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Critical global citizenship: contextualising citizenship and globalisation[1]

Abstract: This introductory paper to our first issue provides reflection on the concept of critical global citizenship at both theoretical and practical levels. We maintain that 'citizenship', irrespective of its level of articulation (i.e. national, international, global, etc.) remains an issue that reflects a status, a feeling and practices that are intrinsically interlinked. As a legal status, formal citizenship allows individuals to form a sense of belonging within a political community and, therefore, empowers them to act and perform their citizenship within the spatial domains of the nation-state. Critical global citizenship asks these same individuals not so much to neglect these notions of belonging and practice to a particular locale, but to extend such affinities beyond the territorial boundaries of their formal national membership and to think critically and ethically about their local, national and global relationship with those who are different from themselves. Making a case for a critical global citizenship, however, also requires acknowledging material inequalities that affect the most vulnerable (i.e. migrants, asylum seekers, those experiencing poverty, etc.) and which mean that efforts to cultivate global citizenship orientations to address social injustice are not enacted on an even playing field. As such, a critical global citizenship approach espouses a performative citizenship that is at once democratic and ethical, as well as being aimed at achieving social peace and sustainable justice, but which is also affected by material conditions of inequality that require political solutions and commitment from individuals, states, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations.

Keywords: global citizenship, critical global citizenship, cosmopolitanism, human rights, everyday citizenship

1 Introduction

The world today is faced with many challenges at so many intersecting levels: environmental, political, social, economic and security-wise. And yet, despite the existential threats posed by environmental challenges in particular, it is nevertheless the sociopolitical polarisation around institutional injustices, politics of difference and the management of an emerging super-diversity driven by tectonic changes in transportation as well as information and communication technologies (ICTs) that has dominated theoretical and policy responses to globalisation. The outcome of these structural changes is the emergence of a multicentred world where not only socio-economic struggles but also cultural rights claims are made by vulnerable and minority groups and where the sites of contestations are no longer territorially bound but global in their political and discursive constructions and manifestations.

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It is for these reasons that the *Journal of Citizenship and Globalisation Studies* aims to engage critically with the nature and problematics of new forms of citizenship in a global context. The aim is to investigate the multifaceted understanding of citizenship that is embedded in both the global North and the global South, while acknowledging our collective ethical responsibility to work towards a more just and peaceful world. Of course, this goal faces many challenges, but in this introductory paper to our first issue, we want to articulate some of these challenges as well as put forward practical steps to achieving such lofty goals.

In the context of the modern nation-state, citizenship has been advanced as a constitutional cornerstone and a powerful ideological framework for regulating social interactions at the level of the nation-state. At its most basic level, citizenship indicates membership of a political community with associated rights and duties. This is akin to what many theorists term 'contributory rights' (e.g. Isin and Turner 2007). However, in many émigré societies, citizenship is being challenged and contested because of economic globalisation, as well as cultural and religious diversity. In particular, post-migration cities are grappling with the claims of culture and religion (Benhabib 2002; Barry 2001; Kymlicka and Norman 2000) and pondering over how best to accommodate increased diversity with its underlying notion of 'difference', while maintaining an overarching sense of belonging and inclusion within the broader society.

Achieving this balance has become increasingly difficult, with 'populist' far-right movements and political parties capturing the political 'centre' in many European nations, the USA and Australia. The challenge here is to ensure that cultural and religious rights are protected without the risk of producing disconnected communities and a weakened sense of belonging to the wider society. In other words, the challenge of how to accept and support cultural and religious diversity without necessarily erecting new forms of mutual exclusion and intercultural tensions remains.

The in-principle position pursued in this introduction follows the intellectual arguments made within theories of global citizenship (e.g. Davis 2006) and cosmopolitanism (Appiah 2006), whereby the true binding glue for diverse societies resides not only within nationalistic normative citizenship articulations but rather within a more global approach emphasising our shared human experiences, aspirations and responsibilities. In other words, our consciousness should not be simply based on a premise of support for fellow citizens but rather on a personal commitment to social justice and an ethics of care oriented towards fellow human beings across the globe. The argument here is that any new framing of citizenship approaches must be global and holistic, reflecting the universality and interconnectedness of human experiences, while acknowledging the specificities of the sociopolitical environment within which they occur.

2 Global citizenship and cosmopolitanism

Global citizenship has been invoked as a possible new articulation of de-territorialised political membership in the context of increased levels of diversity in the global era. In particular, it has been noted that existing 'local' versions of social policies and political frameworks do not always take into account the fact that many people are nowadays connected to 'global communities' with deep transnational ties, allowing them to maintain collective cultural identities and practices that transcend the boundaries of the nation-sate. These and other political implications of transnationalism represent significant challenges to national articulations of citizenship with their concept of territorial demarcation and spatial fixity. In order to overcome these limitations and reflect the multiple identifications facilitated through different transnational practices and ties, new alternative (and often overlapping) frameworks for citizenship have been explored and advanced since the 1980s, most notably its post-national, multicultural, cosmopolitan and global versions. Though some of these concepts do exhibit clear overlapping dimensions, this paper will examine more closely a critical 'global citizenship' approach.

The notion of 'global citizenship' is very broad and at times contested, as the very term seems to represent an oxymoron (Davies 2006) with an inherent contradiction: 'citizenship' in fact implies a membership of and a belonging to a territorially defined nation-sate, while 'global' invokes a sense of an attachment to an

imagined global community that transcends the very essence of the nation-state. Moreover, the notion of 'global citizenship' – though increasingly prevalent in many policy and educational settings – is not as yet a legally binding concept. Rather than being a normative reality, the notion of global citizenship is more of an aspirational ethical framework that reflects how the traditional notion of citizenship, defined within the contours of the nation-state, is progressively being challenged and transformed within the context of globalisation and transnational mobility. In this regard, global citizenship – with its emphasis on social justice, cultural and political rights as well as political inclusion beyond the boundaries of the nation-state – is an articulation of a set of universal cosmopolitan values that bridge the normative gap between national and international affiliations (Habermas 1996; Young 2000).

Taking all of this into consideration, the working definition of global citizenship that we want to promote in the *Journal* (cf. Mertova and Green 2010) is as follows:

Global citizenship concerns one's identity as a social, cultural, and economic being, with rights and responsibilities to act locally, nationally, and globally (Lingard and Rizvi 2010; Rhoades and Szelényi 2011).

This definition is informed by a cosmopolitan worldview that is premised on an acknowledgement of the global interconnections and interdependencies among all human beings irrespective of cultural, social and religious backgrounds. It requires certain orientations, ways of being and ways of relating to the world. Such orientations are based on principles and values such as openness towards diversity/difference, interdependence, interconnectedness as well as a sense of responsibility and care towards others that does not lead to paternalism. In this sense, critical cosmopolitanism (Delanty, G. (ed.) Handbook of Cosmopolitan Studies. Routledge: London and New York) requires not only the recognition of the 'other' but spells out how one can relate to other human beings in ways that any fellow human being can understand in our increasingly interconnected world. To this end, cosmopolitanism aims to nurture and support the principles of the equal worth of each person and the ethics of mutual respect among all human beings. Critical cosmopolitanism also acknowledges the material conditions of the 'other' and aims to alleviate discrepancies in social and economic suffering and justice between the global North and South.

Citizenship has a persistent materiality related to its legal and formal status, whereby it has traditionally acted as a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion from the national polity and the rights and protections associated with access. For example, the politically vexing and contested issue of undocumented arrivals (either those fleeing persecution and seeking asylum or those pushed by global economic factors to seek work outside of their countries of origin) has become a key indicator of how liberal states use traditional conceptions of citizenship to categorise and regulate 'desirable' and 'undesirable' flows of human labour and capital in an era of globalisation. On the one hand, this has promoted new modes of citizenship, with many migrants holding dual/multiple citizenships and having a high degree of cultural capital and mobility. At the other end of the scale, the case of international students and temporary workers, as well as the provision of temporary visas with limited rights and protections, highlights new forms of inequality that haunt and problematise beliefs that citizenship acts as a guarantor of inclusion, equal rights and protections under state law (Robertson 2015). Here, critical global citizenship may advance thinking about social, political, cultural as well as environmental, gendered and other rights and protections beyond the nation-state, by enabling critical reflection on the ways in which citizenship is mired in material conditions that reflect systemic injustice, inequality and uneven distribution of capital and resources between the global North and South. Specifically, the concept of cosmopolitanism, which is anchored in a discourse of universal ethics and openness towards others, will inform our idea of a 'critical global citizenship'.

3 Key features of a critical global citizenship approach

Although global citizenship does exhibit a number of interrelated and mutually enhancing aspects that have the potential to facilitate global responsibility, some of the conditions previously outlined also paradoxically limit and refocus the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship on the

nation-state. In promoting a critical global citizenship approach, we acknowledge a need to complement 'universal' approaches to global citizenship education by acknowledging material barriers to achieving these ideals. For example, central to a critical global citizenship approach is an ethical engagement with difference, as well as an embracing of and protection for diversity in intrastate, formal and everyday laws, policies and governance. This should be a core focus, to be actioned alongside both ethical development in individuals and the promotion of social justice via a personal sense of global responsibility. A key feature of the latter approach is 'global awareness' or consciousness, which can be defined broadly as a critical knowledge of the world and one's interconnectedness and solidarity with others. This critical awareness of the global situation promotes a willingness to resist social injustice and an ethical responsibility to act for the common good locally, nationally and globally. It is a recognition, not only of our increasing global interconnectedness, but also of the need for grassroots activism to address societal and global injustices and to remove impediments to justice based on spatial/geographic limitations.

Such a critical global citizenship can be approached at the level of a continuum ranging from knowledge-based processes (including critical understanding and self-awareness) and value orientation (personal commitment to egalitarian values and global ethics) to political and committed activism (willingness to challenge attitudes and behaviours within different societal milieus). Such a process involves enhancing one's ethical capacity to act as a cultural, social, economic and political being, with rights and responsibilities that go beyond the boundaries of the local sphere. It involves also a sense of critical awareness of and support for cultural diversity while promoting social justice and global social responsibility. And finally, such an approach nourishes a consciousness of global issues as a reflexive knowledge of the world and one's interconnectedness and solidarity with others. In this sense, critical global citizenship may be conceived of as a transformative platform for influencing – in a positive manner – ones' behaviour and attitude towards 'others', irrespective of their geographic locations or their ethnic–cultural–religious backgrounds. Beyond such 'universalising' tendencies and ethical orientations, 'critical' global citizenship promotes more advocacy- and activism-based approaches to citizenship, to address laws and societal norms that prevent or act as a barrier to normalising and enshrining human rights as a basic core of citizenship. Approached in this manner, critical global citizenship can engender a number of critical attributes including the following:

1. Reflexivity and an externally oriented outlook
2. Openness towards and acceptance of cultural diversity
3. Promoting universal human rights and ethical responsibility

3.1 Reflexivity and an externally oriented outlook

Pursued through education programmes, critical global citizenship approaches learning as an active process, contextualised by one's social environment, as well as a critical, self-reflective exercise, whereby individuals are challenged to question their world and reflect on their role in it. Emphasis is often placed on understanding what is socially meaningful in the world of the individual learner and exploring those meanings within multiple authentic contexts. The facilitation of learning about an interconnected social world forms an important area of global citizenship education, in which concern for local issues is balanced by an awareness of global issues and their interconnectedness with local and national concerns.

3.2 Openness towards and acceptance of cultural diversity

Educational institutions, as microcosms of societies at large, have the capacity to pursue – as a matter of principle – a social agenda that has diversity and social justice as two of its key driving pedagogic principles (Keddie 2012). As such, programmes within a critical global citizenship framework strive to ensure a diversity of stakeholders who are valued through their active involvement. Issues of power and representation become important aspects of such programmes. Within the educational field, one can

argue whether international exchange programmes are examples of global citizenship practice when so few programmes actually involve North–South exchange. The nature and directionality of such exchanges should encompass more representations and active input from the so-called developing South with its unique voices, perspectives and experiences.

3.3 Promoting universal human rights and ethical responsibility

It may be seen that critical global citizenship includes themes associated with civics education, human rights, gender equality and peace education. *These interrelated features of global citizenship are aimed at promoting an active respect for diversity in all its manifestations.* Such an active support for cultural diversity is illustrated at the following levels: (i) grassroots partnerships between different groups; (ii) active intercultural contact programmes in order to learn about the 'other'; and (iii) proactive involvement in local community practice designed to generate and support universal values.

Critical global citizenship, therefore, represents a lifelong educational approach that builds personal and collective capacity for and promotes critical understanding of how we can think and act without prejudice in our diverse and interconnected world (Mansouri 2014). While global citizenship is concerned with nurturing a shared consciousness (a sense of shared destiny and the understanding of common challenges facing humanity), a more critical perspective would promote a personal commitment to act and engage in social, civic and political action aimed at overcoming prejudice and injustice. A critical global citizenship ethics thus should focus more on social, economic and civic-type activities emphasising such notions as common humanity, universality in diversity and advocacy for social 'peace' and 'sustainable development' for all.

4 Young people and everyday citizenship

The characteristics of a critical global citizenship as discussed earlier are evident in the everyday lives and practices of young people in the global North and South, sometimes adhering to global citizenship normative aspirations and sometimes departing from these to suggest more radical civic and political participation and designs. The tensions outlined between citizenship as a tool of integration and belonging to a broader societal whole on the one hand and as an arbiter of individual political, social and cultural rights on the other hand dominate related public debates in émigré societies, from debates regarding how history (and whose) should be taught in schools to the role and visibility of religious worship and discourse in public life. And yet, notwithstanding this politicisation of group rights and recognition in a formal sense and in the institutional settings of schools and other places – where citizenship is used to cultivate national identities and ideals of social, cultural and political participation, at the everyday, quotidian level –it is recognised that citizens in Western and other polities increasingly hold multiple identities and that many have personal connections with other nations and places around the globe owing to their own cultural heritages as well as experiences of permanent and temporary migration. In the Australian context, a critical global citizenship is evident in young Australians of migrant background, who tend to have a strong sense of globalised identities as well as positive views towards their role and belonging in culturally diverse societies (Johns 2014; Harris 2013; Osler 2010). This has been researched through many qualitative studies investigating youth competency in balancing hybrid nature, attitudes towards national and global responsibility as well as embrace of Australian multiculturalism.

Critical global citizenship and cosmopolitan sensibilities are also noticeable in young people's tendency to have looser national affiliation than older Australians, in addition to their association of Australianness with openness to cultural diversity and an attitude of fairness to others, compassion and equal opportunities (Bulbeck 2008). Young people are driving a shift from more traditional, fixed and monocultural ideas about nationality and belonging to more flexible, global forms of citizenship (Ang,

Brand, Noble and Sternberg 2006; Maira 2009). This often requires a balancing of multiple identifications and belongings, producing hyphenated identities. Enactment of multiple identities and communities that extend across national boundaries, rather than a more rigid sense of citizenship and belonging, are seen as inevitable outcomes of 'increasing mobility and multiple networks of interconnectedness across social worlds, central to the cosmopolitanism of contemporary lifestyles' (Ang, Brand, Noble and Sternberg 2006; Maira 2009, pp. 32–33; also refer Ong 1999).

5 Critical global citizenship in a networked society

The *Journal's* brief speaks to and engages with an emerging field of digital democracy and citizenship (refer Siapera's paper in this issue). Experts have long argued that we live in a globalised and interconnected world, with ICTs and networked digital media shaping new opportunities and challenges for social cohesion, political participation and citizenship. This is particularly the case for young people who are often first-users of digital technologies and therefore are the focus of studies exploring opportunities and risks of growing up in a digital age. Related to these questions, digital citizenship has emerged as a critical, although contested, concept for understanding how citizens engage in networked publics and actions, apart from acquiring rights and responsibilities through that status (Isin and Ruppert 2015, p. 4; Hintz, Dencik and Wahl-Jorgensen 2017; McCosker, Vivienne and Johns 2016). According to this emerging field of scholarship, digital technologies shape new spaces in which citizens are 'creating and performing their role in society' (Isin and Ruppert 2015, p. 43) and 'making rights claims' (Isin and Ruppert 2015, p. 4). This definition accommodates claims to transnational commitments and activism, aligning with an emerging field of migration studies that identifies digital affordances with *new formations of citizenship and belonging* (Georgiou 2014; Siapera 2010; Ong 1999).

Digital interconnectedness is further understood to increase young people's social capital, facilitating more diverse social networks, which, in some cases, transcend national boundaries and cultures, creating possibilities for a critical global citizenship that fosters intercultural engagement, understanding and respect for global diversity (Isin and Ruppert 2015). Global citizenship education has thus been closely associated with the growth of young people's use of the internet, social media and mobile media (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 2015). This is underlined by a belief that ICTs promote global, cross-cultural interactions and, alongside these practices, development of cosmopolitan skills and competencies (UNESCO 2015).

Yet, these scenarios have also been revised in recent times, with empirically and theoretically driven research highlighting a range of social and technical or network-related risks arising from the uptake of networked digital media, especially focussed on young people. At a socio-technical level, Isin and Ruppert (2015) and Hintz, Dencik and Wahl-Jorgensen (2017) have highlighted how digital technologies have produced an unprecedented 'datafication' of society, with internet and telecommunications surveillance subjecting our digital lives and expressions to new forms of state and corporate control. Digital citizenship, from a critical global perspective, accounts for new modes of struggle and possibilities of digital activism, solidarity and dissent to counter technologies and modes of power that seek to produce and normalise passive 'data citizens' (Boyd 2007; McCosker, Vivienne and Johns 2016). In addition, the capacity for networked digital media to facilitate cross-border, intercultural dialogue has been paralleled recently with a countervailing trend towards increased online incivility, bigotry and social divisions (Hale 2012; Banks 2010). These influences, which include a rise in violent extremism, racism and hate speech as well as a strengthening, in some online communities, of ethnocentrism, document real challenges, challenges that a critical global citizenship within a digital environment can effectively counteract.

For example, despite these challenges, digital and social media are identified as protective resources for youth, which help connect vulnerable or marginalised community members and provide supportive 'social spaces' and sources of positive relationship building, civic engagement, political activism, healing, intimacy and relationship building, in addition to providing space for actively challenging racist or harmful

stereotypes (McCosker, Vivienne and Johns 2016). This occurs through the creation of online communities that function as 'safe spaces' or enable the development of transnational and intercultural connections that provide support and confidence, as well as encourage resilience towards more negative encounters and influences both 'online' and 'offline' (refer pp. 30–35).

Transnational affiliations, which also underpin digital media use and engagements of an increasing number of young citizens, have been found in the literature to be predominantly protective as they enhance points of belonging and underscore a sense of global community and connectedness. However, the embrace of diversity may be fragile or changeable and it can be tested by economic crisis and political conflict. Multiple networks and identifications can potentially create fragmentation and lead to a loss of local connection, especially when combined with social exclusion, structural disadvantage or discrimination. Young people can also be attracted to defensive identity politics when their social and economic needs are unmet, as is evident in various contemporary examples of radicalisation, as well as nationalist or ethnic revivalism (UNESCO 2015).

6 Critical global citizenship and its transformative potential

Based on the broad discussion herein, the following section briefly discusses the application of a critical global citizenship, primarily in education but also in other important areas of social policy. The rise of 'populism' in the West and the consequent re-emergence of intercultural tensions (especially after 9/11), social conflict in a number of regions, racism and ethnocentrism (in many émigré societies) must be top priorities for immediate coordinated critical global citizenship action focussing on education, media, corporate governance and policy-making. The main challenge, however, is that the concept of global citizenship has remained for too long a rather shallow rhetorical pronouncement espoused by political leaders, policymakers and educators, with no concrete plans for how it can be operationalised and implemented as a transformative process in practice (Wierenga and Guevara 2013). It needs to move from the aspirational realm to the performative arena, with real tools for concretising its various objectives.

Education remains the most critical domain in which critical global citizenship can and should be pursued. It has the potential to engender sustainable transformative positive change in the way people think, behave and act vis-à-vis others. While global citizenship education remains a significant challenge at the level of operationalised and measurable attainments (Oxfam 2006; Tawil 2013), we can perhaps think about the goals and practices of a critical global citizenship education in terms of micro-orientations, such as developing skills and competencies that allow us to be effective critical participants in the global neoliberal marketplace. But more importantly, we can also think about these goals in terms of more transformative orientations, such as deepening one's intercultural understandings and/or developing one's capacities to work within an equitable and social justice-based framework.

In addition to 'curriculum' and classroom-based initiatives, education systems need to also be challenged in terms of their institutional governance, pedagogical arrangements and openness to their social environments. To this end, a critical global citizenship approach within education should also consider the following: (i) extracurricular activities, non-formal education experiences as well as alternative learning traditions; (ii) the educational policy-making process itself (issues of leadership, power and representation); and (iii) the physical structure and organisation of educational systems (most notably the extent to which social, economic and cultural segregation are engendered).

Global citizenship education in this context aims to equip individuals with critical knowledge and reflexive competencies in order to operate, work and participate in daily affairs as global citizens and not only as national citizens. Such educational programmes enable students to develop their own critical understandings of complex and contested meanings of globalisation and the emerging world order. They examine the factors that might hinder or facilitate the achievement of global citizenship, analyse the impact of their actions, as well as their individual and collective responsibilities, as global citizens, within their local, national and international communities.

7 Conclusion

Following the basic Kantian idea that human beings belong to a single moral community, the basic proposal here is to engage policymakers, leaders and emerging leaders (through workshops and professional development programmes) in critically examining the potential and limitations of the interconnected notions of global governance, universal ethics and global civil society. The aim then is to explore how best to construct optimal transformative policies that respond to 21st-century complexities and reflect the realities of the new hyper-diverse and interconnected world we all live in, to critically analyse the implications of new forms of attachments to the traditional nation-state (with its supposedly fixed political membership within defined borders) and to reflect on how new transnational approaches to governance and social policymaking must look beyond legal frameworks and exclusionary citizenship rights.

This introductory paper to our first issue has provided some reflections on the concept of critical global citizenship at both theoretical and practical levels. It is worth remembering that, in the end, 'citizenship', irrespective of its level of articulation (i.e. national, international, global, etc.), remains an issue that reflects a status, a feeling and a practice (Osler 2010) that are intrinsically interlinked. In a way, legal status (formal citizenship) allows individuals to form a sense of belonging within a political community and therefore empowers them to act and perform their citizenship within the spatial domains of the nation-state to which they happen to belong. Critical global citizenship asks these same individuals not so much to restrict these notions of belonging and practice to a particular locale, but to extend such affinities beyond the territorial boundaries of their formal national membership and to think critically and ethically about their local, national and global relationship to those who are different. As such, a critical global citizenship espouses a performative citizenship that is at once democratic and ethical, aimed as it is at achieving social peace and sustainable justice for all. We hope that our *Journal* will be a forum to explore and debate the possibilities and achievement of a more just and equitable world.

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