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Foregrounding the Voice of Prospective Host Community Stakeholders in International Service Learning

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Foregrounding the Voice of Prospective Host Community Stakeholders in
International Service Learning

by

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A THESIS

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Abstract

While there is a growing body of research within the area of International Service Learning (ISL), research is skewed towards an interest in Western concerns and representation. Service learning that involves stakeholders from host countries in the global South is often predicated on relationships between stakeholders that are inherently inequitable. While there is ample research on ISL, most has been concerned with the stakeholders from the global North, with little critical insight coming from the host communities. This lack of community voice only serves to uphold a cultural hegemony, negating claims by proponents of service learning of mutual benefit and reciprocity. Therefore, this collective case study sought out the perspectives of six community leaders in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to determine how they might envision a meaningful ISL initiative. The research participants' concerns with the unequal distribution of wealth, the moral condescension exhibited by foreigners, and the lack of community voice within the global arena, made embracing ISL ventures a tenuous proposition. Evident from the findings was a Western hegemonic ethnocentrism that impacted how the participants perceived service, reciprocity, and partnership within ISL.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, M. A. George. The dialogues reported in Chapters 4-5 were covered by Ethics ID REB17-1379, issued by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board for the project “Foregrounding the Voice of the Host Community in International Service Learning” on October 17, 2017.

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my dad, Sydney George, who I know would have been my biggest supporter on this journey.

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Definition of Terms

The following represents definition of terms as used in this dissertation.

<i>Global North</i>	Refers to Canada, the United States, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. This term is also used interchangeably with the West and also representative of the economically “developed” nations in the world.
<i>Global South</i>	Refers to Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East, and “developing” parts of Asia.
<i>International Service Learning</i>	Adult learning initiatives that involve volunteers travelling from the global North to the global South for the purpose of partaking in community Service.
<i>Western Hegemonic Ethnocentrism</i>	Privileging Western culture and ways of knowing and doing over others.
<i>Colonialism</i>	The forceful occupation and exploitation of foreign territories by European powers.
<i>Imperialism</i>	The economic, cultural, and political influence of the global North over the global South.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Service learning within higher education is becoming an increasingly popular pedagogical tool used to engage students in social issues, as well as to develop leadership skills. International Service Learning (ISL), in particular, inextricably aligns with a mission of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) that has also become an influential force within higher education, and has increasingly been the philosophical driver for ISL. However, although such initiatives require partnerships-relationships that cross borders, the onto-epistemological underpinnings remain entrenched within a Western/European ideology. Therefore, ISL initiatives risk perpetuating a cultural imperialism.

Through this research, I sought out the perspectives of prospective stakeholders in the global South in order to destabilize the ethnocentrism prevalent in ISL, and to find ways to make such initiatives more collaborative.

In this chapter of my dissertation, I outline the background of the study and how I locate myself as a researcher within the discussion. I then outline the problem, purpose and research questions that guided this study, followed by a rationale for my study, theoretical framework and methodology. I end this chapter by sharing my biases and assumptions going into to my research.

Background and Context

I am privileged to be a full time faculty member at a community college in Ontario. Not long after I started working at the college, I found myself on strike, walking the picket line in solidarity with other faculty. Although a unifying experience, I keenly remember feeling like an outsider: jokingly called an imposter by other faculty who claimed I was a student trying to pass for an instructor. While I wanted take this as a compliment, referencing my youthful looks, I

knew that it signaled something deeper. It was not hard to recognize the demarcation line that marked me as an outsider. With a student body that represented nearly 100 ethno-cultural groups, I looked more like one of the brown-skinned individuals that made up the majority of the student body of this city college, than the predominantly White, near-retirement-age faculty. Having worked at the college for over a decade, I have witnessed how it has slowly transformed, whereby I can now see more and more faculty members of colour walk the school corridors—although still a long ways to go before being near reflective of the diverse student body.

However, the insider-outsider dynamics, that marked me from my first days at the college, continues to permeate my consciousness and acts as a lens through which I view my work. I routinely reflect on the privilege that some enjoy while others remain oppressed, and the intersections of race, gender, socio-economic status, etc. (Dei, 2010) within such dynamics. As a professor in a transition-access program, I see every day how those on the outside, those with a history of institutional oppression and exclusion (Dei, 2003; Dei, 2008; Nichols & Braimoh, 2018), fall through the cracks. Therefore, within my work, I feel it is my duty to help arm my students with the social and cultural capital (Childs, Finnie, & Mueller, 2018; Peralta & Klonowski, 2017) that might help garner some advantages moving forward in their education.

It is through this same lens that I have found myself questioning the efficacy of the GCE program and ISL initiatives that have come to be the hallmark of our college's mandate. And, it was the acknowledgement of my unease and the pondering of notions of privilege and oppression among a global North-South divide, that brought me to undertake this research.

Formal education, whether overtly or not, has always played a pivotal role in shaping the kind of citizens that nations deem appropriate. This aim of education has become even more encompassing in its mission with the introduction of *global* citizenship education, which

connotes a more collective objective that goes beyond the nation state. While this concept of GCE has been taken up in differing ways within differing worldviews (Caruana, 2014; Eidoo et al., 2011; Marshall, 2011; Oxley & Morris, 2013; Parmenter, 2011; Roman, 2003; Schattle, 2008; Shultz, 2007), they all make an attempt to address our increasing global interconnectedness. Within the realm of higher education, GCE also provides the philosophical underpinnings for an increasingly popular pedagogical tool, international service learning.

ISL initiatives can take on a range of practices. Examples include having participants contribute to infrastructure improvement projects, while learning about and being immersed in another culture. This may involve building a schoolroom in a rural community, constructing a home for a less fortunate family through an organization like Habitat for Humanity, or working on a farm alongside community farmers to help develop and learn about sustainable food systems. In addition to the service component is a learning and reflection piece that further engages students in the work that they are doing abroad. This may manifest itself in such activities as daily debriefings, journal reflections, and-or blog posts. Often, the learning piece starts before participants embark on their volunteer mission, and continue once they return to their home institutions.

Service learning opportunities offered by educational institutions began to take a strong foothold in the 1980s (Harkavy & Hartley, 2010; Jacoby, 2015), with an increasing emphasis on the need to form community partnerships. Today, they serve to increase student participation in applied social justice learning opportunities and to develop leadership skills. Generally, both domestic and international service learning are grounded in the humanistic theoretical foundations of Experiential Learning and Transformative Learning theories. Jacoby (2015) explained:

Service-learning engages students in concrete experience followed by critical reflection on the service experiences and, in curricular service-learning, with academic content. Reflection is designed with the intention of leading to deeper understanding of the root causes of the need for service and the complexity of the salient social issues, as well as potential future actions within the context of the service-learning experience and beyond.

(p. 6)

However, there has been debate over the desired pedagogical aims of service learning, ranging from a means of supporting academic endeavors, to an ethic of social justice. What becomes evident is that “these divergent views underscore . . . that service learning is not a neutral act. Various rationales can be (and are) attached to the practice” (Harkavy & Hartley, 2010, p. 421).

In particular, *international* service learning within higher education comes out of a growing trend among colleges and universities to acknowledge a commitment to GCE. GCE allows students to take on active roles within communities, “to face and resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 15).

Marshall (2011) employed the concept of pluralism and the use of the discourse of instrumentalism in theorizing the differing agendas within GCE. Important here, is that being able to discern different forms of GCE “has the potential to expose citizenship realities, disparities and inequalities by recognising the political-economic context in which these global citizenry ideals emerge” (p. 415). By extension, this also allows for the interrogation of the different forms of ISL that develop out of these varying GCE ideals.

In tracing the history of internationalization in higher education, for example, Haigh (2014) identified eight coexisting layers of narratives that “are founded in fundamental

differences between the world views of the constituencies involved” (p. 7). These layers ranged from *recruiting international students* and *compliance with standards set by international accreditation agencies*, to *connected e-learning* and *education for planetary, whole-Earth, consciousness* (Haigh, 2014). The sixth layer was identified as *educating for global citizenship*.

When I considered such diverse and competing motives surrounding internationalization, GCE and ISL, I experienced confusion. If there are so many competing agendas within one institution, how do we comprehend the diversity and competing ideals that we encounter when we cross borders? More importantly, I was forced to question grand narratives in which the universal “global citizen,” as defined by the global North, is the protagonist. How do we determine-define collective global missions of GCE and ISL when all players are not on a level playing field?

Underpinning my research, therefore, was the ontological belief that there are varying agendas—multiple realities that drive ISL. This then forced the question of *whose* agenda takes precedent. Underpinning this critical question are notions of power that, when considered, allows a researcher to “better investigate those that are at least perceived to be the more dominant forms of global citizenship education and why” (Marshall, 2011, p. 415).

Locating Self as Researcher

I feel conflicted about ISL, yet I cannot deny that such initiatives can be beneficial. Service learning, in a universalistic, normative sense, may very well be a panacea for the complacency of students addressing the inequities of a globally connected world. However, my ontological worldview is forcing me to reckon with the idea that our realities are more complex than this. Therefore, I cannot bring myself to always accept the notion of a universal good (a

single reality), but am forced to problematize this endeavor. I am forced to problematize the notion of a universal “global citizen” that compels us to embark on ISL missions.

My current interest in ISL stems from working at a college that has been coined the “equity” college because it has implemented GCE outcomes in all of its post-secondary programs; and, it has made a GCE course mandatory for all students. While I welcome such a move, I cannot help but question what kind of citizens we are hoping to shape. My unease becomes even more pronounced when I entertain the thought of going on one of the ISL initiatives offered through my college. Despite being all-expense-paid trips, I have so far resisted the call due to my uneasiness and confusion surrounding these ventures.

Reflecting on my own positioning within this discussion, I go back almost 20 years to my first introduction to a similar sort of venture when I was living in Japan and was offered the opportunity to take part in a Habitat for Humanity project in the Philippines. I felt the same sense of reservation then about that form of international voluntourism (McGehee, 2014), which I feel now about its side-shoot, ISL. While I could not comprehensively articulate my apprehensions at the time, I sensed that there was a power imbalance of sorts. I was cognizant of my own Western privilege; I was yearning to appreciate the other side to this coin or, more accurately, other sides to this prism.

I am privileged to have traveled extensively, and I credit these experiences for helping me to recognize the nuances of my own ways of knowing—my epistemological foundations. For example, while living in Japan, I embodied many contradictions. The stereotypical expectations of me as a black woman (garnered from media representations) contradicted the status that went along with being a public school teacher (highly regarded in Japan) and an English-speaking *gaijin* (foreigner) from a “First World” country. Moreover, my travel experiences within the

region served to solidify these paradoxes wherein, for locals and officials alike, my Canadian passport did not reconcile with the colour of my skin. I believe that my awareness of these contradictions of my varying subjectivities is what has led me to question the Western narrative of universalism that I have been born and raised on and that, I believe, too often drives ISL.

While I was born in Canada, my parents are from a small island nation in the Caribbean, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I still remember the first time I visited with my family as a young girl. It was the first time my dad had been back since he had left the island two decades earlier. I recall impatiently standing with him at gate entrances to homes where the homeowners would quizzically, and even irritably, stare at him. This would go on for what seemed like an inordinate amount of time until, to my dad's delight, a hint of recognition would come over their faces. At the time, I did not appreciate the trip down memory lane or the cultural lessons that my dad tried to impart. Instead, I experienced culture shock; I wanted desperately to return to my "normal" existence in Canada. However, on my trips since, I have grown to appreciate my cultural heritage and ancestral land by recognizing my own Western ethnocentrism and being more open to other ways of knowing and being.

Therefore, when considering the annual call put out by the college that I teach at for staff to submit proposals for service learning initiatives, I could not help, despite my angst surrounding ISL, to think about the little nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A former French and British colony with a struggling economy, St. Vincent is representative of many of the "developing" communities that host ISL initiatives. Not long before, when speaking to one of my uncles visiting Canada from St. Vincent, he shared with me how bleak the economy in St. Vincent was. "What do you think needs to be done to turn things around?" I had asked. His response was, "Foreigners. Outside money. . . . You." I have since pondered his hope for

partnership with foreigners implied by his answer. And so, through my research, I endeavor to uncover other sides to the prism, other perspectives, which may allow for the development of more reciprocal ISL initiatives. My hope is that this will settle my unease.

Problem Statement

While there is a growing body of research pertaining to ISL, there seems to be a consensus that the research is skewed towards an interest in Western concerns and representation. This concern is supported by Jacoby (2015), Larson (2016), and Parmenter (2011) who reinforced a need to include and foreground the perspectives of the host community. Service learning that involves stakeholders from host countries in the global South is often predicated on relationships between stakeholders that are inherently inequitable (Mitchell, 2008). While there is ample research on ISL, most has been concerned with the stakeholders from the global North, with little critical insight coming from the host communities (Larson, 2016). I believe that this lack of community voice only serves to uphold a cultural hegemony, negating claims by proponents of service learning of mutual benefit and reciprocity.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of my research is to foreground the voices of prospective stakeholders in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to determine how they might envision a meaningful ISL initiative. In understanding and valuing the perspectives of those in the global South, we will be more able to challenge our own ethnocentric practices that perpetuate imperialist agendas. Findings from this study may inform the design of more collaborative initiatives that locate desires of host communities at the *inception* of any plans for ISL.

Guiding Research Questions

This research was guided by one primary and three secondary research questions.

Primary Research Question

The primary research question that guided this study was: What constitutes a meaningful, ISL initiative for prospective stakeholders located in the global South?

Secondary Research Questions:

- How do prospective stakeholders of ISL interpret and make meaning of *service* within their host community?
- What constitutes a meaningful *partnership* to prospective stakeholders of ISL in a host community?
- What constitutes *reciprocity* to prospective stakeholders of ISL in a host community?

Rationale for Research

I believe that valuable information regarding how those in the global South perceive ISL can be garnered from research participants in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Despite a desire on the part of its people, St. Vincent has not been a popular tourist destination. In recent years, the island has developed initiatives to change this fate, to be more attractive to foreign visitors, by creating a new brand identity. This includes a new logo, a number of multi-million dollar upgrades, and new resorts.

However, for St. Vincent, 2017 represented a pivotal moment in their quest to attract outsiders. On February 14th, St. Vincent opened its first international airport. This has meant that full-sized vessels can now land on the island, instead of passengers having to transfer onto small, stomach-churning, turboprop planes at one of the larger, neighbouring islands. In fact, one of the inaugural flights was from Sunwing Airlines that represents a major tourist conglomerate. While it may take some time to entice major airlines to consistently fly into St. Vincent, there is little doubt that the island is on the cusp of change.

To date, not surprisingly, many of the other islands in the region have experienced a larger share of ISL initiatives. However, with this likely to change, this was the time to elicit the perspectives of the community regarding their vision for possible ISL initiatives in partnership with Western higher education institutions. The research findings of this collective case study will be used to help determine the next steps in possibly developing a service learning initiative that will foreground the needs of the host community. The research process also marks the first stage of developing a relationship with the community, key in creating ethical, reciprocal ISL initiatives.

Theoretical Framework

In choosing to do research internationally, I believe that using a postcolonial theoretical lens highlights the legacy of European colonialism and how it continues to shape our experiences today. In particular, ISL that involves volunteers from the global North going to the global South needs to be examined, as the inherent inequalities among the regions that drive the “need” for this kind of “service” have been historically constructed (Bashi Treitler & Boatcă, 2016). The discourses that justified and created such disparities may still be perpetuated today through hegemonic, universalistic ideals that I see in GCE and ISL. While there are varied approaches to postcolonial theory, I use a postcolonial lens as outlined by Andreotti (2006, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2016) that represents a pedagogy that aligns with the aims of my research.

Research Design

With the approval of the University of Calgary’s ethics board, I interviewed key representatives of six organizations in St. Vincent and the Grenadines that serve the community and its needs, regarding their perspectives on ISL. Among the sites chosen were organizations that could potentially facilitate hosting an ISL initiative in partnership with a Canadian higher

education institution. Semi-structured dialogues were the primary methods of data collection, with minimal document analysis and observation to help further inform the data.

Researcher Biases and Assumptions

I continue to reflect on what right I have as a Westerner to elicit and interpret the perspectives of those in the global South. I am Canadian, not Vincentian and, as such, I embody a worldview that is steeped in Western norms, beliefs, and values. I question whether, within my research, I am continuing the cultural imperialist tradition of speaking for Others. Yet, inherent in ISL are the notions of partnership, collaboration, and negotiation. ISL precludes singular, exclusionary conceptions of community and, instead, speaks to crossing borders, and a form of “hybridity” and creation of a “third space” as acknowledged by Bhabha (Andreotti, 2011; Nayar, 2010). It is within this other or third space that I see myself and my research. In this space, I acknowledge my privilege and complicity in Western Imperialism, and my outsider status in relation to the research participants. However, within this space, I also see the possibility of negotiating meaning or understanding that does not involve claiming to know the Other or dominating the voice of the Other.

In choosing what some would consider to be a less revolutionary postcolonial orientation, I consider Simmons and Dei’s (2012) call for “a nuanced reading of what constitutes an intellectual subversive politics in the ongoing project of decolonization for both colonized and dominant bodies” (p. 68) through an anti-colonial framework. Yet, for my research, I deliberately choose to use Andreotti’s postcolonial lens over a more radical anti-colonial framework for a couple reasons.

First, I considered my positionality as a privileged doctoral student at a Canadian institution of higher education. I took caution from Spivak’s assertion that Western researchers

doing research in the “Third World” can be a form of cultural imperialism (Best, 1999).

Although I may have a diasporic identity as a Canadian of Vincentian heritage, I recognize that my subjectivity shifts when I, as a Canadian, conduct research in St. Vincent. I acknowledge that I am an outsider. As such, I think that an anti-colonial framework that focuses on the mobilization of local “colonial” subjects in counter-hegemonic engagement, does not *necessitate* me, an outsider whose politics have been shaped by living in Canada.

Secondly, I acknowledge that the immediate audience of my research is the Canadian college that I work for and that may potentially later partner with one of the participant organizations in the study to create an ISL initiative. As such, as a first step in decolonizing ISL, my research aims to destabilize the possible ethnocentrism in global initiatives of higher education institutions in the global North, in order to open the way for more collaborative conceptualizations of ISL. While I believe that a more radical anti-colonial framework has a place in decolonizing education, I acknowledge Andreotti’s (2016) perception of the “intelligibility” of different audience orientations (discussed later). At this time, I forgo more revolutionary aims, in order to strategically “make sense within the modern onto-epistemic grammar” (p. 106) of higher education institutions of the global North of which I would like to see reformed.

Couched in my research is the assumption that St. Vincent is receptive to the idea of hosting ISL initiatives. While I was open to and welcomed non-receptive viewpoints, I chose to base my research on this premise as it speaks to my hope for cross-border communication and negotiation. With that being said, I continue to be receptive to new and surprising ways of envisioning ISL that may be outside of my own Western frame of reference.

Limitations

While I am engaging in postcolonialism as a means to interrogate the legacy of colonialism and destabilize the Western hegemonic ethnocentrism that may be present in GCE and ISL, I recognize that my study represents only the first step in a complex process towards the decolonizing of education. While this step calls for dialogic communication in order to reveal paradoxes in hegemonic knowledge systems, it does not intend to idealize/romanticize the voices of those from the South. Instead, this study encourages a reflexivity that challenges those of us in the global North to recognize our complicity in modernity's violence. This perspective change is needed *before* we can be receptive to new and negotiated ways of knowing and doing and the hard work that that entails.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I introduced the background of the study, research problem, purpose of study, primary and secondary research questions, and theoretical framework that guided the study. In Chapter 2, I review the literature surrounding three streams of GCE that serve as the philosophical underpinnings for their corresponding ISL initiatives. Secondly, I synthesize the discussion around the three streams of GCE by pointing to a gap and possibly fourth alternative for viewing GCE and ISL. Finally, I explore the literature that seeks out the perspectives of those in the host communities of the global South. Here, I touch on key themes of relationships, motivations, and reciprocity.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of my collective case study is to foreground the voices of prospective stakeholders in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in order to determine how they would envision a meaningful International Service Learning (ISL) initiative. Specifically, I was interested in researching their perspectives on *service*, *reciprocity*, and *partnership* within ISL in order to inform the development of more collaborative ISL initiatives. Therefore, to situate this study within the broader context of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and ISL, I have explored relevant literature that illustrates the multiple and often conflicting agendas characteristic of GCE and ISL.

I begin with an explanation of postcolonial theory that informed the design of this study. I then introduce three general, yet contested, streams of GCE and ISL, as both are inextricably linked. First, I look at the neoliberal stream of GCE, followed by its resulting ISL objectives. Secondly, I consider the moral-universal stream of GCE, followed by its subsequent ISL aims. Thirdly, I outline the critical stream of GCE, followed by its critical ISL approaches. I then conduct a synthesis of the literature and provide a more transformative alternative to the critical approach, referred to as “beyond critical.” Presenting this last alternative also addresses some of the gaps identified in exploring the three previous streams. Finally, I review literature that focuses on concerns within host communities of the global South pertaining to three specific themes, namely: relationships, motivations, and reciprocity.

Postcolonial Theory

I acknowledge the roots of postcolonial theory coming from anti-colonial movements that mobilized against colonial exploitation. Fanon, Cesaire, and Cabral, for example, typified such

liberation struggles (Young, 2016). Today, as revolutionary movements, these often involve an exaltation of pre-colonial African, Asian, and Latin American cultures, in opposition to Western colonialism and imperialism. However, this can be seen as creating a binary opposition of the colonizer-colonized which, within my research, is limiting (Andreotti, 2011a).

Marxism provided the foundation for much of the revolutionary anti-colonial movements and provided a means of challenging the exploitative social and economic practices of the Western-colonial powers (Nayar, 2010; Young, 2016). Postcolonial theory shares this challenge; however, postcolonial theory includes a cultural politics that is unique to the colonial experience, thereby shifting the focus from class to colonial exploitation. While postcolonial theory is varied in its approach, Andreotti (2011a) recognized two main streams: one leaning towards Marxist historicism, and one focusing on the relationship between the production of knowledge and power, and the instability of signification (p. 14). Her work focuses on the latter stream that represents a pedagogy of hope.

Andreotti (2011a) acknowledged the contributions of Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak. Bhabha's concept of hybridity allows for new forms of cross-cultural relationships and for the development of the "third space of enunciation" that speaks to new ways of understanding culture (Andreotti, 2011a; Nayar, 2010). Bhabha rejected the simplicity of binarisms and, instead, understood that cultural groups "are not discrete but rather a continuum of subtle differences that are always in process and always shifting" (Shumar, 2010, p. 498). This opens up revolutionary potential as it "sets up possibilities for new social spaces for new discourses and new forms of subjectivities that potentially can be liberatory" (p. 498).

Moreover, Spivak's (2004) pedagogical ambition to "negotiate from within" rather than using a counter discourse of reversal, opened up new possibilities of conceptualizing "social responsibility" (Andreotti, 2011; Spivak, 2004). Spivak admonished that

the groups that are the dispensers of human rights must realize that the . . . current emergence, of the human rights model as the global dominant, [is] contingent upon the turbulence in the wake of the dissolution of imperial formations and global economic restructuring. (p. 530)

When looking at "service" that aims to address human conditions and rights, it is clear that these acts are not neutral. Implicit in this is the recognition that as a researcher, I am complicit in my object of critique. Yet, I understand that "marking, overtly, one's positionality as an investigating subject . . . and laying bare one's inescapable institutional interests are two of Spivak's methods of confronting this situation" (Best, 1999, p. 485).

To explain the problem of hegemonic ethnocentrism, Andreotti (2011a) used the simple metaphor of a field of ripe corn. She asked her readers to imagine harvesting this field of corn, taking the corn out of their husks and laying them in front of us. Then she asked us to compare the corn cobs with the multi-coloured corn cobs in the picture that she provided (cover of book). In the picture of over two hundred corn cobs, hardly any matched what most of us taking part in this exercise probably had in our minds: unblemished, yellow corn: "The prevalence of the yellow corn cob in people's imagination and their 'surprise' at the existence of multicolored varieties can be used illustrate the institutionalization of the globally hegemonic ethnocentrism of the Western/Enlightenment epistemology" (p. 4). While only a very small minority of the multi-coloured corn cobs were yellow, the problem arose when

the yellow corn cob has the power to define and control the production of meaning . . . , and has control over the establishment of laws and institutions, and the distribution of wealth and labour, not only in its local context, but on a global scale. (p.4)

Therefore, our challenge is to learn to recognize difference and the inherent onto-epistemological choices that that entails. This involves being able to question our own knowledges, in order to better co-construct new knowledge.

Global Citizenship Education: Contested Meanings

There is ample literature highlighting the varying and conflicting drivers of internationalization that has increasingly consumed higher education within the last couple of decades (Haigh, 2014; Merrill & Rodman, 2012; Knight, 2012). Haigh (2014), for example, outlined several “sequentially developed,” yet co-existing layers of narratives within the internationalization of higher education. While he recognized that the initial motivation for internationalization was financial, he acknowledged that there were differing and often conflicting motives, concerns and viewpoints that now underpin internationalization within higher education (p. 7). This pluralism that was identified as inherent in the internationalization of higher education was posed as problematic, precipitating the need to “engage with the collective aspirations of each co-existing layer in ways that alienate none of them” (p. 21).

One layer mentioned by Haigh (2014), “educating for global citizenship,” has been an increasing focus among post-secondary institutions, and yet, it is clear that there is no one agreed-upon definition for global citizenship education (Caruana, 2014; Eido et al., 2011; Marshall, 2011; Oxley & Morris, 2013; Parmenter, 2011; Roman, 2003; Schattle, 2008; Shultz, 2007; Wolflink, 2018). Similar to the competing drivers of internationalization within higher education, what complicates GCE are the many agendas that shape the implications of the global

citizen. This is noteworthy, as these GCE agendas set the philosophical underpinnings for ISL within higher education.

In trying to make sense of the contested meanings of GCE, McGrew (2000) classified GCE into three distinct streams: neoliberal, radical, and transformative, each with normative, existential, and aspirational aims (Shultz, 2007, p. 249). Schattle (2008) saw global citizenship in the English-speaking world aligned with four ideological constellations: moral cosmopolitanism, liberal multiculturalism, neoliberalism and environmentalism. Others identify GCE as a left-right binarism (Camicia & Franklin, 2011; Peters, 2010). Similarly, Oxley and Morris (2013) recognized two general forms of global citizenship: cosmopolitan based and advocacy based. Yet, each of these forms were further broken down into distinct conceptions. Within the cosmopolitan based form of GC they saw distinct political, moral, economic and cultural conceptions; and, within the advocacy based GC they saw the social, critical, environmental and spiritual conceptions.

Despite the varying and often competing definitions of GCE, they often work to validate Western hegemonic ideals (Andreotti, 2016; Pashby, 2011; Roman, 2003). Therefore, I am forced to acknowledge the various approaches to GCE as they dictate how ISL is implemented, and in whose interest. Thus, I will look more deeply at these contested interpretations of GCE through three general lenses: neoliberal, moral-universal and critical. While the conceptualizations of GCE touched on above can be found across a broad spectrum, I choose to synthesize the discourses within these three areas as they provide the discursive foundation for most of the ISL we see today.

Neoliberal Perspective

Not surprisingly, when entertaining the idea of GCE and global initiatives, the neoliberal perspective is hard to ignore. Many of these GCE programs place emphasis on competence and competitiveness that lend themselves to having “objectives [that] emerge as complementary to neoliberalism in at least accepting the validity of the present configuration of the global market” (Schattle, 2008, p. 83). This includes higher education institutions fostering competitiveness among their students, and offering specialized credentials as “global citizens” to aid their job prospects in the global market. We see how the concept of citizenship has expanded from the political arena to private sector and civil society, wherein businesses now put emphasis on creating good corporate citizens (Shultz, 2007, p. 249). Such a neoliberal perspective can be seen as a twofold process; while the government creates space for market expansion, the citizen’s role is to access these markets and to intervene at the local level in order to address the problems brought about by capitalist progress (p. 250). Testimony to this is the ballooning of international NGOs since the 1990s that align with interventionism.

The result is an understanding of the global citizen as traveler. This citizen strives to create a place beyond traditional boundaries and local restrictions where he or she can access the political, social, economic, and environmental rewards of participation in a global society. (Shultz, 2007, p. 251)

Yet, without attention to power, these citizens are unaware of their privileged position and, therefore, see no need for structural change.

Within this “free” marketplace, the educator or learner can be seen as a “multicultural consumer of ethnic, racial and (inter)national difference” (Roman, 2003, p. 276).

Framed as consumers of international and national difference, learners and educators become differentially entitled citizen-consumers in a global marketplace in which cultural practices are mere commodities. For example, the idea of linguistic and other cultural differences becomes reduced to a marketplace commodity that can be bought or sold in exchange for particular cultural capital perceived as useful in the realm of social and workplace communication. (Roman, 2003, p. 276)

Therefore, within this neoliberal context, this commodification of difference “depoliticize[s] the social, economic, and political processes and consequences of globalization for particular racial, gender, class and national groups” (p. 277).

Within a neoliberal framework, global citizens as travelers represent a form of “élite cosmopolitanism once associated directly with privilege, but nowadays more associated with notions of professionalism with the growth of transnational occupations and the neo-liberal movements of people as ‘human capital’” (Caruana, 2014, p. 89). Among UK higher education, for example, many recognize the neoliberal discourse as a stronger force than the democratic discourse (Caruana, 2014) wherein “students and workers are most efficiently related in this global community through technologies of standardisation, surveillance and accountability” (Camicia & Franklin, 2011, p. 314). These consumer citizens “are increasingly forced to invest in themselves at critical points in their life-cycle (education, work, retirement) or go into debt” (Peters, 2010, p. 45).

ISL from a Neoliberal Foundation

Therefore, when considering the ISL initiatives that might emerge from a neoliberal leaning GCE foundation, we see how international volunteering is often promoted as a means of professional development.

This provides a recognisable narrative of the South as ‘needing help’ into which the individual volunteer is trained and supported to step into, but now does so in the context of the professionalization of development, and the security of recognized and rewarded personal and professional career enhancement. (Smith & Laurie, 2011, p. 552)

Here, the focus shifts from the needs of the international community, to the needs of the individual volunteer. Smith and Laurie (2011) acknowledged the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility and the emphasis on professional development on the creation of new partnerships, wherein NGOs are now partnering with public and corporate sectors. They recognized this as a form of neoliberalization wherein practices such as ISL, “assume communities and mobilities for the volunteer in ways that privilege individual choice and autonomy over complex political contexts” (p. 555).

Similarly, international internships give students the opportunity to have an experience abroad while gaining professional skills that can give them the competitive edge in the workforce. ISL and internships “can provide cultural and linguistic immersion within the context of hands-on experience that may connect both to academic and potential career interests” (Gates, 2014). We see this happening within health care education, wherein ISL has become a popular pedagogical tool as it helps develop the cultural competence (Kohlby & Daugherty, 2015; Bentley & Ellison, 2007) and clinical skills (Pechak & Black, 2014) needed to be professionally successful within a diverse society.

Moral-Universalistic Perspective

Moving beyond the influence of the “free” market and neoliberalism, notions of morality plays a strong role in the shaping of the global citizen. Presently, the ideology of moral cosmopolitan is framed as a “logical extension of liberalism’s universal principles relating to

human rights and human dignity” wherein everyone has the right to be treated with respect, as well as the responsibility to “help further well-being across humanity” (Schattle, 2008, p. 77). This is tied closely to liberal multiculturalism that also embraces a moral vision of mutual respect across cultures. Ultimately, this moral responsibility is taken up by individuals voluntarily (Schattle, 2008).

Not unlike the notion of moral cosmopolitanism, a discourse of “intellectual tourism” is premised on cultural immersion and understanding (Roman, 2003). This opportunity to be immersed in a foreign culture confirms “the sense of cultural (and geographical) difference between the local defined as the Western self and the global constructed as the non-Western global ‘other’” (p. 274). The Western self then takes on a normative frame of reference that transcribes racialized and nationalistic privilege and reinforces “the division between the so-called ‘international’ and the ‘national’ spaces, creating the possibility for particular national spaces to function as legitimated hidden norms” (p. 274). These divisions then make space for educators and learners to become “agents of civility and democratic nation-builders.”

One of the paradoxes surrounding GCE is the difficulty of changing narratives that are seen as normative within dominant culture (Pashby, 2011). A key question that presents itself is: “Can we still desire and work towards unity, community and solidarity without falling back on a static notion of universality or on a hegemonic Western notion of citizen-subjectivity” (pp. 433-434)? In other words, can this notion of universality be compatible with inclusive polyvocality? Parmenter (2011) saw this idea of universality present itself in the questionnaire responses of over 600 university students worldwide. The research results showed that these students’ concept of GCE included “human-beingness” and “connectedness,” whereby human-beingness entailed

“the idea of a shared common experience and fate” (p. 373), and connectedness included a “sense of shared responsibility and shared destiny” (p. 374).

Andreotti (2016; Andreotti, Ahenakew & Cooper, 2011) wrote about this “single onto-epistemic grammar” that embodied an “epistemic blindness” or “abyssal thinking” that did not adequately address systemic reproduction of harm:

If the darker side of modernity, nationalism and development are forgotten in our accounts of local and global belonging, the result is a modern subject who uncritically celebrates the progress and evolution that they represent, and who believes and affirms their own neutrality and innocence in the face of injustice. (Andreotti, 2016, p.104)

Therefore, how do we go beyond this universal moral form of GCE that is often understood within a neo-colonial framework of human rights, wherein its “universalistic perspective . . . is rooted within a set of institutions and practices that are said to be West-centric” (Oxley & Morris, 2013, pp. 305-307)?

ISL from a Moral-Universalistic Foundation

ISL taken up from a moral-universalistic perspective, shifts the primary focus away from career advancement, to one focused more on cultural understanding and moral responsibility. A popular way in which this is translated into ISL, is through the focus on the transformative learning experience of the volunteer. Often, framing the impetus for ISL is the belief in its transformative learning potential. When using Mezirow’s (2003) transformative learning theory, a transformation would require a drastic shift in our habit of mind or perspective, or in our attitudes (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p.133). Mezirow stated that transformative learning is learning that “transforms problematic frames of reference.” Central to this is the participation in critical-dialectical discourse, with an emphasis on self-reflection and critical

reflection. While his theory is made up of ten steps, there are four main components:

“experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse, and action” (Merriam et al., 2007. p. 134).

Mezirow (2003) argued that in order to produce transformative learning, it was the role of the educator to help learners develop these skills. As this is done through creating favourable conditions for such learning, it makes the link between transformative learning and ISL explicable, as international service learning can be seen as providing an ideal setting for critical self-reflection and discourse, after provoking a disorienting dilemma. Therefore, for many, the goal of the ISL excursions is transformative learning of the volunteer, and follows a “liberal-critical” orientation that focuses on personal rather than systemic change (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016, p. 778).

In a longitudinal case study of a three-week service learning experience in Nicaragua offered by a college in New York, Kiely (2005) built on Mezirow’s transformative learning model through the identification of “six elements of the transformational learning process in international service-learning: contextual border crossing, dissonance, personalizing, processing, and connecting,” as well as an emerging global consciousness (p. 277). Contextual border crossing involved a repositioning of oneself in respect to individual, structural, programmatic and historical aspects of the context.

As students cross borders, these four contextual categories help frame and shape a transformational learning process in which students begin to recognize and unpack previously invisible aspects of their social, cultural, political and economic location on a global map of power relations and critically re-evaluate their identity position and social status. (Kiely, 2005, p. 277)

Findings from this study also indicated that immersion in a new cultural environment and contact with human suffering was enough to provide a disorienting dilemma or dissonance. Then, because of the direct contact, students were able to personalize the experience and develop a sense of moral obligation and responsibility. Processing and connecting worked together through reflecting; and, an emerging global consciousness represented a deep understanding of what it meant to be a global citizen. Central to this transformative learning is the contact with the “Other” (Morgan, 2010).

However, this concept of a disorienting dilemma appears to imply a dichotomous reality that seems incompatible with more complex critical analysis. Through an emphasis on an encounter with the “Other,” transformative learning through ISL forces an objectification of difference that precludes a recognition of fluid, interconnected subjectivities-positionalities. While our students are often deeply concerned about the social injustices that they witness, “their modes of analysis are often fractured and in contradiction with one another as their attention is pulled in competing directions by incomplete theoretical explanations” (Carpenter & Mojab, 2013, p. 160).

While there may be benefits to cultural immersion and this disorienting dilemma, this “Othering” of people and experiences can serve to reinforce a global North/West normative worldview. Andreotti (2016) referred to Thobani’s recognition of “ontological cohesion” wherein Canada’s master narrative presented Canadians as law-abiding and caring, ignoring the socio-historical conditions that produced this narrative. Given a history wrought with injustices, Canada “can only be made to look coherent and unified when it is produced against an externalized (local or global) Other constructed as the inverse image of Canadian exaltedness” (Andreotti, 2016, p. 102). Therefore, despite attempts within GCE-ISL to address social

disparities and to “reposition oneself,” this “Othering” falls short of a multifaceted view of identity positionality.

Bamber (2015) upheld the potential of transformative learning within ISL, but noted the challenges inherent in such an approach. He urged practitioners and researchers to “find new ways to understand the students’ being rather than simply their doing and, more specifically, their being ‘until it becomes them’” (p. 41). He recognized that the focus on an “ethical cosmopolitanism” within ISL that emphasized moral duty to help those suffering overseas was limited and detrimental (p. 31). He concluded by acknowledging that we have to go beyond a deficiency view of our partners, and focus on developing the relationships and partnerships involved. Likewise, while Hutchinson and Rea (2010) recognized the transformational potential of ISL, they recognized the risk to “re-impose colonial domination” and the need for the inclusion of the voice of those in the host community (p. 553).

Critical Perspective

A common theme noted from the discussion thus far is the lack of critical insight into the normative ideology accepted by the dominant culture of the global North in the conceptualization of the global citizen; this serves to reject spaces for other voices. Therefore, there are those that approach GCE from a critical perspective. The “advocacy typology” of Global Citizens (GC), for example, see the critical conceptions of GC as promoting “a form of ‘counter-hegemony’, emphasizing the deconstruction of oppressive global structures” (Oxley & Morris, 2013, p. 313). The critical GC is a more radical form of the moral-universalistic GC, wherein the critical GC is more likely to try to work outside of institutional boundaries (p. 313). When promoting critical pedagogy within citizenship education, ideology, collectivity, subjectivity and praxis become important in separating critical pedagogy from mere critical

thinking, wherein: “the critical pedagogues’ view that the struggle against injustice is a fight for ‘emancipation’ . . . rather than ‘freedom’ . . . is a subtle but important distinction resting on the powerful concept of oppression (Johnson & Morris, 2010, p. 81). This challenge to oppressive structures represents a radical approach to global citizenship, wherein the critical citizen’s goal is to challenge structures of the hegemony of economic globalization that perpetuates inequalities (such as IMF, the World Bank, etc.). Implicit in this is the need to “understand the link between the economic activities of these institutions of political, economic, and social oppression and economic destruction” (Shultz, 2007, p. 254). However, for this to happen, people need to see global relations differently. They need to see it “as more than one of victors, villains, and victims . . . if change is to be more than just shifting exploitation from one group to another” (p. 254).

The above conceptualization of critical GCE seems in line with what Andreotti (2016) called the third audience-orientation wherein one is prepared to face the complexities of simplistic solutions, of uneven power relations and of the historicity and (geo-/bio-) political nature of knowledge production in terms of epistemological hegemony, and of self-implication in structural harms. This is exemplified in attempt to critique historical asymmetries and to create opportunities for better informed alliances and forms of solidarity. (p. 106)

Yet, Andreotti saw this attempt to re-center the citizen as “circular criticality,” as “alternative voices are still re-coded in vocabularies that make sense within the modern onto-epistemic grammar” (p. 106). We need to acknowledge and address “the fact that past colonial patterns are being perpetuated in the current politics of knowledge production, be it intentionally or unintentionally” (Parmenter, 2011, p. 370). It becomes evident that there is an internal inconsistency within the curriculum’s approach to critical GCE wherein “antecedents and

outcomes are fairly prevalent within the curriculum document, [but] proposals for its intended delivery are fairly scanty in comparison with those from other conceptions” (Oxley & Morris, 2013, p. 319). This may have to do with the inability to conceptualize alternative delivery modes that would be “intelligible” to most audiences within the global North.

A critical cosmopolitan discourse is one that emphasizes communicative action and deliberative democracy, based on a commitment to “multiculturalism, critical awareness of global power asymmetries, emancipation and social justice” (Camicia & Franklin, 2011, p. 314). However, in Camicia and Franklin’s (2011) study looking at examples in the Philippines and the UK, they found that the critical democratic discourse (as well as the neoliberal) meant different things in different context and regions, and that often there was a blending of the discourses.

It is important to adopt a critical approach to GCE and ISL. Eidoo et al. (2011) pointed to the complexity in naming an issue “global” when the same issues could be identified locally, and has been a basis for the development of local service learning initiatives (Bamber & Hankin, 2011). This connotes an interconnectedness of issues that can be overlooked when adopting a more simplistic focus. They used the analogy of a kaleidoscope to represent the “complexity and intersections among various identity markers (race, gender, etc.), and the shifting, dynamic nature of these identities and their relationship to education” (p. 64). Each of the six authors offered an analysis of GCE through distinct foci and theoretical lenses. These lenses included multiculturalism, race, and gender. Here, they focused on one principle of GCE: a critical understanding of globalization. They believed that *critical* GCE “promotes criticality and complexity in conceptualizing and analysing contemporary processes of globalization. It rejects a normalized and simplistic version that constructs a status quo serving the interests of dominant groups and of neoliberal agenda” (p. 64).

What becomes clear through their discussion is the complex interconnectedness of shifting identity categories. For example, in exploring “race” within GCE, we see that the “global (racialized) citizen is not necessarily bound by geographic migrations, rather inclusions and exclusions that are informed by racial identities in various glocalized (global/local) spaces inform how her ‘race’ is taken up and by whom” (Eidoo et al., 2011, p. 67). Moreover, when gender was added, Ingram (Eidoo et al., 2011) noted that gender was often “shaped by racial and colonial discourses, framing gender inequality as a problem ‘over there’ in the countries of the Global South, or ‘over there, over here’ in the racialized minority communities with the Global North” (p. 71). The authors cautioned that “it is essential for contemporary teachers and educators concerned with social justice within a global frame to move beyond dangerous binaries and oversimplifications of global issues and include a vigorous, lively, and critical engagement with complexity and conflict in classroom practice” (p. 78).

ISL from a Critical Perspective

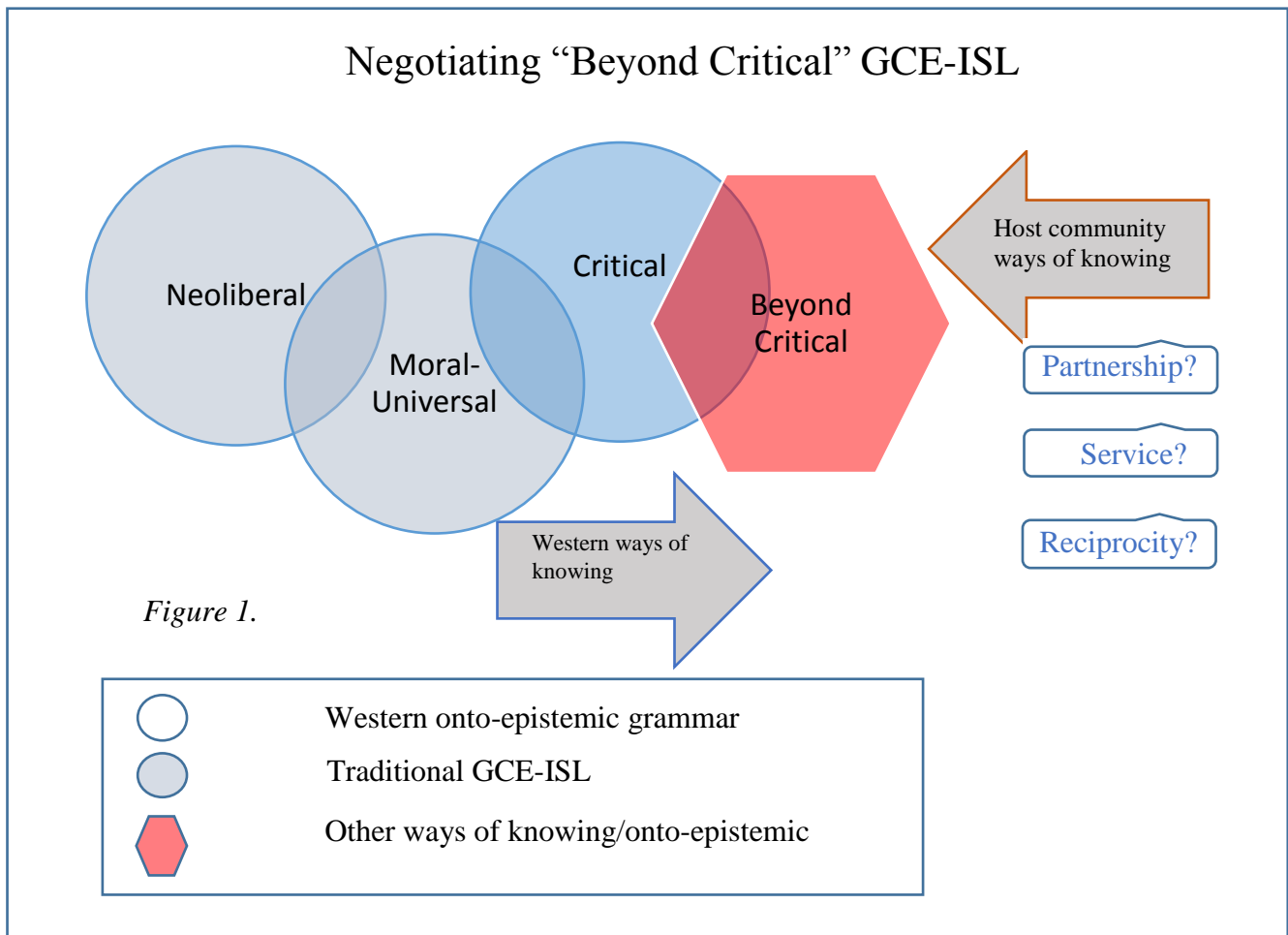
Research suggests that ISL has something to learn from development work where political-economic analysis is more evident. While Hartman and Kiely (2014) recognized the existence of a political-economic structural and cultural analysis within ISL models, “it only occurs in the critical . . . and Freirean SL models where critical consciousness is marked by, ‘a critical and historical problematization of society and one’s relation to it’” (p. 56). This immersive experience allowed for discussions around the political, historical, socio-economic structures, and “how they normalize our experiences and assumptions” (p. 57).

When contrasting critical service learning with more traditional forms of service learning, Mitchell (2008) identified a number of characteristics of critical service learning that included fostering a critical consciousness that implied both action and reflection (p. 54). This also

entailed having a classroom component that allow students to challenge the notion that community needs or problems immediately indicate deficiencies. Instead, critical service learning entailed naming “the differential access to power experienced by students, faculty, and community members, and encourages analysis, dialogue, and discussion of those power dynamics” (p. 56). Ultimately, Mitchell offered three components of critical service learning that each involved a classroom component and a community component: having a social change orientation, working to distribute power, and developing authentic relationships.

While many promote this kind of critical service learning because it aims to challenge the status quo, Jacoby (2015) believed that service learning that focused on charity, projects, or social change, could all be done in ways that were potentially revolutionary. With that in mind, preparation for the service experience should include careful consideration of the proposed activities to ensure that they are not the acts of “false generosity” that Freire claims validate the status quo by perpetuating the need for service. (Jacoby, 2015, p. 238)

Figure 1: Negotiating “Beyond Critical” GCE-ISL



Synthesis: Moving Beyond Critical

Seemingly clear, after reviewing the literature around the varying conceptualizations of GCE, is the challenge to go beyond the limits of all of these discourses to provide a truly critical-alternative approach. To this end, Andreotti (2016) proposed a fourth audience-orientation that is driven by a critique of ontological hegemony geared towards the uncertain exploration of different possibilities of existence beyond the modern subject, modern institutions (including the modern nation state) and of global capitalism – beyond the modern onto-epistemic grammar and the (contested, but enduring) modern/colonial imaginary. (p. 106)

Yet, she acknowledged that the alternative frameworks that this would entail, would be largely unintelligible to most audiences, but crucial to countering the ongoing systemic harm being done.

In the same way, Roman (2003) presented a fourth curricular alternative that was more relational in scope, viewing the local and global not in fixed geographical terms.

Rather, it conceives of *how* communities of people in specific material, temporal, discursive, and contextual places or ubiquitously mobile places (as the case may be) come to be socially and historically related (or not) to land, place(s) and other people and communities throughout the world. (pp. 282-283)

This “relational genealogy” highlights a void for my research to address as it questions how “voices are constituted, and, in whose name. It necessitates learning about whose voices are heard (or shut out) of larger public debates” (p. 283). There is an urgent need to widen research representation on GCE “to actively seek out, listen to and engage in dialogue with those whose knowledges are not yet represented in the global discourse on global citizenship education” (Parmenter, 2011, p. 370). Likewise, Camicia and Franklin (2011) concluded their analysis of specific GCE initiatives within the Philippines and the UK by pointing out the need for further examination of the multiple positionalities of nations and peoples influenced by the discourses of neoliberal and democratic cosmopolitanism (p. 321).

In a transformationalist approach to global citizenship, globalization is seen as a very complex set of relationships that necessitates “new ways of negotiating between local and global actions and agendas, resolving conflict, and acting in solidarity” (Shultz, 2007, p. 255).

The global citizen in this frame understands his or her role as one of building relationships through embracing diversity and finding shared purpose across national

boundaries. Understanding that the complexity of citizenship in a global world is created by and creates a vast network of diverse relationships, the global citizen seeks to include and engage others based on their shared common humanity. (p. 255)

Shultz provided an example of an initiative that involved a “knowledge-generating process” that offers support for my research. With the goal of the process being to transform political and social relationships among people and across borders, some basic, yet fundamental questions were asked: “How can we transform processes of extraction to mutual learning? What knowledge do you need from us? This is the knowledge we need from you” (p. 256). This speaks to negotiation across borders and the creation of something different-new.

A brief review of the literature on GCE and ISL highlights the need to negotiate new ways of conceptualizing ISL that goes beyond a neoliberal, universalistic framework. Yet, even when moral responsibility becomes the driving force for such initiatives, the dominant narrative that privileges and centers those in the global North persists. And yet, Andreotti (2016) cautioned of the difficulty of critically challenging the current ontological hegemony when that challenge is framed in the same onto-epistemic grammar. What becomes clear is the difficulty in addressing the complexities of a legacy of colonialism while interrogating our own complicity in the continuing epistemic violence.

Essential in trying to address the inequalities inherent in our global society, is the need to disrupt the neoliberal aims of competitiveness and corporatization that lends itself to continued imperialistic exploitation. Even when we ignore the market drivers, our seeming benevolence is confined by an ideology that has socio-historical roots of power and injustice. Therefore, just as the us-them binarism fuels the normatization and legitimization of Western ideals and leads to the paternalistic desire to aid others, such binarisms make it difficult to truly challenge structures

of oppression that exist today. Despite taking on a critical approach to ISL, we may not be able to fully appreciate and interrogate the complexities involved, due to our “onto-epistemic grammar” that we are bound by.

Seemingly evident, is the importance of centering other voices as a first step in the mission to destabilize the ethnocentrism prevalent in the global North. I hope that by privileging Others’ knowledges, it will help to reveal the paradoxes inherent in our own knowledge systems and make way for the entertaining of new/other negotiated ways of knowing and doing. With the predominant drivers of ISL being shaped by those in the global North, there is a need to seek out the perspectives of those in the South.

Perspective of the Host Community

While much of the research around ISL has been interested in the perspectives and concerns of the sending institutions and volunteers, not as much, in comparison, has been conducted on the impact of ISL on the host communities. To illustrate this, when I performed a Proquest Dissertations & Theses search¹ that included the search term “international service learning” in the title, of the 38 results only five included research that enlisted the perspective of those in the host communities. Of those five, one was very explicit about its research aims to “minimize the risk of having unsupportive partners” by highlighting indicators of receptivity (Cunningham, 2004). Here, receptivity implied an adherence to *our* Western standards, negating room for “the uncertain exploration of different possibilities of existence” (Andreotti, 2016).

Therefore, there is a desperate need to seek out and include the perspectives of those in the host communities of the global South (Jacoby, 2015; Larson, 2016; Parmenter, 2011) when negotiating “beyond critical” ISL. In the remainder of this chapter, I will look at some of the

¹ The search was performed on September 17, 2016.

research that has centered the concerns of the host community. Within this research, a few themes become evident, among these: the need to build strong relationships; the motivations of the host community to participate; and, the notions of reciprocity and dependency.

Relationships

In reflecting on their 10-year ISL partnership between Villanova University and a Nicaraguan community, Reynolds and Gasparini (2016) shared the host community's perspective on what they wanted in an ISL initiative. The positionalities of the co-authors themselves—Reynolds being a Western academic, and Gasparini working with an NGO in Nicaragua—reflected the commitment to relationship. In responding to an article based on the findings of research conducted by Reynolds exploring the perspectives of community participants of ISL, the authors decided to look at the motivations of the host community, using data from Reynold's dissertation. Employing lenses of postcolonial theory and liberation theology respectively, they offered some insight.

Among the insights, it was clear that the relationship between the host community and volunteers was prioritized and fostered through ideals of “shared austerity” and “physical presence.” Shared austerity here highlighted the importance of foreigners “suffering together,” living as the locals do. Along with this was the need for physical presence in helping to build strong and trusting relationships. This is reminiscent of what Jorgenson (2016) referred to as the “colonial veranda” wherein “international students land in a foreign location, are ushered to a place of comfort, and can view and experience cultural differences from their protective enclosures” (p. 125). She contended that host communities needed to be involved in preparing students for ISL in order to avoid an Orientalist discourse, or “discourse of adventure.”

Centering hosts in the vision of ISL programming may provide a means of challenging current Western ethnocentric manifestations of ISL. In thinking about relationships, MacDonald and Vorstermans (2016) recognized that “the call for mutuality is not one that ignores the reality of global structures of inequality underpinned by colonialism, racism, sexism, capitalism, and so many other systems of inequality, but rather one that tends to how relationships are built *within* and *against* these systems” (p. 132). Basing their understandings on long-answer surveys with host families in Ghana, the authors argued that host families should be participants of ISL, dictated by their own reasons, as a means of prioritizing mutuality (p. 132).

This desire for a re-centering of the community needs when planning ISL projects was echoed by Hernandez (2016), a Nicaraguan program coordinator of ISL. She gave the example of including local youth so that ISL could become transformative for them in addition to the foreign volunteers, wherein they become part of the cultural exchange. In fact, as a means of developing stronger relationships, she called for cross-cultural workshops that included the host families and communities.

The foundation of Fair Trade Learning (FTL), born out of Jamaica, offers a framework for ethical global partnerships. FTL provided “a set of standards and rubric for advancing ethical community-campus engagement around the world” (Hartman, 2016, p. 215). Besides the guidelines provided, noteworthy here was the initiation of this vision by the community in order to prioritize the advancement of *their* needs. This community-driven initiative and partnering with an NGO Third Party Provider (TPP) of international exchange, served to strengthen the voice of the host community, especially when brokering with foreign higher education institutions. The TPP, Amizade, credited the community for forcing them to acknowledge their needs. Speaking about reciprocity:

It is difficult to support financially, but at a board governance level, it has become central to our discourse. That move has ensured that Amizade's resources are dedicated to actively seeking support for reciprocal exchange and has also led to innovative ways to include local young people from the host community more systematically. (Hartman, 2016, p. 223)

Motivations

Therefore, when considering reciprocity in partnerships, it is important to consider the motivations of the host community when participating in ISL. Interviewing community participants and coordinators of ISL in Nicaragua, O'Sullivan and Smaller (2016) found that program coordinators expressed both intrinsic and extrinsic advantages for the local communities. Intrinsic advantages were seen in the enhanced global awareness and relationships built with the visitors, while the extrinsic advantages culminated in the material things received.

After conducting 91 interviews among three sites in Costa Rica that receive volunteers, Smedley (2016) concluded that the primary benefit to the host community was economic, with the volunteering contribution being secondary. Money was shown to be generated either directly through homestays empowering the mothers to create sustainable livelihoods, and indirectly through purchases made by the volunteers in the community. While Smedley pointed out that long-term volunteer placements developed stronger relationships with the community, "despite deeper relational benefits, community members preferred ISL organizations and students that gave the greatest economic benefit through sending many volunteers for shorter periods of time" (p. 75). This finding is in sharp contrast to MacDonald and Vorstermans (2016), who found that social capital development served as key motivation for community members participating in ISL. In fact, financial compensation was not a primary motivator (p. 135). This sentiment was

echoed by O’Sullivan and Smaller (2016), who gave the example of a Nicaraguan coordinator who turned down the suggestion of sending airfare funds to better help the community, saying the community preferred the volunteers to come over receiving the money (p. 54).

Reciprocity

It is difficult to extricate the various nuances of ISL impact on host communities. For example, the ideal of strong relationships is intermingled with that of reciprocity, and reciprocity connotes an awareness of dependency/interdependency. When looking at dependency creation, O’Sullivan and Smaller (2016) interrogated the notion of “service” vs. “learning.” While they noted that the community residents believed that service learning should continue, many were concerned that certain projects, such as building things, only served to promote notions of charity. However, while considering dependency was important, they recognized that this needed to be buffered by acknowledging community autonomy in making decisions regarding receiving aid.

A distinction in the way international volunteers and host communities view helping is seen when “the Northern helping imperative remains undiminished because of the discursive circulation of here-in-comparison-to-there narratives that recycle colonial ‘truths’ in apparently new forms” (Heron, 2016, p. 81). Heron (2016) raised limitations regarding using a postcolonial/neocolonial lens when understanding the views of community members from the global South, as it locked the idea of resistance into a binary established by Europe. Instead, for Africa,

colonization is over. The result of this consciousness can be seen in the ‘non-Othering’ discourse that pervades many of the Southern NGO staff responses. This is a stance that

defies the binaries of North-South, developed-developing, helper-helped, and as such lies outside of Northern notions of resistance to postcolonialism or neo-colonialism. (p. 91)

“Othering” was also seen as the foundation for the service learning initiative in Tanzania that Larsen (2016) studied, wherein foreign help was required to solve the community’s problems. While she saw that the Tanzanian women internalized the privileging of Western knowledge over their own knowledge (p. 101), like Heron, she saw markers of European emulation, or mimicry, as going beyond the colonial binary.

Reciprocity as a guiding philosophy of ISL can be seen as problematic. Dear and Howard (2016) saw reciprocity as being conceptualized in multiple ways: primarily as “leaving something behind” or as “education.” Moreover, these multiple conceptualizations of reciprocity were influenced by service-based worldviews. They referred to Butin’s suggestion that ISL can be contextualized in four ways: technical, cultural, political and poststructuralist (p. 167). The political, for example, focused on power relations, while the poststructuralist “is concerned with how an innovation disrupts social norms” (p. 167). Understanding that how we perceive aspects of ISL is filtered through our worldview, provides an

opportunity for ISL program designers, communities, participants, and sponsoring entities to open their minds towards the multiple ways of understanding what service can be, and allows them the opportunity to make conscious and critical decisions on which conceptualizations may and may not be appropriate for their specific program. (p.168)

The authors called for a shift from a reciprocal approach to ISL to one of interdependence that “suggests a paradigm of continued support, a long-term presence, and an understanding that both parties are empowered to learn from each other” (Dear & Howard, 2016, p. 171). This idea of interdependence is reflected in the experiences of Sharpe and Dear (2013) who became

uncomfortable with the notions of “reciprocity” and “service” that underpinned ISL experiences as it positioned participants in a us-them, server/served binary, and it perpetuated a colonial mentality by positioning students as the solver of community problems (p. 55). As an alternative to a framework based on “service,” they considered one based on “solidarity.”

The literature surrounding GCE and ISL is diverse, and taken up differently depending on the worldview that one adheres to. When looking at ISL initiatives, we can identify neoliberal, moral, and critical streams, with often a blending of two or more. Even so, the vast majority are taken up from a Western-centric standpoint. What becomes clear is the difficulty in moving beyond a system that privileges Western ways of knowing and doing, and that ignores its own complicity in the continuation of global injustices. In order to find other, more equitable ways of conceptualizing ISL, other voices that entail other onto-epistemic grammar, need to be included in the discussion.

Theoretical Framework

I use a postcolonial theoretical lens as outlined by Andreotti (2006, 2011a, 2011b, 2016). In choosing to do research internationally, a postcolonial theoretical lens helps to highlight the legacy of European colonialism and how this continues to shape the relationships between those in the global North and those in the global South today. In particular, the idea of ISL that involves volunteers from the global North going to the global South needs to be examined as the inherent inequalities among the regions have been historically constructed (Bashi Treitler & Boatcă, 2016). The discourses that justified and created such disparities are still perpetuated today through hegemonic universalistic ideals present in GCE and ISL (Larkin, Larsen, MacDonald, & Smaller, 2016). This postcolonial lens submits ISL, a seemingly “progressive

initiative,” “to rigorous scrutiny . . . in relation to origins and implications of assumptions with a view to produce more informed and ethical practices” (Andreotti, 2016, p. 61).

Summary

In Chapter 2, I reviewed literature addressing three streams of GCE and their corresponding ISL initiatives. I then synthesized the discussion around the three streams of GCE by pointing to a gap and possibly fourth alternative for viewing GCE and ISL. Finally, I explored literature that sought out the perspectives of those in the host communities of the global South through the themes of relationships, motivations, and reciprocity. In Chapter 3, I detail the elements of the research design that guided this study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

Overview

In this chapter, I address all research design elements that informed this study. Design elements include: a) research purpose; b) research questions; c) ontological and epistemological underpinnings; d) theoretical framework; e) methodological approach; f) case study site; g) data collection methods; h) data analysis; i) ethical considerations; j) reliability and trustworthiness; and, k) limitations and delimitations.

Research Purpose

International service learning (ISL) that involves stakeholders from the global North “serving” the global South is inherently inequitable (Mitchell, 2008). Research in ISL continues to privilege Western interests and perspectives, with little importance given to the perspectives of those hosting in the global South (Larson, 2016).

Therefore, the purpose of this collective case study was to foreground the voices of stakeholders in a prospective host community in order to determine how they envision an ISL initiative. This study aimed to inform more collaborative initiatives that center the desires of the host communities in the global South.

Research Questions

Primary Research Question

The primary research question that guided this study was: What constitutes a meaningful, ISL initiative for prospective stakeholders located in the global South?

Secondary Research Questions

- How do prospective stakeholders of ISL interpret and make meaning of *service* within their host community?

- What constitutes a meaningful *partnership* to prospective stakeholders of ISL in a host community?
- What constitutes *reciprocity* to prospective stakeholders of ISL in a host community?

Ontological and Epistemological Underpinnings

Key ontological and epistemological underpinnings guided this research and my approach as researcher. As a socio-constructivist, I believe that there are multiple realities and, as such, I am challenged by many proclamations of universality. I recognize that this is where my unease with ISL lies, as notions of a “global citizen” and ISL imperatives are often steeped in universalistic, Western ideals. I suspect that a Western cultural hegemony may maintain a status quo that does not always serve the interests of those in the global South. Instead, other realities, other truths, may be concealed and ignored.

I believe that our knowledge is socially, culturally and historically constructed (Fivush & Merrill, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1989; Merriam & Heuer, 1996). Therefore, to destabilize a possible ethnocentrism driving the ISL taken up by the global North, it is necessary to seek out other “truths” that may reveal paradoxes within hegemonic truth systems. These truths or meanings are “varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing the meanings into a few categories or ideas” (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). For me, in the context of ISL, this entails dialoging with the communities in the global South, and recognizing the cultural and historical influences simultaneously at play, as a first step in destabilizing Western hegemonic ethnocentrism.

Theoretical Framework

ISL is not a one-dimensional, impartial form of benevolence. The “need” for this kind of “service” offered by the global North to the South, has been historically constructed through a

legacy of colonialism. A system of oppression and exploitation, colonialism has impacted the economic infrastructures of the global South, and has been responsible for the continuing disparities between the North and South (Adams & Estrada-Villalta, 2017; Mikander, 2016). Therefore, I use a postcolonial lens as outlined by Andreotti (2006, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2016) to highlight the complexity of ISL, and interrogate the continuing imperialistic agendas that underscore the realities of power and exploitation. As the guiding theoretical framework, postcolonial theory acts as a tool that “informs and structures an analysis of knowledge production and power relations that attempts to identify ethnocentric, paternalistic, depoliticized, ahistorical, and hegemonic tendencies . . . and their implications in the discursive production of self and Other in institutionalized discourses” (Andreotti, 2011a, p. 58).

Andreotti (2011a) proposed the adoption of colonial discourse analysis as a methodology for applying postcolonial theory, or “actioning” it; “Colonial discourse analyses challenge the neutrality and objectivity of academia and its role in constructing stereotypes, images, and knowledge of colonial subjects and cultures which support and legitimize institutions of economic, administrative, judicial, and biomedical control” (p. 86). Within the context of ISL, it is important to interrogate the principles underscoring these initiatives, as they may perpetuate the belief that the “privilege and material wealth in the global North is associated with a seamless notion of progress” and that “humanitarian and moral grounds for action [are] based on the notion of a ‘common humanity’ and a sense of responsibility *for* the Other” (p. 93). A postcolonial theoretical perspective questions the privilege of the global North as one that comes out of systems of inequality and exploitation and, therefore, requires that “political and ethical grounds for action [are] based on the notion of justice and complicity in harm, or responsibility *towards* the Other” (p. 93).

A postcolonial perspective emphasizes a change of cultures, relationships, and structures, so that injustices are addressed, more equal grounds for dialogue are created, and people can have more autonomy to define their own development. . . . From a postcolonial perspective the basic principle for change is contingency, dialogue, and ethical relation to difference and reflexivity—a way of engaging critically with the past in order to imagine other possible futures. (p. 93)

Within this research study, a postcolonial theoretical framework allows me to focus on foregrounding the voices of those in the global South, while questioning assumptions and representations that may arise as a result of Western hegemonic ethnocentrism.

Methodological Approach

Rationale for Qualitative Study

While I recognize that qualitative research has meant different things at different moments, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) defined qualitative research as “a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. . . . This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). Therefore, drawing on Denzin and Lincoln’s contrasting of qualitative research with quantitative research, a few distinguishing features stood out that made qualitative research the best choice for my research inquiry; these hinged on “accepting postmodern sensibilities,” “capturing the individual’s point of view,” and “examining the constraints of everyday life” (p. 9).

In “accepting postmodern sensibilities,” I align with those who reject the criteria set by positivists and postpositivists in evaluating qualitative research, believing it produces a kind of “science that silences too many voices” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 9). I believe that it is misleading to always trust in a single reality as “the world, or reality, is not the fixed, single, agreed upon, or measureable phenomenon that it is assumed to be in positivist, quantitative research” (Merriam, 2002, p. 3). This aligns with a social constructivist paradigm and ontological stance that understands that reality is socially, culturally, and historically constructed. This lends itself to the recognition of multiple realities which requires researchers to “become involved in the reality of the participants and to interact with them in meaningful ways” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 29).

Therefore, through my research, I aimed to capture the individual’s point of view and beliefs; specifically, I was interested in the point of view of the prospective host community stakeholders—those that are far too often silenced. Qualitative researchers want to know how “people make sense of their experience” (Merriam, 2002a, p. 5). This involves having the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection, allowing for “immediately responsive and adaptive” data collection and analysis (p. 5). This means that by having research that is entrenched in the constraints of an everyday social world, qualitative researchers are “committed to an emic, ideographic, case-based position, which directs their attention to the specifics of particular cases” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 9). In order to address the purpose of my study, I needed to adopt an emic perspective that could not be assumed to be part of a universal truth system. I needed to question my own Western ethnocentric hegemony, by being open to and centering others’ perspectives.

The history of qualitative research has been a “story of decentering and jockeying for position” (Erickson, 2011, p. 55). I choose to align with those who do not fit into well-defined, accepted categories that support the principles of scientific research. Further, I align with those who have been fighting to have their voices heard. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) referred to currently being in the eighth historical moment of qualitative research, “concerned with moral discourse. . . . [it] asks that the social sciences and humanities become sites for critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom and community” (p. 3). My qualitative research focused on adding to these critical conversations.

Rationale for Case Study

I employed a case study approach that aligns with Merriam (1988, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c) and Simons (2009). In juxtaposing what Flyvbjerg (2011) believed was an oversimplified and misleading definition of case study, he offered what he considered to be a “commonsensical” definition that rested on four foundational tenets: that the case is a “bounded system,” is intensive, stresses “developmental factors,” and focuses on context (p. 301). Similarly, Merriam (1988) identified four characteristics of case study: that it is particularistic, descriptive, heuristic and inductive (pp. 11-12). My research aimed to look, in depth, at prospective host community stakeholders of ISL within a specific context and has been open to varying and conflicting viewpoints. For the purposes of my study, Simons’ (2009) definition proved comprehensive:

Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a ‘real life’ context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a thesis),

programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action. (p. 21)

When considering ISL as the context of the study, the cases I focused on were prospective host community stakeholders within a specific geographical host site. Stake (1995) stated that “the case is a specific, a complex, functioning thing . . . [acknowledging that] people and programs clearly are prospective cases” (p. 2). In case study, the unit of analysis is the focus, as opposed to the topic (Merriam, 2002a, p. 8). In coming to bound the case, Yin (2014) cautioned that the case cannot be an abstraction; rather, this requires “spatial, temporal, and other boundaries [that] underlie a key but subtle aspect of defining your case” (p. 34). Yin gave the example that “if the unit of analysis is a small group, for instance, the persons to be included within the group (immediate topic of the case), must be distinguished from those who are outside of it (the context for the case)” (p. 33).

When looking at research involving the global South and global North, it is easy to view these regions in binary terms and to oversimplify and essentialize the peoples involved. Therefore, in bounding the case, I saw ISL as the context of the case, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines as the geographical research site. However, I chose to view the prospective stakeholders of ISL as separate cases within a collective case study, recognizing that host communities do not speak with one voice. Moreover, I recognized that *prospective stakeholders* as immediate topic of the case was a broad category; therefore, I narrowed the unit of analysis specifically to representatives (i.e. leaders, front line staff, etc.) of organizations that serve the community, thereby distinct from other community stakeholders such as host families.

For the purpose of this study, a key advantage of case study was its emphasis on interpretation:

We emphasize placing an interpreter in the field to observe the workings of the case, one who records objectively what is happening but simultaneously examines its meaning and redirects observation to refine or substantiate those meanings. Initial research questions may be modified or even replaced in mid-study by the case researcher. The aim is to thoroughly understand Θ [the case]. If early questions are not working, if new issues become apparent, the design is changed. (Stake, 1995, pp. 8-9)

This seemed consistent with Simons' (2009) emergent design of case study. These are case studies "characterized by open or emergent designs with the potential to shift focus in response to a growing understanding of the case, unanticipated events, or a change in the emphasis by the stakeholders or case researcher" (p. 31). As an outsider to the island, I expected that my understanding of the cases would grow as the research study progressed, and as I received feedback from the participants. This suggested a need for me to be flexible and open throughout my research.

Case Study Site

It was not necessary to choose a case that was typical of other cases (Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995) as within ISL there are a wide range of projects that makes doing so challenging. Stake (1995) argued that the first criterion in choosing a case is to "maximize what we can learn" (p. 4). Yet, he echoed Simons (2009) who asserted, "Further criteria that may be helpful in selecting an instrumental case study include geographical location, willingness of institutions and people to be studied, and opportunity – near where you live" (p. 30). The specific sites of my research were located in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A number of factors were taken into consideration when choosing the location of my study.

As my interest lay in the perspective of international host community members and in the possible need for destabilizing hegemonic ethnocentrism prevalent in the global North, I felt the need to choose an international destination. After much deliberation, St. Vincent and the Grenadines seemed a likely choice—I have strong familial ties and well-connected support there. Further, St. Vincent was relatively accessible both geographically and linguistically and, having been there a number of times in the past, I was comfortable in the environment. Moreover, I believed that with the new international airport recently opened, St. Vincent was, and continues to be, on the cusp of change. With an influx of tourist-voluntourist anticipated to increase, it was an ideal time to explore the hopes and concerns of a community that would likely be hosting more and more ISL initiatives. Accordingly, this collective case study marks the initial relationship building process among the community, necessary when setting a solid, ethical foundation for future ISL development on the island. I also chose St. Vincent because it is representative of many of the communities in the global South that host ISL initiatives.

Located in the Caribbean, St. Vincent and the Grenadines is comprised of 32 islands and cays (small islands), nine of which are inhabited. It is nestled between Barbados to its East, St. Lucia to its North, and Grenada and Trinidad to its South. The main island of St. Vincent measures 344 km², with a length of 26 km and a width of 15 km. The small size makes touring the main island an easy day trip, despite its mountainous landscape. This lush, mountainous terrain is a direct result of it being a volcanic island, with an active volcano, and helps to provide breathtaking panoramic views of green mountains dotted by colourful, pastel homes.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has a population of approximately 110,000 people, with at least half of the population of the mainland of St. Vincent concentrated in urban and suburban areas in the south of the island, in and around the capital city of Kingstown. The small footprint

of Kingstown does not diminish the weekday hustle and bustle that is felt when in town. When I thought myself to be “lost” in Kingstown, I had been quickly reassured by passersby that I was, indeed, not lost. “It’s impossible to get lost here. There are only three streets: Back street, Middle street, and Bay street.” “You can throw a pebble from one side of town, and it will hit the other side of town.” As diminutive as this may seem, the narrow main roads and alleys are always alive with the coming and goings of people, and paralyzing traffic jams, casting the fleeting illusion of a much larger city centre. The exception is Sundays, when the Methodist, Anglican, and Catholic churches take over and come alive.

Having walked down some of the cobblestone paths found in town, ducked beneath some of the many archways that Kingstown is known for, walked past the many 19th century stone buildings, and visited the historic fort where the canons are turned inland, I am humbly cognizant of the colonial past that has shaped the island of today. Having alternated between being French and British colonies, St. Vincent and the Grenadines gained independence from Britain in 1979. However, the legacy of a plantation economy has left it struggling to introduce new industries in order to combat a high unemployment rate. It is this legacy that has precipitated a desire among those in the global North to “serve” those in the South. Yet, it is also this legacy of imperialism that deserves interrogation in order to make explicit the complicity of the global North in the proliferation of global inequalities, and to dispel some of the hegemonic socio-cultural beliefs that go along with modernity.

Therefore, before addressing the participants of my study, I need to begin by acknowledging the territory and First people of St. Vincent, the Kalinago. Prior to Africans arriving on the island of St. Vincent, there were the Kalinago, the original inhabitants of the island. This Indigenous population later intermingled with Africans escaping enslavement on

neighbouring islands. This mixed group came to be known as the Garifuna people. However, when the British arrived, they were forcefully exiled to Honduras. Today, only 2% of St. Vincent's population is of Indigenous descent, located in the poorest, most isolated communities on the north end of the island.

Population and Recruitment`

When contemplating organizations that I would invite into this research, I cautioned myself to think outside of my own cultural norms. My initial thought was to look at community-based organizations within St. Vincent and the Grenadines. However, after some inquiries, I quickly realized that the concept of a "community-based organization" was not so widespread and stable in St. Vincent as it is in a large metropolis wherein "local communities" are still substantial in size to maintain self-sufficiency. Therefore, instead of specifying "community-based organizations," I shifted my focus to "organizations that *serve* the community." I believed that this slight nuanced change encompassed a wider range of organizations that work in St. Vincent to mobilize and serve differing segments of the society.

Within the context of St. Vincent, I worked to enlist the perspectives of those in leadership and/or front line roles that serve community. For me, this meant looking at organizations that provided community and social services within the realm of youth services, continuing education, environmental sustainability, and shelter/drop-in amenities, etc.

In thinking about the prospective participants of the study, I also found the need to think outside of my own Western Eurocentric community norms. This involved including the perspective of the religious community despite a reluctance on the part of many Western institutions of higher education to partner with it.² This thought brought me back to my first

² The Canadian post-secondary institution that I work for, for example, explicitly rejects any ISL partnerships with religious affiliations.

memory of St. Vincent. Having arrived on a Sunday as a young, pre-teen girl, I vividly recall going to bed enveloped by the sound of gospel music being sung from churches all over the hills surrounding me. So pervasive was the music, that I could not distinguish one chorus from another. At 4:30 in the morning, I woke up and sat on the edge of my bed, perplexed that this music was still continuing; I listened intently for a long time. Although, admittedly, it was later explained to me that my naïve ears were then hearing the roosters crowing, the omnipresence of the church within St. Vincent has not been lost on me. As pillars within their communities, I expected that any one of the pastors or deacons of an Anglican, Catholic or Methodist church to be representative of many within the community.

Therefore, after I gained approval from the University of Calgary Ethics Board, I sent Letters of Invitation to the organizations that I had identified, with the aim of securing informed consent from four to six. In selecting the organizations for the study, I sought to enlist organizations representative of those that typically partner with foreign (i.e. Canadian) sending institutions, and/or organizations that worked to enhance the social fabric of the community. Ultimately, I found that I had the most traction after I arrived in St. Vincent and was able to make inroads by talking to people and getting referrals. This was an ongoing process, as I was determined on getting participants from differing sectors for maximum variation (Creswell, 1998; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) to determine suitability.

Each one of these sites were looked at as separate cases within the collective case study.

Data Collection Methods

One-on-one dialogues was the primary method used to support data collection; however, informal observation and document analysis helped to round out the data when possible.

Phase I: Observation and Document Analysis

Observation. In order to present a portrayal of the specific sites and to get a sense of the community, the fieldwork entailed continuous informal observation. For me, this involved enmeshing myself within the fabric of the community, by engaging in conversations with locals, listening to talk radio stations, participating in community events, and—to my mom’s delight—attending differing churches each weekend. This meant that my role of observer vacillated between what Merriam (1988) referred to as “observer as participant” to being a full observer, depending on the context. For example, when I attended the church service of one of the participants of my study, I participated; if not singing, mouthing the words of the spirituals. However, other sites often involved me passively observing while being given a tour of the facilities.

Simons (2009) recommended unstructured, “naturalistic” observation and reminds the researcher to remain open to possibilities, and to “make a conscious effort to see differently” (p. 58). For me this entailed that, although I had a somewhat cursory understanding of St. Vincent as a foreigner, my observation of the research sites and communities would allow me to better understand the viewpoints that I got through interviews. With this in mind, I spent ten weeks in St. Vincent, to allow time to more adequately observe and collect data.

Document analysis. Also, with the aim of developing a stronger understanding of the specific sites involved, I tried to collect publicly shared documents that pertained to the organizations participating in the study. I was interested in viewing and understanding the missions of the organizations through the documentation available to the public (Prior, 2008, p. 231), in order to provide insight into the culture and philosophy of the organizations and, in turn, their perspectives on ISL. This, at times, involved participants giving me documents pertaining to the organization, or a sample of projects they had worked on. Such documents served to help

me further form an understanding of the organizations. In other cases, I came across articles that further shed light on participants' views and community roles.

Phase II: One-on-one dialogues

While garnering some information about each of the sites through site visits and/or document analysis, my primary source of data collection was through face-to-face dialogues with representatives of the participant organizations. Underscoring the notion of dialogue here was the “emphases on equity and open-mindedness (or the resistance to judgment) [that] inform the researcher–participant relationship as collaborative instead of power-laden” (Constantino, 2008, p. 212). Foundational to this was the idea of dialogic listening wherein

the focus on dialogic listening makes it possible to rethink some of our research practices, in that it suggests an orientation toward language in use that does not depart from talk, but rather emphasizes how the embodied and intertwined nature of relating to one another can guide and direct us during field studies. (Helin, 2013, 238)

I aimed, therefore, to produce, in social interaction with the participants, knowledge that was relational, conversational, contextual and pragmatic (Brinkmann & Kale, 2015). These dialogues averaged around 45 minutes to an hour in length, and took place in locations suggested by, and convenient for, the participants.

I gained permission from all participants to audio-record the dialogues to be later transcribed. Transcriptions were later sent to participants for member-checking; only one participant opted to provide some clarifications.

Data Analysis

Simons (2009) and Merriam (1988; 2002a) provided a number of useful methods for analyzing data. In referring to Walcott's (as quoted in Merriam) approach to “transforming

qualitative data,” the distinction was made between different ways of making sense of data: description, analysis, and interpretation. Here, interpretation “transcends factual data and cautious analyses and begins to probe into what is to be made of them” (Merriam, 1988, p. 36). “When multiple cases are examined, the typical analytic strategy is to provide detailed description of themes within each case (within-case analysis), followed by thematic analysis across cases (cross-case analysis)” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 31). Ultimately, two levels of intensive analysis were conducted.

1. Patterns and interpretations were garnered from each case. This helped to direct the research with and to the next site. The first few dialogues that I engaged in with participants, in particular, were spaced far enough apart to allow me the opportunity to personally transcribe and start analyzing the data. This involved manually coding data for emergent themes, providing me an evolving understanding of the collective case.
2. When all data gathering was completed, the process continued with developing conceptual categories or themes employing convergent and divergent thinking (Merriam, 1988, p. 135). I listened to the recordings, and read and reread the transcripts while identifying and highlighting recurrent themes.

Interspersed with my coding and thematic analysis, I also used the following data processing strategies:

- Allowed set time for frequent analytic memoing (Miles et al., 2014) in order to help in the conceptualization of the research. In particular, this played an important role in encouraging me to be more reflexive throughout this research process. It also formed the basis of my reflexive vignettes within my data analysis.

- Completed an Interim Case Summary after dialoguing with participants from the first two research sites, and prior to data collection with the other sites. This helped me to “formulate a clearer sense of the case, and to self-critique the adequacy of the data that have been collected” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 132). I also used this as an opportunity to touch base with my supervisor “to atone for the gaps or weaknesses the summary has revealed” (p. 133).

Ethical Considerations

Before I began any data collection, I gained approval from the University of Calgary Ethics Board. In addition, I obtained informed consent from all participants before proceeding with any individual dialogues, and informed them that they could withdraw their consent at any time.

Although I did not anticipate that the research would pose any serious threat to the participants, I had discussions regarding confidentiality and anonymity with the participants as it was “some protection from unwarranted or unfair judgement from unexpected quarters and even agreed audiences” (Simons, 2009, p. 107). As St. Vincent is a very small island, I understood that there might be identity markers that could be easily recognizable by others. Therefore, I anticipated encountering the “ethical grey zone” that Synder (2002) spoke of when what we promise regarding confidentiality conflicts with our “constructivist research practices.” Synder provided a few guidelines that I found helpful including: clarifying the inherent limitations to ensuring confidentiality, understanding the degrees of anonymity-confidentiality possible and, individualizing consent forms (p. 78).

This research rested on the notion of “giving voice” to participants which ideally entails allowing participants a shared degree of control. While limited in its scope, a system of “member

checks” was used to help ensure that my “own biases do not influence how participants’ perspectives are portrayed, and to determine the accuracy of findings” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 113). Therefore, participants were provided the opportunity to edit the transcriptions of their individual dialogues with me.

One concern that I had grappled with was deciding whether my post-research plans were germane to the participants. While my research aimed to uncover the perspectives of the Vincentian representatives of the organizations, one long-term possibility was to use the findings to later partner (on behalf of the college that I work at) with one of the organizations in the study in order to develop an ISL initiative. However, one of the perceived strengths of the research design was that the participants had no ties to partnering foreign institutions, thereby having nothing to lose by speaking their mind. One of the challenges that came out in the literature looking at research on host communities, was the reluctance of host community participants to speak negatively for fear of losing some perceived benefit, no matter how small (O’Sullivan & Smaller, 2016; Larson, 2016). I feared that revealing my intentions may be perceived as a potential benefit that could influence the responses. Accordingly, I feared that revealing my intentions may be misleading, as it was a hope, a dream, spearheaded by me, with only a possibility, but no guarantee, of coming to fruition. Would I be providing false hope? And yet, within such thoughts, I recognized my own ethnocentric bias that assumed that those in the global South would be clambering to join with us in the global North. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) suggested that I be an open book with my project in order to develop trust (p. 60). Therefore, rather than risk adopting a paternalistic approach to my research, I chose to disclose all aims for my research.

To align with a critical social science approach, I responded to the challenge,

. . . [to] struggle to “join with,” and “learn from” rather than “speak for” or “intervene into.” Voices from the margins demonstrate the range of knowledges, perspectives, languages, and ways of being that should become foundational to our actions, that should become a new center. (Cannella & Lincoln, 2011, p. 83)

Reliability and Trustworthiness

In addressing the integrity of the research, I recognize that the great variety of methodological and theoretical approaches to research, underpinned by ontological and epistemological understandings, also imply differences in perspectives on quality and validity that speak to incommensurability. In judging the quality of this research project, I considered a number of factors. To this end, I used what Erickson (Moss, Phillips, Erickson, Floden, Lather, & Schneider, 2009) defined as *well done* data gathering and analysis, and reciprocity among researcher and stakeholders (p. 504).

Erickson (Moss et al, 2009) defined qualitative research as *well done* when “the study involved a substantial amount of time in fieldwork; . . . careful, repeated analysis of data to identify patterns in them . . . ; and clear reporting on how the study was done and how conclusions followed from evidence” (p. 504). My research inquiry took on multiple cases in order to gather useful and diverse data that could act as a form of data source triangulation (Merriam, 2002b; Miles et al., 2014). Moreover, Merriam (2002b) recommended being submerged in the data collection phase for some time as a strategy towards internal validity. Therefore, rather than conduct my research from a distance, I immersed myself in the environment and context of St. Vincent, in order to get a better understanding of the research participants and collect richer data. At the same time, I employed member checks and peer review to check the plausibility and accuracy of my research findings.

Reciprocity within the research provides another way of judging my research. Lather (1986) spoke of reciprocity as “give-and-take, a mutual negotiation of meaning and power” (p.263). She offered an example of “collaborative theorizing” that is based on negotiation: “negotiation of description, interpretation, and the principles used to organize the first-draft report” (p.264). Like a first draft report, this study represents an effort to produce preliminary findings that may be used later to help develop a larger scale initiative. Paramount in this research was the foregrounding of the voice of prospective host community stakeholders, which implied a degree of negotiation between researcher and participant. Therefore, to minimize inaccuracy in description and interpretation, I anticipated that feedback from participants would be enlisted throughout the process of dialoging and member checking of transcripts. However, while I did receive some feedback that helped direct subsequent dialogues with participants, only one participant chose to offer clarification of provided transcripts.

This compelled me to look beyond a narrow understanding of reciprocity that was primarily dependent on member checking. Trainor and Bouchard (2013) reflected on how they adopted a reciprocal stance in their own educational research studies, understanding that “reciprocity highlights the tensions in representation, the legitimization of knowledge, and the power distance between and among researchers and participants” (p. 989). They made a connection between a stance of reciprocity in research and reflexivity, as it “provides opportunity to deeply consider positionality and its role in the production of knowledge” (p. 1000). A stance of reciprocity further compels us to interrogate our biases and assumptions, to find creative spaces to hold conflict so that we may analyze the data in complex, thought-provoking ways that also honor the contributions of participants (p.1000).

Subedi (2006) spoke about the unique positionality of the “halfie” researcher, whose identity is a mixture due to migration or, as in my case, parentage. He argued that “while reflexive practices enable researchers to re-examine their subjectivities, they also ask critical questions about how researchers have met the needs and the concerns of participants” (p. 575), and involves negotiated and partial meanings. Having conducted research in St. Vincent where I have “Third World identifications” as both my parents were Vincentians, I walked that tenuous line of being both insider-outsider and “embark[ed] on a long journey of self-critique” (p. 578). To that end, I made a concerted effort to be reflexive in the research process and data analysis: “When academic researchers neglect to examine the relationship between field/place and their situatedness, they fail to research and write about marginalized communities ethically” (p. 588).

Simons (2009) challenged researchers to “write your ‘self’ into the text” in order to meet the ethical point “that we need to reflect on who we are if we are to study the experience of others and not allow our predilections and values to intrude in unhelpful ways” (p. 94). Likewise, Andreotti (2011a) stated that the first steps in challenging traditional assumptions in research includes examining my own position as a researcher through self-reflexivity (p. 88). Therefore, interwoven into my analysis are vignettes (*italicized*) of my own experiences, observations and thoughts, highlighting the impact on and development of my own biases, values and beliefs throughout this research process in hopes of adopting a stance of reciprocity.

Since intersubjective research is not about taking an “outside” observing role where the focus is to experience the world only through the ears and eyes of the other, it allows me to listen to the voice of the others while at the same time being open to how my own inner voice resonates within me which offers rich possibilities for relating to the others in the dialogic moment. (Helin, 2013, p. 237)

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

Positionality. In thinking about limitations of the study, my positionality as researcher first needs to be acknowledged. With the aim to foreground the voices of the host community participants, I acknowledge that I am not a member of that host community. While I am of Vincentian descent, I was born in Canada; therefore, I recognize that I embody a Western worldview that is not wholly inclusive of that of the participants. More importantly, I recognize that my Western birthright is fraught with a history of domination over Others that privileges me by default. Therefore, as a Westerner that chose to conduct research in a former colony, I am mindful that I risk continuing an imperialist legacy of speaking for Others. I take heed of Spivak's admonishment that within my research, I am complicit in my object of critique, and that no matter how benevolent the intentions, "the critic cannot avoid, entirely, being part of the problem" (Best, 1999, p. 484). Therefore, while I am critical of the ethnocentrism that may be prevalent in ISL, I acknowledge that I am, to some extent, perpetuating it through the onto-epistemic grammar in which I frame and view my work.

Proximity. I am not a member of the host community as I do not live in the community. Therefore, proximity to the community participants signified another limitation of the study. This denotes a degree of difficulty when it came to communicating with some members of the host community. However, I mitigated this by an extended stay on the island, made possible by taking a leave from my job to focus on my research.

Delimitations

Limited scope of participants. While the perspective of stakeholders in a prospective host community was of interest to my study, I chose to delimit participants to representatives of

local organizations that serve the community. I chose this segment of the community as they would generally be the first point of contact when those in the global North are looking to partner with those in the South in order to initiate an ISL project. However, these participants represented only one sector of the community potentially impacted by ISL.

Lack of previous ISL experience. Another delimitation of this study was that the participants had limited to no previous experience with ISL. I chose to look at how participants of the study might envision ISL, which did not require experience with an initiative. While this could be framed as an advantage, as participants were not encumbered with attachments or preconceived ideas about ISL, they may not have been able to offer the perspective of someone who has experienced firsthand the intricacies of an ISL initiative.

Limited number of participants. The delimitation of the research participants to six community organizations may seem like a small number. However, with St. Vincent having a population of approximately 110,000, rivaling that of a small city, I believed that the number of participants was adequately representative of community services offered in St. Vincent.

Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the plan implemented for my research methodology. A collective case study was used to uncover how a prospective host community (stakeholders) might envision ISL. To this end, St. Vincent and the Grenadines served as the geographical site for the cases. Specifically, six organizations that serve the community were treated as separate cases within this collective case study. The primary data collection method used was individual dialogues, with observation and document analysis serving to add richness to the interpretations. Data analysis occurred throughout the research, looking for emergent dominant patterns and themes.

In Chapter 4, I present research findings that outline the participants views on service, reciprocity, and partnership within ISL.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this collective case study was to foreground the voices of prospective stakeholders in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in order to determine how they might envision a meaningful International Service Learning (ISL) initiative. Specifically, I was interested in understanding their perspectives on *service*, *reciprocity*, and *partnership* within ISL to inform the development of more collaborative ISL initiatives. In this chapter, I present the findings derived from the dialogues I had with each of the six participants of the study.

While there are islands in the Caribbean, such as Jamaica, which have hosted many ISL initiatives, St. Vincent does not readily come to mind when one thinks about ISL. The one exception I was told about was the Richmond Vale Academy in the remote countryside on the north end of the island that offered short and long-term courses training international development workers through immersion in a foreign culture and volunteer service.³ While these programs involved some engagement with the local community, I acknowledged that the founders of the program (and current director) were Norwegian, outsiders to the community.

My research, however, aimed to foreground the perspectives of Vincentians within the host community, and so I needed to look beyond a venture spearheaded by foreigners. Therefore, prior to going to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, I worked to identify a number of organizations that served the local community. I wanted the perspectives of those who had frontline experience and understood the needs and desires of the locals. I enquired through friends and family in St.

³ The Richmond Vale Academy offers a climate change program where volunteers help Vincentians adapt to the challenges of Climate Change and Global Warming. They also offer an 18-month Fighting Poverty Program that includes a six-month service period in Central or South America. And for those looking for something short-term, they offer two to four-week programs for school groups wanting to experience St. Vincent.

Vincent, and performed searches on the Internet. Although I acquired some leads, I was more successful in making these connections upon my arrival in St. Vincent, after spending some time in the community and speaking with locals. Over the course of ten weeks in St. Vincent, I identified organizations representing various sectors of community service: the church, social and youth services, college, health, and environment. All participant organizations operated in and around the capital city of Kingstown.

Case Profiles

Case 1: Baptist Church

Founded by American missionaries in 1977, this Baptist church had grown from operating out of a 12-room house, to being one of the largest Baptist churches in St. Vincent. Construction of their new home, a cathedral-like church building, was near completion at the time of my visit. At this time, they had a nominal membership of over 550, with a mission to present the gospel to everyone such that its transforming power will draw them to a dynamic relationship with God. They were responsible for a number of ministries including: feeding the poor; mentorship programs, clothing drives, community outreach, deaf support, and youth services.

Case 2: Environmental NGO

This environmental NGO, housed in the capital city of Kingstown, was established in 1969 to assist with, among other things, the preservation and management of historical monuments and sites and to safeguard the cultural patrimony of the country. After having gone dormant for a while, it had been revitalized within recent years. Headed by a board of Trustees, this NGO was primarily responsible for safeguarding national heritage sites and educating the

public on such issues. The organization owned several historic sites and cared for many more. It had a membership of several hundred and aimed to be active in the cultural life of the nation.

Case 3: Community College

This community college was commissioned in 1997 by the then prime minister, and later formed an amalgamation of four separate schools/colleges in 2005. At the time of the research, the community college had been servicing over 2000 students each year. Offering arts and science education, nursing education, teacher education, and technical and vocational options, the college was the next step for most of the 900 secondary school graduates each year, and tuition-free for those attending full time. In addition to those options, the College started offering bachelor's degree programs in partnership with the University of the West Indies, The Jamaica Theological Seminary, and the University of Technology, Jamaica.

Case 4: Sexual Health NGO

This organization was part of a federation of 141-member associations operating in 152 countries. While the umbrella NGO had been in existence for well over 70 years, the St. Vincent branch of this international NGO had been serving the St. Vincent community for about 50 years. Devoted to providing sexual and reproductive health services and education in St. Vincent, this NGO was committed to upholding the rights of the most under-served regardless of their age, gender, identity, sexual orientation or expression.

Case 5: Counselling and Youth Service NGO

This non-Government, non-profit, professional counseling center offered a wide range of services to the Vincentian public. It was opened by the Roman Catholic Church of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 1989. The building caught on fire in 1998 and, with help from the EU and other organizations, they moved to their current location in 2002. Housed in the city of

Kingstown, this organization mainly focused on helping “at-risk” youth. The Youth Assistance Programme, with its mission of Building Youth Capacities to Overcome Poverty, targeted poor, vulnerable, rural, ‘at risk,’ unemployed youths between the ages of 15-19. A primary focus of the organization was its offering of two full-time, full-year programs that each catered to 30 youth, wherein they developed life skills for six months, and then participated in learning a skill of their choice at a technical institute. They also offered parenting programs. Juveniles in conflict with the law, and who were referred by the High, Family and Magistrate’s Courts, were also considered for places in the program.

Case 6: Social Service NGO

This international NGO first came to St. Vincent in 1905, and became a “Corporation Sole” in 1993. While its mission and vision had an Evangelical foundation, it provided a wide range of social services as dictated by the community needs with the main goal of eliminating poverty and suffering. Within St. Vincent, this included offering pre-school, soup kitchen, food bank, and emergency relief services.

Participant Portraits

To understand the unique perspectives garnered from the experience and expertise of each organization, I spoke with a leading representative from each of the six distinct organizations outlined above. In due course, I met individually with six community leaders for face-to-face dialogues about how they might envision ISL in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These were semi-structured dialogues wherein I had a few prepared questions focusing on *service*, *reciprocity*, and *partnership*, but was open to following the lead of the participants. Therefore, the following questions served as a guide for our dialogues.

1. Service Learning implies a service component that is at the root of ISL. What does “service” mean to you? What do you think of foreigners coming to St. Vincent to “serve”? Why do you think they choose to go abroad to places like St. Vincent to serve-volunteer?
2. If you could determine what “service” should be, what would it look like?
3. ISL also requires partnership with foreign people and institutions. What do you think makes an ideal partnership?
4. How do you think reciprocity can be ensured within ISL? What do you see as possible benefits of ISL to St. Vincent? What benefits would you like to see prioritized for St. Vincent?
5. What concerns do you have about ISL?
6. Would you like to see international service learning initiatives in your community? Why or why not?

Findings

Rev (Case 1)

The first to readily accept my invitation to dialogue with me was Rev. Rev was a prominent leader of one of the largest Baptist congregations (Case 1) in St. Vincent, having earned a doctorate degree at a theological university in the US. In his capacity as a pastor, he was also well known in the community through a daily call-in segment on one of the popular morning radio talk shows. He suggested we meet in a public park next to where large ships dock. I easily found my way there at the appointed time and positioned myself at a picnic table under an almond tree (I only knew that it was an almond tree when I received a text asking if I were the one sitting under the almond tree). Well-groomed and smartly dressed with his chestnut skin tone

glistening in the late morning sun, Rev's enthusiasm and warmth immediately put me at ease. He owned a cadence of speech that was decidedly faster than what I was used to, underscoring a level of self-assuredness that made for an engaging conversation.

Service. At the start of our dialogue, Rev admitted that he was "intrigued" as he had "not heard the term [international service learning] before." He made some parallels to organizations like the Peace Corps and the Rotary Club operating in St. Vincent. However, his understanding of service was based on his "endeavor being involved in the church, like you know there's that kind of missionary endeavors." Asked what "service" meant to him, he answered:

Within my sphere, it is the assistance given to help another human being coming to the aid or assistance of another human being. Not for self-gain or for self-profiteering, but mostly for the good of the other individuals. So, it is a bit of an altruistic, you know, endeavor, rather than individual gain or motivation.

However, when asked about his view on foreigners volunteering their service in St. Vincent, he voiced suspicion.

Suspicious. Initially suspicious. And I don't think often their agenda is often declared, Merlene. And I'm telling you. And even sometimes when they come to serve us, I think it is sometimes to dot their own i's and to cross their own t's, but they won't tell you that. So yeah we benefit, but they're also benefitting.

Fuelling this suspicion were his perceptions of a lack of "transparency" in volunteers making their agenda clear, and power differentials that manifested themselves in having the people that control the resources feeling "that they have the right to control the power."

My suspicion is that people, some of these people, might not necessarily be out front in telling you everything that goes behind their service. See, my definition of service, like I

said, is totally altruistic. So, when you serve somebody it should be for their benefit and not for your benefit but a lot of these things go two ways. I mean, I've had people come here and I know that it benefits their organization that they can show on a resume, "Okay, we have gone away we have done this." So they are resume building along the way, okay? So, there's some kind ulterior motive to that kind of service and once the motives are not declared then I become suspicious.

He provided, as an example of the lack of transparency, a story of an American teaching music in St. Vincent through the Peace Corps but whose main agenda, he suspected, was "gathering information for his missionary organization." This conclusion came as a result of some communication he came across that suggested that the American was sending back information on the culture. "And, I mean, nothing is wrong with that if you're going to serve better. You learn a little bit more. Maybe they think we don't deserve to know what they're really up to. I think that's what it is."

When questioned about what he saw as the service needs in St. Vincent, Rev lit up, "Oh gosh, there are multiple! Where do we start?" That said, his main focus lay in aiding the youth through community and after school mentorship programs, as well as through providing parenting skills. He drew on the analogy of a fundraising program that he was involved in in the United States for an organization that aided women in need of abortions. He marveled that they went beyond the procedural duties and spent a lot of time teaching life values and parenting skills. He was impressed that they were "very hands on," and expressed that he would like to see something like that in St. Vincent. Yet, for Rev, it is "personnel and resources" that are lacking to accomplish many of the things that need to be done. "Maybe we don't have the kits. Maybe we

don't have the personnel to spend the time. Maybe we don't have the sporting equipment or whatever it is. Maybe we don't have the facility. I don't know.”

Reciprocity. When asked about the roles of server and recipient and how they are defined, he immediately claimed that “the person who initiates is often the person who defines the roles, if you follow what I mean. They know what they want out of it. And so they're the ones who's going to define.” However, he cautioned that we should be aiming for initiatives that are “mutually determined” in order for them to be “mutually beneficial”.

It's transactive in the sense that, let's, let us say, okay . . . okay, my most recent trip, let me show you what I did there. I talked to one of the sponsors, one of the guys who's going to be working with me. Usually, what had happened in past seeing teams coming, was that they tell you all that they're going to do, whole parameters, everything is them. And, I'm a very proactive kind of guy. I said this is what we want, this is what we want, this is what we want. And there was an “ah ha.” They were like “Oh, so that's how you're thinking of it.” You're seeing things from my perspective and I'm seeing things from your perspective. That way we tweak it and we make it much more mutually beneficial. I mean, that's what needs to happen. I think there needs to be dialogue.

Rev also expressed the desire to have locals be able to experience going abroad themselves. He recounted the experience of working with an American group that had been coming to St. Vincent to do some volunteer work. But, he decided to that it was his local community's turn to go, even though they struggled to raise the funds. Yet, the impact, on the locals, of going away far exceeded that of the foreigners repeatedly coming: “Of all the years they had been coming, there's nothing that impacted us as much as us going to Skid Row L. A.

So yeah, that kind of reciprocal relationship is required and actually should be advocated strongly.”

Partnership. This talk of dialogue provided segue way into characteristics needed for a strong partnership. Having spearheaded many community initiatives and having had a lot of experience working with foreigners, Rev suggested ways to mitigate the drawbacks that he saw apparent within ISL. Of these, he stressed the need for dialogue among the parties involved in order to garner more openness and trust,

Tell me your hidden agenda. And because it might not be a spurious agenda—but it might be that—yeah, dialogue where me say, “Look, this is our objective.” I don't mind partnerships being mutually beneficial. I don't mind that. But don't put it out as if, “We are here for you; we are here for you.” Come on, bologna! You are here for yourself too! He recommended the implementation of a “memorandum of association” because “until we can develop that trust, until we can get past the black and white, the black and white is what establishes what you are asking about [reciprocity].”

Also significant was Rev’s desire for a system of “withdrawal” that ensured that the host community did not remain dependent on the foreign volunteers:

I don't want you holding my hand forever doing this. I want you to phase yourself out because I don't think it is beneficial. It is too much. That's another thing I have with these service organizations, they create dependencies if they're not done well.

He spoke of a mindset wherein locals “learn also to depend on . . . we believe that we don't have enough and therefore it takes somebody who is foreign to come give us what we really need to get.” Yet, he did not see these dependencies or this mindset in isolation, but recognized historical roots to it. “We've carried the mindset for 400 years. It's our mindset. . . . This goes back to

plantocracy. . . . This goes back to a lot of stuff . . . what colonization did to us, was bringing, was teaching a people that they're subservient.” At the same time, there was an insinuation of a continued neo-colonialism, wherein Rev mused that present-day “the foreigners are probably leveraging, capitalizing on this [mindset] to their advantage.”

Mariam (Case 2)

For six years, Mariam headed a national organization that promoted the cultural and environmental interests of St. Vincent, and continued to work for the organization as a Chair and trustee (Case 2). Complimenting this, Mariam was a lawyer, an outspoken advocate of marine wildlife, and a stakeholder in a number of business ventures in St. Vincent. A modestly dressed White woman, I guessed Mariam to be in her late forties, early fifties.

I didn't mind the extended wait in Mariam's waiting room with her receptionist, as the air-conditioning served as a nice reprieve from the mid-day heat. It had been about a week since I had met with Rev and, after having transcribed and reflected on our conversation, I was feeling slightly more prepared to meet with Mariam. Once she came out to meet me, very little was said by way of niceties, and we went straight into our discussion.

Service. When referring to “service,” Mariam's focus was on the indigent as, “when it comes to giving to communities obviously it should start in the most indigent communities. That's where attention is needed. Those are the communities that get forgotten about by the people who live here.” She gave the example of a community project she organized aimed at restoring the public baths used by a migratory community living in a neglected beach area. In particular, she had many people discourage the painting of a “beautiful mural” on the outside of the building because they were certain it would have been defaced in no time.

But we actually went into the community and asked the community people, “What do you want depicted?” And so, depicted on the mural are scenes of Rose Place. And it really helped to engender pride for them and their own community. So, what I think is really important with this service learning, is that when you go into the communities you have to link up with existing community leaders and find out what is the way to come and not just paint a school but get the people in the community involved as well because often what happens with these international experiences is that the interaction is limited. That they just come in and they paint a school, but they don't get to know the students who are in the schools.

For Mariam, service also served to fill a void and find a sense of purpose.

Well, everybody is looking to find a purpose in life. I mean everybody is looking. I remember this one girl, this American girl who helped us do an archeological dig in Argyle and basically the work that they did was really helping us to learn more of Vincentian history, the real history that we don't know about, the Amerindian history. And I remember we went to Bequia one day and we were just swimming in the sea and talking and she said you know that she's never felt more fulfilled in her whole life than to know that she's actually helping Vincentians learn more about their own history. It's given her a sense of purpose that she could have never found if she stayed in the United States. So, I think people are just looking. When you're young you want to explore. You want to explore new places and everybody at the end of the day is looking for finding their own sense of purpose and fulfillment.

When asked what kind of ISL service initiatives should be prioritized for St. Vincent, Mariam expressed concern for the national heritage and environment. She saw the need for basic

physical labour that served to enrich, for example, heritage sites that needed upkeep. And, she spoke about planting trees on beaches where “there's a climate change resilient element built in so that they're doing things that leave a long term strengthening of the community.” She also championed programs for children, as there is not much programming for them in the summer. As an example, she suggested that they could learn about arrowroot production and, at the same time, work on fixing up the arrowroot factory. Yet, Mariam also saw the possibility of ISL being a source of revenue whereby “they actually have to come and pay to do, to have certain experiences.”

Reciprocity. Mariam emphasized the need for communication and involvement between foreigners and the local communities. “It can take away from them [locals] in terms of their sense of their own obligations to do things if they are not involved.” Mariam presented the scenario of a group coming in and deciding to reforest a beach without requiring the community to do anything. However, she expressed concern over this lack of involvement by the community.

Well it can take away their sense of ownership of a place. If a place is transformed around you and you're not part of that transformation, it's no longer yours. Because I do a lot of community work, I've learned that when you do it you have to get community buy in. It's like if you go to that mural in Rose Place you won't find a scratch on it.

Mariam voiced optimism for the possibility of cultural exchange. Here, foreigners “get to learn about, for example, a whole new set of cultural practices that they're not familiar with,” while Vincentians “can learn about different ways of thinking, different ways of approaching problems and dealing with things.”

At the same time, Mariam also acknowledged that “there are always the negative from both sides that can come.” She recounted a disturbing story of a foreign friend that was raped and murdered while in St. Vincent. However, she suggested that her dress, behaviour, time, and place contributed to her tragic outcome. “Sometimes people come here and they don't take the time to know the culture and then they put themselves in vulnerable positions.” She implied that such tragedies could be avoided if there were a genuine interest in learning the culture and fitting in.

Mariam suggested that her openness to ISL and cultural exchanges may be inherent to her being a product of an “intercultural relationship that led to very productive lives and building communities.”

Well, I have to be open because I am a product of, I'm a mixed-race product. I'm a product of different cultures. I couldn't sit here and, if I were to say otherwise it would go against who I am. My mother is from Canada. . . . So, I'm, although I was born in St. Vincent, spent most of my life here, I still see the Canadian part of my heritage as important. A lot of my values, I believe, come specifically from my mother, and not my father. They're not Vincentian. I don't think like the average Vincentian on a lot of issues. And I'm proud of that. I'm not just Vincentian, I'm a result of my entire history, not just part of it.

Hinting at the privileged life she experienced growing up, she acknowledge that her “whole life has been about international experience” and fondly recounted her experiences on cultural exchanges in Martinique and Egypt, among other trips. Mariam expressed the desire for locals to also be able to experience going abroad, as such exchanges could serve “even just to toughen Vincentians up a bit to experience some hardships elsewhere; they come back appreciating what they have more.”

Partnership. For Mariam, an ideal ISL partnership required dealing with “equivalent types of institutions”:

So, you got to deal, you got to work with institutions that are similar and which have a solid foundation. . . . Our community groups tend to be fly by night, a lot of them. So, you either look for an NGO that's really well established . . . or you deal with institutions, with schools that you know are not going anywhere and you establish a relationship with the institutions, so if this teacher leaves it can be continuous.

But there was some ambivalence here, as she also recognized the benefit of unequal organizations working together as “sometimes there may be advantages to working with community groups that don't have structures because then you can build them up.”

Mariam conceded that what was important here was transparency in order to lessen any false expectations people may have. She advocated for a detailed discussion and documentation of expectations. She saw the need to have parties “regardless of strength . . . have equal weight in terms of deciding the agenda and what they do and don't do.” She explained it as a means of establishing “conflict resolution mechanisms” right from the start.

Yet, despite her optimism, she still seemed to acknowledge that the foreign volunteers experience the most benefit. The story she recounted of the American girl who gained a “sense of purpose” while helping with an archeological dig in St. Vincent illustrated this. It is this “sense of purpose,” “self-growth,” or “raison d’etre” that Mariam saw as being most impactful within ISL.

Joseph (Case 3)

For the last ten years, Joseph had been a leading administrator at the community college in St. Vincent (Case 3) and had been working in the education field for 30 years.

The campus was pretty much deserted when I arrived in the late afternoon. There were a few young people mulling around what I assumed to be the open air entrance and after sizing me up, one eagerly walked me to Joseph's office. I understood this period to be the calm before the storm, as it was the week before the semester start-up, and so I was grateful that Joseph was able to squeeze me into his busy schedule. It had been a few weeks since my meeting with Mariam, as the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season had made scheduling time to meet with people inconvenient.

I sat across from Joseph's secretary in a tight reception room adjacent to his office as I listened to him wrapping up a conference call. Before long, a slender middle aged, dark-skinned man stepped out, introduced himself, and ushered me into his rather large office space. I was given the option of sitting at his desk or at the round table; I chose the round table while he, to my dismay, turned off the air conditioning unit so as to lesson the background noise before we began our conversation.

Service. When asked if he had had any experience with ISL, Joseph was able to offer a number of examples of similar ventures. While he did not know of any such initiatives during his tenure, he made a connection to foreign students coming to complete nursing electives from, for example, Duke University and McMaster University. He also gave the example of the college housing students from St. Mary's University who came to do a developmental economics course.

While these examples did not necessarily involve a formal "service" component, Joseph shared that service to him meant "getting involved in helping others" while helping yourself by "get[ting] a sense in which persons live and thrive in other communities." He confirmed that he was including foreigners in his definition.

In tongue-in-cheek fashion, Joseph insinuated that the main reason for foreign volunteers coming to St. Vincent was “the fact that we are a tropical country with seaside and surf,” but quickly got serious and tied it back to his idea of “service” wherein these initiatives could be seen as a way to try to help “persons who are desperately in need of help.” Joseph hinted that “desperately in need” was synonymous with “Third World.” However, he displayed distaste for this belief, as he muttered that “that's not necessarily the case.” More specifically, he questioned the intentions of those foreigners coming with the aim of helping those in “desperate need.”

You know, if I think that somebody is just coming because this is just going to be a hand-out sort of situation, I don't feel good about that. I don't feel good about that at all. I would much rather the person comes seeking an opportunity, yes to help, but at the same time recognizing that we can help them because, I think, one of the important things for anybody who . . . [is] coming from a developed country to St. Vincent and the Grenadines to work in that sort of service mode, should also see the benefits to themselves as they widen their own horizons.

Following up on this idea of widening one's horizons, I asked Joseph what kind of learning experiences he would like to see foreigners have. His answer stressed that they should not be coming with “preconceived ideas” about the kind of help that is needed and about what life is like in St. Vincent. “Certainly not coming with preconceived ideas that are a way back from some history book not written by us; that we live in trees, that we all live in shacks and shanties.” Yet, recognizing that “no man is an island,” he expressed a willingness to accept help as long as “St. Vincent and the Grenadines benefit from any such experience.”

I was curious about how we could safeguard against people coming with preconceived ideas. To this, he responded that it lay in the selection process.

Because . . . community service at its core should really have this same sort of parameters where you're looking to help and be helped at the same time in some way wherever you go. So it may not be a bad idea to, in the selection process, look for persons with that sort of experience and in the absence of that perhaps there needs to be work done at the institution with the students in terms of helping to prepare them. I guess one of the things that could help is if there is that established relationship between a sending institution and a receiving institution or receiving country.

One suggestion for establishing a relationship was to have an exchange of trainers prior to the actual initiative where they could share information and prospective experiences. As for the learning experience for the local community, there should be a “widening of appreciation and understanding because, you know, sometimes in a Third World country you can have persons who have a warped understanding of somebody coming out of a developed country.” This includes understanding that not everyone coming from “developed” countries are wealthy.

One aspect of service that Joseph spoke about was the desire to include the local Indigenous population in such initiatives. After having been exposed to a strong, more visible Indigenous community in Nova Scotia, despite accounting for only 2% of the population, it made him think. Therefore, if he were to partner with a foreign institution to create a service learning initiative, he expressed that he would like it “to have an element that involves the descendants of Indigenous peoples, so that they can benefit and not remain disadvantaged.” St. Vincent has a concentration of Indigenous descendants living in relative poverty on the north end of the island. Therefore, when asked about what kind of service learning initiatives that he would like to see prioritized in St. Vincent, Joseph’s answer was twofold: persons to be impacted, and an area of focus. He continued to stress the need to serve the Indigenous people of the island. As well, he

saw an area of focus to be technological innovation, as he saw that as a shortcoming within St. Vincent. This involved a desire to have skilled volunteers impart knowledge on youth. “So, for example, in a Third World country like St. Vincent and the Grenadines . . . we don't even do a program in robotics at the community college. So, something like that.”

Reciprocity. When probed about the kind of binarism implied by giver-receiver type relationships, he stressed that these relationships needed to be mutually beneficial. “The persons coming out must feel like they're gaining something. At the same time, the receiving community must feel as if they are gaining something. And neither should really feel, at the end of the day, depleted without having gained anything.”

To help ensure that relationships are mutually beneficial, Joseph stated that “collaboration” and “negotiation” was important in order to come to “mutual arrangements.” He gave the example of working on a draft of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a Canadian university. He had to consider

what benefit is there to Vincentians if St. Mary's or anybody else who comes to St. Vincent and does a field study here? And so we began talking about how we could involve local students to be part of such a program so it would not just be the sending institution. While it's not really community service learning in the same way, but certainly involving locals in whatever is done to ensure that there's some benefit that rebounds to the host institution as well.

Yet, despite the need to always strive for a relationship that is mutually beneficial, he did not hold out hope that “we will ever arrive at a perfect balance.” More specifically, “it may never be an economic balance, but certainly [there can be balance] in terms of lives touched, impact in both directions”

Partnership. When listing characteristics important in a successful partnership between a sending institution and host community, he reiterated mutual understanding. To that he added the need for constant communication, and the need to choose the right personnel to organize the initiative. “You want persons who can not only communicate effectively but have a clear understanding of what the goals of the particular program are . . . what the goals of the receiving end are as well as those of the sending institution.”

While Joseph seemed receptive to partnering with foreign institutions for ISL, he did share some concerns: primarily that “persons coming are ill prepared and are insensitive . . . [and] that the arrangements on the receiving end have not been properly coordinated.” Having a logistical failure would leave a bad impression on everyone. At the same time, insensitive visitors would “leave a bad taste in people’s mouths.”

Um, they come and they, maybe without even realizing, they use derogatory terms. Or, they shut themselves away, from the receiving persons; isolate themselves. That would be very insensitive. If people have prepared for you and you've come in to work with persons and then you isolate yourself, and you don't cooperate. That would be insensitive to me.

Not being able to satisfy the foreigners was a concern of Joseph.

I asked Joseph whether locals would see differently a service learning initiative that had foreign partners, and a local service learning initiative doing the same thing.

Yes, yes, they would. In Third World—well, I shouldn't be general and saying Third World countries, but certainly I can speak to St. Vincent and the Grenadines—there is still largely a sense of, for many persons, that foreign is better. And if it comes to you from outside of St. Vincent, then it must be better.

When asked where that mindset comes from, he acknowledged that many attribute it to St. Vincent's "colonial past" and "historic past of slavery."

I don't know that is it entirely, but certainly you grow up in a world where there are haves and have-nots. Whether it is through the media or otherwise, you get a sense of persons coming from developed countries have, and we in the third world have not. So if it is coming from outside, there is that sense in which it must be better.

When probed further, he admitted that ISL initiatives could reinforce this mindset. "Perhaps only through education and continuing to try to understand each other, maybe that might be diminished, but I don't know if it will ever be fully removed." Yet, for Joseph, the mutual benefits could outweigh the drawbacks.

Janet (Case 4)

For almost a decade, Janet led the St. Vincent branch of an international NGO that focussed on providing sexual and health education and service to the people of St. Vincent (case 4). Before this, she served in a leading role at the Ministry of Health. At the time of our interview, Janet was recently retired.

I got my first glimpse of Janet—a tall, slender, Black woman—as we tentatively approached her house. She was looking down on us from her balcony, anticipating my arrival. I made my way up the stairs at the side of the house to meet her and took a moment to take in the spectacular view. I was given the choice to stay out and chat on the balcony or take shelter inside. We both looked at the sky and, recognizing the threat of rain and wind, settled for the safer option of staying indoors.

I immediately warmed to her as she exclaimed, "Wow! You can pass as Vincentian!" "Well, yes. My parents were Vincentian," I answered, believing that my accent was immediately

giving her cause to rethink her statement. I was anxious to talk to Janet because I knew she had many years of experience in public service. We sat at her dining table and started our conversation. Janet quickly let me know that while in her last job they did a lot of “service oriented work,” international service learning was a new terminology for her in St. Vincent. In sharing her understanding of ISL, she made connections to the kind of work that the social development department might do when a community identifies a need. When asked about examples where foreigners participated, she gave the example of working with the Grenadines Partnership Fund, an NGO housed in South Carolina. Together, they worked with the community in St. Vincent to disperse information on HIV and AIDS. She also made mention of foreign church groups going into the communities to help “renovate churches, build new ones, assist with a preschool. You know, all that kind of thing [that] help to build up a community.”

Service. When asked what service meant to her, Janet responded that it “means giving assistance to others. It is not always what I want to give, but this is what *they* need that I can provide. And it is not servitude . . . I'm here, I'm doing you a favour. It's not that kind of service.” When considering foreigners in this mix, she expressed that it was important that they are not “coming to us and looking down on us. Because we've had people [who] want to do stuff for you and then it's like, ‘Okay, those Third World people. We have to go help them.’ That kind of thing.” She argued that there were a lot of intelligent people in St. Vincent and that people wanted to be included in the discussions. “Gone are the days when people accepted everything you brought. Those days are over with. We are educated. We want what's happening around us. We know where we want to go.” She acknowledged that while they may not always have the economic resources, they have the “human resources.”

In thinking about why foreigners choose to serve in these ISL initiatives, she reflected, “How we have looked at them over the years is that these consultants just want to come over here and enjoy the sea and sun.” She laughed as she said this, but followed with “Honest to goodness.” She was not specifically talking about ISL, but was referring to consultants who have come from abroad to work on social aid projects within St. Vincent. She recognized that her perception may be coloured by past experiences wherein people were viewed as coming with “their [own] agenda and not ours.” Janet stated that she believes that “their agenda needs to change. It has to engage the people on the ground prior to their coming so they know that when I [foreigner] come, it's not what I want.” She then shared a long held suspicion: “Back in the day, some people thought that if they came from a government agency, they were spies.”

When asked about the kind of learning experiences she would like to see for both locals and foreigners, Janet was immediately drawn to the needs of the youth. “We need to somehow harness the energies that they have towards more positivity. . . . I already think that we are losing a lot of young people to the prison and just on the road, mental asylum, the smoking, the drinking.” Therefore, to foster a learning experience of positivity, she saw the need for specific service initiatives that focus on life skills and the responsible use of the Internet.

To make this work, she saw everyone involved as playing the roles of server and recipient. “I think everybody gets into either role at some point. Because we all need service of some kind, and we all sometimes have to serve. And so, we get into the roles at different points.” However, she seemed to imply that Vincentians should be willing to receive help.

I feel that . . . you should be willing to learn from the person who is coming, so that you can in turn serve your own people. So if someone is coming from a more developed country to assist me in any way, be it service or otherwise, when they are through with

this exercise, the people on the ground should be in a better position to serve or to offer service in a more efficient and effective manner.

Reciprocity. To ensure reciprocity, Janet stressed the need for “communication” and “agreement.” She gave the example of her involvement in the Grenadines Partnership Fund. Before the project got underway, each side exchanged lists of their own desires and needs, and this process continued until they reached an agreement. “People must discuss. People must put their cards on the table. And, people must agree.” Therefore, terms must be in place that can allow parties to walk away if not agreeable.

Yet, when parties can agree, Janet saw possible benefits of ISL for St. Vincent and the Grenadines in areas of “personal development” and “community development.” When asked about the drawbacks she might see come out of ISL, she listed many ways in which St. Vincent has advanced. “Of course, now we have more modern facilities and so on, so if we have people coming, we are not as backward as we used to be,” she chuckled. “People don’t look down on us as much as they used to. . . .” However, she hoped for a continuation of this “development,” and that the volunteers could feel “satisfaction of having been able to assist you in making your whole service better.”

Another downside was that exposure to foreigners could lead to a depletion of skilled workers in St. Vincent. She used the example of foreign nurses who come to the island to complete practicums sharing details of their salaries, working conditions, etc. to the local nurses. “We lost people because people went and wrote the nurses exams in the States and disappeared. So we can lose resources when people . . . interact and learn—learn what’s happening on the other [side].” When thinking about the drawbacks for the foreigners coming, Janet harkened back to the attitude and expectations of the foreigners that insinuated a need for cultural humility.

Because if you are coming to a so called Third World country, you have to make up your mind to do without the, um, the hot coffee. I mean, you can get it at restaurants here but you're not going to get the easy access that you have to a lot a lot of stuff. You might not have all the sidewalks you want to walk on. You may not have all the parks to go walking on in the afternoons. All the cycling paths, and you know, a lot of stuff that they would expect at home as second nature. Those things are not going to be available here.

Banking and all of that is up to a reasonable standard so you would be able to manage.

But they would go to the hospital and they would think, "My God, this is a dump."

Because your hospitals are different, and everything is of a different style. But of course resources we do not have. And so, they would look at some of these things, [and wonder] how do they manage here?

However, she recognized that despite all that is working against them, Vincentians "do manage and we do get by."

Partnership. Janet listed a number of traits that she thought was important in building strong partnerships. Besides "honesty" and "skills," she stressed the importance of "good leadership." She was adamant that "it should not be a talk down situation kind of thing; it should be across the board. Whatever you're focusing on, it should be an agreement between both parties. Not one party saying, 'I think this is what you should have.'" She also acknowledged that "some partners may inject monies" that may create an imbalance. "Because with the resources tend to be the ones who want to direct and decide always. So sometimes you don't have a choice because it's their money." Therefore, she threw out an alternative to help balance the power relationship through offering "an in-kind section . . . that will have to come from the local people."

Patricia (Case 5)

Patricia was the director of one of the leading NGOs that provided counselling and youth services (Case 5). She, along with a staff of ten, ran programs for “at-risk” youth ages 15-25 from the urban, sub-urban and rural areas of mainland St. Vincent.

The people who referred me to Patricia described her as a “fireball,” and it did not take long for me to recognize the strength and outspokenness in her that others alluded to. A petite, fair-skinned woman, Patricia defiantly informed me that the day that the current government came into power, she retired so that she could freely advocate on behalf of the community and lobby the government as needed. Her position, at the time of our meeting, was unpaid and, of the staff of ten, only three were on the payroll; the others volunteered their time.

Service. Patricia stated that she understood ISL as being twofold: the local community benefiting and the visiting institution benefiting as well. “And you also have to consider the mission, vision, and the goal of the organization, our national organization as well as yours.” She told of the foreign educational institutions that her organization worked with, such as the University of Montreal, Yale University and the University of the West Indies, where students come from their universities to do placements in their field of study.

When asked what service within the context of ISL is, Patricia responded,

Giving of self without remuneration. Giving of self because of interest and motivation.

Giving of self because you realize that there is a need, two-way, that the student or the person who comes has a particular need that has to be fulfilled as well as the community or the agency. So, it has to be a two-way street.

When asked specifically about foreigners coming to St. Vincent to volunteer, I was encouraged by Patricia to think differently. “I don’t call them foreigners,” she said. Instead, she

called them “visitors.” I inquired as to the difference. She responded that foreign means “not applicable to your society,” as she believed that “the world is a global village, so we can’t have foreigners.”

Therefore, when describing what she thought motivates *visitors* to come St. Vincent to serve, her answer reflected the positivity embraced by her rejection of the label of “foreigner.” She celebrated the ability for “learning outside your norms and your values,” and exposure to “new knowledge” and “different cultures.” When prodded as to whether she believed that the visitors shared her understandings, she answered, “I would suppose so. I would hope so. Because they have to be prepared to learn, to be exposed. Because, I mean, they are coming into new horizons, into new situations. They have to learn your culture.”

When asked what kind of learning experience she would like for the participants of service learning, she seemed to hope for a shift in how participants process information at home and in a new environment. She hoped that such experiences would force individuals to think about “how you’re going to be able to grapple and decide, analyze and synthesize and decide and exactly how you going to deal with the situation.” She gave the example of how youths in her program are encouraged to deal with conflict wherein they can respond to perceived affronts and reflect on their own sensitivities and reactions. This, therefore, was set up as a discussion among individuals that aimed to foster better, more ethical relationships. “And you have to get up and you have to admit whatever flaws identified and promise that you’re going to work and make that weakness into a positive.” So, for Patricia, “in terms of the experience, it has to be gaining by both: international and the local.”

Reciprocity. I questioned her as to whether she was focusing on a cultural exchange, to which she responded that, “It’s not only culture, but it’s *how* the knowledge is learnt.” She

expressed that they use an “interactive participatory methodology” within their organization, an understanding through interaction where “there’s no right or wrong way,” but rather a “transition of knowledge on both sides.” I questioned whether this was a way of viewing the relationship that goes beyond a mere server-recipient relationship.

Yes. Because in our mode of doing things, we also learn from the youths. Right? We let them realize that we don't know everything. We are not Jesus Christ; we don't know everything. We don't have all the knowledge. We may have knowledge about certain things and certain issues, but by far we are not whole in our education and questions that they may ask that we are not aware of answers, that we are willing to go to search and to seek the answers and to come back to them. So while we learn from them, they also learn from us.

When pushed to consider what kind of service learning initiatives should be prioritized for St. Vincent, she, like many of the others, raised the issue of juveniles wherein they end up in jail, in the mental asylum, or on the street. Her other area of concern was the Grenadines and the issue of the environment. She saw the people of the Grenadines, the chain of small islands that belongs to St. Vincent, as self-sufficient, not dependent on the government or the corporate sector for employment. So, the environmental issues needed to be addressed in order to preserve the way of life there.

Partnership. Detailing more about the kind of partnership that she would like to see, Patricia emphasized the need to understand “exactly what the partnership is about: the mission, the vision, the goal, the people who are involved the target group.” This involved “ongoing communication,” even after an exchange of participants. Like others, Patricia recognized a need

“to write [everything] because black and white is what will take you to the courts. That is my evidence.”

Patricia was resistant to the idea that foreign institutions were often seen as having more resources. She was adamant that “resources are limited everywhere regardless of where you come from. . . . Things are difficult for everybody everywhere in our global community.” Her perspective came from having had the opportunity to travel and live abroad. Yet, she confessed that locals “generally think they [visitors] have money.” This would mean that “we will have to do some imparting of knowledge, some discussions and so on prior to [an ISL initiative].”

Patricia saw the need to have “somebody responsible on either side” in order to ensure reciprocity and accountability. She gave the example of the East Caribbean States that received over \$8 million in U.S. aid to address the issue of juvenile justice. However, she did not mince words in expressing her disgust in the mismanagement of the funds. “There has to be accountability. There has to be transparency. And there definitely has to be good governance when it comes to the program. Accountability, transparency and governance must be criterion. . . . Has to be on all sides.” In fact, if she was wary of any kind of drawback with ISL, it was in this area of governance. Her fear was that a lack of focus and communication would entail “not achieving our goal.”

Paul (Case 6)

Paul was the Commanding Officer of a leading international NGO in St. Vincent that catered to a wide range of social service needs in the community (Case 6). Paul was not born in St. Vincent; he left his home island of Haiti 36 years prior, living in Jamaica and Guyana, before settling in St. Vincent to take on his current role seven years earlier.

I immediately understood the military-inspired nickname that Paul was widely known as on the street, when I met him wearing his organization's uniform. He had a large grin, softening his ebony face when I met him—one that never seemed to disappear. He also had an infectious laughter that I later realized was often used to cover up nervousness. Paul welcomed me into his office and, with the background chorus of children playing in the adjoining preschool, we started talking.

I knew that Paul was not Vincentian. In fact, I was warned that his thick French Caribbean accent might prove difficult for me. However, as he shared with me his life experience, I knew that he would have a unique perspective to share. He seemed honoured to be serving the community in his capacity, and started our discussion by first reading the mission statement and brief history of the organization.

Service. Being an outsider to the community, Paul, in some ways, modeled his own expectation for ISL in St. Vincent. He spoke of coming to St. Vincent and first having to poll Vincentians on what they thought their needs were. “What is your opinion? What do you think? What we need in that area? What this area need? And then they will say . . .” It was from their responses that he committed to working with the community to build a home for children. In fact, he informed me that it was with the aid of 45 Canadian volunteers that the school was built. “They came with materials; they came with everything. And then they build the home.”

However, when asked about his understanding of ISL, Paul was not confident that he could talk much on that, but was quick to offer his thoughts on service, giving a lot of credit to foreign “technique.”

But do remember, those big countries like Canada, other big countries United States whatever, those countries, Germany, England. . . . They are the ones, of course, that are

helping the smallest countries to develop in terms of service, in terms of service because in the Caribbean we/our finances are very poor. You can say, because we don't have enough resources. . . . It's the same thing that I said about the children's home. We have the group that come from Canada because Canada has the resources and they have people who can do the community service and they have everything in Canada. And then you know, you are very technical [laughter]. . . . You know how to get it done.

Paul's idea of service was rooted in biblical terms. He gave the example of the Good Samaritan and the Levite to demonstrate that "service has a lot to do with human heart, what God has put in our heart. How we can serve humanity." He made it clear that there were many forms of service, and that, specifically, it was not just about giving money.

Paul seemed to enjoy speaking in biblical analogies, putting my church upbringing of my childhood to the test. Yet, I readily understood what he thought was motivating foreigners to volunteer their services in St. Vincent. He imagined being a minister and gave reasons he would not choose to have a big church where the affluent people attend. In such a church, where there are thousands of people, he bemoaned the fact that the average parishioner would probably not even have the opportunity to shake the pastor's hand or ask the pastor for a prayer. "But guess what? If you want to serve, go to a small church where you can do more for God, where you can do more for the poor. Because the church you have to reach to the poor. We want the people in where you can serve." I understood him to mean that St. Vincent was a small island and in need of help. As such, Paul echoed the same needs for St. Vincent as most of those that I spoke to. He spoke of the need to reach out to children and youth in order to inspire them. At the same time, he saw that those foreign volunteers coming to help with youth could also experience growth through the exposure to a different culture.

Reciprocity. While Paul was positive in his expectations for ISL, he did have some concerns. Primarily, he was concerned about the misconception that locals may have that foreigners are “coming with money.” He believed that “they don't really come to give you money, but they come to learn something in the country too.” But, he lamented that people in St. Vincent may have this “mentality” that focuses on receiving money. I probed as to where this mentality came from, and the nervous laughter seemed to increase. “But people who are born in the Caribbean, you know, our thinking. When we see somebody come from Canada we always think that will bring some hope.” I wanted more. He stumbled over his words as he said that it is rooted in our great grandparents. “Huh?” I queried. “It comes from in the blood, the blood, blood, blood. [chuckle] But, I think you know.”

Paul then drew my attention to a recent comment President Trump made about African countries and Haiti. Although I had been unplugged from the world around me while in St. Vincent, I was aware of the disparaging statement he was referring to.

Even if you know the African countries are having problems, you talk it out. You understand what I mean? There's a way that you can work it out. It's not for you to disgrace them. It's not for you to disgrace the Haitian people and then to say you want people in Norway because of their complexion.

I asked how Vincentians receive foreigners that share that same complexion. “Yes, the message is the same thing. . . . If you have the people come from Norway, the complexion, believe you me, Vincentians will receive them quicker than somebody who's coming from Haiti. It is true.” It is at this point that Paul became concerned about the recorder and, after some reassurance that he would have the opportunity to edit the transcript, he added, “The colour has a lot to do in this world today, but we're not supposed to be.” He wrote this off as being human nature, and that “it

has always been like that. . . . You and I can't change this. Only God." Despite this, before our conversation came to a close, Paul assured me that he was optimistic about ISL being able to make a difference and break down stereotypes.

Partnership. Initially, I was unclear as to what Paul was getting at when he stated that what makes a good partnership is "understanding the community." He emphasized the importance of the local community partner, because those overseas "don't know what happen in the mainland. Because I know. You don't know." Therefore, community expertise was crucial. In contrasting the money that went into initiatives with the expertise, he clearly valued the money as being secondary. "Money don't come first. Yes, we cannot do it without money. But is *we!* We have to look at: how *we* embrace the program; how *we* embrace the project; how *we* going to do the project." Understanding that "we" was inclusive of the local community, I was curious how one went about getting the community to embrace a program. To this, Paul responded simply, "Integrity." This entailed integrity in a community-endorsed local leader to liaise with foreign partners. Therefore, to ensure reciprocity, "proper planning" and the right people were needed.

Limitations

The findings here represent the views of six community leaders in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These were individuals sought out for their front-line social service experience with various local communities on the island. However, these individuals only represent one segment of potential Vincentian stakeholders and, as such, I acknowledge that other community members may have differing and possibly conflicting perspectives. Likewise, I recognize that the findings are grounded in a specific locality, and I do not expect them to be generalized to other communities. However, other communities may identify with aspects of this research study and

choose to transfer some aspects of this research study to support the development of their own meaningful ISL initiatives.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented findings from six dialogues I had with community leaders in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In Chapter 5, I analyze and synthesize these findings through six major themes that emerged from the data.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS

Overview

I dialoged with prospective host community stakeholders in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in order to determine how they might envision a meaningful International Service Learning (ISL) initiative. In the previous chapter, I outlined the findings, revealing the participants thoughts on service, reciprocity, and partnership within ISL. In this chapter, I discuss six key themes that emerged from these dialogues that, seen through a postcolonial lens, highlight how a colonial presence can shape, and continue to play a role in, the execution, perception, and understanding of ISL initiatives.

Analysis

Throughout this research, my aim has been to foreground the perspective of those in the global South. However, the challenge, for me, lay in going beyond my own onto-epistemological worldview to be open to other ways of knowing and doing that Andreotti (2016) cautioned may be largely unintelligible. This research, therefore, is framed by a postcolonial theoretical perspective as articulated by Andreotti (2006, 2011a, 2011b, 2016), that challenges the ethnocentric privileging of Western/European knowledges and its “power to enforce, normalize and naturalize local ethnocentric perspectives on a global scale” (Andreotti, 2011a, p 3). This is particularly important when looking at ISL, where the production of knowledge about the Other in relation to the Western self comes into play.

Penman and Turnbull (2012) outlined possibilities of dialogic listening as “a way that the ‘other half’ of communication can enter the picture on an equal footing” (p. 61). In following Buber’s notion of dialogue, they highlighted a number of key qualities of listening that included

genuineness of the engagement, openness, mutuality, and presence (Penman & Turnbull, 2012, p. 66). They also acknowledged Shotter's (2009) notion of listening

as one that recognizes and realizes the world of the 'other' through responsive talking – a way of seeking in one's talk to afford the 'other' opportunities to tell of themselves – and a way of listening that tells the 'other' they have been heard. This is not passive listening, but a way of being with the other that recognizes and affirms the other, and the self.

(Penman & Turnbull, 2012, pp. 67-68)

Notably, in our listening, when entering a space of cultural diversity and multivocality, we are not always striving for agreement (Ward & Wasserman, 2015; Penman & Turnbull, 2012; Helin, 2013).

Democratic communication founded on listening does not necessarily seek consensus, but seeks to understand and develop the moral imagination to put oneself in the shoes of another. The concept of democratic listening has been developed to respond to human interaction in contexts of social and cultural diversity, conflict, and conditions of inequality. (Ward & Wasserman, 2015. pp. 834-835)

As an alternative, "we need to take on board a refashioned idea of communicating in which difference and dissent are accommodated and fostered" (Penman & Turnbull, 2012, p. 68-69).

Therefore, the aim of the dialogues I had with participants was to listen in ways that challenged the "ethnocentric privileging of Western rationality (as a universal form of reasoning) and of dialectical thought (as a universal form of deliberative engagement) [that] establish specific parameters of validity and recognition of what can be known and how that is to be communicated" (Andreotti, 2011a, p. 2). Andreotti's postcolonial theoretical lens aided in this process. This also required that I was continually reflexive in the process: open to critically

examining socio-historical and political influences within the research process, as well as challenging the notion of neutrality within the researcher-participant relationship (Dowling, 2008 p. 747). I understood that “the complexities of voice also necessitate a reconciliation of the reflexive and interpretive dynamics that expose meaning in the data, and that are genuinely and intrinsically present,” so that research represents both me and the participants (Fabian, 2008, p. 943). To this end, the italicized vignettes interspersed within the following analysis represent my own thoughts and reflections throughout this process.

Through a postcolonial reading of the findings that aims to destabilize our Western ethnocentric hegemony, six major themes emerged: a) *suspicion* underscoring a need for transparency; b) recognition of a *dependency mindset* among Vincentians, c) desire for *cultural humility* in foreign volunteers, d) need for *ongoing communication* between stakeholders, e) longing for an *appreciation of in-kind services*, and f) hope for *physical exchange*. These themes emerged from the findings, offering insight into participants’ views that have been impacted by a legacy of colonialism and that simultaneously challenge and reinforce hegemonic universal ideals often promoted by GCE and ISL.

The atmosphere is quite festive. This will be my first outing since I’ve arrived in St. Vincent a few days ago. My aunt is second guessing her decision to come here on a Friday evening as it seems that just about everyone else in town has made the same decision. As we approach the docked ship, we see the throngs of people in line and again lament our choice. However, we soon relax as the line seems to be moving at a good pace and, even though we are momentarily fooled when we think that we have finally reached the front of the line only to find out that it makes another snake around, we soon find ourselves crossing the plank to the ship.

Inside, we are ushered to a seating area/lecture hall. It is an orderly production; as the group ahead of us exits row by row, we take their seats on the benches in the same manner. While the rows are being filled we are shown a promotional video on the ship, Logos Hope. Touted as the world's largest floating bookstore, I learn that this ship houses approximately 400 volunteers from all over the world. I start to feel uneasy when I pick up on the thick proselytizing, that is only confirmed when I get into the bookstore area of the boat to find primarily religious books and children books. I understand that for the couple of weeks that this ship will be docked here, teams of volunteers will disperse within the various communities to offer aid/service.

With this German ship on a mission to share "knowledge, help, and hope," I cynically make note that the recipients of this "service" are predominantly those in areas referred to as "Third World," "developing," "global South."

Suspicion

Woven throughout four of the six dialogues with participants was an undercurrent of suspicion, expressed both explicitly and implicitly. Rev was direct in voicing his distrust of foreigners purporting to be working on behalf of the welfare of Vincentians. He spoke of "ulterior motives" and a "lack of transparency" that seemed to also have been more implicitly echoed by Joseph, Janet, and Paul. For Joseph, this suspicion appeared to be couched in the belief that foreigners may be harbouring faulty "preconceived ideas" about Vincentians and their needs, thereby giving cause to question their motives for providing service. This was similar to Paul's recognition that there were some ingrained prejudices that can lead people to "disgrace" others. Like Rev, Janet acknowledged that those coming to St. Vincent to provide service may

have their own agendas for doing so—agendas that did not necessarily align with those of Vincentians: “their agendas, not ours.”

Rev’s suspicion that some foreigners were surreptitiously “gathering information,” and Janet’s observation that “back in the day, some people thought that if they came from like a government agency they were spies” could easily be dismissed as the ramblings of overly guarded individuals. Yet, the pervasiveness of such beliefs among locals became glaringly evident during the writing of this chapter with the reporting that the US government had to evacuate 23 Peace Corps volunteers from St. Vincent, as a result of an unspecified threat levied against them due to rumours that they were actually US intelligence agents (“Peace-corps Volunteers,” 2018).⁴ In her study of ISL in East Africa, Arends (2016) saw this kind of suspicion as a recognition of exploitation, that also signaled a belief that many partnerships were not viewed as reciprocal (p. 111).

This expressed suspicion is not baseless. St. Vincent was built on an abusive colonial system wherein it “masked its exploitative structures under the guise of paternalistic benevolence, coding colonial domination as acts of generosity, reform, ‘development’, welfare and stability” (Nayar, 2010, p. 35). Local customs and cultures were denigrated and replaced by more “civilizing” European systems. History writing, for example, has been identified as a way that was used to codify false stereotypes of natives as lazy, primitive and promiscuous, paving the way for the justification of restrictive policies (Nayar, 2010, pp. 40-41); while science had been used to justify their subjugation (Roy, 2018). The recognition of these circulating false

⁴ The specific details of why the volunteers were evacuated had been in dispute. Some contradicted the story that it was a result of the rumours (<https://www.stlucianewsonline.com/added-peace-corps-volunteer-alleges-attack-by-middle-eastern-men/>).

stereotypes by Joseph was clear when he condemned those coming “with preconceived ideas that are a way back from some history book not written by us.”

A postcolonial reading encourages the problematizing of the “values, knowledges, and assumptions that underlie ISL” (Larson, 2016, p. 10). Larson (2016), for example, recognized the shift of the conception of service from one of a slave lacking choice, to that of a “Western colonizing mission whereby service came to be associated with the mission and right to civilize the ‘Other’” (p. 12). This entailed recognizing this Other as inferior. The suspicion expressed by the participants, therefore, indicated their recognition of this power-laden shift and their need to assert themselves.

While Mariam and Patricia did not voice suspicion as the others, they both advocated for detailed agreements. For Mariam, detailed documentation would provide transparency. Likewise, for Patricia, it was what is written in “black and white” that would hold up in the courts. These comments indicated an apprehension to put full trust in a foreign partner that could only be quelled by a secure contract.

This suspicion or lack of trust directly impacts how reciprocity and partnership is taken up by the local community as partnerships and reciprocity both imply a working towards the advancement of mutual interests. Participants clearly insinuated that they were not confident that their needs would garner the same attention as those of foreigners.

My mom would be so pleased. I have yet to miss a Sunday morning church service since I've been here. Impressive, since I rarely—okay, never—make the time to do so at home. No, it's different here. I cannot ignore the multitude of churches that seem to be part and parcel of just about every neighbourhood. And even if I somehow missed seeing them tucked among homes and vegetation, I certainly could not miss hearing the chorus of

gospel music passionately filling the air every Sunday. Each week, I've been going to a different community, to a different church, and I cannot help but observe the uniqueness of each one. Today has been no different. I walk in and feel a little out of place. I find that I have been more conscious of skin colour since I've been in St. Vincent and, walking into this church today, it does not escape me that I am not as fair-skinned as most in this congregation. I cannot help but think about the prominent family names in St. Vincent that harken to a colonial past, and often serve as markers of power and wealth on this island. Is it a coincidence that the most optimistic, least suspicious of those that I speak to about ISL are those that share these traits?

Dependency Mindset

Andreotti's (2011a) analogy of the multi-coloured corn cobs illustrated the propensity for many "multicolored corn cobs that have been historically and continually exposed to such treatment to see themselves through the eyes of yellow corn cobs: to aspire to become yellow and to see themselves and other multicolored varieties as lacking and deficient" (p. 5). All but one of the participants, either directly or indirectly, spoke of a dependency mindset among Vincentians. It is this mindset that precipitated Rev's desire for a system of "withdrawal" within ISL partnerships. He acknowledged that "we don't value our own as much as we value somebody coming from overseas." His belief that Vincentians think that they need to rely on someone who is foreign to fulfill their needs, was a theme that kept repeating itself in the dialogues I had with participants. Mariam cautioned that the community needed to be intimately involved in the process of ISL so as not to take away their sense of ownership and obligation, thereby fostering further dependency. Joseph spoke of Vincentians often having a "warped understanding" of foreigners, whereby they are perceived as wealthier and more independent:

that “foreign is better.” Janet’s resignation that those coming from a “more developed country” should leave “people on the ground . . . in a better position,” illustrated many of these taken-for-granted beliefs. And, while it took some prodding, Paul also acknowledged this “mentality” of Vincentians to rely on foreigners for aid. This is reminiscent of the “here-in-comparison-to-there” narratives that recycle colonial ‘truths’ that Heron (2016) spoke of (p. 81), and parallels the experiences of Sikes (Lavia & Sikes, 2010) working in the University of Sheffield’s Caribbean Programme that “deep within the culture is the belief that what comes from elsewhere is better” (p. 90).

Fanon’s (1952/2008) seminal work, *Black Skin, White Masks*, addressed the issue of the “inferiority complex” experienced by many colonized peoples. Fanon argued that this feeling of inferiority was a direct result of colonization.

In other words, I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonized native, robs me of all worth, all individuality, tells me that I am a parasite on the world . (p. 73)

The result is a desire for recognition wherein “then I will quite simply try to make myself white: that is, I will compel the white man to acknowledge that I am human.” (p. 73). Likewise, Spivak uses the term “worlding” to indicate the increasing dominance of Eurocentric society and systems. For Spivak, colonialism has resulted in a situation where “the First World believes in its supremacy and the Third World forgets about the worlding and ‘wants’ to be civilised/catch up with the West” (Andreotti, 2006, p. 45).

The recognition that this mindset has deep-seated roots in a history of colonialism, was not lost on the participants. This was stated directly by both Rev and Joseph. According to Rev, “We’ve carried this mindset for 400 years.” And Joseph made the connection of this mindset to a

world of “haves” and “have-nots.” Paul’s acknowledgement of this mentality, while coy, was raw in its honesty: “It comes from the blood. . . . It has always been like that.” These comments hinted at the current manifestations of a colonial past.

They also seemed to agree that there was no simple solution. The idea that they have been living with that mentality for so long, implied that it will continue. Joseph did not hold out hope that “it will ever be fully removed,” and Paul was even less optimistic, as only God can make this change. Ward (2013) argued the need to recognize the colonial and postcolonial traumas experienced by the descendants of those formerly colonized:

A psychological approach to studying postcolonial cultures often establishes a way of reading that is attentive to the psychological effects of colonization and/or decolonization on formerly colonized and, frequently, colonizing peoples. Such effects may include, for example, inferiority or dependency complexes, the related internalization of racism, the traumatic legacies of colonization and the slave trade, and so on. (p. 171)

However, she also recognized the inadequacy of Western psychoanalytical approaches to fully deal with these traumas. Pointing to critiques levied by Freire and Fanon who believed “liberation is only truly realized when the oppressed arrive at an awareness of the psychological domination that has shaped their consciousness and relationships with the world around them” (Ward, 2013, p. 176), she called for a deeper understanding of belated trauma in relation to postcolonialism.

While the participants did not see themselves as having a dependency mindset, they recognized it among many Vincentians. At the same time, they did not seem to know how inviting foreigners through ISL missions may or may not exacerbate it. Yet, they recognized this dependency mindset as playing a role in how service is perceived by the local community.

Rather than receive service as a simple transaction or exchange among people, service is laden with power differentials that uphold the belief in Western cultural supremacy. This belief makes forming reciprocal partnerships challenging, if not impossible.

I love mornings here. I love seeing the swarms of schoolkids in crisp, colourful uniforms, being directed by the traffic police. More specifically, I love seeing my own son in his green and white uniform disappear among his classmates in the schoolyard of the school he is attending while here with me. These days, my heart warms when his recounting of his previous nights' dreams now contain "brown" characters. I credit this to him being immersed in an environment that is full of all hues of brown and mirrors his own being. But I cannot relax. I cannot relax because not long ago he was wishing for "pink" skin and "yellow" hair; and, I know that that desire is still there. How does a six-year old learn to believe that white is better?

Cultural Humility

Related to the suspicion that the participants expressed, was the perceived need for cultural humility. The concept of cultural humility has long been championed in the health field and has transitioned to other disciplines. Many therapists, for example, believe that in order to forge strong relationships with clients that are "culturally different," they must "be able to overcome the natural tendency to view one's own beliefs, values, and worldview as superior, and instead be open to the beliefs, values, and worldview of the diverse client" (Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013, p. 354). The intense offence taken by four of the six participants to the attitudes, perceptions, and comments of some foreign visitors, suggested that they saw a need for some kind of introspection by foreigners prior to engaging in any initiative. Joseph condemned the "derogatory," and "insensitive" comments and attitudes that often spoke to false

“preconceived ideas” held by foreigners. Instead, he stressed the need for them to come with “an open mind” and a “willingness to assist.” His suggestion that care should be taken in selecting participants who “understand what service is at its core,” denoted his understanding that “employing cultural humility means being aware of power imbalances and being humble in every interaction with every individual” (Foronda, Baptiste, Reinholdt, & Ousman, 2016, p. 214). Interestingly, this need to have foreign volunteers address their preconceived ideas *prior* to taking part in ISL, contradicts ideas of transformative learning in ISL, whereby ISL itself can be used to challenge “any pre-conceived notions they [volunteers] may have had prior to arriving - notions about the country, the people, the environment that they would be working in, and their own ideas as to how they would feel and respond” (Kearney, Perkins, & Maakrun, 2014, p. 324).

Similarly, Janet expressed insecurity in having foreigners “looking down on” Vincentians and “talk[ing] down” to them. And while she acknowledged that “people don’t look down on us as much as they used to,” emanating from her comments was a preoccupation with the condescending attitudes of some foreigners. This was underscored by Paul, who could not hide his disdain for certain foreigners’ lack of tact when speaking about people in the global South: “It’s not for you to disgrace them.” He was particularly incensed by the recent insult thrown out by President Trump wherein he referred to Haiti and African nations as “shithole countries.” “And this is bad. But you know, I will tell you. Trump is not educated. To me, the people may say I’m wrong. Because when you have this [pointing to head], you know what I mean?” Here, Paul implied a need for a cultural humility—an education that reflects “openness, self-awareness, egoless, supportive interactions, and self-reflection and critique” (Foronda et al., 2016, p. 211). This corresponds to Paul’s understanding of service where he says “the humility plays a significant role in service.”

For Rev, cultural humility came in the form of respect: “Respect us else or I don’t want your service.” To this, Rev expressed concern that those coming are not properly briefed and identified a need for “adaptability”.

You come into a different culture, different values, different ways of doing things, you have to have that level of adaptability. See these are some of my concerns. That you are not very adaptable when you come here. That you try to superimpose your way, your attitude, your way of doing things and all of that.

The need to be properly briefed and adaptable, was echoed by Mariam as she saw the tragic rape and murder of a female foreigner preventable: “Sometimes people come here and they don't take the time to know the culture and then they put themselves in vulnerable positions.” Cultural humility, therefore, “goes beyond imparting knowledge about cultural practices” (Ross, 2010, p. 317). It is about addressing the attitudes, beliefs, and biases about people who are different. From a postcolonial perspective, the need to address these beliefs of cultural supremacy goes hand in hand with a legacy of colonial oppression and exploitation that continue to shape our interactions today (Rizvi, Ligard, & Lavia, 2006) .

The idea that service learning can benefit from, and has shown evidence of, an emphasis on social justice has been put forth by Grain and Lund (2016). As part of this, they pointed to the “recent pedagogical and curricular embrace of critical emotion studies . . . and the focus on ambiguity, tension and discomfort” rooted in humility (p. 50). Service learning

has the capacity to be an emotional journey in which participants, including students, community partners, host communities, faculty, staff, and others, may encounter varying types of difference, and are necessarily put in a position to question their own ontologies, ethics, and ways of knowing. (p. 50)

The participants that I spoke with, had a keen awareness of the tension and discomfort that cross-border interactions can entail, and the cultural humility required to form ethical partnerships.

We are driving up in the area of Queens Drive, an upper middle-class neighbourhood where, I am told, there is an abundance of beautiful homes. We don't have the time to really tour the area as I am meeting, for the first time, a participant in my research study at her home and I hate to be late. I sense my uncle's apprehension as the car slows and he looks for someone to ask directions, as landmarks are relied on in the absence of street names and numbers. "I know I'm supposed to pass a green house," he says precipitating our bantering over what qualifies as "green" as I point to a house. "You call that green?" he retorts amused. He stops and asks a resident where Janet's house is, and we continue up the road feeling more assured that we are going in the right direction. A gorgeous, contemporary Western home catches my eyes on my right, and before I have the chance to share my admiration and envy of that home, my uncle makes reference to it. "Oh yeah, I forgot that she was near that funny looking house." There is no escaping that our cultural references are different. I am not Vincentian and cannot presume I know what Vincentians are thinking, what Vincentians value.

Ongoing Communication

In part, to combat the suspicion and perceived need for cultural humility, every participant stressed the importance of ongoing communication between partners. Andreotti (2011a) spoke of the need to have yellow corn cobs and multi-coloured corn cobs become aware of difference:

to unlearn their (possible) epistemological arrogance, to learn to listen beyond their tendency to project and appropriate, to relate to Other corn cobs in ways that legitimize

different ways of knowing and being, and to engage in ethical solidarities without the need for consensus, a common cause or a common identity. (p. 6)

For Rev, it was through dialogue that hidden agendas become unmasked. Mariam stressed communication between partners as a means of emboldening the local community by securing buy-in. Joseph underscored the need for collaboration and negotiation, while Janet reassured me that Vincentians were “intelligent” and, therefore, want to be “included in the discussions” before coming to an agreement. Patricia spoke of an “interactive participatory methodology” that required a “transition of knowledge on both sides,” entailing a form of dialogic communication. Paul, by his own actions, demonstrated the need for communication from the outset when he, as an outsider-foreigner, surveyed Vincentians on their needs *prior* to implementing any initiative. This desire for dialogue is reminiscent of the dialogical form of logic that emphasizes the need to recognize that we are always in relation to other people, and that is how we come to know (McNiff, 2013, p. 42).

Essential in this relationship is the role of listening. With the Western researcher’s role focused on listening rather than talking, listening becomes an active process of meaning making (Helin, 2013; Shotter, 2009).

This shift from an emphasis on speaking to an emphasis on listening is especially important in multi-ethnic societies, but it could be argued that it applies equally to a global context which is increasingly marked by diasporic identities, flows and contraflows of cultural content, shifting geopolitical formations, and socio-economic inequality. (Ward & Wasserman, 2015, p. 834)

Helin (2013) acknowledged that dialogic listening entails four dimensions of listening: “relationality and conversations as a shared activity, listening as an active process, the

polyphonic nature of listening, and listening as an embodied activity” (p. 225). Employing a postcolonial reading, the last two are of particular importance. Polyphonic listening involves wrestling with the tensions and challenges of listening to multiple voices that do not necessarily fit together. From this may arise voices or language that are unintelligible to us. However, listening as an embodied activity “can offer a feeling for that which I bodily know but do not yet understand cognitively” (p. 238). This requires a kind of listening that is open, “without the need to immediately try to make sense, rationalize, or theorize, but instead to remain open for that which is yet to come” (Helin, 2013, p. 238; Penman and Turnbull, 2012).

Being open to that which is yet to come allows us to entertain going “beyond the modern onto-epistemic grammar” (Andreotti, 2016, p. 106). Andreotti, Stein, Ahenakew, and Hunt (2015) mapped different interpretations of decolonization within the higher education context. Among the four discursive spaces identified was the “beyond-reform” space that, at its core, recognized a Western ontological dominance that needs to be addressed: “In other words, the incorporation of multiple ways of knowing (grafted onto the same hegemonic ontological foundation that is left unexamined) through strategies of equity, access, voice, recognition, representation, or redistribution, does not change ontological dominance” (p. 27). Therefore, listening to perspectives that may be unintelligible may be a first step.

The unanimous desire on the part of the participants for more deliberate and ethical communication indicates a shared sentiment of being left out of the conversation. Embedded in this seemingly innocuous desire to be included, are concerns of power imbalances and the privileging of Western hegemonic voices. In order to navigate complex negotiations towards meaningful ISL partnerships, a concerted effort needs to be made to listen to voices that may be

outside of dominant ways of knowing and doing. Without the voices of the host community being valued and asserted, reciprocity remains elusive.

I have made a few attempts to make it to this festival, but this is the first time I've succeeded. My son, half-heartedly, accompanies me, all the while rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. It's 4 a.m. and we are in town to take in Nine Mornings: a Christmastime festival unique to St. Vincent. I live a little with the sound of steelpans and amuse myself with watching the carolling and dance contests and various sporting events. When queried, most here would say that this festival dates back to the days of slavery. Before Christmas, catholic slave owners would bring their slaves with them to attend early morning "novena" services at the cathedral. However, not being allowed in the church, their accompanying slaves were left outdoors to walk the streets. This festival, therefore, grew out of their need to socialize with each other and entertain themselves. While bringing in dawn, I reflect on my ancestors, and on how our history continues to shape our actions today.

Appreciation of In-kind Services

In speaking about reciprocity, Joseph stressed that both sides must feel like they are gaining something. He openly stated that he believed that there may never be an "economic balance," but was open to other ways of finding balance "in terms of lives touched" and "impact." Janet also agreed that economic resources may not be so abundant in St. Vincent; however, St. Vincent had "human resources" to offer. Argumedo and Pimbert (2010) argued that "barter markets and other non-monetary exchanges can help in re-thinking mainstream economics on the basis of radically different principles (e.g. reciprocity, solidarity, affection,

respect, gift, equity, sustainability) . . .” (p. 348). Paul shared in this view that we should value services besides just the monetary ones.

Okay, if you have an organization, you have different types of activities, alright. You say somebody is responsible for worship. Somebody is responsible for education. Somebody is responsible for service. Somebody is responsible for whatever. But when the person who is responsible for service, the person may come with something or . . . go to the children's home. . . . In this service I am going carry clothes. The other one says, “I'm going to carry food.” The other one says, “We going to have a detail for a meeting.” The other one says, “Oh, I'm going to carry \$100.”

In this illustration, Paul gave the example of the running of an organization that had different departments working together. Narrowing further to the multifaceted initiative of helping out in a children's home, he described many services working together to fulfill the needs. Money was mentioned last.

The search for alternative forms of economic exchange in contrast to the neoliberal market system is not new (Miller, 2010; Whitworth-Smith, 2014). This has been negotiated in various forms through Social and Solidarity Economies, wherein

instead of enforcing a culture of cutthroat competition, they build cultures and communities of cooperation. Rather than isolating us from one another, they foster relationships of mutual support and solidarity. In place of centralized structures of control, they move us towards shared responsibility and directly democratic decision-making. Instead of imposing a single global monoculture, they strengthen the diversity of local cultures and environments. Instead of prioritizing profit over all else, they

encourage commitment to broader work for social, economic, and environmental justice.

(Miller, 2010, p. 1)

It is the core organizing principles of reciprocity and redistribution (Kumbamu, 2018, p. 20) that the participants seem to have expressed a desire for.

Miller (2010) offered several questions that could help identify diverse possibilities for economic organization. Of these, the ones focussing on *transfer and exchange* and *governance* stood out within the context of ISL: “How do goods and services move from production to consumption in ways that enact solidarity values? . . . What kinds of institutional policies, rules and procedures shape a supportive context in which solidarity-based initiatives can thrive” (p. 5)? While the participants of the study did not expressly speak of Social and Solidarity Economies, they expressed a desire for something different than the mainstream that

begins with a recognition of interdependency. In relationships animated by many different dynamics of power, privilege, inclusion, exclusion, cooperation and exploitation, our lives and fates are bound together with myriad others. Solidarity is enacted when we recognize these connections, take active responsibility for our own participation in them, and work to simultaneously transform those relationships that are destructive or exploitative and to cultivate those relationships that embody care and mutual respect for those with whom we are connected. (p. 6)

A postcolonial theoretical perspective acknowledges the necessity of challenging economic structures that are “overdetermined by global capitalism” (Rizvi, 2007, p. 262). Rizvi (2007) argued that even if global cultural interconnections are powered by economic forces, they “need to be located in particular localities and interpreted through particular geometries of power, in the dialectic between the local and the global” (p. 262). This speaks to a need to go beyond

universal Western hegemonic forms of thinking and doing to being open to and valuing difference.

Within the context of ISL, the participants were very cognizant of the unequal distribution of resources between the global North and South, and the economic disadvantage that this put them at. Janet's comments illustrated the hope for something different:

I know that it [an ISL initiative] would need to have financial input. If the people on the ground can provide service free of cost. I mean, that would add up for something financially, so you don't have to expend funds for that. . . . It all depends on what is going to be done in that partnership. Because some partners may inject monies, so I think there is now an in-kind section so that will have to come from the local people. And, whenever you try to execute something like that, you have to have goodness and skills put into personal relationship, and honesty.

Therefore, in order to have non-exploitative partnerships that see all partners as contributing equally, it would require going beyond neoliberal reasoning by finding ways to value non-monetary forms of service that incorporate the values and ideals of the local community.

I have apparently come at a good time. The spirits of many are high, optimistic. Everywhere I go, small talk seems to involve referencing the number of cruise ships that have been coming in during the current week, or speculating as to whether one will be coming the next day. The increase in foreign visitors to the island is an indicator of prospective prosperity, and Vincentians are cautiously hopeful. They have been reaping the benefits of decimated tourist economies of islands to the north; the recent destruction caused by hurricane Jose and hurricane Maria has forced ships to change paths and look

for other places to dock. Yet, the juxtaposition of these colossal, modern cruise ships docked up against a very small port town still featuring many 19th century buildings, puts me at unease, feeling like I am on an episode of the Twilight Zone and wondering how we got here. Despite this, I understand Vincentians' desperation, and now I, too, find myself looking down to the harbour each morning, speculating, hoping.

Physical Exchange

Half of the participants directly spoke about the benefit of having a physical exchange of participants within ISL. Specifically, they expressed the desire to have those in the host community also have the opportunity to go abroad. Rev's example of having his local community group go to L.A. after years of having received an American volunteer group was potent: "There's nothing that impacted us as much as us going to Skid Row L. A." Likewise, Mariam recounted her own transformational experiences of traveling abroad, and conveyed a belief that the opportunity to travel would benefit the local community as well, helping them to better appreciate St. Vincent. Joseph suggested that there should be an exchange of initiative partners prior to any initiative start-up. At the same time, while Joseph acknowledged that he saw benefits for the local community being exposed to foreigners, he expressly saw the benefit of travelling. "I've really seen what traveling can do to someone in terms of the opening up of their horizons. So, I see that for the sending institution; I see persons coming and I see their horizons being opened up."

While these participants expressed a willingness to host such initiatives, they also recognized the imbalance this could entail when members of their own community cannot reciprocate through travel. This serves to, once again, highlight the discrepancy in the distribution of wealth among regions. Much has been written about the potential transformation

of those who get to experience service learning abroad. If immersion in a new cultural environment through border crossing could help create the dissonance needed for transformational learning (Kiely, 2005), should not locals share in such opportunities as well?

From the time Mariam tells me about the mural in Rose Place that she reckons still would not have a scratch on it, I am on a mission. I fantasize about visiting the spot to witness that this is, in fact, true; Yes, a picture of this untouched mural would serve as the perfect metaphor of the need to include the voice of the host community in ISL. I beam at the thought.

However, I am humbled when I ask my cousins to take me there. While two of the three tentatively acknowledge my request, one cousin adamantly rejects the request as insulting. After some fierce debate by all, I capitulate. I realize I have been blinded by my own privilege, my own hegemonic ethnocentrism, that I was willing to trespass in a community and infringe on the privacy of others, for my own gain. Not only that, I become keenly aware of my bias that gives weight to my own assumptions and desires. Am I really here to listen?

No matter how much I would like to deny it, I have been complicit.

Synthesis

Overall, the participants that I spoke with expressed an openness and desire to host ISL initiatives in St. Vincent. They all recognized the potential influence that Western partners could have on the development of the island and believed that Vincentians would most likely benefit from ISL ventures. At the same time, however, an analysis of the findings indicated an awareness by the participants of a Western hegemonic ethnocentrism that they expected they would have to contend with and was at the core of all their concerns.

The ethnocentric privileging of Western rationality (as a universal form of reasoning) and of dialectical thought (as a universal form of deliberative engagement) establish specific parameters of validity and recognition of what can be known and how that is to be communicated. These parameters are intimately associated with aspirations of unanimity and consensus and make it impossible for other forms of thinking, knowing, being, and communicating to “disagree” or even to make intelligible contributions in Western-led and structured sites of conversation. (Andreotti, 2011a, p. 2)

Within the context of ISL, the initiatives were viewed by most of the participants as Western-led, with foreign institutions controlling the resources and, therefore, dictating the terms of the partnership.

This belief by the participants precipitated a desire to champion their own difference and strive for ethical solidarity.

Ethical solidarities challenge the normative project of unanimity, consensus, and singular rationality of Western/Enlightenment humanism enabling the emergence of a kind of contestatory dialogue where knowledge is perceived as situated, partial, and provisional and where dissensus serves as a safeguard against fundamentalisms, forcing participants to engage with the origins and limitations of each others’ and, specially of their own systems of production of knowledge and sanctioned ignorance. (Andreotti, 2011a, p. 3)

Through “contestatory dialogue” participants, therefore, expressed a keen awareness of an unequal global distribution of wealth/resources and knowledge that had many implications for their place within ISL.

The suspicion towards foreigners voiced by participants, spoke to a legacy of violence and betrayal packaged in an “ethnocentric global hegemony of Western/Enlightenment

humanism.” This suspicion also precipitated the recognition of a need to have foreigners engage in some form of cultural humility in order to challenge their own sanctioned ignorance and be open to difference. Yet, there was a recognition that this Western hegemonic ethnocentrism had damaging effects on the local community emanating in a dependency mindset among Vincentians that needed to be addressed in order to move beyond a belief in Western supremacy. The suspicion among locals, lack of cultural humility among foreigners, and dependency mindset of Vincentians, challenged notions of ethical service, reciprocity, partnership.

The participants offered suggestions to help combat the inequities that could be present in ISL initiatives. All participants called for ongoing communication as a means of having their voices heard, beyond speaking the hegemonic modern onto-epistemic grammar of the West. This entailed having foreigners open to listening to ideas that may be unintelligible within a Western framework. Participants also insinuated a need to re-evaluate how resources are valued in order to stress interdependency among global partners and strive for mutuality; this was offered as an alternative to dominant neoliberal sensibilities that privilege and bolster a Western economic philosophy that may be at odds with the needs and values of the local community. Ultimately, the hope of also having locals have the opportunity to go abroad to complete an exchange signified a departure from the traditional ISL initiative where locals welcomed foreigners, to one where locals shared in the same cultural and economic capital that affords them the opportunity to travel as well. For some, this exemplified true reciprocity.

A jarring feeling runs through me every time one of the participants describe St. Vincent as “Third World.” I can’t help but feel that it is an outdated term synonymous with notions of underdevelopment as defined by the global North. I have been encouraged to move away from terms that represent linear notions of progress, and it does not escape

me that imbued in such terms is a hierarchical status system that idealizes the West/global North. Therefore, I stop using “developing/developed” in favour of “global North/South” after playing around with “Majority World/Minority World.” And yet, I recognize the inadequacy and blurred nature of my current choice, that ignores the complexity of shifting positionalities and multifaceted global identities. This remains problematic.

Summary

In this chapter, I conducted a thematic analysis of findings from six dialogues I had with community leaders in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, revealing participants’ recognition of an underlying Western hegemonic ethnocentrism. This manifested itself in a suspicion of foreigners’ motives and a dependency mindset among Vincentians. This also precipitated the desire for more ethical communication, cultural humility, and an alternative approach to valuing contributions made by partners in order to ensure more ethical service, reciprocity, and partnership.

In Chapter 5, I further discuss these interpretations in the context of prevailing neoliberal, moral-universal, and critical schools of thought that directly influence how service, reciprocity, and partnership are taken up, and will present recommendations for future development of ISL initiatives that aim to work collaboratively with communities in the global South.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

I started this research journey skeptical of the claims of mutual benefit among global partners of International Service Learning (ISL). Although an employee of a post-secondary institution that promotes these initiatives as part of its Global Citizenship Education (GCE), I was reluctant to take part due to an apprehension that I could not clearly articulate but made me conflicted. I was concerned that there might be a privileging of Western ways of knowing and doing through border crossing within ISL. Therefore, the purpose of my research study was to foreground the voices of the prospective stakeholders of ISL in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in order to determine their views on ISL and how they might envision a meaningful ISL initiative.

I chose to dialog with prospective host community stakeholders in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Specifically, I participated in one-on-one dialogues with six community leaders representing a diverse group of social service agencies in and around the capital city of Kingstown. In the previous chapter, I analyzed the findings, revealing that while the participants all expressed a desire to host ISL initiatives in St. Vincent, at the core of their concerns was a recognition of a Western hegemonic ethnocentrism that impacted how the local community perceived and experienced notions of service, reciprocity, and partnership, often further serving to validate Western ideals.

In this chapter, I further examine the findings and interpretations outlined in Chapters 4 and 5. While my dialogues with the participants focused on ISL, I understand that these initiatives often grow out of ideological understandings rooted in the GCE offered through higher education institutes in the global North. To garner a better understanding, this Western hegemonic ethnocentrism is further delineated by schools of thought that drive differing streams

of GCE and ISL: neoliberal, moral-universal, and critical. This is interrogated through a postcolonial lens as articulated by Andreotti (2006, 2011a, 2011b, 2016). I will then summarize the interpretations and present recommendations for future ISL partnerships between the global North and South.

Summary of Key Findings

While all the participants were receptive to the idea of ISL within their communities, central to their concerns and desires was the impact of a Western hegemonic ethnocentrism. The following key findings came out of the dialogues I had with the six community leaders: 1) concerns that centered on the suspicion of the motives of foreign volunteers, the lack of cultural humility among foreign volunteers, and a dependency mindset among Vincentians; and, 2) the desire for ongoing communication among partners of ISL, an appreciation of in-kind services that challenge neoliberal systems, and opportunities for physical exchange for host community participants. These findings cannot be extricated from a history of colonial violence and exploitation that has resulted in an uneven distribution of wealth, giving rise to the “need” for ISL initiatives that see volunteers from wealthy global North nations motivated to “help” those in the global South. Needed in this conversation is an examination of our own continuing complicity in the widening socio-economic gap between global regions, rooted in the privileging of Western ways of knowing and doing. In doing so, as a first step, we need to question how GCE and its resulting ISL might also reinforce this hegemonic ethnocentrism, and how we can destabilize such tendencies in order to produce more reciprocal relationships and initiatives.

Discussion

Service learning, rooted in a learning philosophy of GCE, can be taken up in diverse ways depending on the worldviews driving it (Caruana, 2014; Eidoo et al., 2011; Marshall, 2011;

Oxley & Morris, 2013; Parmenter, 2011; Roman, 2003; Schattle, 2008; Shultz, 2007; Wolflink, 2018). It is not surprising then, that there are varied approaches to ISL, all negotiating ways in which the global citizen is defined and constructs its place in the global community.

I started this research harbouring the belief that there are multiple agendas that drive ISL: competing agendas that are often inconsistent with the notion of a singular universal reality. Therefore, it was necessary to seek out other perspectives thereby problematizing the ethnocentrism that grounds many of these ISL initiatives and privileges particular ways of knowing and doing. The analysis outlined in the previous chapter, indicated a strong awareness by the local Vincentian community of this Western hegemonic ethnocentrism and its role in directing and manipulating potential ISL partnerships between the global North and South.

Neoliberal Agendas Undermine Good Intentions

One form of GCE-ISL is the neoliberal conceptualization where “students are imagined as a kind of mobile human capital, to be cultivated in order to meet the requirements of an ever-demanding global job market” (Wolflink, 2018, p. 109). Wolflink (2018) found that among many major global education lobbying and professional organizations there was a frequent concern for student “hirability, employer needs, and a general logic of power through accumulation” (p. 109). Here, the globalized economy through personal and professional career development is prioritized under the guise of the South needing help (Smith & Laurie, 2011). Yet, Wolflink saw a sharp contradiction between this neoliberal take on global citizenship with that of one aiming to produce critically informed and open-minded citizens. He warned that:

In treating these two strands of global citizenship as anything less than a misaligned set of goals, we do a disservice to the cultivation of students’ abilities to be critical of their societies. Instead, in thinking very seriously about what we really want students to learn,

we must interrogate the ways in which our discussions of educational programming conceal some of our political disputes and concerns about citizenship. (p. 116)

This conflict was echoed by Giroux (2002) who insisted that in order to maintain the university as a critical site of learning, “is the recognition that education must not be confused with job training, suggesting all the more that educators must resist allowing commercial values to shape the purpose and mission of higher education” (p. 433). This only leads to a reinforcement of global and local power imbalances (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016).

The recognition of this conflict within ISL was not lost on the participants in St. Vincent, who saw the competing agendas as something to be suspicious of. When participants were asked to give examples of initiatives that host foreigners, of the examples given, many reflected neoliberal objectives. Janet, Joseph and Patricia, for example, spoke of foreign university students coming to St. Vincent to complete internships. Central in their observations was the foregrounding of the self-interest of the foreigners. Rev’s suspicion arose from his recognition that many come to “dot their own i’s and to cross their own t’s.” This was echoed by Janet who recognized that the agendas of foreigners “could be selfish.” She offered the example of nurses coming to St. Vincent “on attachment” in order to gain work experience. “But they were just coming to get the work experience here. They were not coming to impart knowledge.”

Giroux (2002) cautioned that as neoliberalism starts to define culture and values, “the relationship between critical education, public morality, and civic responsibility as conditions for creating thoughtful and engaged citizens are sacrificed all too willingly to the interest of financial capital and the logic of profit-making” (p. 427). It was this understanding that fueled Rev’s suspicion that many were just coming for “resume building.” The participants understood that

these “global citizens” were using the opportunity to add to their “human capital” through travel (Caruana, 2014).

Andreotti et al. (2015) spoke of the shine of modernity where “modernity is commonly defined in relation to a bright, shiny side associated with concepts such as seamless progress, industrialization, democracy, secularization, humanism, linear time, scientific reasoning, and nation-states, amongst others” (p. 23). Yet they referred to Mignolo’s recognition that modernity carries a shadow of coloniality where “coloniality represents the spaciality (expansionist control of lands), ontoepistemic racism (elimination and subjugation of difference) and geopolitics of knowledge production (epistemic violence) that are constitutive of modernity” (Andreotti et al., 2015, p.23). Because so many are invested in and benefit from modernity, coloniality remains hidden-denied.

Likewise, the conflicting nature of neoliberal forms of GCE and ISL with more critical forms means that a neoliberal approach necessitates the discounting of certain oppressive global structures that fuel neoliberal agendas, and undermines efforts to be critical. For example, the recommendation by some of the participants to recognize “in-kind services” as an alternative to monetary resources challenges neoliberal norms. Instead, “capitalism’s hegemony obscures alternative views of reality, including the possibility that a reduction in needs rather than abundance of possessions can also make people better off, while lack of excessive ambition and preference for sharing over competition can increase contentment” (Argumedo & Pimbert, 2010, p. 343). The values of reciprocity and redistribution of alternative solidarity economies are at odds with the principles of the neoliberal market economy (Kubambu, 2018, p. 20).

Ultimately, such a neoliberal framework condones a “sanctioned ignorance” of the colonial origin of the unequal distribution of wealth between the global North and South.

This ideology produces the discourse of ‘development’ and policies of structural adjustment and free trade which prompt Third World countries to buy (culturally, ideologically, socially and structurally) from the ‘First’ a “self-contained version of the West”, ignoring both its complicity with and production by the ‘imperialist project.’

(Andreotti, 2006, p. 44-45)

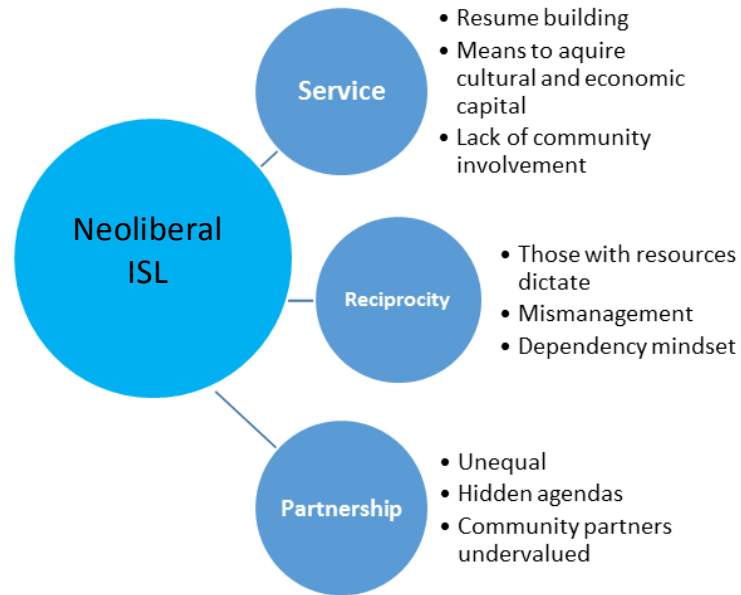
Rev’s reference to the impact of 400 years of slavery and the mission of Christ was poignant in the recognition of this “sanctioned ignorance:”

He [Christ] says, look, I’m here to not only to release the oppressed, which we try to do, but I’m here to bring sight to the blind. I am here to envision a people who have been darkened by colonialism and plantocracy. . . . But if you take out a man’s eyes now, 400 years whatever, unless he can get corrective measures taken, he’s still going to be blind no matter how long ago it was. So we have a societal blindness that I try to bring some therapy to.

Therefore, there is a need to go beyond soft-reform that only focuses on the inclusion of individuals in existing systems and their resulting rights and responsibilities without questioning the power structures in place (Andreotti, 2006; Andreotti et al., 2015). More corrective measures are needed to ensure reciprocity and ethical partnership within ISL.

Figure 2.

Host Community Perceptions of Neoliberal ISL



Moral-Universal Approach may Deepen an Ideological Contrast

Another approach to GCE-ISL initiatives is one that focuses on moral-universalistic sensibilities. This approach is framed by a “moral responsibility” that sees privileged individuals from the global North spreading their notion of civility and humanitarianism (Roman, 2003; Schattle, 2008). Yet, masked by these “noble” objectives is a coloniality that maintains the neutrality of the foreign volunteer and “uncritically celebrates the progress and evolution that they represent” (Andreotti, 2016, p. 104). While Kiely (2005), for example, building on Mezirow’s transformative learning theory, recognized an emerging global consciousness within ISL aided by contact with human suffering and a new cultural environment, he acknowledged the existence of a “chameleon complex.” This complex represented the challenges of negotiating “identity in social situations and within social institutions where participant’s emerging critical awareness conflicts with dominant and mainstream ways of thinking and acting” (p. 278).

This perceived lack of criticality among foreigners was abundantly evident in the comments made by Janet as she repeatedly pointed out that she did not want foreigners coming and looking down on Vincentians: “Because we’ve had [people like that]. People want to do stuff for you and then it’s like, okay, ‘Those Third World people; we have to go help them.’” She admitted that Vincentians have “issues” that foreigners “may not see in their country because they are more developed.” And so, she pointed out that volunteers can learn from Vincentians: that “there are people [in St. Vincent] who can think as well as they can think and perform as well as they can perform. And so they don't just look down on the entire society.” Here, Janet can be seen adopting a “non-Othering” approach (Heron, 2016) that “defies the binaries of North-South, developed-developing, helper-helped” (p. 81). Yet, even in such admonishments regarding the motives behind such humanitarian efforts, is a normalizing of Western ideals being used as a yard stick for human development.

The uncritical acceptance of, and desire for, Western norms and notions of civility by both foreigners and locals alike, forecloses on the possibility of valuing other ways of knowing and doing, and the questioning one’s own complicity. The example given by Mariam of the American girl who helped with an archeological dig serves to illustrate this point as the American volunteer expressed that “she's never felt more fulfilled in her whole life than to know that she’s actually helping Vincentians learn more about their own history. It's given her a sense of purpose that she could have never have found if she stayed in the United States.” While this girl may have experienced Kiely’s (2005) six steps of transformative learning in ISL, absent from her “epiphany” was a recognition of interconnectedness of issues wherein issues identified as “global” can be identified locally (Eidoo et al., 2011). Her approach demonstrated the limits of an “ethical cosmopolitanism” that Bamber (2015) warned of, wherein this “moral duty” to help

others can involve a lack of complexity in thinking that also precludes a recognition of her own complicity in the continued disparities between the global North and South.

Moreover, the dependency mindset that the participants spoke of illustrated that Western norms have been embraced and elevated by the local community as well, often superseding local values.

The implication is that within discourses of progress and civilization, time acts as a principle that arbitrates and ranks not only what counts as knowledge, but also what it means to be human. . . . Non-European traditions, cultures and ways of knowing and organizing are translated into universalized European epistemological parameters as inferior, less evolved, primitive, erroneous, or eccentric “culturally different” derivatives.

(Andreotti, 2011a, p. 66)

Pashby (2011) recognized the need to further probe the conceptualization of global citizenship as she lamented that most often it served merely as an expansion of national citizenship that maintained a Western status quo (p. 428). She recognized the need for Glass’s notion of polyvocal citizenship “wherein different, multiple, complex and contradictory identities are given voice, and boundaries shift and challenge oppressive dominant norms and standards” (p. 432).

Global citizenship based on moral-universalism links to the call for global humanitarianism that often spurs on ISL initiatives. Dromi (2016) challenged the notion that transnational humanitarianism is autonomous and impartial in its approach, but rather has underpinnings of nationalism. In looking at the nascent field of transnational humanitarianism, he argued that “national-level actors presented humanitarianism in their countries as aligning with their national values and character, and that this was a central aspect of the emergence and

maintenance of the transnational humanitarian field” (p. 81). At the same time, he acknowledged that patriotism and a rallying around the belief in one’s national superiority often helped in fueling the desire to help others (p. 92). This is a reminder that benevolent acts are never neutral.

Humanitarianism is seen as laden with moral authority. However, Brada (2016) argued that the moral authority associated with humanitarianism is contingent:

It depends on circumstances and varies from one context to another. Furthermore, its perceptibility rests on individuals’ capacity to mobilize categorical similarities and distinctions. One cannot call a thing or person “humanitarian” without denying the humanitarian character of someone or something else. (p. 756)

This necessitates the effort of individuals to position themselves as moral interveners, and requires an ideological contrast: “The categories against which humanitarianism is contrasted tend to emerge through association or implication—as violent, for example, or inept, remunerated, corrupt, or absent” (p. 758). This is not unlike the concept of “ontological cohesion” wherein Canada’s master narrative is presented as compassionate and law-abiding in contrast to an externalized Other (Andreotti, 2016, p. 102); the West takes on a normative frame of reference and reinforced by the “intellectual tourist” (Roman, 2003).

The expressed desire for cultural humility among foreigners was in response to the moral authority and cultural imposition that participants saw as bolstering the desire for foreigners to take part in ISL initiatives. In outlining the successes and challenges of a GCE program embedded in a college in Toronto, Asgharzadeh and Nazim (2018) pointed to some staff that objected to GCE on the grounds that it was “moral indoctrination” (p. 170).

This observation raises a number of questions: Is the teaching of peace, global cooperation, care for the planet, compassion, empathy, responsibility, critical thinking,

and reflection synonymous with indoctrination? And if so, how can then one define the task of education? And what would be the right kind of education? (p. 170)

While the authors understood the philosophical challenges inherent in the implementation of GCE, they defended the GCE program on the grounds that it exemplified the criticality, freedom of expression, and intellectual activism promoted by Enlightenment thinkers. Yet, the veneration of Western Enlightenment thinkers as foundational to GCE highlights the “global imaginary” (or “modern/colonial imaginary”) (Andreotti, 2011b; Stein & Andreotti, 2016) that these programs continue to operate under, whereby “our experiencing and interpretation of these experiences are conditioned by collective referents grounded in the languages we have inherited to make sense of reality and communicate with others” (Andreotti, 2014, p. 16). While I am sympathetic to the impasse that a hyper-critical stance that negates all things Western/European may bring about, we need to be mindful of our complicity in reinforcing a Western hegemonic ethnocentrism wherein “modernity is constructed as exclusively European; something that develops in the middle ages and that subsequently expands to other parts of the world.” (Andreotti, 2011b, p. 383). Andreotti (2011b) referred to Latin American scholars to highlight that while the internal critique of modernity, such as post-modernism and post-structuralism, is important, we must “recognize its limits in the foreclosure of colonial difference” (p. 386).

One way to counteract this is by making space for an “ecology of knowledges” that engages other ways of knowing and “requires an account of the ‘darker side of modernity’” (Andreotti, 2011b; Andreotti, Ahenakew, & Cooper, 2011).

It means . . . including it [a Eurocentric critical tradition] in a much broader landscape of epistemological and political possibilities. It means exercising a hermeneutics of suspicion regarding its “foundational truths” by uncovering what lies below their “face

value.” It means giving special attention to the suppressed or marginalized smaller traditions within the big Western tradition.” (Santos, 2014, p.44)

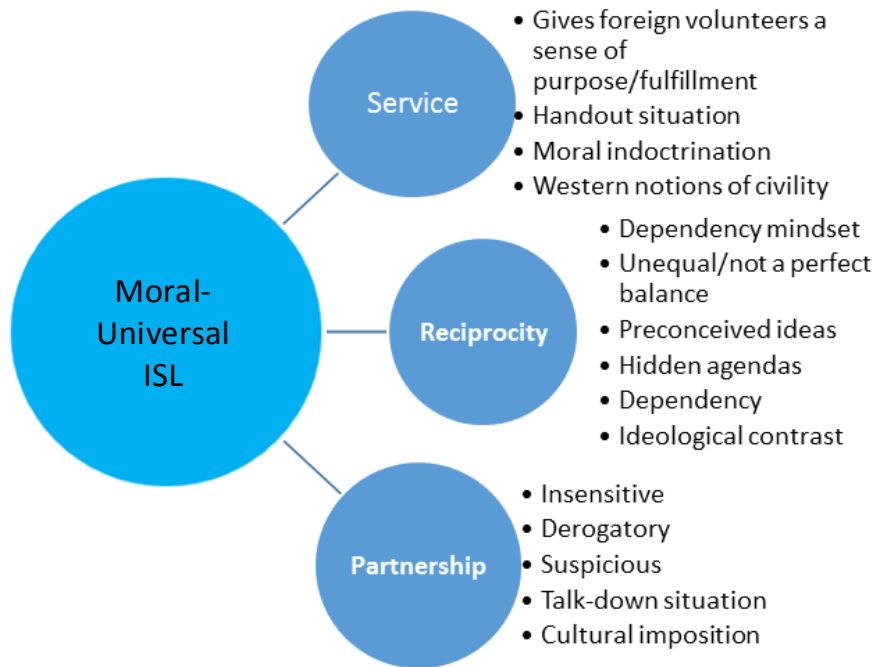
Ultimately, this multifaceted view of knowledges may undermine tendencies to “Othering” that helps construct the global North as progressive while maintaining a deficiency view of the South.

The research findings highlight the internalization of this ideological contrast seen in the comparative observations made by the participants in this study. Paul did not hold back on his admiration of “big countries” like Canada “helping the smallest countries to develop.” For him, Canada has the resources and the people; “They have everything in Canada.” He praised the “technique” of those from the global North and acknowledged that, “When we see somebody come from Canada we always think that will bring some hope.” Janet’s contrasting of the lack of amenities in St. Vincent to those experienced in the global North spoke volumes, wherein foreigners might exclaim, “My God, this [St. Vincent] is a dump!”

It is crucial, therefore, to recognize the perpetuation of this ideological contrast within ISL in order to find ways to develop more reciprocal and equitable partnerships.

Figure 3.

Host Community Perceptions of Moral-Universal ISL



Critical Approach has its Limits

What sets the critical approach to GCE and ISL apart from the neoliberal and moral-universal, is a focus on challenging oppressive global structures and promoting criticality, complexity, and social justice (Eidoo et al, 2011; Johnson & Morris, 2010; Mitchell, 2008; Oxley & Morris, 2013). Shultz (2007) saw the need for people to see the world beyond categories of “victors, villains, and victims” if we were to move beyond a state of shifting exploitations (p. 254). This speaks to the erasing of the economic and socio-cultural divide that we see perpetuated—whether intentionally or not—within the neoliberal and moral-universal approaches to ISL.

However, Andreotti (2016) cautioned that attempts to re-center the citizen through critiquing oppressive structures and forming better alliances can still be an example of “circular criticality,” wherein we are still processing Other voices in “vocabularies that make sense within the modern onto-epistemic grammar” (p. 106). Referring back to Asgharzadeh’s and Nazim’s

(2018) defence of the GCE program at their college, sheds light on the difficulty of moving outside of our own onto-epistemic grammar. While they acknowledged that knowledge is not “neutral or value-free,” and offered many critical and counter-hegemonic insights and objectives for GCE, their support of the GCE program still remained packaged in an onto-epistemic grammar that idealized the Enlightenment as the standard bearer. Andreotti (2006) reminded us that “all knowledge is partial and incomplete, constructed in our contexts, cultures and experiences. Therefore, we lack the knowledge constructed in other contexts, cultures, and experiences” (p. 49).

Tuhiwai Smith (2018) understood that Western history is made up of intersecting ideas that disavow other histories: for example, the misleading intersecting ideas that the discipline of history is universal, patriarchal, innocent, and about progress. She acknowledged that the Enlightenment was a modernist project often predicated on an Otherness, whereby views of the Other became more formalized “through science, philosophy and imperialism, into explicit systems of classification and ‘regimes of truth’” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2018, p. 649; Winant, 2018).

The connection to the industrial state is significant because it highlights what was regarded as being worthy of history. The people and groups who “made” history were the people who developed the underpinnings of the state—the economists, scientists, bureaucrats and philosophers. That they were all men of a certain class and race was “natural” because they were regarded (naturally) as fully rational, self-actualizing human beings capable, therefore, of creating social change, that is history. (Tuhiwai Smith, 2018, p. 649)

Therefore, our Western onto-epistemic grammar serves to limit the degree to which we can truly be counter-hegemonic.

Throughout my research, participants often showed an awareness of, and signs of pushing back against, a model of soft-reform. In soft-reform “it is presumed that difference can and should be neatly incorporated on the terms of those doing the including, without any social conflict or significant change in structure, subjectivities, or power relations” (Andreotti et al., 2015, p. 26). While the participants, for example, were receptive to having foreigners come and volunteer, they believed that it would most likely be on the terms of the foreigners, whether it be because they initiated the project or because they controlled the resources. Yet, they were adamant that they be included in the conversation as they have unique and valuable perspectives to share.

The dependency mindset that the participants spoke of can be linked to a disavowal of their own history and voice, and an adoption of a Western onto-epistemic vocabulary that locates them on the periphery. Just as Ward (2013) recognized that Western psychoanalytical approaches cannot adequately deal with the belated trauma of colonialism, it can be argued that a critical approach to GCE-ISL located within a Western onto-epistemic framework cannot fully challenge oppressive structures.

Coming to know the past has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization. To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges. The pedagogical implication of this access to alternative knowledges is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing things. Transforming our colonized views of our own history (as written by the West), however, requires us to revisit, site by site, our history under Western eyes.

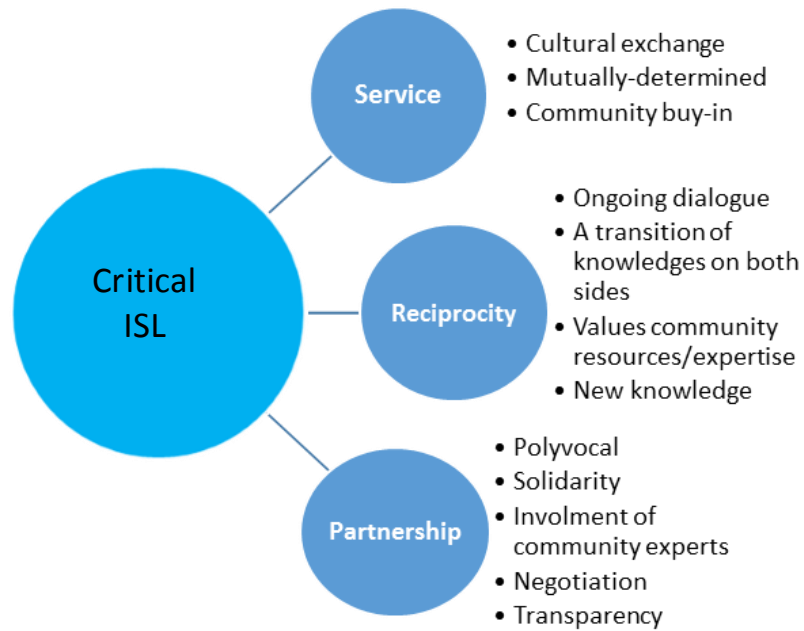
(Tuhiwai Smith, 2018, p. 651)

The strong desire for ongoing communication by the participants highlighted their need for “polyphonic listening” (Helin, 2013) that requires making space for multiple voices. Patricia’s

own use of an “interactive participatory methodology” within her program, demonstrated a means of leveling the hegemonic power attributed to some knowledges through encouraging “a transition of knowledge on both sides.” Radical reform understands that “unequal relations of knowledge production result in severely uneven distribution of resources, labour, and symbolic value” (Andreotti et al., 2015, p. 26).

This critical awareness led participants to make suggestions for ISL that would work to challenge oppressive structures currently in place. The desire for radically different ways of forming solidarities through valuing “in-kind” services directly challenge neoliberal constructs. “Movements that are resocializing economic relations provide us with many opportunities to identify sites where ethical economic decisions can be made around recognized forms of interdependence, and where we can begin to perform economy in new ways (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 81).

Figure 4. Host Community Perceptions of Critical ISL



Hopes for Moving Beyond Critical

An analysis of the findings, utilizing Andreotti's (2006, 2011a, 2011b, 2016) postcolonial lens, has illustrated that a Western hegemonic ethnocentrism is present—and even reinforced—within GCE and ISL. More specifically, it has revealed a recognition by the local community of the influences of neoliberal, moral-universal, and critical discourses within prospective ISL ventures and partnerships; and, it highlights participants' simultaneous acceptance of, and resistance to, these influences. How service, reciprocity, and partnership were taken up by the participants was directly related to their perceptions of the unequal distribution of wealth between the global North and South; the moral authority that gives the global North the mandate to intervene in global South affairs; and the inherently unequal terms of partnership that lessen the impact of their voice within a global arena.

Andreotti et al. (2015) spoke of radical reform that concentrates on “a strong normative stance focused on ‘fixing’ an aspect of the system (to make it work for marginalised subjects), which ultimately leads to an expansion of the existing, modern system, rather than enabling alternatives to it” (p. 26-27). Much of the participants' concerns and suggestions fell within this radical reform space, wherein the notion of ISL was not challenged as much as the approaches to its implementation. The call for cultural humility and ongoing communication, for example, aimed to address deficiencies *within* the system.

However, the participants also suggested ways that challenged some of our Western norms (such as ideas around solidarity). Andreotti (Andreotti et al., 2015; Andreotti, 2016) proposed the possibility of the “beyond-reform” space wherein we need to go beyond “the incorporation of multiple ways of knowing (grafted onto the same hegemonic ontological foundation that is left unexamined) through strategies of equity, access, voice, recognition,

representation, or redistribution, [that] does not change ontological dominance” (Andreotti et al., 2015, p. 27). Within this space Andreotti et al. (2015) offered ways of challenging ontological dominance through “system walkout,” “system hacking,” and “system ‘hospicing.’” System walkout produces alternatives (“with guarantees”) to modernity, but still “tends to support the same affective investments” (p. 27). System hacking bends rules within the system to produce alternative outcomes, while system hospicing works towards dismantling oppressive systems all together, and generating something new. However, these iterations of beyond reform provides differing degrees of challenge to “intelligibility,” whereby some possibilities “are unintelligible to those entrapped in the metaphysics of modernity” (p. 28). For this reason, more effort needs to be made to promote dialogic listening among global North and global South partners, in order to produce a polyvocality that may lead to a recognition of other knowledges, and a destabilizing of Western hegemonic ethnocentrism in ISL.

Recommendations

Through this research journey, I have come to recognize and question the limitations of my own ways of knowing and conceptualizing possibilities outside of my normative frame of reference. Therefore, I recognize the value of enlisting perspectives of Others. At the same time, I recognize that although I have enlisted the perspectives of community leaders in St. Vincent, this research, for the most part, represents my interpretations of our dialogues. As such, it is confined to a “grammar” that may not do justice to the thoughts and ideas put forth by the participants.

Moreover, recognizing these confines, I find myself hesitant to express desire for the possibilities that a *beyond reform* space suggests, because they are probably unintelligible to me.

And yet, Andreotti et al. (2015) recognized that the objective of decolonizing education is “enunciated from different spaces” (p. 31).

At the limit-space of the modern grammar within and outside of ourselves, we sit with the difficult lessons of modernity and its violences as our guide, and seek to take account of the *unknown* and *unknowable* that modernity has unsuccessfully tried to eliminate. (p. 35)

Therefore, I make recommendations for future ISL initiatives in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, with a recognition of the need to challenge the privileging of Western hegemonic ethnocentrism, and make more evident the coloniality that supports modernity.

Moving Towards Meaningful ISL

1. All aspects of ISL initiatives should be mutually developed, with an initial needs-analysis coming from the local community.

Host community. Develop initial needs-analysis to assert community expertise and self-determination.

Sending institution. Have host community develop initial needs-analysis *prior* to making any plans for an initiative. Defer to host community regarding their needs and desire for ISL within their community.

2. Implement a communications strategy and plan that aims to promote dialogic communication and polyvocality.

Host community. Ensure that strategies are in place that allow for safe expression of dissenting-conflicting opinions and ideas. Identify and express what the community needs to feel heard.

Sending institution. Develop expectations for on-going communication and feedback before, during, and after initiatives. Ask what the host community needs to feel heard.

3. Embed solidarity strategies within GCE and ISL that focus on redistribution and reciprocity through adopting a counter-capitalist redefinition of the intrinsic values associated with resources and expertise.

Host community. Identify all resources and expertise that the community can offer for the development of an ISL initiative.

Sending institution. Identify all resources and expertise that the sending institution can offer for the development of an ISL initiative.

Both. Work together to develop a plan that equitably values contributions by all.

4. Ensure physical (travel) exchange opportunities for host community participants when ISL relationships become entrenched through successive phases of ISL within a community. This should involve a collective responsibility whereby equitable distribution of (pooled) resources is used to make this happen. This represents a solidarity approach that leads to demonstrable reciprocity.

Host community. Require that ISL initiatives are designed in a way that allows for physical exchange of participants from both the global North and South.

Sending institution. Require ways to equitably distribute economic resources to allow for travel/exchange for both those from sending institution and host community.

5. Develop an initiative that addresses the success criteria identified by the varying stakeholders involved.

Future Research

Through this research, I aimed to address a gap in the research literature on ISL that revealed a need to include the voices of those in the host communities of the global South. My research focused on one small segment of a prospective host community in St. Vincent and the Grenadines—community leaders of organizations that serve the community. Future research should involve other prospective host community stakeholders, in order to get a more holistic picture of the views held by Vincentians on ISL. Likewise, St. Vincent and the Grenadines is unique in its own right and so, it would be useful to see similar case studies conducted in other former colonial communities in the global South.

Summary

In this chapter, I have used a postcolonial theoretical lens as outlined by Andreotti (2006, 2011a, 2011b, 2016) to further explore the themes that emerged from the analysis of the findings. Specifically, I looked at neoliberal, moral-universal, and critical conceptualizations of GCE-ISL, and the ways each manifestation was taken up by the participants. The participants' concerns with the unequal distribution of wealth, moral condescension, and lack of voice, as exhibited through the differing streams of ISL, made embracing ISL ventures a tenuous proposition. Moreover, Andreotti's postcolonial lens helped reveal that there is a need to address the Western hegemonic ethnocentrism if we are to address the concerns of the participants and impact the service, reciprocity, and partnerships within ISL.

To this end, I made some recommendations that aim to destabilize the privileging of Western ideals in the developing of future ISL initiatives. These recommendations involve “giving voice” to the host community stakeholders through having them create the initial needs-analysis that drives the initiative; setting up a communications strategy that encourages

polyvocality; and, identifying success criteria as defined by the community. The recommendations also involve challenging hegemonic, socio-economic expectations through embedding solidarity strategies through an emphasis on redistribution and reciprocity; and, by requiring that participants in the host community also be included in opportunities to travel abroad through exchange.

Some of these recommendations may seem counterintuitive or unrealistic; however, I believe that we have “ongoing pedagogical obligations to address modernity’s violence and its unsustainability” (Andreotti et al., 2015, p.36). This means trying to move outside of our own onto-epistemological grammar.

Each morning, after I returned to Canada, I woke up eager to listen to the morning radio talk programs that I had grown accustomed to listening to while in St. Vincent; I still had access to them through Internet radio. I quite liked the “comess”—a French creole word for confusion—of one of the shows. While many Vincentians around me had distained the idle chat/gossip coming from the three male talk show hosts, I secretly relished in the show’s “comess.” Maybe, this was because it reminded me of popular morning shows back home in Canada. Or maybe, I was drawn to the foreign accents of two of the three Vincentian hosts—one British and the other, more familiar, Canadian. But I think, more likely, that it was because it grounded me in a parlance that I yearned to be party to—a grammar that I thought may give me clues to the heart, soul and mind of the people.

I had later heeded the suggestion to listen to another, apparently more popular, morning radio show as I was told it made more of an effort to address issues endemic to St. Vincent (plus I would be able to hear Rev’s call-in segment). I got sucked in: soaking up the island’s news, partaking in local gossip, and identifying with the plight of the

masses. Moreover, I became engrossed in the two-party politics of the island that seemed to blanket everything with an intense rivalry/conflict that spoke to a legacy of a colonial past. I understood my intense interest to be my way of grounding myself in the fabric of the community, and maybe even blurring the insider-outsider line that marked me. And, it was with this backdrop that I developed an optimism about the development of meaningful ISL initiatives. . . .

I haven't tuned in in a long time. Instead, my focus has drifted from the desire to be immersed in another culture, to the immediacy of my own life here in Canada and, with each passing day, I feel my enthusiasm experienced while in St. Vincent waning. I have returned to work and have been bogged down with the typical day-to-day challenges of most with a strained work-life balance. I started this journey wanting to settle an unease—a discomfort rooted in ISL initiatives between the global North and South—and, I make an effort now to quiet myself to see if it is still there, separate from the anxiety that I have developed during the writing of my dissertation. It is.

And yet, something is different. This time, it is a familiar unease—an unease that, if not present, would be missed as would the advice of an old, trusted friend be missed in the midst of a deep, personal crisis. I now recognize that this unease helps guide me by forcing me to question my complicity in modernity's violence. I cringe when I voice that, and yet I know that I've barely scratched at the layers of complexity that surrounds my positionality and the varying levels of privilege and subjugation I experience. I've come to understand that my unease was never the problem. On the contrary, I realize that it is the absence of unease that is more disconcerting because, in that absence, comes a surety that speaks to the privileging of norms and desires, and the suppressing of Other voices.

When in St. Vincent, buoyed by the voices of Vincentians, I felt optimistic about the possibilities for ISL. Now that I'm home, I feel apprehensive again. However, I welcome this apprehension as one that calls for the guidance of Others; as one that recognizes that my knowledge is not whole; as one that knows that the aim of decolonizing education requires this unease.

Appendix A: Guide for Individual Dialogues

1. What is your understanding of ISL? What (if any) has been your experience with ISL?
2. Service Learning implies a service component. What do you think of foreigners coming to St. Vincent to “serve”? Why do you think they choose to go abroad to places like St. Vincent to serve-volunteer?
3. If you could determine what “service” should be, what would it look like? What would be the role of the “server”? What would be the role of the recipient of the service? *Or*, do you see other ways of envisioning this service relationship?
4. ISL also requires partnership with foreign people and institutions. What do you think makes an ideal partnership? Does anyone have more power in this relationship? If so, how would that manifest itself?
5. How do you think reciprocity can be ensured within ISL? How can reciprocity be measured? What benefits would you like to see prioritized for St. Vincent?
6. What concerns do you have about ISL? What do you think may be some drawbacks to these initiatives for St. Vincent? What disadvantages might there be for the foreign institutions/volunteers?
7. What do you see as possible benefits of ISL to St. Vincent?
8. Would you like to see international service learning initiatives in your community? Why or why not?
9. Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding your thoughts on ISL?

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