

The rhetorical constructions of global citizenship and the location of youth: A critical analysis

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Abstract

The recent growth of global citizenship scholarship, especially in so-called Western universities, could entice us into making constructive assumptions about the viability of this area of study and teaching. Especially with respect to the lives of young people, the promise of global citizenship and its growing disciplinary popularity can be read as contributing to more connected and selectively realizable world communities, which share more of their lives' possibilities for the wellbeing of all. With this in mind, and with a continuing focus on the rhetorical claims of global citizenship – as opposed to the practical or even quasi-practical actualizations of such citizenship – and as a select thematic response to *The National Youth White Paper on Global Citizenship* (2015) produced by high school students in Canada, this paper attempts to expose the weaknesses that are ingrained in the scholarly constructions of the case. It also analyses the precarious global citizenship location of youth in both developed and developing world contexts. At the end, the paper suggests possible ways of educating for a more inclusive global citizenship, which values all knowledge systems and advances the wellbeing of diverse communities across the world.

Keywords: youth, global citizenship, globalization, colonization

Introduction

The recent extensive and expanding constructions of global citizenship could herald a new context and possibilities to achieve political and economic situations that enfranchise the lives of all, especially those populations that have been historically marginalized in many ways. Indeed, with the proliferation of both old and newly emerging discursive blocks and fragments on the topic, we should rightly welcome the formations of horizontally located conceptualizations, theorizations, and, expectedly, select practicalizations of citizenship possibilities that potentially aid the prospective liberation of many from a world where full citizenship rights are

mostly absent. While we should not go against the high discursive elevations of global citizenship scholarship – which, perhaps now more than at any other time, is claiming a sizeable platform in Western universities’ research and teaching spaces, with slow expansion into other parts of the world – the actualities of harnessable projects of global citizenship are, at best, very limited.

The verbalizable ideas of global citizenship might be something to get excited about; minimally, these should promise an extranational (and certainly an extra-horizontal) coming together of people, whereby we could all belong to a global human family or, more purposefully, a global nation where we attain specific rights, coupled with some responsibilities that re-humanize our contexts with material equality and ontological, as well as epistemological, equity. In practice, though, the ideas as well as the potential practicalities of global citizenship are, at least for now, still aspirational life categories that we should hope for – but which are not so easy to attain. Indeed, the post-Westphalian world in which we are currently located is based on legally binding and boundaried nation-state systems that define, categorize, and assign citizenship rights and responsibilities. This is attached to what is generally referred to as ‘sovereign power’, where every national government around the world has what could be described as an absolute monopoly on the distribution, as well as the occasional rescinding, of citizenship rights.

As Dower (2008; 2002) notes, any real claims of global citizenship are at best theoretical, even if these should be appreciated as ethical possibilities whose theorizations and verbalizations should raise the hopes of those who are especially multifariously de-citizenized (Abdi, 2015) and who, to the potential surprise of many observers, number in the billions, whereby, in one form or another, their basic rights are limited or completely denied. The issue of de-citizenization is a complex one, and has thick historical connections that I have discussed elsewhere (Abdi, 2008). While I do not want to detail these here again, suffice it to note that across the globe, all historical or current differential power relations – including political conquests and economic exploitations, of which colonialism should be one of the best known – have established expansively enduring processes of de-citizenization that have created our current and differently endowed human conditions.

For youth citizenship comprehensions and discussions, the history of colonialism may be an issue that escapes attention, but it is important to understand how contemporary national and international situations are, in one form or another, historico-cultural and politico-economic formations that have created measurably knowable winners and losers, and which have also led to different outcomes for those involved. Through understanding these formations, we could say that some citizenship deformations were perforce imposed on the lives of people, including youth, particularly in previously colonized zones of our world – mainly Africa, Asia,

and Latin America. For educational purposes at least, it is also important to familiarize today's young aspiring global citizens with the learning and knowledge attachments of the forced cancellations of their primordial citizenship rights: primordial in the sense that all people are born free until otherwise subjugated, sometimes a few seconds after birth, into, rights-wise, deficient citizenship realities. Perhaps one good example of being born into such rights-deprived contexts is the diabolic caste system in India, and a few other places, where the newborn immediately loses his/her primordial citizenship possibilities on being registered – not officially, but via dominant social categorizations – into the status of his/her group/caste. Interestingly, and especially with respect to India, the citizenship rights of the Dalit (low-caste) child's citizenship rights are theoretically protected in rhetorical citizenship equalizations and equities that are never implemented. So the question of globalizing the citizenship of locally/nationally oppressed groups and individuals becomes even more complicated, which adds to the practical complications of the claims of global citizenship.

This paper, being topically attached to these and related citizenship issues, attempts to provide a generalized response and some theoretical expansions on *The National Youth White Paper on Global Citizenship* (2015; accessible at <https://goo.gl/m0Frc6>). In so doing, I provide in the following pages a critique of the continuing rhetoricizations of the area, complemented by a focus on contemporary contexts of youth, and ending with suggestions for some possibilities to achieve critical global citizenship for youth and for the overall enfranchisement and wellbeing of all. It is with this focus and these attached observational intentions in mind that I have deployed the subtitle 'A critical analysis', with the aim of pointing out the weaknesses of contemporary claims of global citizenship and, from there, suggesting ways to achieve a better understanding and improved possibilities in this currently important scholarship domain.

Global citizenship and the location of youth

The assumed precarity of youth citizenships has selectively become the stuff of legend, especially in so-called pluralistic Western societies in the recent past. Labels proliferate here, the relevant ones being *Generation X*, *Generation Me*, and the current *millennials me*, which is really a misnomer based on the people it purports to describe – a misnomer in that those in the age group who place themselves as such are varied but media-hyped into a twenty-first-century birthdate mythological incongruence. Yet the simplification of these labels abounds with no clear assumptions of ontological loss, misguided lifestyles, or aimless wanderings in the jungle of globalization. In critically interacting with the thick analytical readings of Canadian high school youth who produced the above stated 2015 White Paper, one could appreciate how some youth are actually more informed, more focused, and more aware of their

surroundings than we might be made to believe. Indeed, as was relatively evident from their presentations (Godwaldt *et al.*, 2015), the youth's consciousness – or, more correctly, the conscientized reading of their local and global locations, more or less in the way Freire (2000) intended – was not only clear, but also seemed to be more ready to expand and, when needed, rupture the boundaries of the conventional in citizenship and human rights issues. Indeed, the clarity of perspective these Canadian youth show should be capable of counterweighing hegemonic platforms that could sentimentalize global citizenship discussions, scholarship, and realities that are, more often than not, epistemically presumptive and selectively blind to extra-local boundary lives – basically becoming detached academic discourses purposefully inferred from the vantage points of the materially privileged North.

As a minimum, these youth show a deeper commitment to the global citizenship ethics that Dower (2008; 2002) discusses with respect to the possible contradictions of the practices of global citizenship and the political and legal boundaries that complicate those. But what is equally impressive about these young people who worked with their teacher is how they are beginning to realize the need to open up new and equitably established critical dialogues, starting by listening to southern populations with discernible openness, in order to co-construct with them new and inclusive citizenship contexts and structures. The youth are also clearly interested in learning from those southern populations while also sharing their Canadian experiences and struggles in realizing viable global citizenship platforms, which are at least threaded by sincere ethics of care, and some readiness for action when they see practical ways to do so. Indeed, as Vattimo (2011) so cogently notes, knowledge and truth are not the monopoly of any one person and there are multiple truths and epistemic systems that are co-created, as Harding (1998) illustrates, by all humanity from all corners of the world. As such, the practical reconstruction of global citizenship in the lives of either the Canadian or global youth is not going to happen by metaphysical love or even via sincere, if contextually detached, hope. When, or if, that happens, the post-dialogic practical outcomes of global citizenship must also be moulded together, by multidirectional perspectives and methodologies that are more factually representative of the term 'global' than the one that is currently being thrown around without much being global about it. As implied above, contemporary notations and writings on global citizenship have been, more or less, a craft of scholars in northern universities who mostly research the lives of the South. This could, therefore, be the right moment to inculcate in the minds of Western societies a new desire and willingness to appreciate the histories, cultures, and, certainly, the knowledges of the South.

Again, as we think about and aspire for a more active youth participation in the positive possibilities of global citizenship, we must not miss the facts on the ground with

respect to the especially precarious economic citizenships of so many people and, in particular, the youth in so-called developing countries. Moreover, the citizenship theorizations we are dealing with are attached to the processes of globalization that have been officially advanced by the dominant world system in the recent past. The task of redoing the situation is not easy: our contemporary political and economic lives have been shaped – indeed, relatively controlled and contextually mediated – by the long-ago established parameters of the Westphalian system, which, although commonalized to almost every corner of the politico-economic world, was initially a European invention to demarcate the lives of people in Europe and, later, elsewhere. Despite that reality, aiming for Dower's aspirations, as later correspondingly enthused by others (e.g. Abdi, 2015), should still be a noble target: noble in that what we are talking about is more than just a new redistribution of citizenship legalities that I, for instance, could claim and attain in spaces outside my currently accorded native and naturalized political and economic rights in Somalia and Canada. So what is the thing with global citizenship, global exhortations, and analyses that are now so commonly generalized by so many scholarly and teaching spaces?

Rhetoricals of global citizenship claims

The real deficiencies in citizenship contexts briefly described above somehow seem separate from the actual focus, as well as the continuing constructions, of global citizenship as a block of knowledge that is now fully mainstreamed into the conventional pantheon of epistemic representations. With that, the academic intentions of the case are, more or less, attuned towards the realization of theoretical knowledge representations that do not deal, as much as is needed, with the intensely unequal global and local realities in almost all categories of life, including the political and certainly the economic. As such, the verbalizations of global citizenship are seemingly intended to make sense to those who are invariably more endowed in their daily contexts and attendant global situations. It is with this in mind that global citizenship, which should have served as a liberating epistemic platform for the globally marginalized in particular, might have itself assumed the role of an onto-epistemologically colonizing perspective. An interesting and connecting analytical thread is the way historically, especially in colonial times, the rescinding of people's primordial citizenships (Abdi, 2008) was predicated on the wilful construction of false knowledge representations, what Said (1993) called the cultural colonization of both the epistemic and the epistemological to facilitate the comprehensiveness of the imperialist project in the lives of people. Indeed, as noted in the earlier critiques of the Tunisian scholar Ibn Khaldun – who, in his celebrated *The Muqaddimah* (2015: Prolegomena or Introduction) effectively depicted the psycho-cultural transformations that take place in the lives of the conquered – and in later perspectives by, among others, Frantz Fanon (1968; 1967) and Ranajit Guha

(1998), the exhaustive and deeply subjective deformations of the colonized certainly effect their de-citizenization. That, in itself, results in a situation where the oppressed internalize thick ontological liabilities that de-pattern their cognitive locations into willing subjects of the intense unequal citizenship relationships that currently prevail across the globe.

Without a doubt, we are still dealing with the effects as well as the outcomes of such problematic citizenship realities; as we speak, the citizenship contexts of those (whether the young or older generations) who live in the previously colonized world are still connected to ongoing political and economic liabilities that sustain their marginalization. Indeed, it is essential to note here that the onto-epistemological global edifice that colonialism built (in figurative terms) is intact; and, unfortunately for those who were assigned to the deprived spaces of the system, the situation of the second, third – or worse – citizenship classifications do still stoke their lives. As should be understood by all serious observers, perhaps just as culpable of these epistemic and citizenship deformations are the assumptions about the historical and cultural locations of the colonized and the less powerful, whose knowledge and living contexts were derided as underdeveloped and primitive (Achebe, 2003; Rahnema and Bowtree, 1997). The deriding of valuable relied-upon life systems – relied on for millennia – spawned a cluster of experiential and epistemic decontextualizations that refused to recognize the factuality of practised citizenship rights and responsibilities that were, irrespective of what dominant entities were trying on marginalized populations, the real stuff of the way people construct their socio-cultural relations, relate to their political institutions and platforms, ascertain their financial needs, and, formally or informally, calculate the overall economies of current life situations and future possibilities. More often than not, these were the expansive decontextualizations or relational deformations that were imposed on people's citizenship contexts. It is also important to note that with such onto-epistemological deformations – certainly in the way that Fanon (1968; 1967) and others discussed them (e.g. Kane, 2012; wa Thiong'o, 2009; Monga, 1996; Césaire, 1972), where the effects of the demerit points imprinted on the lives of the colonized became *longue durée* – the new hegemonic knowledge assured the supremacy of Western ideas, world views, and ways of doing and knowing. In examining the way Guha (1998) and Bessis (2003) talk about these, and in fully applying the deep critical analysis from Edward Said (1993; 1978), we can see how the existential belief systems that followed these cognitive deconstructions were so thick that the result is the global and highly unequal citizenship inheritance we have today.

It is a world explained and affirmed through Eurocentric modernity with the rationalizations of all citizenship contexts where the relationship between the human and the natural, as well as time and space, are measured to fit the needs of global

capitalism, its profit-driven regimes of open competition and the commoditization of almost everything, and the desired mono-economism that prevails over culture and politics. It is, indeed, a problematic global citizenship claim and, for the world's majority losers, it basically remains as such: a claim with so much of the Indigenous knowledges and epistemologies relegated to the scrapheap of the historical, cultural, and, by extension, onto-existential vacuity (Santos, 2014; Santos, 2007). It is via these knowledge and citizenship suppressions that cognitive colonization sets in, with the example of Indigenous peoples in Canada (and surely in other settler-colonized territories) effectively illustrating what happens when people are subjected to cultural and physical precarities that sustainably endanger their ontologies and existentialities (Daschuk, 2014; Battiste, 2013). As things stand now, after about 400 years of European settler colonialism, these previously endowed citizens of the land have been reduced to Canada's least enfranchised citizens with respect to educational, political, economic, and overall social development. As such, in terms of what matters in citizenship rights and responsibilities, Indigenous peoples have surely experienced what should be called the total de-citizenization of yesteryear's first-class citizens (Abdi, 2008).

No wonder, therefore, that Indigenous Canadian scholars are not that sanguine about the whole project of Canadian citizenship, let alone global citizenship (Weber-Pillwax, 2008), and want to speak about liberation before reconciliation (Coulthard, 2014). Here, the location of knowledge and its indispensability for viable citizenship situations should be clear. To appreciate the weight as well as the depth of the pain of the de-citizenization wounds Indigenous people in Canada have been perforce subjected to, one can relay the case of the hundreds, maybe thousands, of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and, equally relevant for this paper, the plight of youth in Indigenous reservations and in major urban centres. One recent media story is the alarming attempted suicide of Indigenous youth in the highly deprived Attawapiskat Aboriginal reservation in northern Ontario, where 11 children tried to take their lives in a 24-hour period (*The Globe and Mail*, 2016). As usual, media outlets mistakenly compared life in this reservation to so-called developing world conditions. As someone who comes from that background, I can categorically state that the situation of Attawapiskat is many times worse than most developing world contexts. In citizenship terms, therefore, and however one measures it, the Indigenous peoples of Canada have experienced for a long time what the Italian thinker Giorgio Agamben (1998) might term as a *homo sacer* status; that is, those who are still continuously liable and subjected to neglect and punishment, despite their existence being recognized. Perhaps, to ascertain this reality more closely, let me return to the example of missing and murdered Indigenous women who, in the eyes of Canadian security and legal systems, are apparently less valuable than other women in Canada. While no one, let alone myself, should wish anything that endangers the

life of any woman or man, one could still wonder what these institutions would have done if even two women from the dominant Euro-Canadian community, or from other communities that are more endowed than Indigenous peoples, went missing. It is a critical and immediate life-situation question that should not be avoided, and my own answer to it can be easily assumed.

When such global and local citizenship realities – which, as implicated here, are more or less rhetorical, mostly unrealizable, and fundamentally of unequal claims – are analysed in the context of youth populations (especially as the situation relates to education, employment, and human wellbeing), the issues cannot or should not be simplistically assumed. And while we should not abandon the aspirational notations and possibilities of global citizenship, the fact remains that for so many of the world's youth, the rhetoric of global citizenship is, for all observable practices, as such: just rhetorical. Again, the aspirational is not necessarily bad, for it minimally contains fragments of global ethics that should entice us to at least think and care about the welfare of others (Dower, 2008; 2002). With respect to the needs of young people across the globe, though, the aspirational should be tied to more than being hopeful and should be pragmatically attached to real and attainable citizenship inheritances that could be bestowed upon them. An ecological scan of how things are at this time is not that encouraging. As I briefly discuss below, so many youth – in the developing world especially – are dealing with multiple livelihood problems that need more attention. In addition, such youth are dealing with persistent contexts of chronic unemployment and underemployment. These liable economic situations continually militate against their capacities and, more dangerously, their potentialities to gain viable livelihood platforms that ameliorate the situation for themselves, their families, and their communities.

I am selectively repeating myself, but any extra emphasis is still important. My own research interest in claiming and acting on the scholarship of global citizenship is not necessarily about its contemporaneity, but more about assessing and critically interacting with the rights of peoples across the globe. In these times of unmitigated globalization – where those with economic potency (Stiglitz, 2015, 2003) and communication technology power (Castells, 2013) effectively benefit from the open-ended neoliberalized trade, education, and related systems of life – there are those who are dealing with the continuously diminishing prospects of citizenship rights across the globe. Especially, in checking the situation of youth, in almost all countries of the world, young people are dealing with less than viable employment and, by extension, economically liable situations so that in some places, descriptors of pessimism that locate youth as the lost generation are being used to describe what has been happening for some time now. Yet, despite all descriptors and indicators that show the quasi-permanentization of precariatized youth, change does not seem

to be forthcoming. The reasons for this could be multiple, but in the so-called liberal democratic countries in the West, such as Canada, the political voice of youth is hardly heard, and when this is complemented by widespread presumptions about youth political apathy, it all leads to a lack of response to young people's economic citizenship rights and expectations in particular. In other places where the political forum is even less open to multi-actor demands, youth issues might be rhetorically expounded, but far less actioned when it comes to national or regional policies and programmes.

Young people are continually being reduced to the labels we saw above, with such problematic if understandable labels serving only the quotidian or even self-interest purposes of those who are detached from the real lives of youth. Here, professional academics and others in positions of policy and official power (more or less in the way that Foucault (1980) would deploy these) actually create such select epistemological despairs, which deterministically rule out the needed rescue of those who have been multiply marginalized by the combined forces of predatory neoliberal globalization and the corrupt politics of those who should have proactively thought about the learning and working welfares of young people. The working life situations of youth are especially worthy of some extra observations. In both developed and developing countries, the youth are facing bigger challenges in procuring viable and liveable employment possibilities via, among other areas, the regional grouping of global manufacturing and service industries. Where I am going with this manufacturing and service sector global grouping is altogether more complex than I could depict here, but perhaps it is worth a try (albeit with limited analytical intentions).

Manufacturing and service industries – areas where many inexperienced youth could first find entry-level, non-skilled jobs – have become the order of our selectively post-something epoch. Even as far back as the early 1990s, some so-called management gurus such as the late Peter Drucker (1994) were talking about the advent of some post-capitalist world. This, of course, was only selectively meaningful and, clearly, Drucker and his epistemic monocentrists were not interested in the global currency of citizenship, especially for young people whose lives were to be shaped by the language as well as the educational and employment possibilities that concerned both their present and future. Despite all meaningful hindsight, such predications never happened – or perhaps, more practically, they were geographically blind – which should not be detached from what we are seeing this year in the United States of America's election cycle of propaganda, xenophobia, and rhetorical isolationism. In terms of Drucker and his ilk's information, what was presented as a move to an unknown post-capitalist location could be nothing more than the vertical reading of American life and many other lives elsewhere in the world (Saul, 2006). Such select homogenization was supposed to be manageable, in both

its relational and temporal terms; that is, it was to fit the so-called – but certainly citizenship misguided – mono-economic bottom line where, perhaps, the maxim (in the parlance of Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company) that what was good for the company was good for America seemingly still reigns supreme. Now the issue is only about corporate America, not the good of the American people, who have been extensively de-employed since the 1980s via onward forced post-industrialization (because so much industrial employment has shifted to overseas economic colonies in Asia and Latin America where, owing to widespread poverty levels – always a primary citizenship violation – workers are willing to earn a fraction of what Americans are being paid).

It is also important not to miss here the severity of the conditions to which most of the new neoliberal economic workers are subjected. In more cases than otherwise, these extra-Western workers lack any active citizenship employment rights including liveable pay, limitations on the number of hours worked, and protection from hazardous environmental contagions. Reading the real scenarios of this, one should be reminded of the global continuation of the power elite's rule so cogently analysed many years ago by the critical sociologist par excellence, C. Wright Mills, who, in his concise, counter-vertical power polemic, *The Power Elite* (2000), taught us about the interconnected networks that control the world. What is interesting for me, in referencing Mills's work for this purpose, is the facilitating role that governments play in driving the corporate agenda, which, when discussed with some social justice-informed economic rights, achieves two geographically disparate situations (America and the new economic colonies in Asia or Latin America) where primary livelihood violations are committed. Interestingly, as the Canadian philosopher and writer John Saul (2006) discusses, the reduction of social and, certainly, historical and cultural individual rights (especially for young people whose developing, but always desirable, constructive connections with their citizenship contexts are so important) into corporate subjects is at best problematic, if not entirely untenable. Saul rightly notes that in all intensive observations and analyses, we are naturally social and, by extension, citizens of somewhere; therefore, we cannot – and should not – be reduced to a corporate figure that more or less fits the needs of the market.

While that should be the way we actually see ourselves in the milieu of our societies, the new global power elite – dubbed the 'shadow elite' by Wedel (2009) – is not in any mood to expand the spaces of the social or the political into the possibilities that Chantal Mouffe (2009; 2005) characterizes. Indeed, Mouffe's reading of the political is to refuse any subservience to systems that privilege some while oppressing the majority of earth's inhabitants. This ought to remind us of the role of oppositional politics, which should not shy away from the needed frontal confrontations with citizenship-damaging global management systems that subordinate everything to

the whims and priorities of the neoliberal globalization that connectively protects the interests of the shadow elite, while savagely discarding the needs of the marginalized billions around the globe (Harvey, 2007). The savagely uneven access to political and economic rights is what has given us the 1 versus 99 per cent, whereby a few have accumulated so much wealth and power that to talk about a global citizenship practically represents a massive misnomer which needs to be scrutinized and excavated more robustly. In my reading, such excavation should allow us to decipher more effectively the politico-economic codes that continually marginalize young lives in almost every country in the world.

More often than otherwise, it is here where those with perforce corporatized realities, without the benefits accrued by the power elite, become de-citizenized and slowly alienated – from their communities, selectively from their families, and increasingly from themselves. Such contexts and all the societal assumptions and expectations they carry with them do not advance or sustain the necessary citizenship habitualizations that should guide youth through the complexities of the political, economic, and technological platforms we are dealing with in today's complex and selectively interconnected world. Indeed, with youth already so marginalized with respect to the prevalent politico-economic arrangements that govern their contemporary locations, there have to be new ways of facilitation where they could harness their potentialities more concretely and more aggregately. With respect to global citizenship claims, especially, one should not minimize the important question of how youth could think about, pragmatically perceive, and attempt to relate to extranational contexts when they are so less endowed in their local situations and are continuously dealing with liable economic situations that do not bode well for their own enfranchisement. Attached to these realities, but certainly requiring a deeper critical perspective than I am willing to give here, is the life-reality divisions among youth in different zones of the world.

Certainly, while the rhetoric of global citizenship is currently widespread in academic contexts, with concerned scholarship rising exponentially in the past 15 or so years (Abdi, 2015), there is a very interesting disjuncture at two levels – at the research focus and directional level – and within the economic liquidity fissures that are comparatively factual among youth in the developed world vis-à-vis those residing in the developing zones of our planet. While the differences of citizenship opportunities are certainly divergent with respect to youth in the two presumed global zones, one need not discount the need to think about possible solidarity among young people in different locations of the world. This is important in that, more than with any other group, the quality as well as the structural dispensations of citizenship futures will directly impact the lives of today's young people. But this citizenship could have – perhaps more than at any other time in history – globally connected constructive

intentions and elemental characteristics that can bring people together rather than divide them. Indeed, with the current focus on global citizenship, and despite all the potential weaknesses described above, we can aspire to more extranational ethical considerations that persuade us to think about the welfare of those beyond our boundaries and, when viable, take actions that can ameliorate the lives of all. It is with this global ethic in mind that the political enfranchisement and economic liquidity of youth should be globally discussed, analysed, and modified. Even when the employment situations in, say, Canada and South Africa are so different in their numerical representations and, by extension, their influence on the social wellbeing of the concerned, what actually stands out in both cases is the situational economic marginalization of young people.

It is both descriptively and analytically problematic to compare the two contexts, as Canada's youth unemployment rate is about 13 per cent (Trading Economics, 2016); in contrast, it is over 50 per cent in South Africa (Cassim and Oosthuizen, 2014). Clearly, youth in post-apartheid South Africa are dealing with a severe lack of work opportunities that completely overshadow the Canadian situation, and those in other countries in Europe and North America. And one ought not ignore the massive hardships that result from this situation, including lost potential, high negative impact on the country's socio-economic development, and the problematic intergenerational family influences that establish and sustain widespread poverty and all the issues that come with it. While this is not intended to convey a causal, even correlational conjecture (as the analysis here is not intended to focus on that), suffice it to say that South Africa also has one of the highest crime rates in the world. Beyond that, the two countries have had different historical trajectories that should be, to a large extent, responsible for these starkly disconnected unemployment situations. What is interesting in both cases, though – which is also real for many other countries irrespective of their location on the world index of development, as presented in the United Nations Human Development Index charts – is the comparatively persistent high youth unemployment rate, which, as the two examples presented here show, is about double the rates for adults in both countries: about 25 per cent for adults in South Africa and 7 per cent for adults in Canada (Cassim and Oosthuizen, 2014; Trading Economics, 2016).

What is also important to note with respect to the above numbers is not necessarily what liable economic citizenship realities these represent now, even when these are so important to ascertain and analyse, but the persistence of such realities in almost all corners of our world, more so in zones where the youth population is highest, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and the Middle East. In addition, while there are many factors – including the destructive civil wars in Syria and elsewhere – that affect the situation, with respect to the massive movement of peoples in the

current refugee crisis across the Mediterranean Sea and into a supposedly good life in Europe, one should not miss the youth unemployment-driven migrations from the African continent, where young people are risking everything and losing their lives in the thousands to escape from what are basically neoliberal globalization-connected schemes of poverty, which are perpetuating the marginalization of poor countries across the globe and especially young people in those countries.

Concluding recommendations

In concluding my observations on the complexities of global citizenship and the global marginalization of youth, we cannot but hope for active and connectively viable conversations among young people, especially in developed and developing zones of our world. As a minimum, that would achieve an honest perspective of global citizenship where the rhetoric is less about creating the quasi-proverbial global citizen – who actually becomes a problematically concocted figure who hardly exists in real, practical terms – but, rather, the focus should be more on elevating the ethic of care that Dower (2008; 2002) talks about, complemented by an ethical global space, more or less in the way discussed by the Canadian Aboriginal scholar Willie Ermine (2007). The global ethical space, when appreciated by more of us, creates a situation where people, irrespective of their endowments and power contexts, relate to one another with respect, recognition, and reciprocal acceptance. That could constructively spawn relational possibilities that are less restrictive with respect to the promise of social justice and knowledge equity, including citizenship knowledges among peoples regardless of their geographical locations, socio-cultural contexts, and politico-economic possibilities.

Attached to needed multidirectional dialogues and ethical intentions should be (what I would term) global citizenship ethics education for youth in all parts of the world. While civic education, many times represented as citizenship education (although the foci might not critically converge in many instances), is included in many school curricula, it is more often than otherwise intended to teach governance structures and nationalist doctrines that are designed to serve the interests of the governing elite. The governing elite includes those in so-called liberal democracies in the West where, via the machinations of the interconnected power elite (Wedel, 2009; Mills, 2000), ideas and information are manipulated through corporatized media structures that hardly speak for the masses, let alone for youth interests and needs. To counterweigh such problematic platforms of critical citizenship suppression, deliberate complementation by new prospects of decorporatizing and decolonizing global citizenship education is needed (Shultz, 2015), whereby the formations of the new young critical citizen could be aspired to, and inclusively achieved. When that happens, it will also serve as a viable promise for the long-term establishment of an informed citizenry that both cognitively and pragmatically understands its rights

and responsibilities, and unapologetically demands them for its social wellbeing and for the wellbeing of future generations. Undoubtedly, therefore, the role of relevant local and global citizenship education is fundamental.

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