

Chapter 20. Reflections on Global Citizenship

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This book began with a mihimihi or greeting composed by Hone Morris (Ngāti Kahungunu, Rangitāne) that used the metaphor of birds and birdsong to represent connections between peoples, our collective wealth, and the myriad of encounters that have created and continue to recreate our world. These connections were also visualised through the metaphor of raranga, the customary practice of weaving using the harakeke or flax plant, which is synonymous with unity, togetherness and strength. We asked how the multiple strands that connect peoples around the globe can be brought together to create enduring connections, the implications of these for rights and responsibilities, and what could be done about stitches that have been dropped.

As you read this book you may have noticed the range of voices represented in the chapters and aho, speaking with different tones and from different perspectives, which may at times have seemed like the birdsong of the opening mihimihi – a mixture of sounds from solo arias to harmonious compositions to a cacophony of seemingly disconnected noises. This is not unintentional. Our world is diverse, and there are as many perspectives on the challenges we face and our rights and responsibilities in relation to these as there are people on the planet. So, putting together a book about global citizenship was a process of weaving together a few of these strands to create something new, a picture of global citizenship as it looks like from Aotearoa.

In this process, we acknowledged our tūrangawaewae, the place we stand and start any journey, in Aotearoa. In doing so we emphasised Māori perspectives and knowledge as a vital strand in any discussion of citizenship, rights and responsibilities that come from this place. Our conceptions of global citizenship are grounded at one end in the Aotearoa context, and specifically the presence of Māori as first peoples of this land and our collective colonial history. From this tūrangawaewae we are connected to the rest of the globe through a myriad of threads and encounters. Some of those connections are explored in this book, in particular the global challenges of climate change, conflict, and poverty and inequality. These connections are two-way. We are impacted by these challenges, and we have an impact on them.

As we come to the end of this book, we reflect on another key thread, the concept of global citizenship. We introduced the idea in Chapter 4 as a response to globalisation and the inadequacy of legal and nation state-based conceptions of citizenship but also introduced some key questions about the nature and usage of the concept. Following from this, each author in the Rito section has engaged with the concept in a different way, with some focussing on global citizenship at the global level and/or institutional responses to local and global challenges (Rogers; Banks et al.; Gardyne & Malecki), while others focussed on

local and Indigenous responses to the challenges presented by globalisation (Movono & McLennan; Kaiser & Kenney; Forster et al.; Siautu et al.). Other authors explored more creative and individual responses (Horrocks & Doig; Hazou). While the scales at which authors engaged with global citizenship was varied, some, particularly Banks et al. and Hazou, drew our attention to the interactions between individuals, groups, and institutions within and across those 'scales of action'. Each chapter in the book sheds light on important components of global citizenship and the connections between Aotearoa and the rest of the world, while also highlighting the complexity and contestation that accompanies the idea that we (as individuals, Indigenous and ethnic groups, civil and corporate entities, local and national governments) can be global citizens.

To draw these threads back together, this final chapter reflects on citizenship and global citizenship as articulated in this book and answers the question of why we don't give a clear definition of global citizenship, explaining why our conception of global citizenship is messy and uncertain, critical yet hopeful, and perhaps at times reminiscent of the noisy, cacophony of birds that inhabit the forests of Aotearoa.

Complicating Citizenship

The foundation of this book is the idea of citizenship. As a concept, citizenship is a very useful way to understand membership of communities, both in the formal, legal sense of the nation-state, and membership of communities and interest groups that operate at the sub-state level (Kahu, 2022). Whether in the legal sense or in the sense of belonging to a community, citizenship is important because it has consequences. As Kahu (2022) notes, it determines material benefits, fosters a sense of belonging (or alienation), and it legitimises participation and voice. It also confers particular rights and obligations.

But citizenship has also been exclusionary. The nature of citizenship in any community is socially constructed, contextual and fluid. Not all citizens have access to the same rights, and this access is often determined by their identity, with some of the central identity categories – such as gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability – being dominant and deemed to be more valued and desirable than others (Kahu, 2022). As Eglin (2020) argues, "liberalism came to political prominence in societies that were already capitalist, imperialist, racist, patriarchal, heteronormative and ableist. Its attendant rights were understood to be those of the white, heterosexual, male, colonizing, able-bodied, property owner" (p. 13). As many of the chapters in this book attest, the struggle to extend the rights of citizenship to colonised, non-property owning, female, LGBT, non-white, and other marginalised groups is an ongoing struggle.

This process has been further challenged by globalisation as the world has become increasingly interconnected through flows of ideas, commodities, finance and people. These exchanges have led to significant increases in living standards in some parts of the world, most notably China and India, while a very small percentage of people have become very rich. However, it is clear that the world is struggling with the social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges of globalisation. Economic stagnation, extreme inequality, mass unemployment and underemployment, precariousness, poverty,

hunger, wasted output and lives have led to what Foster (2019) describes as planetary ecological 'death spiral' (p. 1).

This spiral is evident in the Rito chapters. As the chapters on climate change attest, we have reached a new and dangerous stage in planetary evolution with rising temperatures, extreme weather, rising oceans, and mass species extinctions leading to the rapid deterioration of our physical, social, and economic environment. As Angus (2016) argues, capitalism's inexorable drive for growth which has been powered by the burning of fossil fuels has driven our world to the brink of disaster. This drive for growth and the concomitant pressure on the earth's resources is also the cause of significant hostility, as we can see in the chapters on conflict. Meanwhile, the world faces the ongoing challenge of poverty and worsening inequality, which is both caused by and leads to conflict and amplifies the impacts of climate change. In all of this, it is increasingly clear that both individual and collective rights are still not enjoyed by large parts of the global population (Eglin, 2020).

As discussed in Chapter 3, these challenges have contributed to a significant backlash against globalisation as witnessed in the protests of the 'anti-globalisation movement' of the late 1980s, through to the anti-austerity and anti-capitalist movements of the 2000s, the class-based mobilisations that followed the financial collapse of 2007–08, the Occupy Movement in 2011, and the Global Climate Strikes of 2019 (Eglin, 2020). Indigenous movements and groups have often been at the forefront of these, such as the Zapatista uprising of 1994. More recently there has been a backlash against the granting of rights to many, and the twenty-first century has seen the rise of right-wing and far-right populist movements. This right-wing response to neoliberalism and globalisation favours an exclusionary vision of citizenship where perceived outsiders are not worthy of citizenship rights and has led to the "building of walls and other disgraceful means of closing borders" (Eglin, 2020, p. 7) to protect the 'rights' of the privileged.

Complicating Global Citizenship

In the midst of this, the idea of global citizenship has risen in popularity as a means to highlight moral commitments to and engagement with others. The term 'global citizen' has been used to explain this growing sense of global belonging and interdependence, and the rights and responsibilities that flow from it. When the challenges we face locally are linked to collective global challenges that cross borders and oceans, and when the rights of one group are impacted by the actions of others who may be thousands of miles away, our responses to them must also be both local and global in scope. A global conception of citizenship can help us see those links and can facilitate the connections and cooperation necessary to address global challenges.

But global citizenship has also become a problematic term. Most contemporary and popular conceptions of global citizenship are rooted in Western, liberal traditions, advancing particular (Western) political interests. As Eglin (2020) argues, the concept of citizen is closely associated with the liberal state, while the concept of global citizen has come to be associated with neoliberalism. He argues that contemporary forms of global

citizenship are ideological, serving the interests of global capitalism and multinational corporations.

Moreover, these forms of global citizenship are generally framed by the modern/colonial imaginary (Pashby et al., 2020) and neoliberal global citizens continue to be complicit in the perpetuation of global inequality, seeing the world and the global challenges through a lens that is ahistorical, depoliticised, and ethnocentric, offering simple solutions that reflect Northern paternalism and salvationism (Andreotti, 2012). Arguably, the concept of global citizenship as it has been popularised in the twenty-first century reflects and expresses the relationship between the largely white, 'developed' North and the largely non-white, underdeveloped South (Eglin, 2020, p. 11). As noted in Chapter 4, this means that efforts to promote rights and responsibilities that apply to all human beings can be seen as a form of neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism masking the impacts of colonial violence and splitting the world in two – those who are privileged, and capable of being active global citizens, and those who are in need of support.

This is why, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 6, global citizenship is often associated with “white saviourism” where the global citizen is constructed as a benevolent helper, delivering a gift to the ‘other’ who is in need. As Potter (2010, in Eglin, 2020) argues, the concept of global citizenship is also compromised by:

the restriction of the possibility of its realization to a small minority of the world’s mostly rich, mostly male, mostly white, mostly straight, mostly Northern and mostly able-bodied people... it has an ideological affordance in itself. Capitalism, imperialism, racism, patriarchy, heteronormativity and ableism work to ensure that a designated few realize the dream while the rest of us, in being seduced by it, are thereby mystified. (p.13)

Despite this, we argue – with Eglin (2020) – that neoliberal capitalism and the global north do not own the concept of global citizenship. But we need to look beyond these loud, dominant voices for other forms of global connection and citizenship to help us address the wicked global problems we face today.

Decolonising Global Citizenship

Throughout this book, we have highlighted the agency and actions of a range of groups from within and outside global governance and power structures, including a range of Indigenous responses. In Chapter 19, Forster and Belgrave explored the idea of agency and active citizenship, noting that while individual responsibility is crucial to making change, altering the structures that constrain action is equally important. This is a significant challenge, particularly where – as noted above – what may seem to be a ‘good’ response morally and ethically is fraught and may even contribute to ongoing injustice.

This is why this book presents a range of voices and perspectives, and weaves Indigenous knowledge with Western knowledge, affirming both ways of knowing as legitimate, but prioritising the voices of Indigenous people and those most affected by global processes and challenges. Our aim was to avoid the pitfalls of much of the discourse of global

challenges and citizenship, which focuses on victimhood, with Indigenous and marginalised groups spoken for and portrayed as in need of help. Highlighting and sharing the voices of those directly concerned not only enables us to see the problems as defined by those affected but to also become aware of the myriad solutions and responses missed by mainstream media and scholarship, enabling much more positive, hopeful and mana-enhancing (empowering) conversations about rights and responsibility (McLennan et al., 2021).

Highlighting these voices and responses in this book, and centring our discussion of global citizenship here in Aotearoa is part of our contribution to unsettling settler colonialism and decolonising global citizenship (McLennan et al., 2021, 2022). Decolonisation is a political and epistemological movement aimed not only at the liberation of colonised peoples, but at transforming ways of thinking, knowing, and doing (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). The core of decolonisation, for Indigenous people, is the material matter of the return of land and sovereignty (Tuck & Yang, 2012), and this emphasis is evident in the chapters by Hepi et al., Forster & McLennan, and Kaiser & Kenney. Beyond this, decoloniality involves “working toward a vision of human life that is not dependent upon or structured by the forced imposition of one ideal of society over those that differ” (Mignolo, 2017, p. 459). As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) has argued, decolonisation is a “long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power” (p. 175). This involves the production and diffusion of alternative discourses, knowledges and creative acts aimed at breaking down “hierarchies of difference that dehumanize subjects and communities and that destroy nature” (Maldonado-Torres, 2016, p. 10). The iho atua and many of the aho, and the emphasis on Indigenous perspectives throughout this book are one way in which we aim to contribute to this process.

We acknowledge that this is a limited effort, part of a long and messy process, and the dropped stitches, tangled threads and unfinished edges presented in this book reflect the gnarly, complex and fluid nature of decolonisation. This is a “messy, dynamic, and a contradictory process” (Sium et al., 2012, p. ii) that imagines and works towards another world while remaining conscious of the dominance of western thought and material relations. As such, we are also responding to Stein et al’s (2020) call “to identify opportunities and openings for responsible, context-specific collective experiments that enact different kinds of relationships, and different possibilities for (co)existence, without guarantees.” (p. 45). Our approach to global citizenship is one that is deeply embedded in the local context but also strongly connected to the global. Indeed, we argue that globalising the local and localising the global is perhaps the only way in which global citizenship can be indigenised and decolonised.

In this endeavour we draw from Anna Tsing (2005) who asks, “Might it be possible to use other scholarly skills, including the ability to tell a story that both acknowledges imperial power and leaves room for possibility?” (p. 267) We also draw on Gibson-Graham’s new ways of ‘doing thinking,’ an ‘ontological re-framing’ (2006, pp. xxxix–xxx) which is open to new ideas, and which works to uncover what is possible and creative, but which does

not deny critique, “... a mode of thinking that is generative, uncertain, hopeful, and yet fully grounded in an understanding of the material and discursive violence and promises of the long history of development interventions” (Gibson-Graham, 2005, p. 6).

While the challenges of the planetary ‘death spiral’ are immense, and climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic appear to have pushed the planet to the brink, we see possibility in the voices from the periphery, and in the responses and actions of a myriad of individuals, groups and institutions within and across the many ‘scales of action’. Our uncertain, but generative and hopeful approach to global citizenship is inspired by the legacy of generations of Māori leaders and activists who hoped for and worked towards a better future for all, even in the midst of the violence of colonisation and the heavy losses and pain this entailed. We also return to the concept of manaaki, the notion of caring for one another that is reflected in the raranga metaphor. This strengths-based, long-term strategy reminds us of the importance of protecting and looking after all members of the global family. It is global citizenship in action, it is welcoming, respectful and purposeful; elevating the mana or authority and presence of others to strengthen, build resilience, good health, and wellbeing, and to continue the collective fight for justice and peace.

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