010), individuals and corporations will develop and coordinate solutions to social problems that are impacting communities. Colleges and universities coordinate the outsourcing of social work to students engaged in service-learning and volunteer programs. The state has effectively transferred responsibilities that it was once responsible for to organizations and its members (Dennis, 2009).

Colleges and universities play an important role in solidifying this transition, as they recruit, train, and enthrall students to bear the costs and responsibility of supporting their communities through service-learning programs. In doing so, students assume the financial and emotional burden of supporting the community. Neoliberalism has shaped service-learning courses and programs by placing greater emphasis on acquiring job skills and extrinsic rewards (Stoecker, 2016). The subversion of student activism coincides with this shift toward students seeking extrinsic rewards with regard to their education. This shift in attitude can also shape the intention of students who choose to participate in service-learning programs.

Additionally, neoliberalism has shaped service-learning through a shift away from policies that support social justice and toward policies that encourage social cohesion. As neoliberal policies took shape at the national level, there was a shift away from a focus on diversity and a movement toward social cohesion. This shift toward social cohesion was intended to act as “a corrective measure that can help to increase social solidarity and restore faith in the institutions of government” (Joshee, 2004, p. 147). In the conclusion of a paper written on utilizing service-learning and activism as acts of dissent, Bickford and Reynolds (2002) argue that service-learning is embraced by colleges and universities around the country while student activism is not. This forces students to operate from a depoliticized stance away from a critical analysis or from participation in a democratic process focused on social justice. According to Hyslop-Margison and Sears (2006), social cohesion serves to protect neoliberalism from any form of critique, as well as subvert political activism. Kliewer (2013) argues that unless neoliberalism is restrained it will “reproduce the existing ideological structures that preclude achieving the democratic and justice goals of the civic engagement movement – unjust levels of inequality, disengagement, and disempowerment” (p. 73). If service-learning is aligned with neoliberal ideology whereby citizens are characterized by their connection to the market, then democratic and justice goals are undermined and eroded (Kliewer, 2013; Meens, 2014).

Globalization

Exploring democratic principles in service learning is an objective that can be applied domestically or globally, which leads to a discussion of globalization, the fourth dimension of neoliberalism. Student service-learning experiences can be taken in the

context of domestic (traditional) service learning as well as service learning abroad, and it is important to recognize how economic development policies have shaped countries of the South for almost two centuries, many of which are the sites for international service-learning programs today. International service-learning programs can take on a neo-colonial shape (Martin & Pirbhai-Illich, 2015), perpetuating stereotypes of the global South and reinforcing power structures. If service-learning programs fail to address these issues, neo-colonial patterns will persist. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the historical context for the rise of globalization and neoliberal economic policies and how they have transformed these societies from being highly self-sufficient to dependent on the economic support of countries in the North.

Such policies are intended to create development projects in other countries that may not serve a tangible purpose for that country or meet an articulated need of its citizens. What these projects do accomplish is the reorganization of public and private sectors by assigning new roles for workers, corporate and business activity, and the state to achieve goals. Those living in poverty throughout the global South – Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia, South Asian, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East – are living the same nightmare that they lived in under colonialism. Neo-colonial patterns shift colonial power toward unconstrained economic power in ways that benefit former colonial powers and exploit the former colonized. As a result, wealthy elites have wielded their ideological, political, economic and social power to negotiate away public goods and the collective interest of communities in the South for individual accumulation and self-interest.

The U.S. was effective in exerting its power throughout the Global South because of the professionalization and institutionalization of development (Escobar, 1988). The concept of professionalization is “a set of techniques and disciplinary practices through which the generation, diffusion, and validation of knowledge are organized, managed, and controlled” (Escobar, 1988, p. 431). Development was professionalized when existing disciplines were applied to Third World issues or new sub disciplines were created around economics, health, education, etc. As a result, there were new theories and concepts to discuss the experiences of people living throughout the Third World and identify potential solutions to the problems that existed.

The institutionalization of power refers to the “establishment of an institutional field in which, and from which, discourse and techniques are produced, recorded, stabilized, modified, and put into operation (Escobar, 1988, p. 431). According to Escobar (1988) there are a variety of development organizations that participate in this process including international organizations (the United Nations), bilateral institutions (U.S. Agency for International Development) and voluntary agencies (CARE). Additionally, there are development programs at colleges and universities around the world that promulgate the knowledge within these fields to up and coming professionals.

All of this knowledge is shared through programs, conferences, and other networking opportunities, which makes possible the use of power. This is significant because international volunteer programs are an integral part of the global aid industry as such programs serve as the training ground for future development aid workers (Maren, 2002), and they are coordinated (Tvedt, 2006). Engel and Georgeou (2011) contend that governments are the largest international volunteer sending agencies and thus

development volunteering serves as a government subsidized apprenticeship program, which has very little accountability to poor people in the developing countries to which these apprentices are sent to serve.

Each of these points are so important to exploring the nature and design of the CIEE program and how it supported students in unpacking their beliefs about education and the role they play in addressing social injustices. More important is the question, how did the CIEE program sustain such learning, so that it became a habit and incorporated into the daily lives of students. How did the program show students that there are alternatives to service that move students away from models of service as charity toward models of solidarity? Often, programs fail to question the reasons of how and why charitable models reinforce existing problems. As neoliberalism has created an environment that neutralizes dissent, people have developed apolitical belief about community (Dennis, 2009). How then did the Thailand program create an environment that prompts students to question the conditions under which community members are living as a result of corporate interests and state policies?

In this regard, the question then becomes, does traditional service-learning support undemocratic practices? There are also those who suggest volunteerism is a means to enable state and federal governments to avoid adequately funding public service programs. Governments essentially deny organizations public funding, which then forces these cash strapped organizations to turn to inexperienced free labor (Bennett, 2003). Thus, the government utilizes volunteerism as a means to replace appropriate policies to address societal issues (Marullo, 1996). Robinson (2000a) goes straight to the heart of the

matter and states that service-learning, as a depoliticized practice, becomes a "glorified welfare system" (p. 607).

Critical Service-Learning

The utilization of theory in research influences the ways in which researchers organize, interpret, and give meaning to issues and activities that shape the human experience. This research project is grounded in critical theory for two reasons: (1) to demonstrate how international service-learning programs can shape the learning experiences of participants and (2) to examine how students' development of a critical perspective can lead to their involvement in social action activities upon their return. According to Brookfield (2005), critical theory is based on an understanding that the focal point of analysis is the conflict between the social classes. Therefore, traditional service-learning activities and programs lack an emphasis on lasting social change. By focusing on social change within the context of critical service-learning, courses and programs are intentionally addressing the unequal distribution of power among groups in society, as well as the relationship between institutions and the communities being served (Mitchell, 2005).

Critical service-learning was introduced in the literature with Rhoads' (1997) research on "critical community service" (p. 204), which the author conceptualized around eight guiding principles to explore how the ethic of care and fostering such an ideal could play out in classroom settings. Critical service-learning was later advanced to incorporate the language of social justice as an outcome of the service (Rice & Pollack, 2000; Rosenberger, 2000). Several researchers in the field contend that social justice and service-learning are inherently linked due to the nature of the work (Delve, Mintz, &

Stewart, 1990; Jacoby, 1996; Rosenberger, 2000). However, there are many others who argue that the connection between social justice and service-learning needs to be made more explicit and integrated into service projects on multiple levels (Brown, 2001; Butin, 2005; Cipolle, 2004; Marullo, 1999). For example, Wade (2001) states, “Rarely do students in service-learning programs consider whether some injustice has created the need for service in the first place” (p. 1).

Based on this disconnect, critical service-learning researchers advocate for an emphasis on student outcomes, as well as on social change (Mitchell, 2005). Thus, course curricula should utilize service activities as a means to incorporate theories and individual experience, but also allow students to explore the historical causes of social problems to better understand how to articulate and develop effective strategies to address concerns. Mitchell (2008) argues that there are three areas of distinctions between critical service-learning and traditional service-learning, which include: “working to redistribute power amongst all participants in the service-learning relationship, developing authentic relationships in the classroom and in the community, and working from a social change perspective” (p. 50). As a result the relationships and roles of community members, faculty, and students are re-envisioned. More importantly, the structures of power that maintain oppression, that perpetuate the need for service programs are dismantled (Mitchell, 2008).

Critical service-learning is not without its own critiques. Santiago-Ortiz (2019) argues that the literature on critical service-learning fails to address settler colonialism in the United States and the “colonial nature” of service-learning (p. 43). Tuck and Yang (2012), argue that settler colonialism shapes schooling and educational research in two

ways. First, settler colonialism influences the organization, governance, curricula, and learning assessment. Second, settler perspectives and worldviews are considered acceptable knowledge and promulgated through research findings that legitimize and uphold systems of oppression. According to Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, and Glen (2014),

Settler-colonialism has functioned, in part, by deploying institutions of western education to undermine Indigenous intellectual development through cultural assimilation and the violent separation of Indigenous peoples from our sources of knowledge and strength – the land (p. II).

Santiago-Ortiz (2019) contends that if critical service-learning intends to create social change by dismantling power structures it must explore more than just power, privilege, and oppression. She argues that project decisions, implementation, and goals should include community members and thus become rooted in a process of solidarity.

International Service-Learning

The intersection of the three fields of study abroad, international education, and traditional service-learning results in international service-learning. The purpose of international student programs is to augment the academic, personal, and professional development of students (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011). In the last twenty years, the government has committed to expanding participation in international education programs to prepare students for competition in the global economy and maintain the role of the U. S. as a global leader. These programs focus on experiences that promote a broad understanding of the world, language acquisition, and cultural competencies. In reality, many colleges and universities are more interested in instituting global requirements that students can satisfy rather than creating an experience that encourages critical reflection and skill building (Aktas, Pitts, Richards, Silova, 2016).

The role that colleges and universities play in preparing students for citizenship in a democracy has been encouraged largely through voluntary service-learning activities and community-outreach programs (Cohen, 2006). Relying on such activities alone does not actually prepare students to be active citizens. In fact, what is happening is that international education is more focused on educating for global leadership to the exclusion of educating for citizenship (global or otherwise) (Cole, 2016). There is a disconnect that exists between colleges and universities attempting to reclaim the social functions of higher education through service-programs and their focus on marketization. This disconnect impedes the conceptualization of a citizenship model that can be taught and practiced on college campuses (Cole, 2016). This is a problem because less emphasis is placed on the knowledge, skills, and awareness that students are gaining or not from their experiences.

Neoliberal Development Model

The neoliberal development model offers a prescription of economic, social, and political policies to promote growth and modernization (Boas & Gans-Morse, 2009; Klein, 2007). This model emerged from the post-WWII U. S. economic agenda that focused on both rapid development and a global redistribution of wealth (Bello, 2000). During this period the U.S. was promoting a new discourse around development deeply rooted in more conventional free market and free trade policies (Helleiner, 2006). This led to an economic expansion of the global North into the global South with a growing international aid system that included development aid, emergency assistance, financial institutions and instruments, and foreign policy initiatives. This development structure led to global South states consenting to the demands and expectations of aid organizations

that had the intention of altering the public and private sectors of the countries and integrating economies into a much larger global economy.

There are a number of scholars who suggest globalization contributes to global oppression, hegemony, and domination (Amin, 1996; Chase-Dunn, Kawano, & Brewer, 2000; Held & McGrew, 2007). Khor (2000) argues that globalization is a new form of colonization in the Global South. Ultimately, it has led to increased inequality between people (Amin, 2004; Goldberg & Pavcnik, 2007). This inequality has profound effects on these communities as it hinders their ability to create democracies, eliminates their imaginative potential to identify sustainable solutions to their problems, and leads them to adopt false democracies set up by the global North (Amin, 2004). More recently global North countries are negotiating Economic Partnership Agreements, which will ultimately solidify a neoliberal hegemony in global South regions (Hurt, 2012). The normalizing effect that such programs and policies have on these communities is profound. The continuous images and discourse that Global South communities are deficient, underdeveloped, and poor affirm a belief that these people need help modernizing their societies. This framing of the global South negatively shapes how students participating in international service-learning experiences view the communities that they will be living and serving in.

Increasing Presence of Service-Learning in Higher Education

Unequivocally, service-learning is becoming an increasingly significant component of academic programs on college and university campuses (Smith-Paríolá & Gòkè-Paríolá, 2006). International studies programs are contributing to this growing trend. Smith-Paríolá and Gòkè-Paríolá, (2006) contend that there are several benefits to

international programs which include: teaching students an appreciation for the challenges people from different societies face, while developing an understanding of the complex systems and structures that perpetuate such problems; guiding students to explore potential strategies to overcome social problems in appropriate, respectful, and constructive ways; helping students to recognize the meaning and value of responsible global citizenship; and providing them with skills to give them a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. This final point is a growing trend in the internationalization of education, with students going abroad to gain a competitive edge in the job market (Hanson, 2010; Knight, 1999). Further, these points become paternalistic in a setting isolated from genuine community involvement, but they also perpetuate the very injustices that critical-service learning programs are working to address (Marullo & Edwards, 2000).

Critiques of Global Service-Learning

Hartman and Kiely (2014) argue that global service-learning is open to the same critiques as traditional service-learning. Smith-Paríolá and Gòkè-Paríolá (2006) conducted a case study of an international service-learning course that takes students to Jamaica for three weeks. Students participate in lectures on the history and culture of Jamaica, receive training on ethnographic research, engage in daily discussions, learn about the nature of service-learning, volunteer at service-sites in the community, and conduct ethnographic research. Through the course of the trip, they found that course leaders did not feel that student discussions were as “rich and engaging” as they could be (p. 80). The researchers suggest that this could be accomplished by removing the power distance between faculty and students that is created through assuming traditional

classroom roles. Additionally, required written assignments were not reflective enough, nor were service activities organized very well. However, students indicated that in fact they wished there had been more service opportunities in the community.

In many ways, this student illustrates the major critique of service-learning: that it perpetuates a service-oriented activity, as opposed to a activist-oriented activity that is critical in nature and focuses on social justice outcomes. Smith-Paríolá and Gòkè-Paríolá (2006) fail to recognize the oppressive nature of the three-week international service-learning course by not identifying the importance of the local community in designing curricular goals and participating in student learning. The local community is also not involved in developing the research activities of students. This pedagogical approach promotes the idea of researching the “other.” This is significant in the learning of students, as it instills beliefs about service as charity, not justice. “Volunteers in a charitable operation do not seek to alter stratification systems that produce inequality, only to temporarily re-allocate surplus assets that they control” (Marullo & Edwards, 2000, p. 900). Thus, the service-learning experience is about them, not the community. Nor does it promote a reciprocal relationship between students and the community. It also does not teach students anything about taking their learning and skills back to their communities to address social problems that impact them.

Kiely (2004) conducted a longitudinal study of an international service-learning program in Nicaragua. He used a phenomenological approach to examine students' transformation during and after their participation in the program. The program goals of the Nicaraguan trip focus on developing the consciousness of students about the historical development of racism, sexism, economic disparities, and unequal relations of power

through a series of community presentations, seminars, and readings. The transformational design of the program intended for students to continue to work to end oppression, economic disparities and ongoing global poverty post program.

Kiely (2004) identified three patterns of students' ongoing transformation with regard to their emerging global consciousness, including envisioning, transforming forms, and chameleon complex. According to Kiely, envisioning refers to students' articulation of a desired aim to engage in social justice activities once they return home from abroad. Transforming forms are the shifts in how participants envision themselves and the world in at least one of the following dimensions: political, moral, intellectual, personal, spiritual, and cultural. The study found that all 22 participants identified change in at least one of the six worldviews. Chameleon complex reflects the long-term difficulties that participants will face as they try to make changes in their behaviors and actions to reflect a commitment to social justice. According to Kiely, participants struggled to engage themselves in social action activities upon their return. In part this is due to the fact that their newfound commitment to address global issues was met with "little support" or was incongruous with "perceived obligations as U.S. citizens" (p. 16). Kiely argues that there is a need to study program designs that convert students' envisioning their engagement into concrete action that affirms their commitment to social change. The CIEE program provides that opportunity to explore program factors that support students being able to enact social change upon their return.

In a study examining student participation in international service trips (ISTs), which are short-term experiences, Cermak, Christiansen, Finnegan, Gleeson, and White (2011) wanted to understand student perceptions of social change as it relates to their

affinity toward either service or activism and the relationship and interaction between the two. A total of 24 students who enrolled in one of seven international service trips (ISTs) participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews about their experience abroad. Researchers identified four outcomes as a result of their participation in ISTs. First, students experienced a sense of dissonance between wanting to make social change happen and knowing how to take appropriate action. Second, they identified raising awareness as the primary means for creating social change. Third, students valued service activities, as opposed to activist activities. Finally, students preferred service to activism because of the social stigma associated with activism and their limited experience and participation in activist activities. This was true regardless of whether or not they had a desire to become activists.

As a result of these findings, the researchers suggest that ISTs are not doing enough to help students understand how to create change, even though they are creating interest in students in wanting social change. The importance of activism is downplayed during service trips (Cermak, Christiansen, Finnegan, Gleeson, & White, 2011). Students are not given the opportunity to explore activism as an ideology, nor are they given the opportunity to learn skills to support activist activities. Essentially, service-oriented programs undermine activism because students are not provided with this knowledge or these skills. More importantly, programs do not explain to students how to effectively get involved upon their return. The researchers emphasize giving students the history and ideology of activism, as well as helping students connect to campus events that have an activist focus on historical movements (Cermak, Christiansen, Finnegan, Gleeson, &

White, 2011). This is important and something that the researchers leave out of their discussion.

One important way ISTs can improve would be to not focus entirely on current country-specific issues, but instead help students make connections back to their own communities. Thus, students are getting a history lesson on activism, developing skills to develop effective and appropriate change, and learning about the interconnection between social issues abroad and within their own communities. With this learning and their new skills, hopefully students will be inspired to return back to their campuses and communities and begin to tackle the social concerns in these places.

Hartman and Kiely (2014) conducted a comparative case study to explore how students made meaning of their international service-learning experience before, during, and after their involvement in the program. They drew from data collected from three different international service-learning programs. The first was from a service-learning partnership between a Tanzanian community and a Research I University. The second data set came from interviews with students from a Research I Institution who participated in a service-learning course in Bolivia. Finally, they drew from a large multimethod study of global service-learning programming that included 160 participants enrolled in a variety of service-learning courses from different locations (Kiely & Hartman, 2004; Kiely & Hartman, 2007).

They identified six dimensions of critical global citizenship: intellectual, political, moral, social, cultural, and personal. From the study emerged a model for critical global citizenship that served as an alternative to study abroad's focus on intercultural competency, and service-learning's focus on civic education. Hartman and Kiely (2014)

contend that critical global citizenship means engagement in the continuous struggle “aimed at disrupting, decolonizing, and transforming historical, linguistic, structural, cultural, and institutional arrangements that cause harm” (p. 32). What remains missing from their model is an emphasis on the concrete skills that students obtained to be able to continue their work as a critical global citizen. Hartman and Kiely (2014) contend that students who participate in international service-learning experience radical transformation of their worldview; however, they lack the knowledge, skills, and social and organizational tools to translate their new learning into meaningful action upon their return.

The reality is that built into the international service-learning experience are neo-colonial power relations that are rooted in Christian missionary practices whereby indigenous communities are “civilized,” and countries in the global North exert power over communities in the Global South (Chapman, 2016, p. 2; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Kahn (2011) argues that international service-learning is not devoid of the colonial ideologies, which are embedded in its frameworks, including civic engagement, study abroad, international development, and academia. MacDonald (2014) suggests that the process of decolonizing pedagogies may not be possible when there are privileged students participating in an academic structure founded on colonial practices. MacDonald argues that an international service experience should not focus on student learning or their experience with oppressed communities but instead “engage a pedagogy that does not guarantee a kind of learning, or a kind of citizen but rather resists answers and embraces questions” (p. 210).

Transformational Learning

The CIEE Thailand program has dedicated itself to creating a transformational experience for students because, as the Director of the program said, “it wants students to believe that they are able to confront the oppression that they witness and work to change those oppressive circumstances and structures.” In this section I highlight key transformational theories that provide insight into the program’s design to alter students’ perspectives of self and others, as well as shape their commitment to justice.

Transformative learning theory focuses on the meaning that individuals construe from their experiences and how they can then use this learning as a guide to action (Clark & Wilson, 1991; Mezirow, 1990). It is a process where we transform our current systems of reality (how we think and feel about something) to make them “more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7-8). As people learn about the lived experiences of others, they are able to question their own beliefs and assumptions and consider whether or not they are justified.

Transformational learning consists of both individual and social dimensions and implications (Mezirow, 2000). In order to recognize how societal structures, ideologies, beliefs, and practices have been utilized to promote assimilation, it is imperative that individuals develop an awareness of the historical construction of their knowledge and the values over time that have been used to shape their perspectives. This understanding helps to develop agency and encourages individuals to find their own voice.

While I go into more detail about each of the components of the CIEE program, it is important to touch on how the program is intended to be transformational. At the heart of the CIEE Thailand experience is the practice of “exchanges.” For each unit students spend time with community members asking questions and learning about their lived experiences. This may be conversational, eating meals together, and/or helping the family complete a project. I want to again come back to the work of Addams who believed that cultivating relationships was the foundation of democracy (Daynes & Longo, 2004).

Addams’ philosophical grounding and approach resulted from witnessing the oppressive nature of capitalism. She established Hull House as a place for families to adjust to the conditions of industrialization. It was a community-based institution that served as a space to foster relationships with people who came from different backgrounds, and learning was rooted in personal experience and exchange. Hull House was transformational because it offered opportunities for application as opposed to research; for emotion as opposed to abstraction; and for universal interest as opposed to specialization (Addams, 1994). The work of Hull House was grounded in active listening, participation, connected leadership, and solidarity. All of these are contradictions to neoliberalism, and they led to transformation as people developed an understanding of the daily challenges of others and empathy for them.

The process of transformation for students within the CIEE program comes from the Exchanges, informed by course readings, and reflecting on those experiences, giving students the opportunity to explicate their original frames of reference. Dewey (1916) stated that, “education is not the process of ‘telling’ and being told, but an active constructive process” (p. 38). According to Dewey, experience is a natural phenomenon

that is internal to human beings and signifies how people engage with the environment around them (Berding, 1997). Dewey advanced the concept of experience and reflection and the roles they played in the development of learners. His transformational learning process is based on a feedback loop that describes how experiences translate into learning. It involves: (1) observation of surrounding conditions; (2) reflection on similar situations that have occurred in the past, which is based partly on personal knowledge and partly on the knowledge shared by others with more experience; and (3) judgment, which is based on the synthesizing of observations and reflections to determine significance. Through this process students are able to develop alternative perspectives about situations they are witnessing. The challenge then becomes sustaining those new beliefs and attitudes.

This learning process is particularly important because what is happening for students as they shift their perspectives and are open to new information and ways of understanding is that they are rejecting old thoughts, emotions, and patterns of behavior. They construct new knowledge and new perspectives through learning. Piaget (1971) referred to this mechanism of learning as equilibration. Simply put, equilibration is a dynamic process of self-regulated behavior, whereby an organism receives feedback to its psychological structure based on previous actions in a way that creates discrepancies within that structure. These discrepancies create a state of disequilibrium, which will lead the organism to reorganize its existing structure to once again achieve equilibrium (Piaget, 1971). For Piaget, development is an ongoing process from infancy to adulthood, which “moves from a concrete phenomenal view of the world to an abstract constructionist view, from an active egocentric view to a reflective internalized mode of

knowing (Kolb, 1984, p. 23). Piaget (1971) emphasizes the ability of individuals to adapt to their environments through the dual processes of assimilation and accommodation. The CIEE program is designed in some respects to create disequilibrium for students through an examination of their own social identities, as well as their nationality as a result of examining the impact of U. S. foreign policy on the lives of individuals, families, and communities abroad. This exposure provides students the opportunity to shift perspectives and prompts them to challenge larger systems and structures that drive oppression.

Transformation comes from being able to hold those new perspectives. Scholars have developed learning cycles that describe the process of transformation that learners go through as they are exposed to new information (Kolb, 1984; Lewin, 1951; Mezirow, 2000). Kolb asserts that, “learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (1984, p. 38). Lewin (1951) introduced a three-step social change model to facilitate a change in organizations and behavior: unfreezing the status quo, movement to a desired outcome, and refreezing to create a new permanent state. Kolb (1984) built on the work of Dewey and Lewin and created a four-stage process that emphasized reflection and testing new ideas and behaviors: (1) concrete experience; (2) observation and reflection; (3) forming abstract concepts; and (4) testing in new situations. In both cycles, a critical incident happens that shakes an individual’s equilibrium, with the status quo representing the equilibrium state. Individuals and groups are forced into a situation where they have to question themselves about how their individual identities align with their integrity (Poutiatine & Connors, 2012). While in a state of disequilibrium, through a process of reflection that informs new ideas, individuals

and groups are able to create a new frame of reference. Such a process would transform a group from its current status quo to a new concluding state (Robbins, 2003). This isn't without its challenges because if efforts to refreeze occur prior to implementation it is unlikely that the shift in status quo will be sustained over time (Kritsonis, 2004).

Refreezing is a process to support the long-term change as individuals and the group integrate new behaviors into their routines, traditions, and culture. If not, individuals and the group will return to their previous behaviors. Refreezing stabilizes the change intervention that was implemented by finding a new equilibrium between the driving and restraining forces (Robbins, 2003).

Mezirow (2000) builds on the work of Lewin and Kolb to include a more intentional process of critical analysis that leads to action and reintegration of those beliefs and behaviors into daily life. However, Mezirow (2000) suggests that in order to transform one's frame of reference, a person must have an experience that cannot be explained by their current frames of understanding. The process of transformation often follows variations of the following phases:

- (1) a disorienting dilemma; (2) self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame; (3) a critical assessment of assumptions; (4) recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared; (5) exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions; (6) planning a course of action; (7) acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans; (8) provisional trying of new roles; (9) building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and (10) a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective (p. 22).

Individuals and groups may reject phases of this process because as Mezirow (1997) contends, due to the challenges associated with this process, individuals have a tendency to reject new ideas.

Transformation also comes from giving those who are oppressed the opportunity to voice their experiences within an oppressive society, which was the basis of the work of Paulo Freire and Myles Horton. Much of the work of Freire (2005) centered on critical consciousness or *conscientização*, an educational philosophy that he defined as a liberatory process. In this process, people become aware of how they experience marginalization and structural oppression, and they organize to change their social condition (Freire, 2005; Godfrey, & Burson, 2018). Freire (1973) contends that, “Once man perceives a challenge, understands it, and recognizes the possibilities of response he acts. The nature of that action corresponds to the nature of his understanding” (p. 44). It is important to acknowledge that Freire was aware that there was not a universal response to oppression. The way societies are structured is oppressive, and the ramifications on oppressed groups differs. A key factor of critical consciousness, according to Freire, (1973) is dialogue. For students of the CIEE program that comes through their conversations with peers, program facilitators, and most importantly community members.

Horton established the Highlander Folk School in 1932 to address the oppressive social conditions that existed in poor mountainous communities and in the segregated South. There were three important outcomes to the educational programming of Highlander. First, participants recognized the transformative value of the lived experiences that they brought to their organizing work (Conti, 1977; Schneider, 2014). By examining their own experiences, participants were able to identify and access the resources available to them to come up with their own solutions to problems. Second, they developed agitational strategies to bring about social change in the racially and

economically segregated South (Glen, 1988; Schneider, 2014). Third, collective movement identities emerged from the participation in the programs (Schneider, 2014). This type of model focuses on empowering people to identify their own challenges within their communities and explore potential solutions that address these problems (Glen, 1988). Horton framed social problems within the context of race, class, and exploitation, which allowed participants to “establish collective identities” (Schneider, 2014, p. 6). Transformation resulted from the commitment to intentionally create links between education and the needs of the local community.

Conclusion

It is through educational experiences that individuals go through a difficult process of developing new lenses through which to view and interpret the world around them. As individuals engage in learning experiences, they are provided with opportunities that either reinforce their previously held beliefs and views or they are challenged to reconsider them. The CIEE program would provide students with experiences that help them question the validity of the status quo and challenge their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that support the status quo. Essentially, it aims to unfreeze their current belief structure. Students do a great deal of work within groups not only to process their personal experiences within Thailand, but also collectively, they discuss and reflect on what they are observing within communities and the conversations they are having with community members. This is allowing them to shift and move their perspectives about the issue of globalization and development. There are a variety of activities that support the refreezing process for students over the course of the semester: readings, ongoing reflection, intentional engagement with community members, and final projects. While

investigating the experience of students who participate in international service-learning programs, it became clear that critical theory and transformational learning provide a basis for exploring other questions that may shape their understanding of the world around them and their response to it (Brookfield, 2005). It is the intent of this study to explore those program elements that lead to participants of critical international service-learning continuing their engagement in social action upon return from their experience abroad.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine how the international service-learning CIEE Thailand Program on Development and Globalization program is able to transform students into active citizens who participate in activities to dismantle oppression and injustices in their own communities after their return from abroad. This study focuses on the experiences of students of the CIEE program and the program activities that they participate in that contribute to their transformation. In exploring their transformation to engage in action, it is important to understand how the CIEE Thailand program frames social action, designs their program to incorporate skill-building opportunities, incorporates the perspectives of the host communities, and encourages student ownership of their learning experiences. This chapter outlines the qualitative method used to deepen understanding of this program to explore and answer the research questions. The first section includes a review of the research questions. The next section provides the rationale for selecting a qualitative research method to answer my research questions, specifically a case study. The third section provides an overview of the components of the research design, which addresses the site selection, participant recruitment and selection, and data collection and analysis. The final section explores the limitations and trustworthiness of the study.

Central Research Questions and Assumptions

This research is designed to study the connection between the educational experiences of students who participate in the CIEE international service-learning

program and how this prepares students for future involvement in community organizing, activism, and active citizenship to address oppression in communities upon the conclusion of their trip abroad. My research will focus on the following central question:

1. How do international service-learning programs prepare students for social action and ongoing involvement in social justice programs and actions upon their return?
 - a. What do participants identify as the specific characteristics of the program that led to their learning?
 - b. What activities do participants identify to demonstrate employment of the learning they acquired from the CIEE program?
 - c. How do the students enact social action upon their return from the program?
 - i. How do they understand their experiences in the program?
 - ii. How do they understand their learning in the program?
 - iii. How do they connect these experiences with their current approaches to social justice?

These research questions emerged from my professional experiences with two different sets of students. The first group consisted of alumni of a summer biomedical engineering international service-learning experience in Guatemala. While these students articulated profound learning around recognition of the social injustices that they witnessed in communities they visited in Guatemala, they were unable to identify or demonstrate any skills related to dismantling systems of oppression that they learned from their participation in the program. The inability of international service-learning programs to teach participants skills to address systems of oppression is confirmed by an

in-depth review of the literature. Research reveals that students who participate in international service-learning program are not returning from their experience with tangible skills to address social injustices that exist in their own communities or translating their critical awareness into action (Cermak, Christiansen, Finnegan, Gleeson, White, & Leach, 2011; Kiely 2004). Participants in the Guatemala experience returned with increased awareness, but they did not know how to address societal problems and issues except through volunteering their time to causes they were interested in helping.

The second group was made up of returned alumni of the CIEE Thailand program. These individuals were engaged in community organizing activities and applying the knowledge and skills they developed while abroad to issues impacting their communities, which included oppression in the rural South of the United States, New Orleans post-Katrina, and mountaintop removal in Kentucky. Participants were changed individuals as a result of the program. However, what was it about the CIEE program that led alumni to translate their experience abroad into meaningful action? As a program ostensibly designed to transform students into critically engaged global citizens, I want to explore the educational components and program practices and how they shape the learning of students. The findings of this research will be shared with other international service-learning programs and be utilized for the development of critical service-learning programs.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

The basis for utilizing qualitative research is to learn about some aspect of the social world (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Some researchers look to explore the meaning that individuals or groups assign to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009), and

others seek to understand how individuals socially construct and make meaning of their lived experiences (Merriam, 2002). By utilizing this approach, researchers gather and analyze data with the overarching goal in mind to improve some social circumstances (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In order to accomplish this goal, it is imperative that a researcher develops a deep understanding of a specific phenomenon or experience (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

It is the intention of this study to explore the meanings and interpretations that participants of this study articulated within a specific social context, their time in the CIEE Thailand program (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Thus, a case study for this research is most appropriate, as the study aims to explore and understand the experiences of alumni who participated in the CIEE Thailand program. Given that the vast majority of international service-learning programs only expose students to issues of oppression without giving them the tools to confront the injustice (Cermak, Christiansen, Finnegan, Gleeson, White, & Leach, 2011; Kiely 2004), it is important to understand the lived experiences of participants of an international service-learning program, such as the CIEE program, who are engaged in organizing and activism work and applying their learning from their experience abroad.

Case Study Approach

To investigate whether the CIEE Thailand Program on Development and Globalization, located in Khon Kaen, Thailand, effectively inspired and prepared students to engage in social action activities upon their return, it is best to explore with an in-depth case study design. Case studies are less focused on making generalizations, but instead examining particularization, which is to take a particular case, study it, and know it well

(Stake, 1995). In exploring a case, the researcher recognizes its uniqueness, which leads to a recognition that it is different from other cases. The emphasis on cases is to not look at “how it is different from others but what it is, what it does” (p. 8). It is the intention of this research to understand and know a single case, the CIEE Thailand program, and how it educates and prepares students for future engagement in their local communities. I believe the CIEE Thailand program is a unique case because alumni are taking what they learned from their time in the program and translating it into meaningful organizing activities after their return from the program.

A case study design should be considered when: (1) the study answers ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions; (b) the researcher is unable to manipulate the behavior of the participants involved in the study; and (c) there is a focus on contemporary events (Yin, 2014). At the heart of the study is to understand how the CIEE Thailand international service-learning program is different from other programs. Therefore, I am seeking to know “how” the CIEE Thailand program shapes the learning of students and “why” the experience makes them continue to engage in social justice activities upon their completion of the program. I also seek to discover what are the factors that influence their path post program, and why those factors are significant. Because the participants’ experience in the program has already taken place, I am not in a place to manipulate their learning. Furthermore, the focus of the program on Development and Globalization, and the current activism work the alumni are engaged in, form the core of contemporary discourse around current events such as race, power, equality, colonialism, and environmental and human rights.

The strength of the case study design is based on the ability to research a particular phenomenon--in this case the alumni's participation as students in the CIEE program--which is captured by the reflections of their experience in the program (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Case studies are an appropriate design selection when it is impossible to distinguish the phenomenon's variables from their context (Yin, 2014). The case study variables of this study would be the components in the design of the CIEE Thailand program, which included: program and cultural orientation, course units, course readings, classroom instruction, briefings, community stays and exchanges, position papers, workshops, and a "Where We're At" reflection session. The context is the classroom setting, communities they are working with, and the program location in Khon Kaen, Thailand.

To avoid answering a research question that is too broad or developing a study that attempts to fulfill too many objectives, it is important for researchers to determine the boundaries of the case (Stake, 1995). Several authors identify different criteria for binding the research project, including context and definition (Miles & Huberman, 1994), time and place (Creswell, 2003), and time and activity (Stake, 1995). This research fits into a case study design because it is a bounded system, returned alumni of the CIEE Thailand program who participated from 2002 to 2010; relies on in-depth data collection from multiple sources; and is based on a real-life situation (Creswell, 1998; Knight, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Simons, 2009). Case studies rely on a variety of data collection methods (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 2014). The data collection methods in this study include examination of documents, archival records, interviews, observations, and physical artifacts. The intent of using multiple sources of evidence is to develop an in-depth

description of the case being studied. The data collected in this study described participant experiences in the CIEE Thailand program and how these experiences prepared them for engagement in their own communities upon their return.

The findings of this case study will be shared so that they may be applied to other service-learning programs, international and domestic. There are two important outcomes for case study research. First, there is a focus on the educational opportunities that result from conducting case study research, both in the research process and dissemination of findings. Participant engagement in the process should “contribute to their self-knowledge and political knowledge to what it means to work in and between groups” (Simons, 2009, p. 5). This is particularly important given that this study is an opportunity for participants to consider their effectiveness in working toward social change, particularly when they are likely to work across social identity groups. Additionally, the findings of the study should be disseminated to people in the field who are able to use the information to inform future decisions, policy, and practice. Second is the “story of the case,” which refers to how we make sense and meaning of the case by uncovering its underlying meaning and structure (Simons, 2009). The telling of the story is based on the integration of inferences and interpretations of the important events described by the participants to tell the story in its entirety (House, 1980). It is important to tell the story of the CIEE Thailand program so that other educators can learn from it, and potentially incorporate aspects of the CIEE program into their own programs.

The in-depth descriptions of the alumni experiences provide an understanding of the knowledge, skills, and awareness that they developed as a result of their participation in the international service-learning program, and how they were able to engage in

community organizing upon their return. In this study there is an intrinsic interest to understand this research case because of the “need to learn” about student experiences abroad (Stake, 1995, p. 3). The findings of this research will be used to inform study abroad programs, civic engagement offices, and campus advocacy offices on how to support students returning from international service-learning programs and encourage their interests in participating in social action activities in their communities.

Conceptual Framework

While there is considerable research on international service-learning programs and national service-learning programs, there is limited research on international service-learning programs that both develop student awareness in being able to identify oppression and teach them skills to address injustices in their communities upon their return (Cermak, Christiansen, Finnegan, Gleeson, White, & Leach, 2011; Kiely, 2004). Students today live in a precarious time, and they are seeking alternatives to manage the crises before them. This generation of students is confronted with an unprecedented global ecological calamity that puts their futures in peril as they are forced to deal with the effects of climate change, human population growth, rapid extraction and destruction of natural resources, depletion of land and water supplies, high levels of pollution and toxic waste and so on (Fiala, 2010). Furthermore, young people today are dealing with the consequences of unbridled capitalism, driven by neoliberal policies. College students live in a world with severe economic disparity as the wealthiest one percent has more wealth than the rest of the world’s population combined (Hardoon, Ayele, & Fuentes-Nieva, 2016). Some transition--As more students express desire for skills to address these problems, I propose a conceptual framework that utilizes five critical components to help

explain why participants of the CIEE Thailand international service-learning program continue to engage in organizing and activism activities after their experience abroad. These components include: 1) ownership of one's educational experience (Freire, 2002), 2) reeducating the non-poor (Evans, Evans, & Kennedy, 2000), 3) developing a holistic approach to education (hooks, 1994), 4) exposing students to differences and creating opportunities for collaboration to solve problems (Tsing, 2016), and 5) understanding how to effectively work in solidarity with marginalized populations through critical service-learning (Mitchell, 2008).

Students in the United States have a responsibility to be a part of working on solutions that address these dire issues. As educators, how do we support students through their process of developing an understanding of their experiences and help them navigate these systems? As an educator, I think a great deal about "how" students learn and the "meaning" that they make of this learning, as well as what my role is in their process. This is particularly important, as a neoliberal ideology has shaped the educational experiences of college students for the last fifty years (Apple, 2001; Harvey, 2005). The educational experiences of students are negatively influenced by this trend, particularly related to teaching and learning. Foremost, it plays out in the classroom where there is typically a focus on conventional pedagogical approaches. Freire (2002) refers to the conventional approach as the "banking" concept of education (p. 72). It is a teaching style that relies heavily on the transference of knowledge from the professor to the student. The result of the "banking" model is that it inhibits students from developing skills to effectively critique injustices that exist within society. This model of teaching and the neoliberal ideology silence voices as students are rarely given the opportunity to

question or challenge the information that is presented to them in the classroom.

Neoliberalism has effectively silenced alternative opinions and beliefs, which includes activist voices (Bickford & Reynolds, 2002). It restricts any potential alternatives from emerging into public discourse on issues (Eagleton, 1991). In service-learning settings, Mitchell (2013) argues that neoliberalism leads to complacency, which contributes to a sense of defeat in not being able to create change and depoliticization of service-learning by not focusing on structural oppression.

Freire (2002) suggests, “Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, though the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry, that human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (p. 72). In this way, students have ownership over their educational experiences, which is an aspect of learning that is emphasized in the pedagogy of the CIEE Thailand program. Freire argues that in order for people to truly learn about an issue and create systemic change based on that knowledge, people need to understand the nuances of an issue and be willing to critique it. This critical consciousness is what Freire refers to as *conscientização*, which encourages learners to develop perspectives and deep understanding of the issues that are occurring in the world around them and apply this learning to their lived experiences. A core component of the CIEE Thailand program is to encourage participants to be conscientious of the situations going on around them. This attentiveness to the lives of others leads to increased understanding of others’ lived experiences and greater awareness. Accordingly, critical consciousness is developed, leading people to take action against the oppressive forces in their own lives, which would result in their own liberation. Freire focused his attention on oppressed populations, but how do these ideas

apply to non-oppressed people? This is particularly important when considering that most U.S. students who study abroad come from White, middle-class families.

This question of educating the non-poor is one that was explicated by justice advocates and scholars, including Paulo Freire, at a conference on literacy and participatory education in the summer of 1987. According to Evans, Evans, and Kennedy (2000), the non-poor are described as the “middle class who as a group have low infant mortality, high life expectancy, and enough sustenance to be above the poverty line” (p. xi). Conference participants engaged in discussions about the possibility of “reeducating the oppressor” and the feasibility of creating educational experiences that would challenge individuals to recognize their inherent privileges. They also explored what these educational experiences would entail. Freire emphasized that the transformation and liberation of the non-poor is a conscious choice that they make, as the non-poor do not actively seek out opportunities to transform themselves; nor are they inclined to voluntarily relinquish their privilege or participate in educational experiences which entail outlining strategies to give up privilege (Evans, Evans, & Kennedy, 2000). Exploring how the CIEE Thailand program challenges students to explore their own privileges and the process of giving up those privileges is a key component of this study.

Freire also identified a number of obstacles that prevent the non-poor from having a transformational experience in a learning environment, for example, perceived stereotypes of the poor, such as “the poor need help,” “they are lazy,” or “they are ignorant” (Evans, Evans, & Kennedy, 2000). Other obstacles identified by Freire are fatalism (“this is just how things are in the world”) and despair, which leads to cynicism and immobilization. The CIEE program is designed to provide participants with

experiences to develop self-awareness, as well as develop an understanding of the historical and current forms of oppression.

bell hooks (1994) explored the concept of engaged pedagogy, which proposes a pedagogy toward freedom, self-actualization, and students/teachers' empowerment. hooks "emphasizes the well-being" of students (p. 15). She suggests that the process of holistic learning is achieved when faculty are actively committed to self-actualization as a means of empowering students. hooks interrogated the role of the educator in the classroom and explores the limitations of current pedagogical strategies. The intention of engaged pedagogy is to allow students to bring into the classroom their personal experiences and identities when discussing issues that have impacted them intellectually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. By allowing students to explore issues holistically, hooks believed students have the opportunity of liberating themselves from the hegemonic practices of a more traditional education. The goal is for students to think critically about their own experiences and the experiences of others and apply that knowledge to other issues. In this study, one of the core considerations is how participants in the CIEE program were able to translate their learning in Thailand to other issues of oppression.

It is important to acknowledge that transformation does not occur in isolation of others. Tsing (2016) describes two phenomena that contribute to one's process of individual change. The first is what she describes as "contamination"—the encounters that we have with others. Individuals change as they make space for others. An individual's personal story is filled with incidences of contamination, as it is impossible to not engage with others (Tsing, 2016). The second phenomenon is collaboration, which Tsing argues

is required for the survival of all species. Collaboration is about being able to work across differences, which leads to more contamination. Our collaborations with others are what lead to transformation, not the decisions that we make as “self-contained” individuals (Tsing, 2016, p. 29). This is not without its complexities. As Tsing, further states,

Collaboration is work across difference, yet this is not the innocent diversity of self-contained evolutionary tracks. The evolution of our “selves” is already polluted by histories of encounter; we are mixed up with others before we even begin any new collaboration. Worse yet, we are mixed up in the projects that do us the most harm. The diversity that allows us to enter collaborations emerges from histories of extermination, imperialism, and all the rest (p. 29).

The challenge for educators is to then help these students make meaning of these experiences. Concepts of contamination and collaboration are important for the CIEE Thailand program because a major component is the exchanges that take place with the local community.

Experiencing contamination and collaboration are important within the context of the CIEE Thailand program given that it is a U.S. based program sending students into communities in the Global South. The challenge is how to effectively prepare and engage students in situations where they are witnessing the marginalization of a population and how to prepare them to work in solidarity with these oppressed groups to address the injustices that are occurring. Within the context of service-learning, Mitchell (2008) identifies three key elements of a critical approach to service-learning, which includes redistribution of power between all involved in the service-learning relationship, development of authentic relationships in the classroom and community, and operating

from a social change perspective. In reality most participants engaged in international service-learning programs have some level of societal power and privilege, which has made it possible for participants to find themselves in Thailand working with communities to overcome oppressive conditions. Mitchell (2008) suggests that in order for students to create authentic relationships in these types of settings they need to develop relationships based on connection. This entails students recognizing and working with differences, which also means understanding power structures that exist within society. To understand power structures is foundational to having a critical approach to international service-learning. Orienting students toward a social change model of service-learning requires challenging “students to investigate and understand the root causes of social problems” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 53). This study explores how the CIEE Thailand program is based on a social change model, encourages participants to develop authentic relationships, develops an understanding of power and provides strategies to redistribute that power. This conceptual framework informs my study of how educators utilize international service-learning as a transformational experience and how it guides students in overcoming similar obstacles, leading to liberation from the ideological structures that frame their understanding or lack of understanding of oppression.

Research Design

This case study fills a significant gap in the research regarding how international service-learning programs are able to prepare students for engagement in social action activities upon their return. The decision to select a case study design is ideal when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed to understand a phenomenon (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). Case study design is also an appropriate option when the researcher is

attempting to bring out details from the perspective of the participants in the study. Thus, they rely on a variety of different techniques to gather data in order to explain an event or phenomenon (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

This study draws from the work of Freire (2002), Evans, Evans, & Kennedy (2000), Tsing (2016), hooks (1994), and Mitchell (2008) to describe a process of how participants were transformed as a result of their engagement in the CIEE Thailand program. This study draws from these theories to describe the experiences of alumni while they were participating in the program and how these experiences helped to shape and inform their social action activities upon their return from Thailand. This design was selected to highlight what participants experienced in the program, what they learned from these experiences, what the specific characteristics of the program were and how they contributed to participant learning, as well as what participants were able to do with this learning upon their return. This is important because it informs me about what aspects of the program shaped participants' interest and perceived responsibility to respond to social injustices that they are witnessing in their communities.

Unit of Analysis

A case study is characterized by the unit of analysis, and not by the topic that a researcher wishes to explore (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The primary unit of analysis for this case study is the alumni of the CIEE Development and Globalization international service-learning program in Khon Kaen, Thailand and their perceptions of the program's contribution to their social action activities. This is not intended to be an evaluation of the overall program. This research focuses on a single case of seven participants of an international service-learning program over an eight-year period from 2002-2010.

Participants will provide important insight into the knowledge, skills, and awareness they acquired as a result of their enrollment in the program, and how this informed their ideas about justice and involvement in community.

Research Site

The Council on International Education (CIEE) launched their Thailand study abroad program in 1995. The program was born out of and inspired by the social movements in the Northeast region of Thailand, an area ethnically and culturally both Lao and Cambodian. Leaders of networks such as the Non-Governmental Organization Coordinating Committee on Rural Development (NGO-CORD) and the Assembly of the Poor were instrumental in developing the CIEE Thailand program (Altman, Boonjear, Chupkhunthod, Herat, Jongrak, Kaewrakmuk, Leavell, MacGlashan, Mangis, Premrudeelert, Roggemann, & Streckfus, 2006). Their organizing work with indebted farmers, people living in slum communities, people with HIV/AIDS, landless farmers, and other oppressed groups was foundational to the model and objectives of the study abroad experience. The model for their program is rooted in community-based and experiential learning theories (2006).

Participants

The participants of this study were recruited and selected utilizing intentional methods. I interviewed seven participants for this case study. In addition, to launch this study, I interviewed the CIEE Thailand Director in order to provide an overview of the history and design of the program and access to any necessary documents and artifacts that can be useful to informing the study. Qualitative case studies underscore the importance of multiple participant perspectives, observations that take place in real life

situations, and interpretations of the participant context (Simons, 2009). An interview with the director allowed for triangulation of the data (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Yin, 2014). It is imperative that I garnered support and assistance from the staff of CIEE Thailand for this project, as they were able to provide me with potential access to alumni of the program. Additionally, I connected with the ENGAGE Network, a listserv group that current students and alumni of the CIEE Thailand program can join voluntarily. I communicated with the managers of this group and received permission to reach out to listserv members. Seven alumni were selected for this study and they were given the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the study. At any stage of the research process they were able to withdraw from the study.

Participants were selected to provide insight into what students learned during their experience and how they were able to translate that experience into participation in social action activities once they returned. These individuals were selected based on purposeful sampling and snowball sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Purposeful sampling is utilized for primary research (Patton, 1990; Patton, 2002).

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

Additionally, critical case sampling involves selecting a small number of important cases to "yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of

knowledge" (Patton, 2015, p. 276). I employed the technique of snowball sampling to ensure I achieved the goal of seven alumni participating in the study (Sadler, Lee, Lim, & Fullerton, 2010). The utilization of the snowball approach was appropriate when there are alumni who are unaware of or no longer access either listserv. Within the context of this study, I asked current participants to identify other potential alumni. I had four alumni who responded to my initial email that went out to alumni. One participant sent out an email to the same listserv and recommended participation in the study as a way to reflect on their experience in the program. This garnered three responses to the study, however, only two of these individuals decided to participate. The third individual did not respond to my follow-up email to them. Additionally, another participant provided me with contact information of another alumni. Upon contacting this individual, they enthusiastically agreed to discuss their experience in the program. Once individual alumni were identified, I reached out to them and invited them to participate in the study.

As this study was interested in understanding how the CIEE Thailand program prepared students for social action activities post experience, it was imperative to set research criteria to bind the study. Therefore, participants met the following criteria.

- They participated in and completed the program between 2002 and 2010
- Engaged in social action activities upon their return
- Identified the CIEE program as integral to their development and understanding of social action in communities.

By limiting who is eligible to participate in the study, I reduced any variability in the sample to explore the aspects of their program experience and how it led to their further engagement in the community after they returned from their experience abroad. It is

important to acknowledge that it is likely several CIEE Thailand program alumni did not engage in activities to dismantle oppression upon their return, but this does not negate the importance of those who did and understanding why they made that choice.

Data Collection

The study relied on several data collection techniques to provide a more holistic understanding of how the international service-learning program shaped participants' involvement in social action activities. These techniques included individual interviews, review of program documents, and examination of artifacts produced by alumni post-program. The purpose of collecting data from a variety of sources was to ensure that there was an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon and guarantee trustworthiness within the study (Patton, 2002). Additionally, multiple data sources allowed for triangulation to increase credibility of the study and ensure accurate findings (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

The confidentiality of participants was of the utmost importance to me in this study. All data collected from participants and from the program were kept in a secure location in my home office. Participants of the study were given pseudonyms to guarantee their involvement in the study remained anonymous (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2010). Those individuals who participated in this study were also given the opportunity to terminate their involvement at any time, which no one ended involvement.

Individual Interviews

Interviews are imperative in situations where the researcher is unable to observe participant behavior, feelings, or how they make meaning of their surroundings (Kvale, 1996; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and they are central to the qualitative research process (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Interviews provide researchers with a view into the

experiences of participants that they would unlikely be able to get from other data collection methods. Interviews are designed to build rapport with the participants, as well as provide a window into their experience in the program and how it shaped their future social action involvement in the community. For this study, I conducted an intensive interview with each participant (Weiss, 1994). An intensive interview is designed to be more fluid and unstructured, although a specific line of inquiry is followed (Yin, 2014).

Researchers need to select participants who are interested in sharing details about their experience as it relates to a phenomenon and who can effectively reflect on and verbally describe this experience (Polkinghorne, 2005). Each intensive interview lasted approximately 60-75 minutes and was recorded, with permission from participants, to support the data analysis process. All of the recordings were transcribed after each of the interviews. The transcriptions were shared with the participants to provide them the opportunity to review their words. It was important to me that participants' thoughts and perspectives were accurately transcribed and appropriately reflected their views.

Program Documents

The second source of data collection was a review of program documents. I received copies of program documents from a former staff member, which was used as evidence for this case study. The documents reviewed included the Program Facilitator Guide for multiple years, the Program Guide, and the Intern Coordinator Manual. The Program Facilitator Guide provided an overview of the role that the program facilitator played in guiding the learning and development of participants. The next set of documents reviewed included the program guide for participants over multiple years, which served as an introduction to the program and community for students. It also

provided an overview of the program themes, schedule, and program expectations and guidelines. Additionally, the Intern Coordinator Manual was examined to understand the training process for interns. Access to these manuals allowed me to explore how the program develops students. Additionally, a review of these documents provided an opportunity to examine the development of the program over a period of time to consider how this may have influenced student outcomes.

Alumni Artifacts

The third source of data collection included a review of artifacts of the program, as well as those that are the result of alumni social action activities post-program. This researcher had access to all of the final projects that were produced by participants in the program. A review of these artifacts served to demonstrate what knowledge, skills, and awareness were developed throughout the course of the program. Additionally, I reviewed artifacts from alumni social action activities post-program, which included newspaper articles, written reports, and items produced for campaigns. Due to cost, it was important to acknowledge that I did not have access to any artifacts located in Thailand. That being said, I did have access to artifacts that participants created after their experience abroad, which provided insight into how they applied their learning.

Analytic Memos

An important process during the data collection period is for the researcher to reflect on the information that has been gathered through interviews, a review of documents, and a study of artifacts. To capture these reflective thoughts, I wrote memos to briefly summarize what I learned, and synthesize the data to find meanings and identify similar patterns of information (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The

consistent practice of writing memos helped to advance my thinking of how the CIEE Thailand program shaped the learning of participants to want to continue their engagement in the community once they returned.

Data Analysis

During and after the data collection period, I began the process of analyzing and interpreting the data. The qualitative data analysis process is described as “the most complex and mysterious of all the phases of a qualitative project” (Thorne, 2000, p. 68). It is a time intensive process that generates a significant amount of data from interview transcripts, document reviews, memos, and other artifacts, into which the researcher must immerse herself or himself deeply (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). To avoid becoming overwhelmed by the amount of data collected, it was imperative for me to develop a system for organizing all gathered information (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

To effectively manage all of the data, I created files for each participant to store their signed informed consent form (Appendix B), demographic information sheet (Appendix C), the recorded interview, hardcopies of interview transcripts that I worked with and analyzed, and documentation of all communications. Additionally, I kept reflective summaries of each of my interactions with participants, which included reflections of my experience, any thoughts and insights that emerged through my interactions with each of them, and any other relevant information to this study.

Attentiveness and intention to effectively organize data helped me to identify patterns and allowed for themes to emerge from the data (Burnard & Morrison, 1994). By analyzing these emergent themes, I sought to make meaning of the lived experiences of participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 2006). Once the data was

collected and organized, it was imperative that the process of analysis be thorough and deliberate. To accomplish this goal, I employed an analytical framework based on Morse's (1994) 4 cognitive stages – detailed below – and utilized strategies to assist with coding. Additionally, I utilized the data analysis software NVivo to organize and analyze data collected during interviews, a review of documents, and an examination of artifacts.

According to Morse (1994) there are four cognitive stages that are foundational to all qualitative methods: comprehending, synthesizing, theorizing, and recontextualizing. The first stage is comprehending, which entails gathering an extensive amount of data. The researcher is able to achieve comprehension when she or he is able to “identify stories that are a part of the topic, identify patterns of experience, and predict their outcome” (p. 30). As a result, the researcher produces a detailed and rich description of the case being studied (Morse, 1994). In this stage I utilized coding techniques of Saldana (2013) and Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) to develop concepts that are uncovered in the data collection process. Saldana (2013) breaks down the coding process into two cycles: First Cycle and Second Cycle coding. First Cycle coding allows the researcher to assign codes to summarize the initial segments of data that emerge. This process allows the researcher to develop general categories from which more specific codes can be created as more data is gathered and analyzed. During the First Cycle, I utilized NVivo coding, which entailed developing codes based on snippets of the actual language used by the participants, which ensures that the researcher “prioritizes and honors participant’s voices” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p, 74). Selection of codes was developed from the components of the conceptual framework. Codes may be developed from phrases that are repeated by participants, which is a good indication of commonality

(Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). In this stage, I also used the data software program, NVivo, which played an important role in the comprehending stage of analysis. To organize and begin the coding process, I imported the interview into NVivo. As I immersed myself in the data, I created nodes to identify important concepts that emerged within the interview transcripts and throughout other documents reviewed (Walsh, 2003) as passages of data may belong to certain themes that have emerged.

The second stage of Morse's (1994) data analysis process is synthesizing, which is the development of composite patterns. This entails using pattern coding to further categorize larger chunks of data, which Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) refer to as Second Cycle coding. This method of coding allows researchers to find similar threads and connections within the segments of data to create smaller categories and themes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). There are several important functions that pattern coding offers researchers: it reconstructs data fractured in the broad coding process; allows for analysis of a small number of categories; allows data analysis to begin while still collecting data; and enables researchers to develop an evolving schema to understand data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). This is helpful here because the researcher can begin to explore the data while still collecting it, which allows the researcher to really know the data. Additionally, the researcher can begin to play with the data, move it around and make connections. In the synthesizing stage, I utilized the technique of memoing to assist my process of understanding. Writing memos is a valuable tool for the researcher in the analysis process because it allows her or him to map out research activities to record decisions and track the progression of the study, extract meaning from

the data, and maintain momentum throughout the study (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008).

Theorizing entails examining the relationships between the categories developed from the data and building a thorough account of the data (Morse, 1994). Researchers theorize to find the most accurate explanation of the data. There are a few different strategies that I employed to understand the relationship between data. First, I ordered and distilled memos, as this allowed for testing of conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Additionally, I utilized logic models to understand the complex chain of events that participants experienced over time (Yin, 2014). The purpose of using the logic model was to understand programmatic goals and how the program activities accomplished those goals. Theorizing is a rigorous process to test the data (Morse, 1994), and logic models operationalize a series of events over a long period of time. The use of logic models for this study was appropriate because it helped to understand CIEE Thailand's vision and goals for the program, and to trace its programmatic activities to verify it achieved its intended outcomes of transforming participants into engaged citizens upon their return.

The final stage of recontextualizing entails the researcher developing new theories or propositions that can be applied to other situations and populations (Morse, 1994). This stage is important because I had the opportunity to compare my findings with previous research, as well as engage with the literature to consider how my findings fit into a larger body of knowledge. This provided insights into my research questions because there may be a model for international service-learning programs that both raises

awareness of oppression that exists in communities and provides participants with the skills to address these injustices upon their return from the program.

Trustworthiness

According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), the trustworthiness of a qualitative study is judged by two criteria: 1) “Does the study conform to standards for acceptable and competent practice? 2) Does it meet standards for ethical conduct with sensitivity to politics of the topic and setting” (p. 63)? To ensure that this study remained trustworthy, this section shows that the above criteria was met.

First, this research explored the experience of students who participated in an international service-learning experience in Khon Kaen, Thailand. While research has found that international service-learning programs have contributed to participants’ understanding of oppression, programs have not provided them with concrete skills to address oppression upon their return (Cermak, Christiansen, Finnegan, Gleeson, White, & Leach, 2011; Kiely 2004). Given that there has been little published or public information that accomplishes transferring skills to participants, the use of a case study qualitative method seems appropriate for this study. The conceptual framework for this study draws from multiple critical concepts related to student learning, transformation, and critical service-learning as a pedagogy (Evans, Evans, & Kennedy, 2000; Freire, 2002; hooks, 1994; Tsing, 2016; Mitchell, 2008). This relied on several forms of data collection, such as interview, documents, and artifacts. By collecting research data from multiple sources and multiple methods, triangulation served to develop a more accurate representation of the CIEE Thailand program (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Triangulation also ensured that there is a holistic description of the case being studied. Additionally, I

wrote analytic memos to make note of emerging ideas, reactions, and concepts. The research method detailed considerations for this study, including site, participants and the data analysis process.

The second criterion ensured that qualitative research was conducted with care toward participants and met the highest ethical standards. This study outlined protocols to gain consent of the participants, ensure confidentiality, and protect participant identities, which was critical to understanding the activities of participants who continue to work to address oppression in their communities. Prior to individual interviews, participants were provided with an informed consent form (Appendix B) outlining the voluntary nature of the research, confidentiality, and their right to leave the research study at any time. Additionally, in the participant selection, the researcher avoided saying anything that was interpreted as coercive with regard to their participation in the study. Also, to ensure the reliability of this research project, it was imperative that the participants of this study recognized the findings as an actual representation of their lived experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, participants were given copies of their interview transcripts to review and provide any clarifications so that their voice was accurately represented.

Additionally, while soliciting participants for this project, they were provided with the “Letter for Prospective Participants” (Appendix A). The letter provided individuals with greater detail about the purpose of the research and requirements for participation. Before the beginning of any interview, each participant was sent an electronic version of the “Informed Consent Form” (Appendix B) to review before their interview. This form provided detailed information about the study, how collected data was to be shared, confidentiality, and any other pertinent information. Participants were

advised that I was available to meet with anyone to discuss the content of the form prior to scheduling the first interview. Each participant acknowledged receipt of this information by signing the form, which was kept in his or her individual files. I consulted with the College of Education's IRB advisor prior to the start of the data collection process.

A second consideration for this study was the impact of the political nature of my work as an educator. As someone who identifies to the left of center politically, I have a critical perspective regarding international service-learning and community engagement in general. I brought preconceived notions and beliefs about this research topic. Therefore, it was important for me to allow the data to emerge instead of forcing data based on beliefs and assumptions about the topic (Groenewald, 2004). Throughout the study it was important for me to remain self-aware that my own identity was present in the study, and to rely on reflective journaling.

Limitations

As with any research project, there are always limitations present. This study is no different. Most importantly, it cannot be expected that a small sample of seven participants will accurately reflect the experiences of all of the participants who went through the program. These are individuals who have different backgrounds and lived experiences that perhaps shaped their learning throughout the program. Additionally, the social identities of the participants shaped their perceptions and experiences in the program, which impacted their involvement in communities upon their return.

The second limitation for this study was that I only sought out participants who identified being transformed by the experience in the CIEE Thailand program. The study

intended to understand what knowledge, skills, and awareness participants received as a result of their enrollment in the program and how they were able to utilize this learning in their own social action activities upon their return. It may be that many students in the program do not involve themselves in social action upon their return. However, this does not negate the value and importance of knowing and understanding the experience of those students who were shaped by their experience in the program, which led to their continued involvement in activism and organizing.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research study was to explore how alumni of an international service-learning program were able to use the knowledge, skills, and awareness they learned from the program to effectively participate in social action activities upon their return. Given the central research question, a case study approach was utilized to explore and understand the experiences of alumni of the program. The conceptual framework for this study attempted to describe how elements of the CIEE Thailand program prepared participants for engagement in social change activities upon their return from a semester abroad. The findings from this study hopefully provide a rich description of participants' experience in the program and how they identified their transformation as a result of it. Thus, this study fills a critical gap in the international service-learning research with regard to how these programs can both develop awareness of oppression and provide critical skills to address oppression in other communities upon their return.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Introduction

To understand the experiences of participants in the CIEE program, it is important to understand the Thailand context and how program founders used that context as the cornerstone for the program and embedded key learning within the program design that modeled Thai organizing strategies. Program founders grounded the program in this Thai history, which gave participants a context to learn about and a familiarity with the community members that they were working with as they addressed the issues impacting these communities. Also, participants were engaged in a process which limited their ability to impose their own perspective or organizing choices on the community. CIEE launched the Thailand study abroad program in 1995, and to fully grasp how the program shaped and influenced the lives and commitments of participants, this study necessitates an exploration of the Thai context. This foundational understanding focuses on the educational strategies and tactics that participants are exposed to in their engagement in communities throughout the region, as these communities respond to the country's adoption of colonial practices and neoliberal policies, and highlights a history of resistance by communities in the face of government efforts to control the region and its people.

The program is located in the city of Khon Kaen, Thailand, in the Northeast region of the country annexed by Bangkok in the 19th century. It is ethnically and culturally both Lao and Cambodian and made up of mostly large, poor agrarian communities. This cultural composition of this region is important because the program

draws from the social movements that took place as a result of communities being economically marginalized. Program participants witnessed the resiliency of these communities in the face of multinational corporations coordinating the seizure of their land.

The CIEE program is designed to place students in environments that allow them to explore and understand the colonial tensions that still exist in their current form and also to work on projects that support communities in their struggles against corporate interests and state power. Although Thailand was the only country in Southeast Asia not colonized by other European powers (Guan, 2004), its leaders did adopt colonial practices with regard to political systems and social forms of control (Selway, 2007). At the end of the nineteenth century, King Vajiravudh promoted a new Thai nationalism, whereby people needed to speak Bangkok Thai, as well as follow the Buddhist religion (Vaddhanaphuti, 2005; Selway, 2007). This new national identity was promoted through state institutions such as schools, the media, and military. Simultaneously, the regime rejected the ethnic labels Lao and Khmer and preferred one ethnic group, Thai (Selway, 2007), which created tension with the Lao and Cambodian communities in the northeast and the Thai population. These tensions have not dissipated, as there is an ongoing struggle between agrarian workers and the state (Baker, 2000).

The CIEE program exposes students to the everyday struggles of communities as they navigate the neoliberal policies imposed on them by the government. During the 1980s, the Thai government focused on promoting capitalist development, particularly in rural areas. This interest led to the widespread commodification of rural land, which resulted in farmers losing their land. According to Kasian (2006), community lands were

privatized for non-agricultural purposes. The rise of the people's movement began in the 1990s as a result of the economic policies (Kitirianglarp & Hewison, 2009), further straining relations with agrarian communities. The country's economy was driven by market forces operated by the state and multinational corporations, which led to resource conflicts, displacement of communities, and erosion of peoples' ways of life (Phongpaichit, 2002). The unrelenting emphasis on developing the urban areas led to regional disparities, as the majority of rural resources were redirected to support urban growth (Kasian, 2006). As a result of resources being siphoned off to urban centers, villages assumed the role of distributing benefits of a welfare system, which included providing unemployment and retirement support, as well as other social functions (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2000). A grassroots social movement began out of everyday citizens coming together in opposition to government and IMF policies. This movement focused on rights, identity, environmental protections, and a process on the basis of which CIEE designed much of its program.

The Influence of Grassroots Social Movements on CIEE's Program

The CIEE Thailand program relied heavily on the knowledge and experience of community organizations that were mobilizing local communities to act against the Thai government. Organizations like the Non-Governmental Organization Coordinating Committee on Rural Development (NGO-CORD) and the Assembly of the Poor were instrumental in empowering local communities to rise up against state-imposed policies that supported corporate interests, which led to a grassroots people's movement. These organizations successfully mobilized the populations with whom they worked—workers, poor farmers, and other marginalized groups—against governmental policies that were

negatively impacting their communities. What was unique about these organizations and the movement in Thailand was that it revolutionized organizing in the country in four primary ways, which are core to the CIEE program.

First, a primary component of the CIEE program was an experience that was referred to as an “exchange,” which was modeled after the concept of the solidarity visits. Students would travel to surrounding communities to learn about the daily lives of community members and speak about the issues impacting them. Through this experience students would learn first-hand about the lives of community members from community members themselves, as well as learn about what organizing tactics were working in their movement and which ones were not. This was similar to solidarity visits that took place between communities in Thailand. For example, independent groups of farmers struggling against Thai authorities would hold separate protests for extended periods of time but would come into contact with one another. Leaders of these groups would make solidarity visits to other groups, where they would share information and compare their experiences of struggle (Prasartset, 2004). Solidarity visits gave organizers the opportunity to share not just knowledge, but also resources and show strength in numbers. Organizations like the Assembly of the Poor put greater emphasis on developing networks rather than political parties. Solidarity visits did not lead to a consolidation of power but an opportunity to amplify community voices, as well as to rethink organizing strategies. NGO-CORD utilized such networks to give the people in the movement access to domestic and international resources, academics, and researchers that would help to inform their demands and activities (Phongpaichit, 2002).

Second, an integral part of the CIEE experience was the concept of resistance through other tactics, which might be utilized in participants' final projects. Students were given the opportunity to make contributions to community's resistance movements by working on projects that met the identified needs of community members. For example, final projects assisted a community by building relationships between communities locally and globally or providing communities with research reports that contribute to their cases against the state or corporations. In Thailand, community organizers no longer focused on capturing the state; instead, they relied on everyday forms of resistance and focused on local actions. As a result, members of the movement learned how to press for policy and legal changes within the existing systems. Through social action and political lobbying, organizers were able to change institutions and the mindsets of political leaders (Phongpaichit, 2002). The CIEE program taught students to learn from community members about the ongoing work of their campaigns and what they have done to address the issues. Students learned about the strategies and tactics employed and their outcomes and then were given the opportunity to make additional contributions or work on projects that advanced local campaigns.

Third, the CIEE program was designed to help students explore Thai civil society as they collaborated with multiple communities that are linked by their struggles against neoliberal policies. There is considerable variation in the social class structures that exist in the Northeast region of Thailand. In rural areas, at one end of a spectrum, there are the advanced commercial farmers, and at the other are the landless farmers. In more urban settings, there are union workers, lawyers, educators, and community organizers working for NGOs. Additionally, as a result of commercialization, Thailand has evolved into a

post-peasant society (Elson, 1997). In an effort to halt neoliberal reform policies, a cross-class nationalist front began working with NGOs to develop a national discourse with a message of saving their country from the control of multinationals (Kitirianglarp & Hewison, 2009). The movement put greater emphasis on civil society than class identity. In the mid-1970's there was a socioeconomic change that occurred. In part it was due to an effort to squash communist infiltration in the rural areas, but there were two major roads built from the rural areas to urban centers (Nishizaki, 2014). This new infrastructure opened up commercial opportunities for farmers and it also allowed for large numbers of rural peasants to migrate to the cities. This migration allowed for the children of peasants to access schools. Over time these children grew to be professionals in fields like education and law, while simultaneously maintaining a connection to their communities back home (Baker, 2000). In the people's movement in the 1990's, there was widespread support because of the cross-class involvement in local actions.

Finally, the CIEE program emphasized to participants the importance of culture, identity, and community. Students engaged with communities in order to build relationships with the members, and to develop an understanding and respect for their culture and identities. All of this is rooted not in the perspective of charity or service, but in what it means to work together in solidarity. This links back directly to making the connection to Thai history. Drawing from people's movement, the focus of this movement was to create new ideologies that centered on culture, identity, and community. According to Phongpaichit (2002) social movements in Thailand are based on the village community. These movements focused on creating a future community not based on the vision of the state, but instead on their own ideals. As a result, communities

opposed the neoliberal economic policies and demanded alternative strategies instead. People organized to protect community rights against market individualism. They renewed their commitment to community solidarity and community cultures as a political strategy. These communities also demanded that the broader society acknowledge and respect the culture and values of a minority or oppressed community. This is really the heart of the CIEE program. In the next section I will provide an overview of the internal aspects of the program. This organizing history is foundational to the development of the CIEE Thailand program.

CIEE Thailand Program

The CIEE program was directly influenced by leaders of networks such as the Non-Governmental Organization Coordinating Committee on Rural Development (NGO-CORD) and the Assembly of the Poor, who were instrumental in the development of the CIEE Thailand program (Altman, Boonjear, Chupkhunthod, Herat, Jongrak, Kaewrakmuk, Leavell, MacGlashan, Mangis, Premrudeelert, Roggemann, & Streckfuss, 2006). Foundational to the model and objectives of the study abroad experience was the organizing work of these leaders with indebted farmers, slum communities, people with HIV/AIDS, landless farmers, and other oppressed groups. It is the design of this program model that frames social action and outlines the various characteristics of the program that contributed to participants' transformation into agents of social change upon the completion of their experience. The model for their program is rooted in community-based and experiential learning theories (2006), as evident in the objectives of the semester experience:

- Providing a space where students can learn to struggle and grow together as a community.
- Providing a space for meaningful cultural exchange.
- Providing opportunities for active learning by giving students first-hand experience with the interconnected issues of globalization and its impact on the communities of Northeast Thailand.
- Foster global responsibility by helping students reexamine their roles in globalization.
- Challenge students to reexamine their perception of what education is and how they learn.
- Connecting present and previous students to help them carry the lessons and skills learned here back home.
- Being an empowered presence and ally to communities.

(2006, p. 3). The next chapter outlines how students experience their personal struggles with understanding the privileges connected to their identities; cultural understanding through community exchange; understanding globalization and neoliberalism and their role in them; education; and serving in solidarity to communities.

The significance of the CIEE Thailand program is that it is not designed to be contingent on the Northeast Thailand context. The model is a “holistic and comprehensive approach to issues of social justice, solidarity, and civic engagement and can be transferred to any context” (2006, p. 4). It is not to be replicated, but other professionals can reflect on the components and how they may be incorporated into other international service-learning programs. This is possible because at the heart of the

program is a focus on the context of the program location and the stories and experiences of the local community. In the next section I will provide an overview of the program model and describe how the program incorporates the local context into the curriculum.

Program Overview

The focus of the CIEE Thailand program was on globalization and development, and the students spent 13 weeks exploring a variety of issues impacting local communities. In order to understand how globalization and development shaped these communities over time, participants took courses that gave them a historical understanding of the area, engaged in curricula that gave them a real world understanding of the neoliberal policies shaping communities in real time, learned about the influence of identity politics in organizing, and observed the organizing tactics and strategies that were employed by community organizers and community members. To help guide the participant learning experience the semester is organized into three parts: Orientation, The Units, and Final projects.

Orientation

When students first arrived in Thailand, they participated in an orientation process that lasted approximately two weeks. An initial orientation in Bangkok for the first few days included an introduction to Thai culture and the region, academic expectations, and learning about the program model that would be guiding their process, as well as an opportunity to develop bonds with the other participants, faculty, and program staff. Students then spent the next two weeks at a local retreat center located between Bangkok and Khon Kaen. The purpose of this extended orientation period was to provide students

with cultural immersion and understanding, programmatic experience, deliberative group building activities, and a deeper overview of the CIEE model.

CIEE placed emphasis on language and culture due to the importance of providing students with a foundation for engaging with communities. The program focused on language, Buddhism and Thai culture with sessions taught by native speakers who in some instances were CIEE staff. While these sessions started during orientation, they continued throughout the semester.

Additionally, students were introduced to issues of globalization and development during orientation, broadly and within the context of Thailand. During the orientation period, presentations were organized by local scholars and organizers to provide an overview of Thai history and how neoliberal policies are impacting local communities.

A key component of the orientation process was for students to explore their own educational experiences and what learning meant to them. This provided students the opportunity to explore how the educational process is standardized and how they are socialized within that process. These discussions allowed students to also talk about alternative forms of education, including a critique of the Ivory Tower (Altman, Boonjear, Chupkhunthod, Herat, Jongrak, Kaewrakmuk, Leavell, MacGlashan, Mangis, Premrudeelert, Roggemann, & Streckfuss, 2006).

Finally, the program placed significant emphasis on identity development within the context of diverse work groups. To prepare students for the work of engaging with people from different cultural backgrounds and lived experiences, students explored their individual social identities, power, and oppression. It was an opportunity for students to explore how their identities have shaped their educational experiences, how they function

in groups, and how their identities might shape their experiences with local community members. They would participate in group activities and discussions that focused on “race, exoticification, and otherness” (Altman, Boonjear, Chupkhunthod, Herat, Jongrak, Kaewrakmuk, Leavell, MacGlashan, Mangis, Premrudeelert, Roggemann, & Streckfuss, 2006, p. 33). This had a profound effect on students.

Courses

To meet the academic requirements of colleges and universities, the program was organized around a few different courses that students were expected to enroll in. These courses included: Thai Language, Buddhism and Thai Society, and The Human Perspective on Development and Environment. Thai Language, as previously mentioned, began once students arrived in Thailand.

The Human Perspective on Development and Environment was broken up into unit topics. Each semester, the program organized four to six units based on issues impacting local communities. These were macro issues that students explored through the lens of development and globalization. For example, students might have enrolled in an agriculture unit exploring agricultural policy, where they lived and learned from small-scale farmers, or a water unit that looked at dams and their effect on communities and national water policy, or a land unit that looked at mining issues and waste management, or an urban unit that explored a variety of issues, including slums and housing issues in city environments and rural/urban migration issues. The program spent approximately nine to ten weeks to go through each of the units. Each unit had six to seven components, which included readings, classroom instruction, briefings, community stays and exchanges, position papers, workshops, and “Where We’re At.”

Readings

Each unit consisted of two reading packets that students received to help their understanding of the issues. The first set of readings provided an examination of the issues through a larger global and academic lens, which helped prepare students for their community visits. The second packet provided the Thai and local perspective on issues that were impacting local communities. Reading packets drew from journal articles, newspaper articles, human rights reports, and issue-based reports. They also included research and reports written by former students and interns about the issues impacting the communities. Students were required to write a one- to two-page summary of the readings, which helped to guide their participation in the exchanges they had with the various stakeholders. Students used the readings to help guide and formulate the questions that they would discuss with the group to be considered for the exchanges. For example, if the unit was on paper mills, then the group would receive readings on forestry and impacts of paper mills and the process of making paper, as well as articles based on the perspectives of companies and of the villagers. Interns played a role in putting together the readings.

Classroom Instruction and Briefings

Over the course of the semester students received issue-based instruction from professors at the university or from community leaders knowledgeable about the issue. For each issue, students received three to nine-hour lectures, which covered environmental and development issues.

Briefings were specific to development and globalization issues that impacted communities in the region. To prepare for community visits and exchanges, a small

student group, who self-selected to lead this issue area, facilitated the briefings for the larger group. During briefing sessions students utilized the lectures and readings to formulate a list of issues that they wanted to explore together during their site visits. Students were expected to develop a course of action for how they organized themselves during exchange sessions. It was important to have a plan in place as exchanges could take several hours. For issue trips that were longer in duration, facilitators organized mid-trip briefings to check in with students.

Community Stays and Exchanges

Community stays were facilitated by two to three students who were responsible for guiding the group through a process of inquiry. When the group arrived in a community to investigate an issue, students often stayed with families in that particular community. These families were typically involved in or impacted by the issue that students were there to study. Depending on the issue, students participated in daily activities that the families were involved in. If the topic was related to landfills, the students might, if they chose, scavenged for food with their host family. The exchanges were an integral component to the learning experience of students. Issues have a variety of sides and perspectives, and exchanges provided students the opportunity to learn about each of them. Students met with a variety of stakeholders. Depending on the issue, community stays were either one- to two-weeks in length. The goal of exchanges was for students to make personal connections so that their “impersonal ‘academic’ understanding of the issue begins to fall away, and they see the issue in terms of people’s lives” (Altman, Boonjear, Chupkhunthod, Herat, Jongrak, Kaewrakmuk, Leavell, MacGlashan, Mangis, Premrudeelert, Roggemann, & Streckfuss, 2006, p. 8).

Another important component of the units was the “exchanges.” As one participant described them, they were “the clearest line of clarity around the human experience of globalization.” The exchange took place with an individual speaker coming to the retreat center to discuss the context that students would be learning about over the semester or it involved an exchange within a village. The people-to-people exchanges that occurred during the exchanges were typically done through an interpreter with pre-designed questions from both the community and students. Exchanges served two purposes: first they helped community members to tell their own stories of struggle and to build solidarity, and second, they created an opportunity for students to learn about what people were experiencing.

Position Papers and Workshops

Once students returned from their community stays, students wrote position papers based on problems posed by the student facilitators for that unit. The papers provided students with the opportunity to explore the variety of experiences and perspectives that they were exposed to while visiting the different stakeholders. Students were given the flexibility to create alternatives to the papers. For example, students could write newspaper articles and submit them, create photo essays, or develop a campaign proposal. All of these options were designed to prepare students for group workshops.

For each unit, student facilitators organized a three to four-hour workshop to provide students the opportunity to process their experiences in the community. The group worked together to identify key learning, underlying issues related to the unit topic, and questions for additional exploration to advance their understanding of the issues. They also identified further actions the group or individuals might take in the future.

Where We're At Check-Ins

After one or two units, students and staff took a full day to reflect on how members of the group were relating to each other, the impact the program was having on individuals, group dynamics, conflicts, and the overall process. Students and staff critiqued different components of the program up to that point, including language instruction. They also generated ideas for potential group projects that students could work on. The purpose of the Where We're At sessions was so students could evaluate where the group was going and to generate ideas to improve their process.

Participants

In this section I introduce the seven participants who self-selected to participate in this study. Their time as students in the program ranged from Fall 2002 to Fall 2006. I provided participants the opportunity to self-select the identities that resonated with them, as opposed to providing a narrow list of identities to select from. As a result, there were a wide variety of identities that ranged from race, class, and gender identities to parenthood. This was done for two reasons. First, I did not want to leave any identities off of the list, as identities are deeply personal to individuals. Second, given the social justice focus of this research, I wanted to learn from participants how they identified, and what this would say about how they identify given the context of their current work.

Kathy

Kathy is a White woman who participated in the program in the fall of 2003; currently she identifies as a mother and activist. Prior to her experience in Thailand, Kathy had experience travelling globally, but she decided to participate in the Thailand program because of the opportunity to work directly with communities. As she stated, "I

didn't just want to pick a study abroad program that was partying in Barcelona. I wanted to spend my time in communities. I wanted to be in communities more. I didn't want to be on the campus. So I think it's just essential. If you're going to learn about globalization and development, you have to spend time with the people that it affects the most." After she finished the program, she stayed on as a program intern and then as a community intern.

When Kathy returned for her final year of college, she completed an independent study on social movements and how to organize on a national scale. While in Thailand, she grew interested in organizing on a national level, in much the same way that she observed organizers of the Assembly of the Poor and the network in Northeast Thailand. For her study, she explored social movements in South America to understand: What was effective about national movements? What did not work? What were the strategies employed in these movements? In Thailand, she said, "they are all volunteers and they are all part of this social movement." During her final year of college, she also became interested in the issue of genocide, specifically with the crisis in Darfur.

Upon Kathy's graduation, she served with AmeriCorps VISTA for two years. She also was the co-founder of a coalition focused on genocide awareness. In her role as a volunteer coordinator for AmeriCorps, she was interested in understanding how programs are able to get people involved. How do you create an effective orientation program? How do you make such programs personal to motivate people to stay involved? How do you get paid staff to look at volunteers as an integral part of the program? In her second year, she held a VISTA leader position. During this period of time, she participated in the Northwest Leadership Corps. Currently, she works for a small international humanitarian

action organization that facilitates refugee-led programs that restore dignity in refugee camps and sites globally. They work in spheres of education, sports, human rights, and leadership development.

Adam

Adam participated in the CIEE Thailand program in fall semester 2002. He identifies as a middle-class Southerner of Western European (with some Eastern European) descent, male, cisgender and leaning in the hetero direction. Adam was drawn to the program out of his interests and vocational pursuits. Specifically, Adam was interested in alternative models of education as a way to solve social problems, models that were non-hierarchical, non-competitive, and non-capitalistic.

After Adam's return home, he received a prestigious scholarship from his college to study a global problem. Adam decided to study "Conflict in Water Resource Management." According to Adam, his focus was to "explore grassroots, transnational, trans-local fights around water management, rivers, and local water crises that people described as an impending crisis." This brought him back to Thailand twice, the first time for three months, and the second time for an additional three weeks. During this time, he worked with local people in a struggle against the Rasi Salai Dam. He also worked with organizers who were planning on hosting the second world gathering conference for dam-affected people and their allies. It was called Rivers for Life, and over 300 activists from 76 countries attended, including Berta Caceres, the Honduran activist who was assassinated in 2016.

After he graduated, Adam applied for teaching and organizing positions before settling on a teaching position at a local school in South Carolina. Adam taught at the

school for four years with a broad solidarity focus and approach in mind. He then returned to his undergraduate school where he worked in the civic engagement office, leading their Bonner Scholar Program. At the same time, he was organizing in mill neighborhoods, where textile mills employed members of the community. He then enrolled in a divinity school in a southern state to think about how to organize for social justice through the church. Currently, Adam is the co-executive director for a grassroots training school in rural Tennessee.

Cameron

Cameron identifies as a White, cisgender, heterosexual (most of the time), college educated male. At the time of his participation in the program, he identified as upper middle class. Cameron came into the program already politicized and familiar with “street protest culture.” Prior to enrolling in the program, Cameron had been involved in mass mobilization efforts, including protests of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Upon completion of the program, Cameron returned to his undergraduate college and worked on an environmental speaking tour that the ENGAGE network, a group of CIEE alumni, was working on to bring organizers from Thailand to speak with communities in the United States. After graduating, he returned to Thailand for two years to serve as a program intern for the CIEE program. Once he finished his internship role, he assumed responsibility for the ENGAGE office, which was at the time located in Maine, and he moved it to San Francisco. For the next three years Cameron supported the collaborative efforts of the ENGAGE Network. He left to start a graduate program in

New York City. While there, he worked for a social justice center and organized for a local union.

He currently runs a comparative-studies, human-rights-focused study abroad program for college students. The program takes students to New York, Nepal, Jordan, and Chile each semester. He is also actively involved in a national network of social justice donors. These are individuals that are wealthy or have access to wealth and who are interested in giving it to social justice organizations, particularly those that operate from a social justice framework.

Beth

Beth identifies as a White woman, who at the time of her participation in the program identified as middle-class. Currently, she identifies as a lower-middle class professional. Beth participated in the program in the fall semester 2003. For Beth, studying abroad did not seem like a possibility for her: “I assumed it would be really expensive and just not accessible.” But, she was drawn to the program because of its focus on globalization and development with the opportunity to work directly with communities and with NGOs. The program was related to her course of studies and interests, but the program offered her the opportunity to see these issues from “different perspectives, including corporations, community members, and organizers.” Beth stayed in Thailand for a full year. After completing her semester as a student, she stayed on as a Community Intern for the following spring and summer semesters, working with local communities to prepare them and students for the community stays.

Since Beth’s time in the program, she has worked in the nonprofit sector. She worked for a transportation safety organization that was a part of a national coalition that

focused on bicycle and pedestrian advocacy. She currently works for a nonprofit organization that certifies environmentally sustainable wine growing. Beth also serves on the ENGAGE Board of Directors and has maintained a collaborative working relationship with NGO-COORD in Thailand. She is working collaboratively with them on an organizing approach. Beth serves on a transportation advocacy group for a Pacific Northwest state and on the leadership councils of a food collective and local food organizations in a western state.

Manuel

Manuel identifies as a Latino, low-income male. He participated in the program in fall semester 2005. Manuel started to become politically aware when he was in junior high school; then he was active in anti-war protests against the War in Iraq in 2002. Prior to going to Thailand, he felt that he was already “active, learning, and searching for education on my own.” He was trying to learn things on his own to “find the truth. Because I realized kind of what we're learning is not really too much truth in it.” Initially he wanted to study in Japan, but the only options he was finding were business schools. When he found the Thailand program, he was excited about the opportunities: "Go fishing in the Mekong River. This sounds awesome. I want to do this."

After Manuel completed his semester in Thailand, he served as a Program Intern. After he completed his internships, he lived for two years in the Dominican Republic to work with the director of a study abroad program to implement practices similar to those of the Thailand program. Currently, he spends a great deal of time organizing for a community action organization around the issue of homelessness and housing on the West Coast. Manuel argues that people who are experiencing homelessness are victims of

rampant abuse at the hands of the police. He contends this is largely due to the fact that “many of the tactics employed by the police are first tested on the homeless community.” He is working with another organization to conduct research on the surveillance practices of the police and their impact on the larger community. Additionally, Manuel is also a member of ENGAGE because he wants to serve as a mentor to returning students from the program. Currently, Manuel is a self-employed fashion designer who started his own clothing line, and he manufactures clothes for other people to sustain himself financially.

Patrick

Patrick participated in the program in the fall semester of 2003. He identifies as a white, middle-class male. The program was initially recommended to Patrick because of his interest in development and foreign policy, and this particular program was one that his college would allow him to participate in to meet his requirements.

After Patrick finished the program, he returned to campus feeling a bit confused and lost. It was not solely culture shock that he was experiencing but trying to understand his purpose. As Patrick stated, “What is this world we are living in? And how do you make it a better world? What does help look like, and what is my role in that?” After he received his bachelor’s degree, Patrick went back to Thailand to work for the program for the next four years. He enrolled in a master’s program focused on international education. For a few years he worked for a study abroad program that organized comparative, multi-country experiences. He still works in the field of study abroad. Currently, Patrick works on the operations side of the field, as opposed to the program side.

Through his involvement with the program’s alumni network, Patrick was involved in various campaigns, including a fair-trade rice campaign, a Thai organizer

speaking tour, and a discussion via the internet between miners from Thailand with miners from Kentucky discussing their experiences and challenges. More recently, Patrick worked with a group of alumni to bring a delegation of Indigenous First Nation activists to Mexico to discuss their anti-mining activities. Delegations came from British Columbia and Northeastern Thailand to meet with three different communities from Southwestern Mexico to discuss their struggles with existing and proposed gold mines in the area. It was a solidarity organizing initiative to bring together people who are directly impacted by mines. Patrick is also a part of an organizing effort to free one of the Thai organizers who was recently imprisoned for his activist work against dams. Alumni are continuing to try and keep his name out there, so people do not forget about him.

Sara

Sara was a part of the cohort that participated in the spring of 2007. She identifies as a White, heterosexual woman. The Thailand program was of interest to her because she studied Southeast Asian history and was interested in going to Cambodia. Sara was unable to identify any study abroad programs in that country, but did find the program in Thailand. Although she did acknowledge having progressive politics prior to her involvement in the program, she did not know anything about the program.

After the program, Sara served in the internship program as a Program Facilitator in fall 2007 and spring 2008. Today, Sara does a lot of organizing and movement building work, both personally and professionally. She currently works with a coalition of organizations that are working on issues related to immigration and refugee rights in a southern state. While the organization focuses on a variety of aspects, the backbone of their work is community organizing and leadership development in diverse immigrant

and refugee communities across the state. They work with these communities to help these populations identify issues impacting their communities, develop solutions, and develop public policy campaigns to improve their situations.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

CIEE had a profound impact on the seven participants who took part in this study. They came from different lived experiences, social identities, regions of the country, perspectives on social justice, and understandings about globalization and development, but all discussed alternative education and continued justice work local and globally. During the process of analyzing the data from participant interviews and a thorough review of program materials, I reflected on the findings and themes that have emerged in this case study and thought very deeply about where to begin to tell the story of the CIEE program. If the intention is to understand how this program shapes the learning of students, it is necessary to share their journey holistically.

While collecting and analyzing the data, participants continually emphasized the concepts of alternative education and solidarity. I use these terms specifically because they are the phrases that students in the CIEE program used to describe their experience in the program. I will share how different elements of an alternative educational experience fostered deep learning that resulted in the solidarity participants engaged in with local communities, and which is part of their ongoing commitment to social justice. During the analysis process, I continuously reflected on the conceptual framework for this study to provide the roots of alternative education that emerge from the data. This study provides an opportunity for international service-learning practitioners to explore how context deepens the learning of students and strengthens the relationship with communities.

In this section, I discuss the overarching concept of alternative education and more importantly, the specific characteristics of the program that led to their learning. The themes that emerged from the data included *conscientização* (Freire, 2002), pedagogy of the non-poor (Evans, Evans, & Kennedy, 2000), engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1994), opening up to collaboration (Tsing, 2016), and critical service-learning (Mitchell, 2008), which is explored below. This is followed by an exploration of how participants are applying the learning from the programs throughout their lives as I examine the process of synthesis and transformation. Throughout I discuss how this data answers my research questions.

Conscientização: Critical Consciousness

The CIEE program intentionally exposed students to a variety of ideas and relationships that helped to nurture their critical consciousness. In this section I examine sub-themes that emerged in the data, including dynamic pedagogy, relinquishing control, and praxis.

Dynamic Pedagogy

One characteristic of the program that students identified as contributing to their learning was a dynamic learning experience, unlike the traditional classroom settings that they were familiar with in the United States. This experience of dynamic learning was constantly changing, centered students in the learning process, and ignored typical tools for measuring knowledge. For several participants, the CIEE program offered them a new way of engaging in their own learning. As Manual described,

The classroom setting isn't enough and you're just so hungry. You kind of go beyond because you've been trained to go beyond because that passion is not satisfying anymore. It's not enough. It's not enough for someone just to be

standing up there and just to hear from that same person, and that's the story. It's like, that's not the full story.

While it was not without form, students were given the charge to determine the course of the nature of their own experiences. Participants described how the CIEE program was a new way of learning for them and an experience that was new every day. Although students' days lacked set course schedules and structures for the most part, with the exception of language and Buddhism classes, students were given the freedom to fill their time with the activities that they needed to complete. This gave them ownership of learning, placed them directly in the field and community, and motivated them to keep learning beyond the classroom. This freedom opened the door for new ways of thinking, as well as encouraged accountability to their peers and community members. As Beth explained,

You didn't have your days off. You didn't have your one-hour classes. You didn't have your tests or assignments to kind of check off the list. So, I think just because it wasn't any of those things, it led to kind of thinking about and being exposed to different ways to learn. It was obviously very deliberate on the part of the program. It provided continued learning for reflection to bring on an emotional and personal side to say how people were feeling in certain situations.

Beth stressed that this learning was different from a more traditional learning experience, where what "happens in the one-hour class that you are in stays there." For Beth, the CIEE program provided a space to be able to adapt, change, and reflect.

Manuel also spoke about how the unstructured nature of the program gave him ownership of his learning, placed him in the field, and motivated him to keep learning beyond the classroom.

I guess what made it so impactful was that it's all so real. It's not in the classroom, in a book at all. You're in the field. You're asking the questions. You're getting the information. And so, I think that really helps people take ownership of it.

Similarly, for Sara this new hunger for ownership of her own learning brought her to a crossroads on her educational path. Part of that stemmed from “figuring out... what self-directed learning looks like.” In part, she was looking for more than just your typical “book learning or lecture learning or academic institution learning.” Sara’s reflection speaks to Freire’s (2002) critique of traditional classroom settings, where students spend much of their time learning how to store information, the “banking” style of education. When learning is taken out of the classroom and put into the hands of students, they begin to develop a critical consciousness, or *conscientização*, and begin to cultivate the tools to support and advocate for change.

A key aspect of the CIEE experience that contributed to student learning was its grounding in the local context, which took them away from any formal classroom setting. Students would visit local villages to learn from villagers, as well as visit other key stakeholders, including corporate interests and government agencies. The program immersed students in the lives and struggles of villagers. As Manuel explained,

After reading Miles Horton and different educational models and understanding that we're not trying to have this teacher to student learning. We're trying to have peer learning. We're going to learn from people who've actually been through the experience.

Manuel went on to describe what this looked like for him, as he was given ownership over his own learning, and the drive it created in him, to not just learn the truth, but to search for the truth. He said,

So, it was like no one's going to give it to you and if they give it to you, they're just giving you their opinion. There are different ways to look at it. I'm going to go out and I'm actually going to talk. Okay, well, I'm studying dams and we're going to the freakin' power agency to speak to them directly and see what they have to say and I'm going to grill them with questions and I'm going to prepare my questions and that information that I receive is going to be my data. Similarly, I'm going to go and investigate in the community, go see what the issues are, ask

the questions firsthand, and let them speak for themselves. And that's going to be my data. And then I'm going to go to the library, and I'm going to go online, and I'm going to see the international context, and I'm going to go and see like, "Okay. Well, who funded this thing? Where's the money coming from?" And connecting all the pieces. And I didn't even need a professor. So now, I'm just learning and I'm getting it and I'm asking the questions.

The student-centered nature of the program was also a characteristic of the program that contributed to their learning. This new way of thinking and learning allowed students to reconsider what they were required to learn versus what they wanted to learn. The program shed a teacher-centered approach to learning and put students in the driver's seat of their exploration of issues. Unlike the more typical banking model (Freire, 2002) of education that American students have mostly experienced, what the CIEE program provided students was the opportunity to work in groups: students both designed their own learning and facilitated a process amongst their peers through discussions and activities around the unit they were responsible for facilitating. This learning also encouraged students to think critically and ask larger questions. Cameron expressed how a student-centered approach inspired him not only to learn, but also to explore the larger questions of globalization and development. These questions were illuminated through the program, which mobilized him to respond to what he was witnessing,

To me, I just-- it lit a fire under me, and it totally turned me on. I think I was completely energized by that type of learning that was student-centered. I became movement oriented based upon learning about the various mechanisms of globalization, corporate globalization, and how it's affecting the lives of people and community. But I owned my own learning.

By being out of the classroom and having this reality be front and center every day, Patrick reflected, "it sparked something in the mind of a student. You do meet people who are marginalized and oppressed. You meet people who are organized. You see those things. [The experience] kind of takes over your life for three months." This

immersion in the local context awoke for Patrick the idea that there are real life consequences to economic structures, including capitalism. Rather than learning about capitalism in the vacuum of a classroom, his experience brought the issues that they were discussing to life. He knew this because he watched these issues unfold daily. This new lens of critical consciousness encouraged a shift in his thinking and learning.

In describing his time in Thailand, Adam reflected on the violence he previously experienced in traditional education environments through standardized testing, and the liberation he felt during the CIEE program, which opened his eyes to a new way to learn. The CIEE program led Adam to question the purpose of education.

When I was in high school, it was in the season of when they were doing a lot of experimental tests on us, on students in public schools. And I remember feeling really, really kind of outraged about that as a young person even though I did really well on these tests. But it created a lot of anxiety, it created a lot of distractions, it created a lot of competition. It just didn't really mean anything. I remember being very disappointed in that and very enraged by that at different points. And so, when I was going to college, I initially was thinking I could be a good teacher, or I wanted to explore what that could look like, but I didn't want to do it in this particular way. I didn't want to have to teach to tests. I didn't want to have to force young people into violent, what I would consider psychologically and emotionally violent experiments with one another. And so yeah, [through the program] I was experiencing what I would consider a cull in the direction of alternative ways of talking about learning and change early on, and it came by somewhat naturally.

A dynamic pedagogy does not teach to tests; instead, it encourages a way of learning that focuses on how we live in this world. Traditional learning settings rely on examinations and have the ability to create undue harm on young people. Systemic violence is perpetuated through institutional practices and procedures that have a negative impact on individuals and groups, psychologically, mentally, culturally, spiritually, economically, and/or physically (Ross Epp & Watkinson, 2004). The CIEE program provided them the opportunity to name the violence that they were experiencing in their own learning

experience, reflect on it, and give them opportunities to re-imagine what education could look like in a less violent and intense environment.

This led students to rethink their ideas about what receiving an education meant to them. Adam recalls that he “felt like something was tugging me in the direction of looking at the purpose of education more closely and interrogating what the whole purpose of it was.” For some, this resulted in the need to step away from formalized education after their CIEE experience. As Sara recalled, “I took a break from college after the program” because it was a “struggle” for her to go back to a traditional classroom setting. Her time in Thailand led to her resisting formalized learning in the classroom. The CIEE program encouraged a format in which students could explore and question what it was that they wanted to know. As Beth reflected, “It was a format that I think in itself you have to be a participant and it requires participation. You can’t just skirt by and take the test, which is the more mainstream format of education.”

As a result of this experience in Thailand, students were able to reimage what education could look like and how to participate in it. Each of these aspects of the CIEE Thailand program fostered a dynamic pedagogy that encouraged critical thinking on the part of students because it focused minimally on the structural conditions of learning, fostered a student-centered experience, and encouraged students to question the truth behind what they were learning.

Relinquishing Control

The CIEE program introduced the notion of relinquishing control in the learning process, another characteristic that influenced student learning. Evans, Evans, and Kennedy (2000) suggest that for the non-poor, the educational options “have to do with

the preservation of what is or the transformation of what is” (pp. 220-221). In opting for the transformation of “what is,” students are encouraged to relinquish control. Beth recalled being encouraged by program coordinators to let go of control, particularly in their work within the community. As she said,

They used to say, “It’s important to just kind of let go of control, let go of knowing.” Because once you’re in that environment, whether or not even over time when I got to know the language better, you have to just kind of give yourself into the situation. So, whatever if people might come by and pick you up in a tractor or go a couple of villages away to have a meeting or prepare meals at different hours. Or any number of expectations that you may have or I may have had, you just have to let go of it and let yourself—yeah.

The program offered students a chance to push back against outside expectations. At the same time, they had to relinquish the control that they felt they needed to assume and think about what they actually wanted. On a deep personal level, it pushed participants in a direction where they were encouraged to practice in their own lives what they were learning about and observing in communities of resistance.

The CIEE program gave students the opportunity to consider what they wanted their future to be, and it put them in settings within communities in Thailand where members were also trying to make decisions and take control of their own lives. The CIEE program opened up the door for participants to both take control of the future, and also relinquish that desire to control an experience that they are not the center of. For Adam, education and learning had always been an experience that was controlled for him. Learning that he could have control over his education and learning was life altering. As he reflected,

And going to Thailand and then it being not only really cool, like, “Oh, not only are we learning these alternative educational practices like decision-making and collective scheduling,” just a whole bunch of those kinds of things. But it was a

prefigurative experience. It was not just an activity to make people feel good. It was an activity to help people take control of their own destinies. And that, to me, was a very game-shifting-- for me, a life-shifting thing to have experienced because it was hitting a lot of things at once. I was like stepping into a lane, so to speak. Very much stepping into my own lane around, 'This is what I should be doing with my life.'

Prefigurative politics, according to Breines (1980), centers on participatory democracy with a primary focus "to create and sustain within the live practice of the movement, relationships and political forms that 'prefigured' and embodied the desired society" (p. 6). Prefigurative politics stand in opposition to hierarchical and centralized organization and requires a movement that uplifts the egalitarian and democratic society that it seeks to create. A cornerstone of the CIEE program is thus linked to Hunter (2000):

What is desired is a complete reshaping of the participants' view of themselves and of their world. This radical new orientation is to result in a reordering of values and new ways of acting out those values in individual behavior and in political and social action for change (p. 177).

This is significant, as the majority of participants come from White, middle-class backgrounds and hold stereotypes of what poor people from other countries experience and how they live. The program worked to transform or "reorder" these perceptions, but more importantly, explored with students what working in solidarity could look like. As Patrick reflected,

It'd be very easy for a program like this to produce a cohort of people who come back and want to save the people and want to save people in Thailand. And then you have mostly, predominantly upper-class white people wanting to save people of color in a different country. I think the difference is that we've tried to do it from a solidarity standpoint and work with people and sort of as comrades. It'll be like, "Together, we can work on this together." But just kind of being cognizant of that and cognizant of who we are and what we represent and how we might come across to other people.

Based on the experience of students, they were deeply moved by being a part of a learning environment that was so unlike any that they had before. They were uninspired by stale classroom learning environments, and the CIEE program brought learning to life for them in a way that made them want to search for more information and answers. It put them in control of their own learning and made them want to find new ways to act out their values. It framed for them a new way of thinking and a new way of learning, and equipped them with the tools to undertake a radical new approach to learning.

Praxis

This critical and deep understanding and quest for answers is what leads to the critical consciousness—*conscientização*—that allows for what Freire (2002) described as praxis: theory and action. An important aspect of the alternative educational experience, students described praxis as significant to their learning because it was bringing together what they learned about: the theoretical grounding and the lived experiences, reflection on that learning, and decisions about appropriate responses to the injustices that they were watching unfold in communities. Kathy highlighted how limiting traditional educational settings could be because they did not offer students the opportunity to act, which was something that the CIEE program offered students. As she said,

I think it presents the student with an opportunity to learn differently. So, up and until that time, you pretty much would not have experienced the phase or the cycle of learning that went from research, personal engagement at various levels – personal engagement with people, different stakeholders involved in the issue – to synthesis, to action projects.

This idea of a complete learning experience was also illuminated by Manuel and an experience that he had while in Thailand. Seeking the truth, knowing the whole story, asking the difficult questions: Thailand was a really profound experience for Manuel. He

reflected on a specific incident of unrest in the community and how everything that he had learned in the program came to life for him. Manuel gave an example of what could be done:

[My professor] took me out, and we were reporting, and we were getting published in the Bangkok Post and stuff and writing stories. And so, we were reading the paper, and we were like, "This is some bullshit. This isn't what's going on here." So, we went out, and we wrote a story and took photos, and it got published. I mean, when do you get to have those experiences as a college student and get published in the Bangkok Post with your professor? It's just so in the world and brought everything we were learning together. I was witnessing what was happening and we did something about it.

The CIEE program roots the learning experience of participants in a process to develop their critical consciousness, what Freire (2002) calls *conscientização*. By witnessing the lived experience of community members, participants of the program developed new perspectives and understandings of the world around them, which they were then able to reflect on as it related to their own lives. This approach, as Freire (2002) asserts, validates the use of experience and the lived reality of the participants in order to foster liberation and create change based on that knowledge. This transformation led to solidarity actions on the part of participants in support of the communities they were working with in Thailand.

Engaged Pedagogy: Disrupting Power

Another important theme that emerged from the data was engaged learning. The CIEE program expands who is considered the teacher and redefines what the classroom is for students, and in doing so redefines power in the classroom. The program continually tried to disrupt students' preconceived understanding of who teaches, who holds knowledge, and who holds power, which was an important characteristic of the program leading to student learning. Drawing from the work of Freire, hooks (1994) introduced

the concept of “engaged pedagogy” to further disrupt traditional classroom environments, particularly hierarchical relationships, with teachers holding power and knowledge in learning spaces. Traditional classroom settings create hierarchical teaching environments, where students are often expected to share, and “to confess” the stories of their lived experiences (hooks, 1994, p. 21). hooks emphasized holistic learning where education is liberation, not a measure of power. According to hooks, when teachers create environments where students are expected to share without reciprocation from teachers, it creates a power dynamic in the classroom which could be coercive.

The CIEE program in many ways creates an engaged pedagogical experience for students because it shifts power from teachers to students, but it also redefines who holds knowledge in learning settings. As Cameron observed,

I both saw the ways in which structural processes like capitalist development are dramatically just changing the way that people view the world and that have a sort of colonizing effect on knowledge production, particularly in the margins of capitalist society. But then also, and I think this is crucial, communities have their own sources of knowledge production. They use this knowledge in their resistance movements to fight injustices and the structural processes that create those injustices. And so I think the program gave me an understanding of the violence of that sort of knowledge colonization.

It was through this shift in learning that students were able to reconsider their engagement in community—how they understood the root causes of societal issues, relations of power, what political education looks like, and what solidarity looks like; they also learned how to develop skills that allowed them to make contributions to collective action. The categories of experience that emerged included: centering knowledge, responsibility in learning, heart opening, and hope.

Centering Knowledge

From the outset of the program students identified the experience of shifting their understanding of knowledge as an important component of their learning. Adam discussed that this shift in understanding occurred for him at the very outset of the program with the Thai language classes. As he recalled, the program didn't bring in outside language experts, but instead relied on program staff to teach the classes. These were staff who were responsible for program finances or coordinating logistics for site visits, etc. For him, there was also a preconceived notion of what it meant to be a staff member of a program and who was considered an expert. As he recalled,

So, what was powerful about [the Thai language classes] was that it wasn't just the language learning track, it was very much like an equalizer in knowing. Nobody was an expert in that except for the Thai people who were teaching us.

Participants identified similar perspectives in regard to the knowledge that villagers held about the issues impacting their lives. As Manuel recalled, "We're giving the farmer who is learning through these experiences growing rice and allowing them to be the professor and validating their experiences as a legitimate experience just as we would validate a professor who's talking to us." Similarly, Sara recalled, "But what was good about the model was that it was grounded in the sort of lived experience of people, so we weren't learning again from sort of an academic expert on any topic but instead we're learning from the people themselves."

Additionally, an integral part of the CIEE program was students' exposure to the work of community organizers and what participants were able to learn from observing how community organizers worked in villages with community leaders and members. Participants identified engagement with community organizers as an important

contribution to their learning. They were able to observe the intentionality of local organizers as they engaged with and mobilized the communities toward action.

Observations of community organizers was an opportunity to consider the question: what does good organizing look like in the field? Sara recalled the importance of being able to watch the organizers engage with community members: “It was really fascinating to me, the sort of interplay between community organizers and sort of what was happening with the communities and their development as an organization and as a movement.” Kathy reflected on being able to observe the prowess of organizers to empower communities:

I think the program really exposes you to the work of community organizers, who can have natural skills at mobilizing community leaders and members. And you saw a lot of that in the program. And you saw this idea of what they called INGOs, Individual Non-Governmental Organizations, to go around to these communities, to [mobilize] around different issues to support community responses to government policies and actions or help make agreements with the government. And those INGOs help that community to organize, not by telling them what to do but by facilitating and empowering within the community.

Cameron discussed the intentionality that Thai organizers used to develop relationships with community leaders. He first stressed that communities have a developed leadership structure, where the head person’s leadership is “historically situated in the community.” These community relationships influence the Thai organizers’ process in working with communities to address the issues that are impacting their livelihoods. As Cameron stated, “the organizer in those communities is ultimately working in a context with a really vibrant ecosystem of relationships... and they work really hard to integrate into themselves into the community.” Sometimes this intentionality included when to introduce and how to use students in their organizing strategies.

Intentionality came with very specific choices that organizers would make to gain the trust of community members. By making these choices, organizers demonstrated to students what vulnerability and justice can look like within the community context. Organizers were not attempting to explain to community members what the right answer was in how to act but relied on the community's knowledge and experience to guide their response. Beth shared a story of observing the process of one organizer who "moved into the village as a way to gain the trust" of community members. As she said,

He lived in the village, got to know everybody, made clear what he does, and what he was interested in. And then kind of helped work with a couple of the leaders of the village to really establish and run a community organization around the issue. He knew everyone in the village, really well.

By removing the hierarchy of student-teacher relationships, CIEE puts students in the position to observe and learn about how to work in communities.

Not only were organizers modeling what good organizing could look like, but they also served as inspiration, because to become an organizer is a commitment to the cause and a way of life. Manuel retold a powerful story of two organizers that coordinated an action at Pak Mun Dam on the Mun River, the moon river, which is a tributary of the Mekong River. The river runs through Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand and feeds 60 million people. As he recalled, "this massive resistance of villagers sprouted there, and these two were the leaders—and kind of like a lot of the other village groups looked up to them. And they were the head of The Assembly of the Poor. And very stoic." He remembered his arrival at the protest:

You roll up and these dudes have these long beards because they haven't cut their beards since the dam was built. And one thing that always stuck out to me as a student or when you're sitting and talking to these villagers is, it's pretty much-- It's do or die. We're going to die resisting this dam until we liberate this river because it means that much to me. And you have very powerful images like

they're leading a protest in the river in the area that's flooded-- flooding and they're neck deep as the water is rising holding out on their process.

Cameron reflected on being able to envision his own future as an organizer through observing local organizers, but also developing lifelong mentoring relationships with them. As he said,

I was able to see what life on the left could look like and to kind of develop relationships with mentors who can sort of hone that for me and with me. And I do think that many of my most significant mentor relationships were with organizers and older generation folks in Thailand. These folks are people I'm still in touch with and have been in touch with for the 15 years since I went on the program.

Similarly, Adam concluded that he also wanted to become a community organizer through the relationships that he developed with Thai organizers. He discussed being challenged by his Thai mentors to consider next steps:

We had these elders from the Thai People's Movement asking really hard questions like, Alright, cool. So, you've come onto this really great semester experience, what are you going to do with it now? So, we were pushed very, very, very early on in that semester to really start thinking about what does it mean to build solidarity everywhere you go? It was just amazing. [Local organizers] became my models for me and I decided that I need to be an organizer.

Engaged pedagogy focuses on removing hierarchies in learning environments, which promotes a sense of freedom in learning. The CIEE program gave students the opportunity to reimagine who holds knowledge and who participants are able to learn from. Learning does not just come from those who stand in front of a classroom and lecture on a particular topic. Knowledge comes from lived experiences, which are equally valid and equally inspirational.

CIEE created opportunities for students to be active participants in their own learning; in doing so, students were able to engage freely with the ideas and information to which they were exposed. Students were encouraged to critique current knowledge

claims or interpretations of evidence in real time. hooks (2010) argues, “Ultimately there is the awareness that knowledge rooted in experience shapes what we value and as a consequence how we know what we know as well as how we use what we know” (p. 185). The program encouraged students to be critical thinkers, which means being able to think independently and take action in support of themselves. It is through those actions that students are able to gain experience.

Responsibility in Learning

Students in the program were given ownership of their own learning, which occurred primarily through curricular design. “We have a philosophy of giving students ownership over their education,” Cameron recalled being told during orientation. “If you guys want, we want to give you the opportunity as a group to, collectively, actually create your own schedule based on the relationships we have with the communities that we are connected to.” Just like that students were given the power to decide what it was that they wanted to learn for the semester and how they were going to learn it.

Students were given full range to both design the curriculum for the semester and, in smaller work groups, design their units that they selected to be responsible for. They took this charge very seriously, as it was an important part of their learning. Participants commented on how designing the curriculum provided them with a sense of responsibility for their own learning experience. As Adam recalled, “The program's front and center task was students claiming responsibility for their own learning.” After Adam’s cohort decided on the units they would learn about over the course of the semester, he recalled the responsibility that his small group took to prepare for facilitating the learning process: “Groups planned to facilitate their units, facilitation groups would

do site visits so they could understand the issue better and prepare their peers with their briefings, community stays, and exchanges.” He said, “We were designing our own learning. It was pretty remarkable. We were having a whole immersion upon immersion upon immersion” experience. He further commented,

There is a different sense of empowerment that comes from that. You go out with a group of two to three students to design a week-long learning experience for your fellow students and you become a little bit of an expert. There’s a different level of accountability and ownership over a particular thing. And you’re going on behalf of the whole collective, so it’s pretty amazing.

Similarly, Sara reflected on how students broke up into groups based on their topic of interest and planned for the unit. Students assumed responsibility for “facilitating the group, developing their learning goals, and developing the plans for the exchanges and things like that, but it was very much student-directed learning.” Cameron recalled that being given the agency to shape their educational experience meant “taking up some responsibility with students.” While his group created a curriculum so packed that they didn’t have a single day off during the semester in order to meet everyone’s interest, he felt that “they couldn’t complain because they had created it.”

By turning the curriculum design over to the students, CIEE created an environment where students took ownership of their learning. This led them to engage in a collective, democratic decision-making process to ensure that everyone was included in the process, which was not easy. Cameron discussed the agency that students were given to design their own learning experience, even though it could be a messy process. He said,

For the first week we hammered out a schedule, it was a grueling process, but everyone’s topic of interest was included. I think the pedagogy in the program very much centered students in the learning experience. It had a more democratic

approach where students had to sort of really take ownership of their learning. And I think that I kind of immediately took to that as a student.

Similarly, Beth discussed the process of negotiation within the group, but also the organic nature of decision making that took place. While students did receive some guidance from staff and interns, it was very much a learn as you go model. But the group made decisions together. As Beth said,

In the curriculum, there was not a specific-- there wasn't specific content around skill building, around decision making, or conflict resolution, or facilitation, consensus, anything like that. It was kind of more, just learn on the go, and then feedback and debriefing. We always felt very strongly about consensus in decision making. I don't think that was an expectation that was pushed on us from the program. It just was something that we had to negotiate as a group as to how we wanted to make decisions.

This collective decision-making process also flowed into the facilitation of students who led individual units, which all of the participants identified as an important part of their learning. They incorporated it into their preparation for exchanges with communities, as the group decided what it was that they wanted to know and understand about the issue. Kathy said, "You would decide as a group what questions you would ask. You would have discussions around what you thought was the most important aspects of globalization development within those." Sara also said, "As a student group, we were able to figure out, 'Okay, what do we want to learn? What is it that we're going to try to uncover through these conversations?' Then we collectively put together our questions." Patrick reflected on how students would ultimately lead pre-sessions, exchanges, and post-sessions for each unit. He said,

Together we would decide what questions are we going to ask, and what did you think of the readings, and what do we want to know? Asking those kinds of questions. So, it gave students more participation in directing their learning. You've read the material. You've heard the lectures. Now, we're meeting the people that are part of this issue. What can we learn from them? How can we

avoid just asking them the same questions and getting answers we already know? How do you build rapport with the community? Because from the reading-- what can we get from this experience? So, it forced us to think about that, and think about the questions, and think about what we wanted from our experience.

Adam felt that the entire process should “not be an extractive, individualistic thing, but as being a very collective process that should have much more purpose than just getting information.” It is through our engagements and interactions with others that we are opened up to new understandings of current realities. When our experiences are limited by what we understand as truth, then there is the potential for that truth to become distorted by those who are in control of information. This can lead to those in power preserving the status quo they have conceived in order to protect their own interests.

Heart Opening

The CIEE program developed experiences for the participants to merge the mind and body, which students identified as having a profound experience on their personal development. The initial exposure to holistic mind/body learning was in the Buddhism classes that students began taking when they arrived in Thailand. Beth was moved by the experience of incorporating deep reflection, which she attributed to this experience. As she recalled, “The Buddhism classes helped me to think about the connection to my body. Considering the mind and the spirit and the heart part, it was certainly impacted.” hooks (1994) discussed the importance of the holistic development of educators, to counter the traditional educational environments which created a mind/body split. Similarly, Cameron commented, “I think I really liked the fact that we had an element of focus on Buddhism and I think I ended up being really drawn to that and doing some mindfulness work. Sort of quieting myself and developing my listening strategies and improving the way that I listen.” Adam also discussed learning from Buddhists in Thailand how to hold

spaces for people to share their experiences, which is something that he “walks with today.” He said, It’s a “non-anxious presence sort of approach to holding space with young people in general and asking questions. There's a lot that I picked up from that in terms of how to hold that kind of listening space with people.”

Adam discussed how Buddhism gave him the opportunity to reflect on his own experience with organized religion:

I haven't done enough reflection or enough intentional study on the tenets of Buddhism to notice for sure, but I know that in those moments I grew to understand my own sort of conservative Christian practice in a very different way. And it was in a way that it was not in conflict with the Buddhist practices that I encountered and mimicked and engaged with. But in another way, they just taught me knowing your own people because these things are inside our folkways and our ways of being and that you don't need the industry to tell you, ‘You know what? You don't need an organized religion to tell you that.’ And so, I think those are more contemplative practices that I was able to experience through community stays that were more Buddhist in their sort of purpose.

The Buddhism course offered students the opportunity to experience something more profound, which they referred to as heart opening. Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh (2008) emphasized the practice of Engaged Buddhism, which emphasized the importance of a union of mind, body, and spirit. He stated, “We have to be aware of what is going on in our body, our feelings, our emotions, and our environment” (p. 29). Wholeness does not come from acquiring knowledge alone, but “knowledge about how to live in the world” (hooks, 1994, p. 15). Participants described this merging of mind and body as heart support or heart opening, particularly within the context of neoliberal corporate policy. Manuel said,

So, the biggest thing you can do is give someone else heart support. And that's really what it is. What these oppressive power structures do is they'll try to make you feel low. That's one of the main things. Every corporation when they're-- the tar sands to the Keystone pipeline to Standing Rock to the gold mine in Thailand to fucking Nigerian petroleum fields, they're always going to make you feel alone.

They're going to isolate you and feel like there's no one going to help you. You're all alone in this. Nobody even cares about you. There's no resources in your community. You're poor. There's no work. Just give up and die. So, what's really important is to understand that we're not alone. And when you go and visit these communities, and you see that, you can connect. And then, there you have things like the community gathering festival where everybody comes together and celebrates resistance and gives freaking hearts for it. And you see, wow, this is alive, and together, we're actually a lot of people. And we're strong and powerful. So that's -- you're really trying to -- I'm trying to connect-- you got to connect people and that's solidarity and that's the end goal of the program is to be in solidarity with other people. It doesn't require that you live there. It doesn't require that you fight there in the gold mine and live there and resist. It means that you can understand their struggle and be in solidarity with their cause. And give them heart support.

According to Wehrle (2016), "Using the body of others as tokens and instruments of one's own power has a long and sad tradition" in war and occupation, including all of the atrocities that come with invasion, colonization, incarceration, and more recently a global economy deeply entrenched in neoliberal policy (p. 58). Foucault (1977) describes the docile body as one that "obeys," "responds," "becomes skillful and increases its forces," it is "subjected," "used," "transformed," and "improved" (p. 136). In order to manipulate, shape, and train the body, it must be divided into parts and functions. For Foucault, our ability to feel, perceive, and experience our environment and culture involves the body. Therefore, we are embodied through our lived experience. Adam reflected on the lived experience of meeting community members and witnessing the devastating impact of government policies that support corporate interests. He said,

So no longer were these issues in the abstract, things didn't really sit in the abstract. When you talk about economics and capitalism, well, a lot of it really would've boiled down to, for me in that experience, was that whole families were being ripped apart by corporate interests. And so there's at least a direct relationship to why people were losing their homes or losing their way of life, or whatever it was, was because of the interconnected global paradigm of what development should look like, and these people were saying, "Please don't do it this way because it's killing us." So that, to me, was a real heart-opening location-creating four months of my life and I've not been the same ever since.

Similarly, Kathy discussed the importance of understanding the experience of the people most affected by a crisis. She said,

So, the program really tries to model a way of learning and a way of taking action that involves academics, it involves listening, and opening your heart personally in a personal engagement. Listening to the community, what do they need, and then you're amplifying their voices, you're co-creating with them. If people did more listening and embedding in communities, our world would probably be more empathetic and effective in every program that was implemented.

Beth commented on the fact that people are having to put their bodies on the line in organizing spaces in order to stop what is happening in their communities. She said,

Now, I just think about organizing, and when I think of the body, putting your body on the line and kind of, obviously, what you were seeing indigenous people and the community doing in terms of kind of their survival and the work that they were doing, etc.

This speaks directly to students witnessing how community members would use their own bodies as a site of resistance within social justice movements. The intentional use of one's physical presence "against the oppressive and coercive elements of the state in protests, and as means to protect the community, turns the body into a site of resistance and pride" (Motta, Flesher Fominaya, Eschle, & Cox, 2011, p. 24).

Beth was able to reflect on how the program brought all of these components of ownership, responsibility and heart opening into focus for her. She reflected,

I would say that, for me, the experience was really impacting me on all levels. So, there was the intellectual academic side where I'm taking in all this information. Then I'm learning about the culture, I'm building relationships, I'm seeing something totally new. So, it really was kind of this full body and mind experience. I think that that is a way of developing ownership because there's nowhere else to go. All sensations are being impacted by something new and so kind of taking it in on all different layers. The format of it being so focused on all the questions that we would prepare, all the interactions that we would have, all the interviewing was really determined by us as a group, and then we had the opportunities to debrief afterwards and talk through our frustrations or what went well, what didn't, what to change. And that was a format that I think in itself you

have to be a participant and requires participation, and you can't just kind of skirt by and take the test which is the more mainstream format of education. I'd say that's how the program kind of set people up to be responsible for what they were taking in, what they were learning.

According to Kolb (1984), "Ideas are not fixed or immutable elements of thought but are formed and reformed through experience." This process of experiential learning, is described by Wallace (1996) as,

the ability to immerse themselves openly in new experiences, to reflect on these experiences, to integrate observations into more abstract conceptual schemes or theories, and to use these theories to guide decision-making and experimental action to solve problems, leading to new concrete experiences (p. 20)

This experiential and transformative learning process that the CIEE program created for students, immersed them in the lived experiences of community members. It put the students into the experience with mind, body and spirit.

Hope

Another aspect of engaged pedagogy is hope. It is not enough to only bring awareness to the oppression that we see in the world, but we must create opportunities to address those injustices. As hooks (2003) states, "When we only name the problem, when we state a complaint without a constructive focus on resolution, we take away hope" (p. xiv). A crucial component of the program that students identified as contributing to their learning related to providing students the opportunity to engage in activities to solve the problems they are witnessing. Learning in the program was not prescriptive and opened up the possibility to explore ideas and really understand the lived experiences of individuals in the community and what those experiences meant for the community as a whole. Hope gives a sense of possibility and helps foster community. Hope lets us look at the problems and think of creative solutions. Hope was manifested within the program by

students bearing witness to the unyielding resistance of communities as they fought against governmental policies and multinational corporations. In doing so they were able to consider future actions.

By considering the potential for future actions, participants opened up the door for themselves to consider, what's next? They did not have to accept the information that they were given as the final conclusion; on the contrary, they could question, they could consider what needed to be known now, and they could work with others to organize actionable responses. Sara considered what could be done with the information that they were learning through their experiences. As she recalled, "I think in terms of learning not just for learning sake but being able to figure out what to do with this new information." There was a certain sense of responsibility that came with knowing the truth. No longer was it about internal reflection, but it became about external action. As she further stated,

Okay, if this information exists, if you've had this realization, you as a student or as a person in this world, have a responsibility to do something with it. That's more than just a paper that one person reads. The idea that once you learn something, once you understand more about a topic or a community or something, that the idea is not that this is sort of your knowledge to have. And so again, we were sort of encouraged to figure out more active ways to share that information with our home communities or with the broader Thai community. So, a lot of, again, writing or videos or other kinds of publications. But that idea, of like, you just get to learn to make yourself smarter, yeah, I learned the limitations of that. And that really is about what you do with that knowledge in sort of transforming your community or sphere of influence is more important.

In many ways the program allowed students to question the knowledge that was being presented to them. They were encouraged to reinvent knowledge, to explore what the actual truth was, particularly for those in the community. Hope comes from people being able to respond collectively. As Cameron recalled,

I both saw the ways in which structural processes like capitalist development are dramatically just changing the way that people view the world and that have a sort

of colonizing effect on knowledge production, particularly in the margins of capitalist society. But then also, and I think this is crucial, communities have their own sources of knowledge production which is used in their own forms of resistance and resistance movements. And so, I think the program gave me an understanding of the violence of that sort of knowledge colonization. But then also the generative capacity of resistance and hopeful resistance and the ways in which communities involved in resistance are literally in the process of reconfiguring their understanding themselves, their understandings of their own communities, their understanding of collectivity, and their understanding of power.

Students were able to witness first-hand the steadfastness of communities to resist the injustices that they were facing at the hands of corporations stealing from them.

For some students the concept of hope also emerged in the critical thinking that they were doing as they questioned what globalization and development are and its impact on the lives of others. Patrick recalled needing to overcome the hopelessness that presented itself and look for possibilities to work with others to address the problem. This creates hope. He said,

I think we had been through an intense experience, and seeing oppression, and seeing people struggling, and were really frustrated with the world. But we were inspired that we could work together and make a difference. And our projects had a small impact, but it was like, Wow. Look what's possible when we all work together to produce something. And it's not just the paper. It could be newspaper articles that are out in the world, documenting the situation we observed. In that matter, it's important too. So the ideas of being engaged, of being active citizens, the power of working with other people compared to working as an individual. These ideas bonded us together and made us work together well.

Opening to Collaboration: Encountering Vulnerability

The CIEE program relied on experiences and encounters that allowed students to question the status quo, and created opportunities to see a different, more accurate reality. The program continually exposed students to different ways of being, learning, and experiencing the world. Tsing (2016) explores how our unpredictable encounters transform us. She argues that we are contaminated through our encounters with others,

and in doing so we are able to make space for others, in part because the things that we once believed as true are now called into question. When we come to this new realization, it opens up the door for collaboration. According to Tsing (2016), collaboration means “working across difference” (p. 29), which in turn leads to further contamination. It is an ongoing process of learning. Tsing discusses how, through precarity and assemblages, people can shift perspectives and understanding that can lead to transformation.

Precarity

When they are experiencing a different culture while also trying to learn about and understand complicated topics such as globalization and development, vulnerability might present itself in different ways to students. As Adam recalled, “There was a lot of vulnerability that got created in those spaces.” Not only was it about letting go of control of the learning environment, but it was about “accepting being laughed at” as he fumbled through the language. As he said, it was “very humbling, and while I’m probably not able to quantify the impact on me, it’s been profound.” Similarly, Beth discussed the vulnerability that came with not knowing the language, and “putting yourself in a place where there’s a lot that you don’t understand,” not only about the language, but their culture as well. According to Tsing (2016), precarity is the state of being vulnerable to others. We are rarely in control of unpredicted encounters, even of ourselves. The uncertainty that comes with these encounters can shake us to our cores, make us question what we’ve been taught, or question what we believe. This destabilization can be frightening, and at the same time it can create opportunities to understand new realities, new beliefs, and explore new responses.

Being vulnerable was not just about understanding, but also about being attuned and invested in work that is multidirectional. In discussing solidarity work, Cameron reflected on what is required “in work that is multidirectional. It requires some sacrifice and willingness to be vulnerable.” To him vulnerability was an investment in a relationship “in order to serve the relationship work or to serve movement work in a way that in turn serves the liberation of all, of all involved.” The ability to come together to address injustices in the community means accepting and working through those uncertainties, with an openness to being vulnerable.

Assemblages

The CIEE program provided opportunities for students to experience assemblages in the form of exchanges, which students identified as a key aspect of the learning. Exchanges gave students the opportunity to explore the histories and influence of globalization and development with community members directly affected, as well as with government agencies and corporate leaders. They were opportunities for students to understand the lived experience of community members.

Assemblages are open ended gatherings. According to Tsing (2016) assemblages allow us to explore and ask about “communal effects without assuming them” (p. 23). More importantly, they show us potential histories as they are unfolding. The significance of exchanges was two-fold. First, they were about understanding a way of life that one might not have experienced before. It was an opportunity to participate in the daily lives of community members and learn about the work they did in sustenance and survival. Students were moved by the exchanges with community members in particular as they tried to explore those histories.

As Patrick said, it was a cultural exchange and a way of life that was completely foreign to him:

The communities were very welcoming. They welcomed us into their homes. They taught me how to harvest rice, livelihood activities that we got to participate in. I remember going fishing on one of the rivers in a little boat. It was just cool. A different kind of life that I never experienced.

Similarly, Adam discussed the experience having community members open their homes to him and having a window into their lives. As he recalled,

I spent a lot of time not necessarily building close relationships with folks, because that was kind of hard to do in a four to five night kind of situation, but what it meant to kind of see kind of a glimpse of the world through people who are living in very, very different situations.

Second, exchanges were designed in the same format that Thai organizers used within the Assembly of the Poor to coordinate meetings between communities so they could learn from one another as they organized against an authoritative state. According to Kathy, exchanges allowed participants to communicate and learn from one another without expectations or preconceived notions of what they thought they might hear. As she said, “The idea is that in order to learn, it’s an exchange of information and not a questionnaire or drilling questions. You’re coming without preconceptions of the other party.” For her exchanges gave her an opportunity to understand the needs of the community, as well as how they were feeling about the situation they were experiencing as it related to dams or slums. Sara remembered visiting one community:

It was really strategic and interesting when the organizers would bring in students for an exchange in the beginning of the organizing phases because it was an opportunity for their members of the villages to get a chance to practice telling their stories, sometimes for the first time. It was really validating for community members to be heard. I think it was politicizing also for the villagers themselves, who through seeing – yeah, through seeing the other people’s responses, recognizing that “my stories are important, my voice is important and that it’s not just in my head, this really is a horrible kind of thing.”

Adam believed that exchanges gave the group the most direct line of clarity around the human experience of globalization. But the important piece was that it was a collective learning environment and not just one sided. According to Adam, “The point was to really create a collective learning experience that didn't transcend cultural difference, but actually highlighted people’s areas of difference so that you can learn from those positionalities.” As Adam described, not just students came with questions, but community members also wanted to learn from the perspective of students. These experiences created opportunities to rethink social issues within communities and how they are defined.

Adam shared that through the exchanges his whole construction of the concept of poverty changed. When asked to explain what had shifted, he shared a story of a conversation he had with a women’s collective. In speaking with them about promises the mining company was making, he said,

I just remember being like, “You know, I live in really different circumstances – I have a lot where I come from compared to what you all have, just sheer stuff. Proportionally speaking, I don't know what it would look like in terms of our income, but right now, I just know that what they are trying to tell us is that the kind of jobs and sort of factories and the kind of industry and different kinds of development they're going to bring to you is intended to lift you out of poverty.” And the group of women were all just like, “We are not poor. We're tired of being told that, we have everything we need, we don't need these things to bring us out of anything because we have everything we need. This is in fact destroying all the things we have that we need.” But what they were refusing to acknowledge was that they were poor.

For Adam this was a paradigm-shifting conversation because narrow definitions of poverty limit the ability to develop creative solutions to social issues. He suggests that by expanding our understanding it will “enable more generative conversations about how to solve problems instead of saying, ‘We're going to give you this so that you get out of

poverty.’ It's going to be conversations around why people are poor or why people think people are poor.” In reconstructing paradigms, there is a focus on what people need, and most importantly people don’t lose community assets in the process. Adam’s definition of poverty was contaminated though his encounter with the women of this community. As Tsing (2016) predicted, the things that we once believed as true are now called into question.

For some students, genuine learning was not just sitting down and discussing and redefining issues of globalization, it was also the process of bearing witness to it. For Manuel, exchanges were a profound experience because they exposed students to potential suffering on a massive scale and what people were doing to survive. As he recalled,

You're dealing with these villagers and going into these communities and seeing, going into the slums. Just situations you'd never find yourself in. And not only that, you're dealing with, maybe you've never seen anything like this in your life or didn't even know people suffer like this or are oppressed like this. What are people having to do just to survive?

Similarly, to Cameron, exchanges were a crucial part to the CIEE experience because they offered students the opportunity to learn “how these issues affect people in human terms in a way that you understand the real human impact and not just, ‘Oh, this is affecting villagers.’ You see it in human terms and what that means.” Exchanges helped students to witness the injustices that communities were experiencing and then connected them to other stories of injustices. This altered their understanding of what they thought they knew and helped them to draw conclusions about larger structural injustices.

Critical Service-Learning

Critical Service-Learning

CIEE successfully helped redefine what roles students and community members play when addressing issues of inequality, power and relationships. It adopted a critical service-learning pedagogy, which placed emphasis on redefining the roles that students, faculty, and community members play in the service experience. Traditional service programs perpetuate the have/have not dichotomy that exists because they fail to deconstruct the systems of power that created inequalities in the first place. Moving from a traditional service-learning model to critical service-learning requires three components. According to Mitchell (2008), these include working from a social change orientation, working to redistribute power, and building authentic relationships, all of which contain classroom and community components.

Social Change Orientation

Critical service-learning programs that strive toward a social change orientation incorporate experiences that encourage participants in the program to “critically analyze their work in the community” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 53). In doing so it is imperative that these programs support students’ explication of structural inequalities that perpetuate the oppressive conditions of the communities that they are working with. The CIEE program incorporated group dialogue, reflections, and writing assignments to encourage deeper analysis of those structural inequalities. A social change orientation was fostered in the “classroom” to encourage students to investigate the links between lived experiences and institutional structures and policies.

Classroom Component

Students in the program would lead debrief sessions after their community exchanges to help one another explore the issues they encountered. Answers were

complex, given the larger questions participants were asking, but Kathy recognized, “You really have to struggle to find the information from various sources to get the whole picture of either a project or an outcome of a project. And I think that that's just essential.” Part of coming to those conclusions was being able to “process the experience in our group sessions and when we would write our reflection papers.” Beth commented that the reflection paper really helped her think about what she thought and felt about the experience of the exchange, as it allowed her to “consider some of the larger questions around globalization or what created the conditions that this community is living in before coming to debrief with the group.” She said, “It was helpful for me to get my thoughts down on paper first.”

Group processing sessions provided students the opportunity to dialogue with one another to figure out conclusions to the issues that came up. As Manuel said, "Okay. Well, what did you learn? Let's put the pieces together. What did you learn from the government? What did you learn from the villagers? And let's come up with our own opinion and see where you fall." For Manuel there was not an expectation that faculty members would tell them the answer. They had to figure out how they felt about what they heard from community members, government agencies, and the multinational corporations. Providing students with a critical analysis would support their investigation of root causes that maintained the status quo or policies that protected the interests of those in power. Instead, students develop critical consciousness when the program fosters a learning environment that connects action and reflection. According to Mitchell (2008), a critical service-learning pedagogy provides students the opportunity to reflect on course materials as they relate to their work in the community.

Processing sessions also gave students the opportunity to make connections between the units they were studying each week to larger structural issues associated with globalization and development; as Adam said, “If we’re not connecting all of the work that we were doing up to that point, then we’re missing the bigger picture.” Similarly, though the group processing sessions, Patrick was able to reconsider his initial ideas about development:

I probably thought that development was a good thing and in principle, it is, right? You're developing. It should benefit people. But why on earth are these projects causing so many problems? And why are these people I'm meeting seem so angry? Or this project they're frustrated with was funded by USAID and are we culpable? There was a sense of feelings of guilt and just realizing this is difficult terrain we're navigating. And what does it mean to do development? And asking those difficult questions.

During the briefing sessions, students developed and organized their questions for the community, but these did not always prepare them for the situation that they walked into when they arrived in the community. Sara shared that once when the group arrived in the community, they learned that the night before villagers’ homes had been burned. In processing this experience, the group reflected on their own realities. As she said, “Coming from our sort of privileged community, the idea that somebody could come in the middle of the night and destroy your land just totally flew in the face of whatever we believed.” The program consistently put students in a position of witnessing the real time situation in communities and provided them the opportunity to make meaning of it.

Community Component

The reality is that critical service-learning programs are political in nature as they work to disrupt structural oppression. At the forefront of this work should be developing and expanding the resources of the community (Marullo & Edwards, 2000). The CIEE

program created experiences where the focus of student work was on the goals of the community. In doing so, they supported the organizing activities of the villages and increased awareness of the issues that were impacting the community.

Beth discussed the role that she could play in supporting the community to achieve its goal. It could not be something that was driven by her own personal interest or ego. As she said,

For me, from my perspective and my understanding, it's kind of letting go of the ego and a sense of power in order to support the efforts of marginalized people to have equal access to anything that they can be or should be provided. So, it's talking about working in solidarity with the people's movements of Thailand is like, "I'm not a villager of Thailand. It's not my personal identity or personal experience. But there's work that I can do and efforts that I can make that lift their voices and help them achieve their own destiny that they choose for themselves."

This focus on community is crucial for the program to advance a critical service-learning pedagogy. Projects must come from the community. Adam shared that the program coordinators worked very intentionally with the Thai organizers and community members to support their goals. As he said, the organizers and the advisors of these villages, along with different networks on the frontlines of struggles, would interface with the program. For example, "In their struggle with multinationals running the hydroelectric dam, the residents were saying that it would be really helpful if there was a way to document this and interpret that into English." By directly identifying the needs of the community, the students in the program were able to support the community goals.

Similarly, Patrick talked about the importance of meeting the needs of the community. While there was space for students to identify what their interests were, final projects focused on what was beneficial to the community. As he recalled,

Our projects were based on needs and/or what is feasible. I didn't understand this as a student, but afterwards. We as an organization, we work with communities

that were organized and had their own organization internally. So, it wasn't like we called a random village or asked them what they wanted. I mean, these communities had their own institutions they had built. So, there was participation in deciding what the project could look like. There's what the student wants. There's what the community might ask for and then what the community might actually benefit from.

It is not for the program or the students to impose on the community; the community needs to request students' participation. In developing a critical service-learning experience, it is imperative that the community only participate to the extent that they have capacity (Marullo & Edwards, 2000). Additionally, it is beneficial that community partnerships extend beyond the limitations of academic semesters (Brown, 2001). Thus, a long-term partnership that relies on new faces in the program demonstrates continuity to the community and commitment. This leads to a redistribution of power and one that is experienced by all of the stakeholders of the program.

Working to Redistribute Power

Acknowledgement and redistribution of power, whether personal or political, is an essential part of a critical service-learning program. For students to explore what the redistribution of power could look like, it is important for the program to engage students in discussions about power, bias, and unearned privilege. More importantly, students should explore how inequality came to be in the first place. Being able to engage in such dialogue and work with their differences leads to “mutuality, respect, and trust leading to authenticity (Mitchell, 2008, p. 58).

Classroom Component

The CIEE program created such opportunities as the “Where-We’re-Ats” to help the group process their overall experience, as well as the overarching issues they are witnessing. These could be related to either the interpersonal relationships or the overall

topics they were learning about. As Manuel recalled, Where-We're-Ats were a place for students to “talk about what was on their mind, how they were feeling, and some used it as an opportunity to discuss challenges that they had with other students.”

Adam discussed the profound experience of being called out by his peers for being a White cisgender male and what that meant to his learning and understanding in organizing spaces. He said,

So, I learned a lot about myself inside that in terms of, like I was saying, my positionality. I got called to the mat a lot for my sort of masculine-performing bullshit by very generous and gracious women. Let's just put it that way. They could have said, "Fuck you forever," and I would have had to deal with that. But I had people who were very much like, "No, he's a good guy, we need to work with him and support him," and that's the sort of support that I received in that window of time. And I think that aided a particularly long journey that I would say I'm still on in terms of what does it mean to be cis white Christian dude in political space, but just in general.

Cameron also discussed the fact that he had a lot of learning to do as he came with a lot of “privilege, unearned privilege really”:

I had a lot of learning to do at the time around how to communicate with people who see the world differently than I do and how to work with folks who had different life experiences than me. I think I had been in a sort of cocoon in our leftist culture in my college campus in Maine where folks tended to view the world like I did and I think that experience of being around folks who didn't have the same type of life experiences and being able to find a way to learn and also build with them I think was really important.

In identifying different kinds of privilege and the roots of power, different opinions would emerge. Patrick recalled,

That we had to process the end of each unit with each other brought out the challenges of working with other people effectively. Especially when you have different opinions and thoughts on the way the world should work. And that was a struggle I remember.

Reflecting on this struggle, Adam recalled questioning how his own identity linked to the larger global picture. He asked,

And how does that connect to the sort of broader, imperial project of global capitalism? What does it mean to be in relationship to the struggle, while also being an elitist, physically being a perpetrator of it? And I think that that was the first time I really started asking those questions ever and had a lot of opportunities to start doing that in a very safe, but also very challenging, place. It also taught me a lot about, what does it mean to work from a particular geographic location?

The discussion sessions also centered around student identities and the privileges that they carry with them. Kathy recalled the fact that she is a very extroverted individual, which meant that she had the ability to take up a lot of space. She recalled a “Where-We’re-At” meeting when her entire group was called out because they were dominating conversations. She said, “All of that was very purposeful in trying to get you to better understand how you lead and how you can lead in a more socially just manner. Maybe that means stepping up. Maybe that means stepping back.”

Community Component

The power difference between students and community members that exists in traditional service-learning programs is rarely identified or explored with participants of the program (Mitchell, 2008). A critical service-learning pedagogy both identifies that a power difference exists within the service relationship and integrates community members into the service experience. The problem with failing to acknowledge this power dynamic is that it reinforces the “have/have not paradigm” (Pompa, 2002, p. 68). Kathy discussed the opportunity of being a part of a project to support an international environmental conference in the wetlands of northeast Thailand for 300 people. As she said, “We built a physical space for them to hold the conference and cooked for them. We were there during the conference, but just in the capacity of troubleshooting.” Developing projects that did not require communities to exceed their capacity was a key element of what the students were learning. Patrick discussed his group project on preparing a

magazine focused on educating the consumer around rice and fair trade. The group interviewed community members that they had met with during the semester because that was what community members had the capacity for. He recalled,

We decided to prepare a magazine that interviewed some of the people we learned from and looked at educating a consumer. And it had sort of a focus on rice and fair-trade rice. When we went out back to the community, we interviewed some people for profiles for the magazine that we were working on and that was their contribution to the project. That's what they had the capacity to do.

Students did not develop a project that required community members to overextend themselves. They participated how they could.

Similarly, Manuel commented on the focus that was put on supporting the community:

I think we saw examples of collaboration when we saw beneficiaries and students helping each other and students would sometimes connect them to community resources and opportunities, and maybe even government officials who were open to engaging the community in a certain way. I think solidarity-- the idea that a group of Americans could go and listen, and then help fulfill a project or the development or the need or the skill or whatever it was what the community needed.

Building Authentic Relationships

Critical to creating authentic relationships is dialogic engagement (Pompa, 2002).

According to Pompa, dialogic engagement is a verbal exchange between students and community members, as well as an experience of spending time together. Additionally, authentic relationships demand an analysis of power and a reconfiguration of power in the service relationship where people can embrace connectedness and interdependence.

Classroom Component

For relationships to be authentic, dialogue also needs to be consistent between faculty and students. This allows for critical exchanges and analysis of what they are experiencing (Cipolle, 2004). This leads to deeper understanding of the materials being

studied. Self-awareness of identity, personal histories, and experiences of privilege and oppression are important, and so is an ongoing consistency in the program. While traditional service-learning practitioners emphasize the importance of building mutual relationships, little is done to actually create and foster such relationships (Rosenberger, 2000).

Viewed through the critical service-learning lens, the CIEE program fostered mutual relationships among students and the community, and also between students in previous cohorts and the current cohort. As Adam recalled, before they even arrived in Thailand, they received a package about the program that included the final projects of students from the previous semester. As he said, “So that was something that was really cool to look at, was that students were developing their own media and work from the semester.” The program was already preparing them for what continuity could look like and the contributions that they could make to the overall movements that were taking place in Thailand. Kathy also recalls, “We were able to read the materials from previous groups and the summaries that they left behind.” In doing so, it gave new participants the chance to pick up where the last group left off to provide communities with some continuity. Each semester, the program was not spending its time creating new projects. Instead, they had long-term relationships with communities, and they were building on the work of previous student groups.

Community Component

An element of authenticity is also recognizing that participants do not have the same lived experience of community members. As Beth said, "I'm not a villager of Thailand. It's not my personal identity or personal experience. But there's work that I can

do and efforts that I can make that lift their voices and help them achieve their own destiny that they choose for themselves." But that can only happen through directly relating to, and directly communicating with, community members in direct, sustained, relationships.

Authentic relationships are not achieved in a single semester. It is important that the community partner knows there will be ongoing involvement from the service program. This also creates opportunities for the program to expand its work with the community over time (Mitchell, 2008). Beth discussed the importance of long-term relationships that the program developed with the community. As she said,

By the time I was a student, since this was one of the longest running campaigns, activities, it was pretty established by the point I got there, which was kind of the standard. The villagers who always had people, students, stay with them, by that point they were pretty used to students coming in two or three times a year. So, they were pretty involved in that process.

There was a familiarity in this for community members. As Sara recalled, "I think there were certain communities who have a lot of experience working with Americans and that made it easier for them." There was trust built up between the program and the community, which made working with students less of a burden. They knew what to expect from students and the program.

The CIEE program, through the exchanges, created an opportunity for participants and members of the community to engage in genuine dialogue, which promoted understanding.

Patrick recalled an exchange he had with community members.

I remember one story when we were sitting in this little village, in this house, eating dinner one night, and it was three of us students and just five [local] town men. And they were just openly talking about how they really disliked the US, and how [one of these men] wasn't surprised. But as I sat there longer, I

understood that they were just making a case that the US's foreign policy has been pretty violent over the last 30 years. And they're like always so surprised that it's coming to this. And that made me pause and think about America and our foreign policy. And who am I? And who is my country? And what are we doing? But that means that individuals in America can sit here with this person who is Thai. We can have a good meal and talk and there's potential for friendship there. But yet these larger forces are at play that neither of us have control over necessarily.

At the heart of this was something that Adam discussed about the program, as he said, “The entire model, that entire approach was about giving people the space to talk about their own individual and collective stories in a way that made us all more human.”

Synthesis

A major component of the CIEE Thailand experience that contributed to the lasting empowerment of students was the final projects. Students discussed the different projects that allowed them to take what they learned and create projects that were beneficial to the communities they worked with. As Patrick said, “They were supposed to be projects that were in the world, as the director would explain, ‘not just papers you file away or get a grade on, but could you do something that's meaningful or beneficial to the people you lived and learned from.’” Adam described a project that he worked on with a couple of other students to write a substantive human rights report regarding a hydroelectric dam project in the Northeast that pushed out thousands of people from their land. He said,

There was a series of campaigns against that push out, and each of them have their own campaigns, and then there's kind of like frontline conflicts. And there was one series of conflicts that popped up that we ended up documenting, the abuse of pretty intense civil, and political, and economic, and social, cultural rights. So, two different reports about the human rights violations of a group of women, in particular – we had a whole thing where we got it published in a national paper, and then it got picked up by a larger, international human rights organization and there was a speech. We cranked out two volumes of incredibly well-documented, professional-quality interviews and documentation.

This is an example of how the students' final projects had multiple layers of impact. First, there was knowledge generation on the part of students as they worked to connect all of the issues that they were exposed to through their work with the community. Second, the community was able to utilize these reports as evidence and to draw attention to the abuses they were experiencing. Finally, the international community was made aware of these larger human rights abuses that were taking place in Thailand. By bringing this project into the world, these students were able to contribute to societal change as opposed to maintaining the status quo. These projects elicit not just a comprehension of what students have experienced but an action to create transformation in the world. Freire said, "The question is not to describe clearly the world but to transform it... How can we transform the process of transforming the comprehension of the world into a process of transforming the world" (Kennedy, 2000, p. 220). Freire asserts that this transformation process is a key component in the transformation of the non-poor.

Other students approached their final project by bringing together multiple communities around specific issues or events. Manuel shared the process that he went through to develop a festival to celebrate human rights and local cultures. He recalled being challenged by the program director:

'Are you sure you're just not just trying to throw a freaking big 'ole party?' Like I don't trust you, basically. What he ended telling me was like, 'All right. Yeah, you can do this but you're going to have to organize it.' And so I was like, I don't know if I can do that, I've never done anything like this. But he had faith in us and trusted me and said it and put it out there. So, I was like, alright – I'm down. You approved it. Let's do it. So, I got an intern and a professor, and a budget and it was 30 days before the date that we had set. So, for the next 30 days, I basically organized this festival and until this day they still do that festival gathering. And so that was like – a huge success, everybody loved it, all the communities loved it.

For Manual to organize this festival took him beyond the classroom. As he stated, “I was a completely different student, I was more involved. I was actually involved in my learning versus just sitting there and prepping for tests.”

Sara discussed the collaborative nature of their final project with a local mining community. The goal was to be able to share their experience with a larger audience, to get the word out about the challenges they faced with a mining company in their area.

She recalled,

I think the final project we did was interesting because it was working with three communities. We explored how to look at the human rights frame, the economic social cultural rights framework, and figure out how to use that to understand and describe the issues in communities to kind of take their opposition to the mining company. And put it in sort of more of internationally-understood terms of rights violation instead of kind of more localized ones. And so that was interesting. Like learning about the framework and learning with communities about the framework and figuring out how to tell their story to the broader audience.

Being able to collaborate with the community and work well with each other, as Patrick said, “was really inspiring.” Students had the ability to be a part of a larger movement of resistance, which was in line with the values that they wanted to see in the world. This was a great source of hopefulness for students and the community, as they knew that their stories were getting out. Revising hooks’ (2010) assertion, through these final projects, students were not only synthesizing their own knowledge, but figuring out how to use it in the world.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The intention of this study was to explore how the CIEE Thailand Program on Development and Globalization prepares students for engagement after students return to the United States at the conclusion of the program. Kiely (2004) suggests that students who participate in international service-learning programs may experience the Chameleon Complex, meaning that their transformational experience may not translate into them participating in social change upon their return. Kiely contends that the “link between perspective transformation, behavioral change, and social action is much more complex and tenuous” (p. 16). What if that elusive link was providing students with concrete skills to be able to navigate the challenging situations they were observing? What if it meant involving them in a process that removes them from having to operate from a place that reinforces the “White savior” mentality? The Director of the CIEE program said, “an outcome of the program is that students see themselves in new ways as agents of change.” The skills that students gain “can be [used] anywhere. So the idea would be that students became engaged, had thoughts, and started to use what they have learned toward social justice -- how to organize people to make change... To make the world a better place.” The CIEE program strives to provide students with not only the tools to work in solidarity with communities in their struggles for liberation, but also the opportunity to practice using them.

Transformation in Action

The data presented in the previous chapter reflects the process of transformation that students go through while engaged in the program. They awaken their critical consciousness, learn how to disrupt power, explore a process to engage collaboratively, and develop an understanding of what solidarity work for justice entails. One goal of this study is to identify how participants employ the learning they acquired in the program. The learning of participants is reflected in the knowledge and skills that they develop throughout the program.

While international service-learning experiences are developing within students a commitment to social change, they are failing to create understanding on how to implement this change (Cermak, Christensen, Finnegan, Gleeson, and White, 2011; Kiely, 2004). Hartman and Kiely (2014) identify that students who participate in international service-learning programs often return home with a new worldview; however, they lack the knowledge, skills and tools to implement change on social, community, and organizational levels. On the contrary, participants in the CIEE program identified several skills that they acquired as a result of their participation and highlighted concrete examples of how they have put them to use them after the program ended. I have categorized these skills into the following areas: Process (facilitation and listening), Self-Development (confidence, self-direction, following your heart), Communication, and Community Building (asking questions, advocacy).

Process

Process skills emerged as those that participants learned to support the interpersonal engagement of participants within their cohorts or with community

members. The process skills that participants identified included facilitation and listening. Facilitation was the most common skill that each participant discussed. As previously mentioned, all students in the program were responsible for facilitating different units, which would entail leading discussions on the topic, leading meetings with various stakeholders, and leading debrief sessions and Where-We're-Ats. For some, it was the first time they had been exposed to facilitating meetings. As Patrick stated, "I learned how to [facilitate] in the program and I wouldn't have done that on a different program." Learning how to facilitate was a skill that Kathy learned, but it was also the process of learning how to facilitate that helped her to develop. As she said, "We learned about facilitation and then were given opportunities to practice, and then we were given feedback on how we facilitated."

Program facilitators would also put students in really complex situations to challenge them. Kathy recalled being asked to facilitate a conversation that she was not particularly keen on: "It was probably the reason why they made me do that group facilitation, to try to challenge my own opinions and really challenge my own ability to lead and be a part of the group and facilitate." So sometimes participants were placed intentionally into situations where they had to facilitate a topic that did not resonate with them or with other students that they did not connect with. Kathy's experience is an example of Lewin's (1951) theory of change on unfreezing, moving, and refreezing, which allows students to continue to apply their learning after they have completed the program. Adam commented that he carries these skills with him daily:

I take facilitation skills into my workday, all the time. I mean to say that in just the way that I organize my thinking and my facilitation, and my follow-up, and my pre-work. The whole way that I set intentions with how I'm going to move a particular conversation in a facilitation form.

Sara identified facilitation as an important skill she learned through the program. She reflected, “It was a crash course in facilitation. How do you help a group identify problems and develop solutions together and share knowledge amongst each other? And so I think we learned a lot of facilitation and consensus building.” Similarly, Beth shared how she learned how to facilitate conversations, “How to work with a group of people and guide discussions to come to a conclusion.” Cameron discussed the skills he gained facilitating and how students learned to “direct the process of learning.”

Adam identified that he picked up skills around facilitation, like design and delivery of meetings, and through that he developed the ability to help people process their learning:

One of the things that I learned in that experience was about how you learn and that process. That was really important to me in terms of what it means to teach and in terms of what it means to be an educator, for example. I was good at helping people learn but that was the goal. The experience of being a facilitator to help students feel ownership, but then develop skills to work better with each other.

Sara also discussed the complexity of facilitation because they were learning how to facilitate on multiple levels simultaneously:

As well as, sort of group identity and group dynamics and so you're with people all the time and it's really an emotional and intense experience. There is so much emphasis on how people are doing and how they're learning and how they're experiencing things. So that was new for me certainly and to have I think and that certainly stuck with me now to just have a greater appreciation for how the sort of healthy communication or healthy group dynamics affects your ability to do good work in the world so there are moments when our group was like super toxic and it was awful, and then there were moments when we made a lot more-- when things were more productive, I think we did more and similarly and subsequent organizations or groups that I've worked with I think I've been able to see a direct correlation when things are toxic, our abilities to get a lot of work done.

Another process skill that participants identified was gaining listening skills.

Patrick emphasized how the program improved his listening skills:

We might sit in meetings for several hours and I had to learn to remain present and really hear what others were trying to say about their experiences or perspectives. In our meetings with community members, I would focus on listening to their stories and the challenges they faced as they were losing their land. I learned how to do that in this program, and I don't know if I would have learned how to do it in another program.

Similarly, Cameron talked about how the program taught him patience. He said, "We would sit through epic 10-hour long meetings, and I definitely didn't have the capacity before. We would make sure that everyone was heard, and I had to be willing to be present for that and really listen to what people had to say." Manuel also talked about how he developed an interest in other people through listening to their thoughts and concerns. He said,

When I was a student, I had zero patience. I was a horrible listener. People were like, "Let's discuss this," and discuss how you feel and all this, and I was like, "Fuck this shit." I wasn't willing to hear it from other people, but while in the program, I'm sitting in meetings for freaking 12 hours and I'm all good and can facilitate an eight-hour workshop and do all this stuff, which I never would have had the skills to do.

Self-Development

Another area in which students demonstrated growth was self-development. They described how the program helped them develop confidence and self-direction.

Confidence was a skill that students developed through their work in the program, in terms of both their academics and also the confidence they have in themselves. Manuel discussed how the confidence he gained in the program was life altering for him; he had an entirely new way of seeing himself. He said,

I think the main thing was confidence. I, to be honest, when I was 14, 15, 16 years old, I really didn't think I was going to live past 18. There's a lot of gangs in my area where I grew up. I was getting in trouble with the law. My life could have gone radically different. You know what I mean? So, when [the program director] and the interns and everybody, the whole group supported me in this idea that we had and put me in charge of it. I was like, "whoa, where is all this coming from?"

It was unexpected. And it really just gave me the confidence. And it was like, “Wow, I am intelligent and I could-- I did this. And we all did this together.” And all I had to do was sit down and do it.

Beth described how she was able to have confidence in herself and the skills that she can bring to any situation. As she stated,

As a direct result of the program, I am able to hone into the core of the work that I do. It’s about the relationships and it’s more thinking about the skills that I can bring. It’s not really issue based. I think that if I didn’t have that exposure, I might have been more inclined to identify a really specific area of expertise or a really specific area of work.

The program gave her the confidence to apply the skills that she learned while in Thailand to any community organizing activity that she engaged in.

Another area of self-development that students identified was self-direction. Sara reflected on how through the program she became “much more equipped to be kind of inquisitive and open to constantly learning.” Cameron discussed how the program gave him skills related to self-direction. He said,

I think it developed a sort of self-directed belief that we can do self-directed work, and also some skills in how to do that. So, some skills around campaigning and some skills around organizing, but not just organizing in the sort of relational sense, but also organizing in the sort of managerial sense, like how to actually get our projects funded and how to put a project together, how to write grants, all of those things I did through the program.

Another form of self-direction that was identified was to follow your heart.

Manuel described following your heart as a “skill” that he learned through the CIEE program. As he said,

Maybe it's more to follow your heart. It's okay because everything about that program is pretty much I wouldn't have done -- I wouldn't have gone back to Thailand, I wouldn't have gone to the Dominican Republic; I wouldn't have done any of that. Because I actually think if I would have got a job straight out of college and done-- if I was going to go to law school. If I wanted to go to law school and become a lawyer and do all the stuff that I was supposed to do, not go

travel the world for five years working with local communities -- that's not the route you're supposed to take. But I did it because I followed my heart.

Communication

A third area of skills that participants identified was communication. One area of communication that students discussed was learning how to talk about themselves and articulate needs. The CIEE program created learning situations that provided opportunities for students to share their thoughts and feelings, which is not something that many had been exposed to prior to their experience in Thailand. Through the various planning sessions and reflection sessions, Beth was able to “communicate my feelings and have my voice heard. This is something that I was not used to doing in groups.”

The CIEE program also put students in positions where they engaged with people with different perspectives. As Cameron recalled, “I had a lot of learning to do at the time around how to communicate with people who see the world differently than I do and how to work with folks who had different life experiences than me.” He talked about what a Thai organizer had shared with him about the Buddhist principle of skillful needs: “Having the intention and impact are not the same thing and that developing skills means to communicate with different types of people effectively is crucial to the work.”

Community Building

Finally, students developed skills related to community building. Participants discussed how their experience in CIEE prepared them for community organizing and activism work. Cameron identified himself as an activist, and his work in the community is very much “inspired” by his work in the CIEE program. As he indicated, his skills around “analysis” were shaped through his experience in Thailand. As a union organizer, he applied the skills around “participatory action research for organizing with

community-based organizations throughout New York City.” Beth discussed how CIEE exposed her to the roles that people play to strengthen community organizations. She identified skills such as “how to identify and cultivate leaders.” She also noted,

The advocacy 101 of developing campaigns and tactics. Learning how to engage with various stakeholders. Working with all the actors and kind of getting to hear their case, hear what their issues are even if you're on opposite ends of the issue. That's not a framework that I was ever really taught or that I even saw or was exposed to.

Participants reflected on how they developed their skills around asking thoughtful questions to understand the conditions and challenges that community members were facing from corporate interests. Patrick reflected that during Where-We're Ats,

You have to ask thoughtful questions [of the community] and think about how you are coming across to the community members when you ask these questions. Assessing yourself. How to ask effective questions? How do you build a rapport with people you don't know when you walk into their home? It gives you sort of a self-reflective skill that you may not have had that you will go home with and think about, “Whoa. I never thought I had to think about these things.”

Similarly, Kathy identified communication skills she developed through the process of exchanges:

Definitely your skills for exchange, so asking questions, asking the right questions, how do you take information that you read and transform that into a one-on-one experience or a group experience of an exchange of information? And then the skill of synthesizing all of that information.

The director of the CIEE program emphasized the types of skills that participants of the CIEE program learned while in Thailand and how the program exposed them to the skills that they would be learning.

Actually, we used to have these things that we'd have students evaluate each other on, it was just to make them aware of what basic group building skills and so they fill out these forms then we tabulate them and that would be a part of their grade, but it's like sometimes surprising things like getting water for others during an exchange, when people look thirsty or being aware of the group and the group dynamic that's happening at anytime and then trying to respond in a way that

helps move that group process forward. So that could be skills like learning when to speak up, learning when to step back, learning when to push someone who really wants to say something but is hesitant, learning when not to push someone who wants to say something but isn't ready, all those basic skills that you can see in any group working together. Learning how to say, "Okay, where are we at?" And then being able to clearly say where we're at in order to move something forward or to address issues that are happening in the process.

Solidarity Work

Santiago-Ortiz (2019) argues that “Solidarity, as an anticolonial stance, is a possible way to relate across difference that challenges individualistic social configurations” (p. 51). The experience in Thailand prepared students to engage in work that challenges ongoing colonization, as well as heal from a colonial history. The work that students did in the program led to local and global solidarity work upon their return from Thailand. Students who participated in the development of human rights reports in Thailand came back to the U. S. and wrote human rights reports in Eastern Kentucky on mountaintop removal. The purpose of the reports was so local communities devastated by the mining practice could tell their stories and advocate for themselves with state and national legislators. This also led to exchanges between miners in Kentucky connecting with miners in Thailand via video conferencing technology to share their experiences in the field.

Alumni of the program worked on a fair-trade campaign to support small scale farmers in rural Thailand to sell their rice in the U S. under the fair-trade label. As Patrick recalled,

[Alumni] took photographs of the communities that appeared in the marketing materials to show people from where the rice was being sourced. Alumni then set up speaking tours where they brought farmers to the U. S. to educate consumers about what is fair trade and how it benefits people. They got the rice here for sale in some stores.

After his return to his university, Adam received a research scholarship to explore grassroots, trans-national, trans-local fights around water management, river, and local water crises. His studies brought him back to Thailand, where he collaborated with others to host a global convening for dam-affected communities. As Adam recalled,

There were 300 people from 76 different countries. I mean it was just all people who were hardcore activist and pushing hard against these major things... These were people from literally the grassroots struggles from around the globe coming together, including Berta Caceres, the Honduran activist who was assassinated. Basically, she just said, "This is what you are going to do the rest of your life. You're going to work in alternative education. You're going to work with people who are really pushing for alternative ways of building community."

Alumni also started their own CIEE alumni network, called ENGAGE, to continue their grassroots organizing work. The network holds convergences where alumni and returning CIEE students come together to share knowledge and work on potential projects. It is also an opportunity for alumni to mentor recently returned students so that they stay involved in organizing. In 2015, ENGAGE brought together a mining delegation from Appalachia to Mexico, with Indigenous First Nations anti-mining activists from British Columbia, anti-gold mining community members directly impacted by the practice from Oaxaca, and organizers from northeast Thailand. As Patrick recalled,

We led almost a two-week delegation to meet with three different communities around Oaxaca who are struggling with either existing gold mines or proposed gold mines in their communities. So it was sort of a solidarity organizing initiative to put directly impacted people in contact with one another.

The experience was based on the exchange model that alumni learned in Thailand. Community participants would sit down with one another and share their experiences with mining and exchange strategies they'd used to resist mining; they also shared strategies that governments and corporations used to gain access to land titles, and most importantly, they described methods of resistance. These were examples of how alumni

were returning from their experiences abroad and applying what they learned to current situations.

It was through the development, practice, and ongoing application of these skills that gave students the confidence to be able to engage in community activism upon their return from abroad. They have continued to refine and apply these skills in both local and global solidarity movements. The participants of this study singled out this program as being the catalyst for their transformation, and it gave them the hands-on experience of seeing that their skills have impact. They had the opportunity to witness the modeling behavior of seasoned community organizers. They engaged in dialogues with their peers and challenged one another to think about their identities and roles in communities. They organized and planned for their own learning. The students learned how to listen and bear witness to the lived experiences of others. And most importantly, they learned how to take direction from community members in their struggle for liberation.

Further Research

The results of this study suggest that students who have transformational experiences, re-evaluate their own behaviors, and are committed to engaging in social change, do so because they internalized, practiced, and saw the results of applying their new skills in the moment. It is through this process that led to their continued work in communities post completion of the program. Battistoni, Longo, and Jayanandhan (2009) emphasize that working in global solidarity means “developing skills to address issues at home, as well as abroad, as part of a larger global movement” (p. 94). The CIEE program is a semester-long program that created an experience that inspired participants to engage in solidarity actions to bring about social change.

Now we live in a world that is grappling with a global pandemic. As a result of COVID-19, how can programs like the CIEE program in Thailand adjust and adapt to this new reality? What does transformation look like with increased emphasis on digital learning? Does this have to be an in-person transformation, or is it possible to replicate program outcomes with virtual programs and experiences? What does solidarity look like in this ever-changing world? In general, more studies need to be done on preparing students for solidarity work in communities. The reality is that liberation and solidarity are desired processes and outcomes, but students are unsure of the process to achieve it.

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Koni Denham and I am a doctoral student in the Education Policy and Leadership program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. My dissertation topic examines how the international service-learning program, CIEE Thailand Program on Development and Globalization, is able to transform students into active citizens who participate in activities to dismantle oppression and injustices in their own communities after their return from abroad. I am seeking participants who would be interested in participating in this study.

The following is a brief description of the study and the criteria that will be used for selecting participants:

Brief Description of the Study:

While there is considerable research on international service-learning programs and national service-learning programs, there is limited research on international service-learning programs that both develop student awareness in being able to identify oppression and teach them skills to address injustices in their communities upon their return

Participants must meet the following criteria:

- They must have participated in and completed the program between 2002 and 2010
- Engaged in social action activities upon their return
- Identify the CIEE program as integral to the development and understanding of social action in communities.

Those who are selected to participate in the study would complete a single interview lasting approximately 75-90 minutes during the summer of 2017. The interviews will be scheduled at the convenience of each participant and would happen over the internet or, if possible, in person. If in person, the interview would happen in a secure location. If you meet the criteria, please contact me at kdenham@umass.edu or 802-579-6714 (cell). If you know of others who meet the stated criteria, I encourage you to share this opportunity with them as well.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Koni F. Denham
Doctoral Student

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Researcher(s): Dr. Jacqueline Mosselson, Associate Professor, Koni Denham, Doctoral Candidate
Study Title: Putting the Commitment to Justice in International Service-Learning Programs: A Case Study of CIEE's Development & Globalization Program in Khon Kaen, Thailand.

1. WHAT IS THIS FORM?

This form is called a Consent Form. It will give you information about the study so you can make an informed decision about participation in this research.

2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

Eligible participants must meet the following criteria:

They must have participated in and completed the program between 2002 and 2010

Engaged in social action activities upon their return

Identify the Council on International Education and Exchange (CIEE) program as integral to the development and understanding of social action in communities.

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

While there is considerable research on international service-learning programs and national service-learning programs, there is limited research on international service-learning programs that both develop student awareness in being able to identify oppression and teach them skills to address injustices in their communities upon their return. The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the CIEE's Development & Globalization Program in Khon Kaen, Thailand and how it contributed to participant involvement in social action activities upon their return from the program.

4. WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

Individuals will participate in a single interview lasting approximately 75-90 minutes during the summer of 2017. Interviews will be scheduled at the convenience of each participant and will occur in person or over SKYPE depending on the location of participants. Interviews will be conducted in a private location. Participants will also be asked to participate in a 30-minute follow-up session to review the transcripts of their individual interview and provide any clarifications or amendments to their responses to ensure they accurately reflect the participant's thoughts and feelings.

5. WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in (1) 75-90 minute interview about your experience in the CIEE program and your social action activities post program.

Please indicate if you agree to have your interview digitally recorded.

Yes

No

Participants will also be asked to participate in a 30-minute follow-up session to review the transcripts of their individual interview. Please indicate if you agree to participate in a 30-minute follow-up session.

Yes

No

6. What are my benefits of being in this study?

You may not directly benefit from this research; however, we hope that your participation in the study may provide you an opportunity to reflect on your experiences in the program and consider how they contributed to your current involvement in your community.

7. WHAT ARE my RISKS OF being in THIS STUDY?

We believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the study.

8. how will my personal information be protected?

The following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your study records. The researchers will make digital audio recordings of interviews. The researchers will keep all study records, including any codes to your data, in a locked file cabinet in my home office. Research records will be labeled with a code. A master key that links names and codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location. The master key and digital recordings will be destroyed three years after the close of the study. All electronic files of transcripts containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such files will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users. Only the members of the research staff will have access to the passwords. At the conclusion of this study, the researchers may publish their findings. Information will be presented in summary format and you will not be identified in any publications or presentations.

9. WILL I RECEIVE ANY PAYMENT FOR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

Participants will be provided a \$30 VISA gift card for their participation in the study. The gift card will be mailed to participants at the conclusion of their 30-minute follow-up session.

10. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Take as long as you like before you make a decision. We will be happy to answer any question you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the researcher(s), *Koni Denham (802) 579-6714 and Jacqueline Mosselson (413) 545-4696*. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu.”]

11. CAN I STOP BEING IN THE STUDY?

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study, but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you do not want to participate.

12. WHAT IF I AM INJURED?

The University of Massachusetts does not have a program for compensating subjects for injury or complications related to human subjects research, but the study personnel will assist you in getting treatment.

13. SUBJECT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT

When signing this form I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use and understand. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. A copy of this signed Informed Consent Form has been given to me.

Participant Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

By signing below I indicate that the participant has read and, to the best of my knowledge, understands the details contained in this document and has been given a copy.

Signature of Person
Obtaining Consent

Print Name:

Date:

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTION PROTOCOL

Introduction and Current Organizing/Activism Work

1. Please tell me about yourself.
 - a. What you do professionally.
 - b. Your current involvement in organizing and activism work?

Understanding of CIEE Experience & Learning

2. Please tell me about your experience in the CIEE program.
 - a. What were the components of the program?
 - i. What did you learn from each of these components?
 - b. What can you tell me about the cohort you studied with?
 - c. What can you tell me about the community?

Conceptual Framework

3. From your experience in the program, what did you learn about taking ownership of your educational experiences?
 - a. How did the program contribute to this understanding?
 - b. How did the program contribute to your understanding of the invention and reinvention of knowledge?
4. How do you define oppression?
 - a. How do you define social justice?
 - b. How do you reflect on it in your daily life?
 - i. What helps you to do more? What obstacles inhibit you from doing more?
 - c. How did the program help your understanding of oppression and social justice?
5. In what ways were you able to develop a fuller, holistic understanding of yourself through your experience in the program?
 - a. Understanding and inclusion of identity through discussions and reflections?
6. How did you engage with differences in the program?
 - a. What types of differences were you exposed to in the program?
 - b. How did this challenge your work in the group? In the community?
 - c. How did it improve your work in the group? In the community?
 - d. How did you learn to cooperate with each other to solve problems given the differences?
7. How do you define collaboration?
 - a.
8. How do you define solidarity?
 - a. How do you understand working in solidarity with marginalized populations?
 - b. Can you provide examples from your time in the program?

- c. How have you been able to apply that to the organizing and activism work that you have done?
9. What are doing? What's preventing from doing more?

Post-CIEE Organizing/Activism Work

10. Please tell me about the organizing and activism work that you have been involved in post CIEE experience.
 - a. How have you applied your learning from the program post-program?
 - b. How has the program provided you support post experience?
 - c. What more could it be doing?

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR THE DIRECTOR

Understanding of CIEE Experience & Learning

1. Please tell me about your experience in the CIEE program.
 - a. What are the components of the program?
 - i. What are participants supposed to learn from each of these components?
 - b. What can you tell me about the cohort structure?
 - c. What can you tell me about the communities they work with?
 - d. What can you tell me about the organizations they work with?

Conceptual Framework

2. How does the program encourage participants to take ownership of their educational experiences?
 - a. How did the program contribute to this understanding?
 - b. How did the program contribute to the understanding of the invention and reinvention of knowledge?
3. From a social justice lens, what focus does the program place on developing an understanding of oppression?
 - a. At societal and institutional levels?
 - b. At an individual level?
4. How does the program develop in participants a holistic understanding of themselves through your experience in the program?
5. How does the program encourage engagement with differences in the program?
 - a. What types of differences are participants exposed to in the program?
 - b. How does this challenge their work in the group? In the community?
 - c. What focus does the program place on cooperation with others to solve programs given differences?
6. How does the program prepare participants for working in solidarity with marginalized populations?
 - a. How does the program define solidarity?
 - b. What are some examples?
7. What is the overall intention of the program? How has it been successful? What have been some challenges?

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