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Exploring Global Citizenship Theories to Advance Educational, Social, Economic and Environmental Justice

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Abstract

The development of effective approaches to educating for global citizenship to promote social, economic and environmental justice is often hampered by disagreement as to the meaning of the phenomenon or concept known as transnational or global citizenship, which could be perceived as an offspring of educational tourism. Three theoretical models or approaches attempt to explain or argue positions about global citizenship: 1) political theory of global citizenship 2) educational theory of global citizenship and 3) the social theory of global citizenship. Some theorists claim that an individual's belief that they are capable of altering their citizenship through environmental conditions and related influences through the creation or engagement in certain types of events could support altering their citizenship status. A review of studies investigating the role of education and tourism in educating for global citizenship is derived from exploring theoretical constructs from all three models supporting global citizenship in an attempt to align the validity of this approach with the efforts to determine how global citizenship and tourism promote social, economic and environmental justice. However, it is important to note that each competing theory emphasizes the importance of some characteristics not addressed by the other models. It was concluded that while effective in some practical and conceptual ways, designating any one model is too restrictive to account for the full range of potential opportunities for educating for global citizenship to advance educational, social, economic and environmental justice. Therefore, one model alone cannot provide a comprehensive strategy for using educational theory as the ideal model to promote social, economic and environmental justice.

Introduction

The premise of this article is that scholarly publishing, discussing and exchanging of ideas through educational tourism or global education networks are more critical than ever to bringing about the dynamic educational transformation needed for creating a more knowledgeable, peaceful and cooperative global society. The nature of the controversy includes a primary debate about whether the concept of global citizenship is "real citizenship" that is capable to bring about systemic and sustainable change as traditional citizenship. A second debate is that in the classical sense, citizenship brings with it a specific legal, institutional, political, and economic bonds between people and society, which becomes more difficult if not impossible to achieve in a world citizenship without boundaries.

The problem

The problem or guiding question for this theoretical paper is: What theories of global citizenship advocate or promote educational, social, economic and environmental justice? Moreover, why is this important?

The approach is to share opposing or critical research findings from the literature interpreted through the context of experiential and theoretical knowledge that has emerged from exploring the concept of educating for global citizenship. This paper explores the potential ways to conceptualize or understand the influence of global citizenship theory as a movement that influence arguments aimed at promoting social, economic and environmental justice in the world.

The case-in-point to establish why or the impetus for this paper is, the World Conference on Curriculum and Instruction (WCCI), a UNESCO-NGO (national government organization) that is bringing together world educators, leaders and researchers from around the world in Rome, Italy in summer 2018 to: ...inspire and engage educators and researchers around the world in an exploration of the processes and effects of global education in advancing economic, social and environmental justice by way of training and producing global citizens who are informed, sensitive, competent and active members of their local and global communities, who take part in the global governance process, who seek sustainable and just solutions to global problems, and who advocate policy changes for the attainment of a just world [1].

In this paper, Global citizenship is conceptualized as defined by KOSMOS, Journal for Global Transformation, Global Citizen Initiative as: a "global citizen is someone who identifies with being part of an emerging world community and whose actions contribute to building this community's values and practices" [2].

Educational tourism definition in prior JTH articles adopts World Tourism Organization (WTO) description of educational tourists or tourism as "individuals or groups who travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four hours and not more than one year" for purposes including study, business, leisure and other activities [3].

Methodology

To understand the range of responses to this guiding question and

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ongoing debates, the author draws upon currently published research literature with the aim of furthering theoretical work in the field of interest, which is educating for global citizenship to promote social, economical and environmental justice. The author presents an original professional theory, showing how personal theory and experience link in with published theories and literature.

This paper examines three prevailing theories of global citizenship to identify and explore arguments about the differences and similarities between the theories. This happens through examining each theory's internal consistency and evaluating the level of empirical support for the theory, experiential knowledge and findings from the literature (i.e. studies/experiments).

Three themes emerge to share results and interpretations: 1) Approaches to Creating Global Citizenship – a comparison, 2) An Evaluation of Differences between Observed Practices and Theories and 3) Personal and Professional Experiences. The Figure 1 shows conceptual framework supporting theories of global citizenship.

Approaches to creating global citizenship – A comparison

There are at least three theoretical models or approaches attempt to define global citizenship: 1) political theory of global citizenship 2) educational theory of global citizenship and 3) the social theory of global citizenship. This section defines each of the theoretical approaches.

Political theory of global citizenship

The Political Theory of Global Citizenship debate in the seminal work, The Political Theory of Global Citizenship (Routledge Innovations in Political Theory) by Carter [4] encapsulates a position widely advocated by Miller [5] in The Idea of Global Citizenship. In this position paper, Miller argues that…

- Citizenship is a political idea – the relationship that holds between co-citizens must be a political relationship, whether or not it involves institutions of government in their familiar form – whereas the idea of global citizenship is essentially apolitical. Whatever merits it may have in other regards, it is damaging if it comes to be seen as a substitute for or alternative to our political relationships [5].

- Dave Miller goes on to argue that 'those who aspire to create transnational or forms of global citizenship… either…are simply utopian, or else what they aspire to is not properly described as citizenship [6].
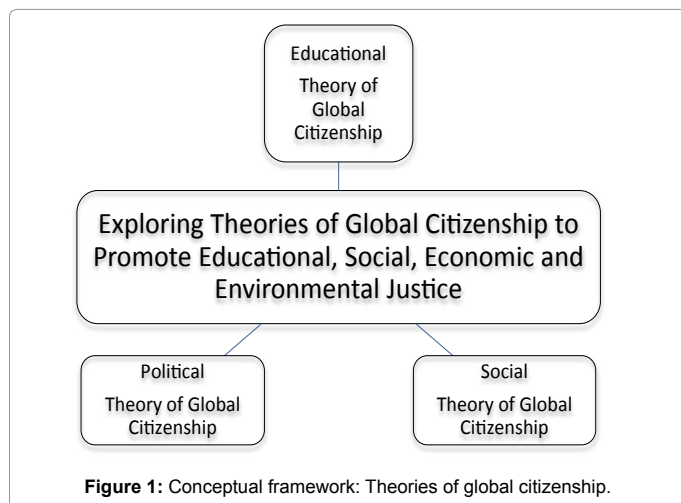

Figure 1: Conceptual framework: Theories of global citizenship.

Arendt and Jaspers [2] is another theorist who in the larger part of a popular essay supports Miller's present argument by stating: 'Nobody can be a citizen of the world as he is the citizen of his country'. And then after claiming that any world government whatever its form would be 'a forbidding nightmare of tyranny', Arendt continues:

'A citizen is by definition a citizen among citizens in a country among countries. His rights and duties must be defined and limited, not only by those of his fellow citizens, but … by the boundaries of a territory. Philosophy may conceive of the earth as the homeland of mankind and of one unwritten law, eternal and valid for all. Politics deals with men, nationals of many countries and heirs to many pasts; its laws are the positively established fences which hedge in, protect, and limit the space in which freedom is not a concept, but a living, political reality [7].

One outstanding critical interpretation resulting from Arendt and Miller's works is that both are courageous and thought-provoking claims about the nature of citizenship. However, my investigation found that these theoretical positions principally proclaim views without empirical supporting arguments. The conversation now turns to another viewpoint that focuses on educational theory.

Educational theory of global citizenship

In Global Citizenship Education: Philosophy, Theory and Pedagogy, theorists published essays to argue that global citizenship education…

Must be set against the imperfections of our contemporary political realities. The researchers assert that as a form of education, global citizens "must actively engage in a critically informed way with a set of complex inherited historical issues that emerge out of a colonial past and the savage globalization, which often perpetuates unequal power relations or cause new inequalities [8]

Researchers or theorists who argue their beliefs about global citizenship education share similar positions that center on the need to create new values. Educators believe that conditions supporting the global citizenship phenomenon often perpetuate unequal power relations that result in new inequalities rooted in historical and emergent world ideologies. These conditions include divergent views of globalism, territorial conflicts, ethnic, tribal and nationalist rivalries, problems of increasing international migration and growing regional imbalances.

Global education theorists further advocate challenging other theoretical views on global citizenship by opening debateson the language, concepts and theories of global citizenship that are supported by world institutions that seek to give open expression to international forms of social justice and citizen participation in world government. Contributors to this dialogue argue that global citizenship education could be a solution to extending human rights and multiculturalism through a more inclusive model of the global citizen [9].

Considering the more inclusive direction, research and initiatives by "UNESCO goes even further than dialogue advancing global citizenship education pedagogy with the launch of the UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012, which made fostering global citizenship one of its three education priorities" [8]. In fact, UNESCO published its first seminal pedagogical guide, titled Global Citizenship Education: Topics and learning objectives. In this work, UNESCO describes global citizenship as "a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity. It emphasizes a

more systemic approach to create political, economic, social and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global [9]. Within this definition, the UNESCO theoretical framework is three-dimensional (Figure 2).

Social theory of global citizenship

In tracing the history of social theorists approach to defining global citizenship, a seminal work titled, Citizenship and Social Theory edited by Turner [9], Social theorists essays describe principles to advocate the meaning of citizenship as the "nature of social membership in society within modern political collectivities" [9]. In essence, social theorists identify what is believed to be four essential issues concerned with the

meaning of citizenship: 1) the content of social rights and organization 2) the form or type of such obligations or rights 3) social forces that produce such practices and 4) various social arrangements by which such benefits are distributed to different sectors of society.

Furthermore, researchers theorized that the concept of citizenship more likely cannot be a universal ideology, largely because it first developed from the conjuncture of social and cultural conditions peculiar to the West, which may not be of consequences for societies outside the West or because of modern technologies that have not permeated some closed societies. Citizenship by nature is a tool that grew from principles of Democracy and liberal society and therefore
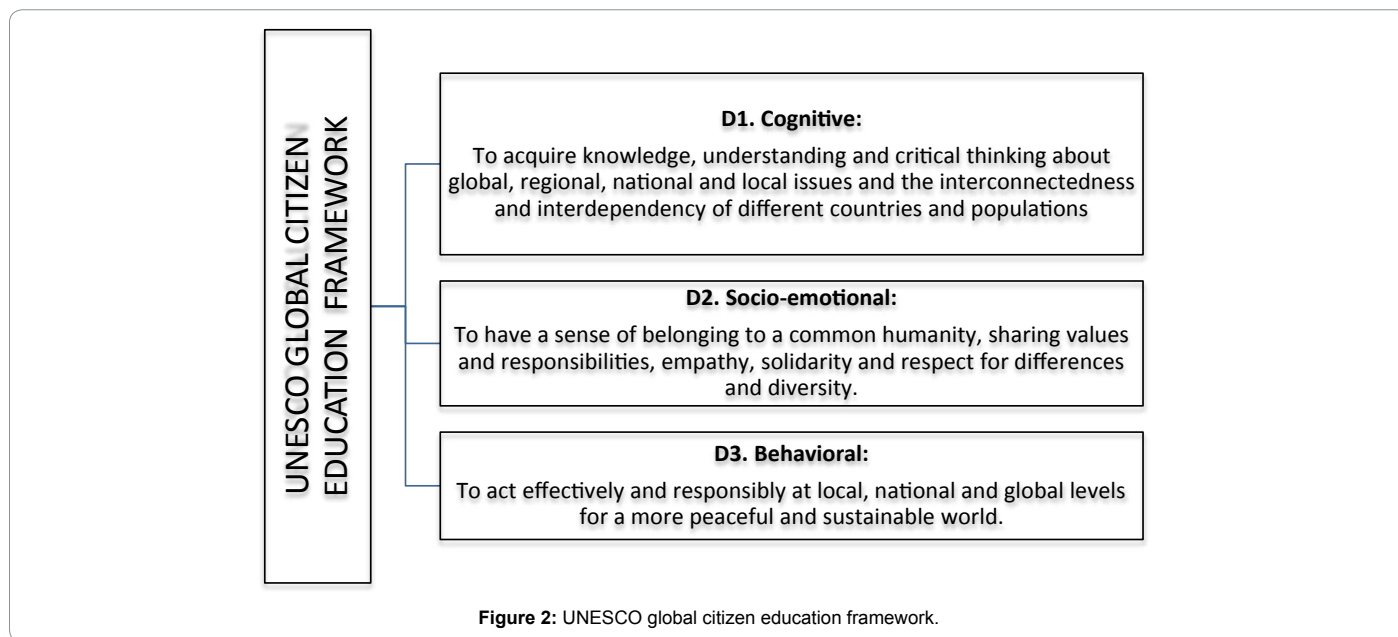

UNESCO GLOBAL CITIZEN EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

D1. Cognitive:
To acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations

D2. Socio-emotional:
To have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.

D3. Behavioral:
To act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

Figure 2: UNESCO global citizen education framework.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP: SOCIAL THEORISTS FRAMEWORK

D1
Content of social rights and organization

D2
Form or type of such obligations or rights

D3
Social forces that produce such practices

D4
Various social arrangements by which such benefits are distributed to different sectors of society
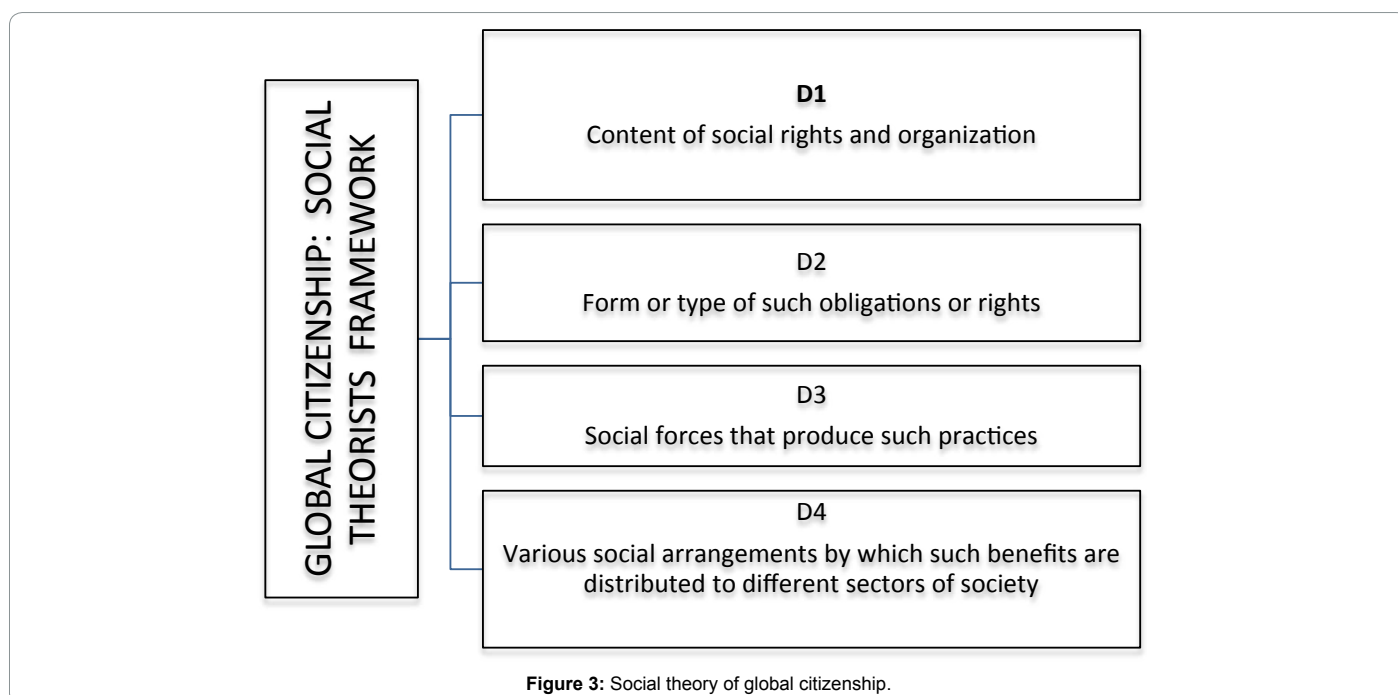
Figure 3: Social theory of global citizenship.

again, the position emerges that there can be no one complete or elaborate theory of citizenship.

Research findings in this typology of global citizenship theory concluded that although we can define citizenship from legal, political and social perspectives, there is yet to a strong foundation of empirical research that provide a good accounting of what causes that support citizenship development - and especially global citizenship. Finally, social theorists conclude that there is tension between global human rights and citizenship rights. Therefore, a question that we might ask as we continue to explore this area emerged as: Is the notion of citizenship still valid, given the many issues raised in the dialogue about global citizenship, human right and social justice? The answer was in the affirmative, "Yes", but again without empirical research to support this position (Figure 3).

Conclusions

An evaluation of differences between observed practices and theories reveals unique approaches by each discipline with respect to describing global citizenship and the relationship to educational and political empowerment. The guiding question aimed to identify theories of global citizenship and how each advocates for or promotes educational, social, economic and environmental justice and moreover, why exploring these conceptual approaches are important. The research clearly shows a common theme revolving around global citizenship that focuses on power relationships and the need to create new values centered on the meaning of humanity and social justice across cultures. The theorists within each area of social, political and educational context agreed that no one perspective or theory is appropriate to define or describe the global citizenship phenomenon; therefore we can never truly reach a consensus. However, this reality does not suggest that we cannot work together across or beyond borders to find an actionable solution to support justice and humane treatment for all people.

Afterthoughts: personal experiences and argument for research

As a result of conclusion of this brief investigation, we argue that we must continue studying the issues introduced by each theorist approach that was introduced in this article. Furthermore, I believe that the World Conference on Curriculum and Instruction (WCCI), the UNESCO-NGO's approach to convene world leaders to engage dialogue to inspire and engage educators and researchers around the world in an exploration of the processes and effects of global education in advancing economic, social and environmental justice by way of training and producing global citizens could be an effective approach to continue this conversation.

We must work to focus on commonalities in our belief systems rather than differences to find actionable solutions. Each theorist cited in this review are informed, sensitive, competent and active members of their local and global research communities, who value global differences and actively participate in the global governance process, while seeking sustainable and just solutions to global problems. It is global voices like these researchers whose theories we must continue to study. The answer to the question "Why?" is that in the advocacy for policy changes, attainment and sustainment of a just world we must find common ground that does not require a universal ideology.

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