Global mindedness and its development across space and time: Illumination of lived experiences from study abroad students and global educational scholars

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education
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Abstract

This dissertation explores the phenomenon of ‘global mindedness’ and its development as the idealized pedagogical outcome of global/international education. I consider how individuals become globally minded across their life journeys and through study abroad experience under larger conditions and forces. There are three discrete studies in this integrated dissertation format. In the first study, I examined the biographical and autobiographical accounts of thirteen US-based global scholars presented in the edited collection *The global education movement: Narratives of distinguished global scholars* (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018). Through a thematic analysis, I identified five major themes in their development of global mindedness: (1) Experiencing war and/or political tension; (2) Encountering social injustice; (3) Inspiration from pedagogical and personal relations; (4) Engaging with socio-cultural difference; and (5) Leaving the familiar / reaching out to the unknown. The findings and discussion deepen understandings of global mindedness and how it is developed; it also offers insights for educational interventions.

The second study furthers the inquiry in life-long learning towards global mindedness, while expanding its focus outside of the US to a more global context. For this study, I interviewed six cosmopolitan educational scholars, who come from and work in diverse cultural contexts and geographical locations. I co-constructed narratives with each scholar and presented them in six brief accounts. By comparing and examining their narratives, a series of common patterns of understanding and experience could be identified. I then applied a life-story based narrative inquiry approach to examine the content of each narrative. In the findings, I highlighted each scholar’s unique qualities of global mindedness and the most significant experiences contributing to the development of these qualities. Core themes included (1) translation and translatability; (2) a scholarly upbringing and aspiration to the value of differences; (3) colonial education, identity, and home; (4) separation, leaving home, and intercultural sensitivity; as well as (5) home as an imaginary space and anchor for intercultural identity.

The third study is a qualitative meta-analysis where I explored university students’ experience of study abroad. Data was drawn from 20 selected primary qualitative studies.
Central to the findings are four major themes: (1) enhanced (inter)cultural understanding and awareness; (2) perspective and identity change; (3) learning through overcoming challenges; (4) learning through interaction and immersion. While confirming the valuable learning opportunities that study abroad can offer, findings in this chapter also raise concern over the limitations and problematic assumptions associated with study abroad.

These three qualitative studies work together to account for the pedagogical ideals of global education as grounded in the lived experience of students seeking to become (more) globally minded and educational scholars who, along certain registers, exemplify global mindedness. This grounded and phenomenological approach offers insights into pedagogical interventions more attuned to the complexity of intercultural subject formation as shaped by historical conditions, lifelong experiences, and unique circumstances.

Keywords

Global mindedness, experience, global education, autobiography, thematic analysis, transformative learning, narrative, life story, cosmopolitan educational scholars, study abroad, higher education, pedagogy, qualitative meta-analysis.
Summary for Lay Audience

What kind of person is a global education supposed to produce? I use the term ‘global mindedness’ to signify the dispositions and characteristics that a global education seeks to develop in learners. To clarify its meaning, and to better understand what kind of experiences may help people become globally minded, I conducted three studies. This dissertation is comprised of these three studies.

The first two studies examined the phenomenon via the life-long learning process of scholars who served as role models of globally minded individuals. The first study was based on the analysis of biographies and autobiographies of 13 US-based global education scholars included in a book. Their stories showed that they had certain common experiences that played a significant role in their learning to become globally minded. Many of them experienced war, encountered or witnessed injustice such as racism, or had important mentors. They interacted with people perceived as culturally different and they were willing to live in unfamiliar places.

In the second study, I interviewed six scholars whose work were related to education but produced largely outside the US context. Each of these scholars speak at least two languages fluently and have lived in multiple locations in the world. Together with them I composed stories that outline their life-long learning processes and highlight the most unique and significant experiences. These experiences that stand out include studying in a colonial education system, translation as a cultural concept, influence from scholar parents, leaving home at a young age and the complexity in the notion of home.

The third study is about university students’ study abroad experience. Through this study I wanted to understand the meaning of global mindedness in the context of study abroad and how study abroad experience could contribute to its development. I selected 20 papers and extracted qualitative data from them such as quotes from students being interviewed to describe their experience abroad. Analysis of these data together – a meta-analysis – showed that study abroad participants often needed to overcome common challenges such as language barrier and disorienting feelings to achieve successful learning.
Co-Authorship Statement for chapter 2

I, Haoming Tang, state that I authored Chapter 2, the first study in this dissertation, in collaboration with my supervisor and two colleagues. As the main author, I contributed 70% of the chapter in the form of writing and making revisions. My supervisor, Dr. Paul Tarc, contributed 20% and my two former peers, James Budrow and Polin Sankar Persad, each contributed 5%.
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Chapter 1

1 Thesis introduction

This integrated study dissertation examines ‘global mindedness’ as an ideal, and as a phenomenon in the world, where individuals develop global mindedness in their engagements across difference as shaped by larger conditions and unique life trajectories. The thesis consists of three separate studies, presented in chapter 2, chapter 3 and chapter 4, respectively. The three studies engage narratives of three groups of individuals positioned differently in the landscape of global education, and who are at various stages of their learning journeys. As an introduction to the thesis, this chapter mainly concerns the conditions out of which these narratives are interpreted in the three studies. In the following sections I sketch out how I have come to, and think about, this topic as a person, student and researcher. I draw on a more personal form of narration to mark out my ambivalence to global mindedness. My intention is to help readers better understand my approaches of co-constructing some of the narratives, my interpretation of the narratives, as well as the biases and limitations in my analysis.

1.1 Dreams, reality, and the researcher’s precarious position

“We live as we dream - alone. While the dream disappears, the life continues painfully.”

– Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness, 1899

Some dreams do not disappear easily, and they can be as strange as life itself. In one of them a few nights ago, I was back in Africa, in a village in southern Uganda, trying to cross the border into the Congo. I remember walking a bustling local market where people were selling all kinds of products. I walked on dirt roads and crossed military checkpoints, believing that I was close to the border. Then, tired and lost, I entered a café-like place where light-skinned folks sat chatting and snacking. I can no longer remember clearly but it was likely that I got connected to the Internet there so I could check the map on GPS, only to find out I had been getting further away from the border.
It was a strange dream – I was clearly a lone foreigner, stranger, étranger, seemingly lost wandering an unfamiliar land, homeless and aimless. I also seemed to be invisible to the people in that dream scene. No conversation or interaction could be recalled. There was little logic or reason to explain what happened. Why did I want to cross the border? Why didn’t I ask anyone for directions? I was wondering about the same questions when I woke up, only to realize that the so-called reality was no less weird than the dream.

While describing Anishinaabe ontology, Hallowell (1975) wrote, “Dream experiences function integrally with other recalled memory images so far as these, too, enter the field of self-awareness” (p. 165). I find it a more appealing way to view dreams. Rather than a window to the unconscious as according to psychoanalysis, it erases the border between the conscious and the unconscious. This Indigenous worldview aligns better with my own view and self-identity in rejection to socio-politically imposed and taken-for-granted divisions and categories – my own dream and vision of global mindedness, the topic of this thesis.

Interestingly, in English and many other languages the world “dream” has a positive connotation, shrouded in a mysterious but romantic aura. In this sense, international education is inspired by the “global dreams” (Tarc, 2009), ideals and visions of a different but better world. The “global mindedness” I focus on in this thesis represent the personal embodiment, interpretation, and enactment of these ideals. On the experiential level, however, there are good and bad dreams, sweet dreams and nightmares. Surely nobody wants to live in a nightmare they can never wake up from. To say that I am living in a nightmare can be exaggerating, though at certain times it feels like an honest statement to make. I am not referring to the heart-popping, cold sweating type of scary nightmares, such as falling off a cliff or swallowed by a monster, but a slow one that gradually eats away one’s sanity and hope in humanity. Depressing, isn’t it? As the commodification of global education and international experience continues, perhaps the dreams can still contain possibilities of change and transformation, even if they are just a channel towards the unconscious, unless, of course, the dreams are themselves turned
into part of the collective consciousness created and manipulated by the media and politics.

Pessimism? I see it as a kind of realism, and a reminder that whenever we believe “there is always hope for a better future”, almost inevitably, someone will turn that hope into a propaganda, a tool of deceiving and manipulation. However noble and inspiring the term “global mindedness” may sound, it loses its innocence the moment it enters the world. My position is certainly not a defender or preacher of global mindedness. As much as I would like to, it would be meaningless to whitewash the term or try to put it back into the vacuum. I must grapple with the inherent tensions and complexity in its constructions and interpretations, for such is the condition of the world.

Which is scarier? Being muted and invisible to the world, or being watched by something silent and invisible? In either case, there is something creepy and scary about silence and invisibility. I recognize the power of critical research to break silence and make the invisible visible, but before getting to the phenomenon to be revealed through the studies, I have a few words to say about the researcher positionality. When the literature talks about how narrative inquiry and life stories can give voice to the participants on the one hand, and the danger of misrepresentation on the other (Goodson, 1995; Larson, 1997), the assumption is that the researcher’s position is that of the powerful and the privileged. The expectation is that they will use the power in a heroic fashion to become something like the savior of the subaltern, the empowering knight in shining armour, or the critical Robin Hood daring to “rob” the master narrative and break the culture of silence. I used to believe in such fantasy, when I started my researcher’s journey, believing that the hero’s power was still dormant inside me and one day it would wake up, until recently, when I started to consider other possibilities. Perhaps I am unfit for the role of a “noble” researcher. Or perhaps, the researcher’s role is nothing like a hat we can willingly put on or take off, but more like a noose tied around our neck, while the heroic fantasy is the stool we stand on, or whatever that sustains our existence.

An observer may quickly point out the seemingly obvious solution: “Cut the rope. Don’t kick the stool.” Well, that might work unless your hands are tied behind you so there is
no way to touch the rope. I tend to believe, however, that the researcher is not subject to such obvious abuse. Perhaps the rope is simply too precious to cut, or it serves as a lifeline that sustains the researcher’s existence.

Following the direction of the rope, I can almost hear a voice from above, “Keep dreaming. We are here to feed you and grant your wishes. Just don’t be so foolish to reach above. Try it and you will fall off the stool.”

“No, thanks. I’d rather not stand on that stool.”

“Wait!” shouts the onlooker, “You’re not in a position to negotiate with the Gallows Master!”

And this would be the perfect moment when the hero wakes up from the strange dream.

1.2 Setting up the scene

I won’t say “I love you” because that mean nothing more than a cheap lie, a cursed spell, an empty excuse to avoid taking responsibility for one’s foolishness. How can I expect true love in a world of shadows, a universe of maya and samsara? I am only in love with the true form that cast you as a shadow. I am simply enchanted by its beauty and otherworldliness, as it reminds me of my own true form, which I have lost not so long ago, and all I have left of me is this broken shadow. (Journal entry, Apr. 2022)

One could wake up from a dream only to find oneself in another, somehow more realistic dream. Waking up, striped off all its metaphorical fanciness, simply implies the return to a more familiar, stable, and comprehensible space. The researcher’s position matters, however precarious and illusive that position might be, but the space matters too. The space where my work is produced, where the three studies is assembled into a final product, is that of broken shadows and broken hearts, of loneliness and uncertainty. Such is the space I read, write, dream, and grapple with the meanings and meaninglessness of my very existence. Such is the world condition as I know it thus far.
It was the autumn of 2018, when I studied at McGill for my master’s degree. I had colleagues with whom I would study together at the McLennan library. That afternoon, one colleague and I decided to take a break and we walked into a café in downtown Montreal where we ordered hot drinks. We chatted while waiting for our orders, and I remember at one point she said, “Maybe this so-called life is just like a dream, and death is the moment we wake up.”

That conversation could have taken place yesterday, and I can still recall the taste of the matcha latte I ordered from that café, but it also seemed to be a flashback from a past life. The space has changed, and the world has changed, with more than two years of a global pandemic and multiple lockdowns. Deprived of a social life, unable to travel while knowing that my loved ones were suffering and some passed on, I began to think about the day of my own demise or awakening. At one point, I even thought about the possibility that if the plague kept getting out of control, the entire human civilization might fall. Could that mean a collective awakening? Fortunately yet unfortunately, now we seem to live in a post-pandemic world, where certain humans seized the opportunity to gain, or attempt to gain more power and control over others. “It helps men to rise above themselves”, as Camus (1947/1991) wrote in *The Plague*. Meanwhile, I survived, and life continues. The dream goes on.

Such is the condition under which I contemplate the question of global mindedness – a world of existential uncertainty, a world full of troubles, a world falling apart. Surely, we are not equally quipped to deal with the troubles and uncertainty, but what makes us equal is the “storied lives” we were all born to live (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). I have read a phrase from Thomas King (2003) miscited in a book regarding transformative learning and teaching. To me, when King talks about the “truth about stories” and “that’s all we are” (p. 2), the reference to the criminal history of colonization in North America is evident. When the land, the language, livelihood, political power, and cultural heritage are all taken away from a people, what else is left to be their identity? I certainly do not intend to appropriate the quote, but it does remind me that when power, wealth, and positionality are taken out of the equation, we are essentially defined by the stories we live and tell. Stories, on the other hand, also contains the power to change the world and
transform lives (Atkinson, 1995). The power and educational value of stories can be best summarised in Dyson and Genishi (1994, p.243): “Stories help us transform the present and shape the future for our students and ourselves so that it will be richer or better than the past.”

In this thesis, I assume the role of a storyteller. I see my research as telling, co-telling, and re-telling of stories. The thesis consists of three independent yet related studies (chapters 2, 3 and 4). It is a place and platform where I get my voice heard through the stories. They concern the experiences of three groups of people, whose stories are bounded together by the overarching research questions. Each study also tells its own story. Each one has its own guiding questions, design, and methods of inquiry. However, these three studies and the stories they tell are not unrelated. The all speak to the meaning of global mindedness and how it can be developed. What do I mean by global mindedness? How did I become interested in it? Here in this Introduction, I try to answer these questions by providing some background information and the stories behind the main (study) stories.

As the title of the thesis indicates, the methodology involved in composing the three studies is a combination of empirical and meta qualitative data analysis. In all three studies, the data are narrative accounts of life experiences. They come from people who are/were either assumed to be, or expected to become, globally minded. The term “global mindedness” in this thesis, however, does not come from any specific theory or conceptual framework. Rather, it started as an open concept to be understood and “re-grounded” through the analysis. The term “re-grounding” as used in the title means that the analysis throughout the thesis is inductive, and the descriptive and comparative analysis applied in the research was inspired by the grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1994), although I did not follow a grounded theory research design (Creswell, 2007). Since the term “global mindedness” is neither new or undefined in literature, my research did not invent the term or develop any new theory for it. What I did was a kind of re-discovery of the meanings and significance of global mindedness, through the eyes of the participants and based on the narratives of their life experiences, thus the “re-grounding”.
The initial idea that eventually evolved into the topic of the thesis came from my master’s thesis entitled *Investigating the transformative value of learning experiences abroad in a summer field study program* (Tang, 2019). In that study, I interviewed four university students who participated in a summer study abroad program. Using the transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2008; Illeris, 2014) as a conceptual framework for my investigation, I tried to understand how these participants’ learning experiences contributed to their identity change and transformation. Many questions emerged from that study that demanded further investigation. Among them stood out the questions regarding the ideal, desired goal, or direction of transformative learning through study abroad experiences. Why study abroad? What are the desired learning goals of these international education programs? Can these desired goals be achieved through experiences other than study abroad? What might these other experiences look like?

A look into the study abroad literature would reveal that there was no clear and definite answer to these questions, and the answers would depend on the researcher’s interest and angle of investigation. While some may look mainly into language learning (Taguchi & Collentine, 2018; DeKeyser, 2014), others may be interested in professional skill development (Tillman, 2011). These questions also beg more questions such as “What do the students study abroad?” and “Who are the students?” Regarding the “what” question, study abroad programs are often discipline-specific, ranging from nursing (Huffman et al., 2020), teacher education (Vatalaro et al., 2015), business management (Gullekson et al., 2011) and other fields of study. Apart from relatively common learning goals such as language proficiency and intercultural competence (Varela, 2017), the desired learning in each program also depends on its field of study and institutional agendas. The “who” question gets even more complicated since participants not just come from diverse backgrounds, each participant also carries their own personal history and previous experiences that will impact their learning goals and experiences in the program.

These questions led me to narrow down my focus to looking at study abroad from the angle of global education, guided by an ideal that I refer to as global mindedness. This path of inquiry produced a meta-analysis that is presented in chapter 4. Under critical examination, study abroad programs may fail to deliver their promise of transforming
participants into idealized subjects such as global citizens (Doerr, 2019; Tarc, 2013; Zemach-Bersin, 2008). In cases such as Zemach-Bersin (2008), where participants get disappointed by the program, a major issue is that the program uses catchy phrases such as global citizen or transformative to attract participants without clearly defining the terms. Participants, on the other hand, have their own ideas and anticipations about becoming a global citizen. Addressing this issue would require a clearer understanding of, first, the goal of global education and its pedagogical vehicles such as study abroad, and second, what students actually get from the study abroad experiences.

Meanwhile, problematizing study abroad and its transformative value made me think beyond short-term learning goals. Although the research literature on study abroad experience is abundant, most of the studies rely heavily on participants’ self-reporting of short sojourns in foreign contexts (Walters et al., 2017). The results from these studies often fail to demonstrate the long-term impact of these experiences. Even those studies that used transformative learning theory to interpret the findings tend to focus on the initial stage of the learning process (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011), while evidence from research also point to the change in participants beyond the short term. A case study by Rowan-Kenyon and Niehaus (2011), for instance, shows that over the period of a year after a study abroad trip, new meanings kept emerging as students were engaged in subsequent learning activities. Using a longitudinal case study approach, Kiely (2004) demonstrates that initial notions of transformation by the experience overseas do not often pan out over the long term. International experience still remains central to my research interests, but experience, according to Dewey’s (1938) principle of continuity, is always continuous and connected to the past and the future. Therefore, it would be very limiting to study an experience without considering its preceding experiences and its impact on future experiences. While the time frame of a PhD program does not allow a longitudinal design where I could follow study abroad participants for an extended period, using the life story approach to study the experiences of scholars with rich life experiences became a feasible alternative. Along this path came the two studies in chapter 2 and chapter 3.
Eventually, the initial questions concerning study abroad evolved into two overarching questions that guided all three studies. For the individuals whose stories I looked into:

(1) How have they become globally minded educators/scholars/students?

(2) What are the significant features of their learning journeys in developing global mindedness?

This thesis is a product of qualitative research situated in the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm (Waring, 2012), where interpretation can only be partial and biased (Orne & Bell, 2015). The researcher’s background, knowledge, experience, and worldview inevitably influence the research data, the analytical lens and process, and the results. My interpretation throughout the thesis is inevitably biased, or as Rapley (2018) bluntly puts, “there cannot be any neutral, pure, mind upon which to consider [the researched] phenomena” (p. 189). The understanding of global mindedness, as a central concept in the thesis, can only be interpreted through my unique yet limited experiential and conceptual lenses. The reminder of this Introduction is designated to a brief unpacking of my own experience and understanding of global mindedness.

1.3 A brief story of the storyteller

“I opened myself to the gentle indifference of the world.”

— Albert Camus, *L’Étranger*, 1942

Working with stories of other people’s journeys of becoming globally minded also gives me the opportunity to reflect on my own journey, or journeys, of becoming globally minded in my unique way, or simply becoming who I am. But who am I? “A traveller” is what I often tell people when being asked to introduce myself. For me, travelling is more than physical mobility or moving from place to place. It is also a mentality of being on the way, and constantly navigating unfamiliar spaces, physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Now in a faculty, and a field in general, where most of my colleagues identify as teachers, I often feel like a thorn among roses, although the feeling of being different is
never new to me. It would be hard to trace the origin of this sense of being different, which, in any case, is irrelevant to the topic here. Perhaps it is this sense of being different that led me to travel, to get out and leave the familiar behind. Like most people I know, however, I had a life of growing up, and going to school in the same city, where both my parents had a stable, routine work life. I grew up in a lower middle-class family with loving parents, but they seldom traveled, except for work or visiting some distant relatives. As their only child, I had little chance to travel. A day on the beach or in a city park was what I expected for a family vacation. Even visiting a new neighbourhood in my hometown would feel like an adventure. Until my early 20s, I had only lived in the city where I was born. My childhood home was only a short walk away from the sea. I still remember standing on the seashore, watching the waves crush into the rocks beneath my feet, and looking up to the horizon, imagining where the ships were coming and going. Nonetheless, the idea of moving to live on the other side of the ocean and leaving my family behind never crossed my mind. Home, or my parents’ home, was a little paradise to me.

University was an opportunity for me to leave my hometown, but I chose to stay, and to study at a university where the infrastructure and facilities were worse than my high school. I have very little memory to savour from those four years of studying at that university, thanks to the overly disappointing first impression and the traumatizing first month. There was no class in that month, only the military training. The campus basically turned into a military camp, where the first years were coerced into hours after hours of standing and marching in the sun or in the rain, day in and day out. The only thing I learned was obeying orders without questioning, which I unlearned quickly afterwards. In terms of the living condition on campus, the canteen food was barely edible, and the accommodation was on par with a concentration camp. I did not know how my peers survived the turmoil of that first month, but I almost did not make it. After two weeks of suffering and failure to adapt, I got very sick with a fever, so I took a taxi home. My parents called me a runaway soldier, but they still took care of me until I recovered. I felt ashamed. It was then I started to realize that my parents’ home could not be mine forever. Eventually I would have to leave. The university staff, on the other hand, showed no empathy and I was convinced my life or death was of zero importance to them. Since I
did not complete the military training, I was also shamed publicly, and lost my chance to get a scholarship. I guess the reason I did not drop out was that I cared about my parents. They always had high expectations in me, and my poor score in the entrance exam and choice of a mediocre university close to home had already disappointed them. Dropping out was not an option that they would accept.

I persevered, even though that university, which I called “the jail”, had become a constant shadow that I could not disperse. Even now a diluted depression spell would strike me as I recall each time entering its campus. I would only show up for class as I had to complete quite a few courses to graduate, and I had no social life as a university student. Those years felt like an extension of high school except no teacher would force me to study. I missed the “authentic university life” while studying at that university. Seeing no way out of the system or the country, I thought my best bet was to change institution. Perhaps I was naïve enough to believe that the problem was “the jail”, while a top institution in the country would make a whole difference. Though I had little love for biology, I also saw no possibility to change major. With some luck, I managed to enter one of the top universities in China for graduate study. For me, however, those two years were a chance to compensate for the loss of my “authentic” undergraduate years. I tried to fit in with the research team at the lab but failed miserably. The poor relationship with the lab crew destroyed the already shaky and feeble love I had for biology. I neglected my lab duties and did the bare minimum to graduate, though I still managed to write a thesis and to publish a journal article. Meanwhile, I made friends at student clubs. For instance, I joined a Taekwondo club and took training lessons twice a week. I also fell in love with photography, and I took photo-shooting fieldtrips with a photography club. The time I enjoyed most, however, was reading at the university library, books on humanity, philosophy, sociology, and psychology. Then almost once a week, I would go to a book reading club and discuss with like-minded fellow students about Aristotle, Marx, or Freud. I worked during the weekends to pay the rent of my room off campus, since I could not tolerate staying in the dorm offered by the university where no privacy was allowed. Looking back on those two years, my life was rich and meaningful, although not easy. I also began to think that a vast country with huge population but controlled by a single political party was probably not where I would want to spend the rest of my life.
While back in my hometown, my parents were still expecting me to become a scientist and work in a university or research institute in China, I started taking English courses every night after my lab work. I also used my spare time to search for interesting study programs from all over the world. Fortunately, back then, most of the foreign websites had not been blocked like nowadays. Through one of my English teachers’ recommendation, I started working for a Dutch representative office in Shanghai, my first full-time job. Although it lasted only two months, and I denied the opportunity to extend the contract, the experience was rewarding and eye opening. I enjoyed my role as a culture mediator. Although I felt quite lost at the beginning, soon I began to enjoy the autonomy I had, and worked overtime willingly to complete the tasks in advance. It was one of the very few times in my life when I have become enthusiastic in what I do. If the two years’ bad experience at the lab was still not enough to make me give up hope in biology, the job was the last straw.

Around the year 2010, study abroad had become a trendy thing in China, especially in the so called “first-line” cities such as Shanghai. Some of my colleagues in the university had been abroad for exchange, and some had plans to do their graduate studies abroad. My choice of Finland, however, was quite unusual, as it was by no means a popular destination for Chinese students. One important reason was the financial limitations I had to face. Thanks to my research, I discovered that back then Finnish universities were tuition free even for international students. The inter-disciplinary master’s program of international development also caught my attention, and I saw it as a great way to transition out of biology into a field of study I was more passionate about.

The most important reason, however, was simply to get out and explore the world. My honest answer made my colleagues and the head professor of the program laugh, in my first meeting with the cohort. It was during the self-introduction when we were all asked why we had chosen the program. My answer was “I want to travel around the world”. I probably added something to make my answer sound more serious, which I cannot even remember, and I do not think any of my colleagues would remember either. I had no interest, nor the financial capacity, to travel like those social media influencers and celebrities, who toured around the world to take photos with famous landmarks and show
off the luxuries from Tokyo and Paris. I wanted to be like some of my English teachers and my Dutch colleagues at the representative office, living and working in a country far from home. I wanted to become a global citizen.

The choice of studying in Finland was a crucial point in my life. In my thesis proposal, I used the term “journey into the flow” to describe my own entry point to global education. Experientially, it was my first international trip and that of becoming an international student. Metaphorically, it marked the start of my understanding of global education through personal involvement. Even though when studying in Shanghai, I had already come across international students and even made friends with a few, those experiences were qualitatively different from being an international student myself. It was after my arrival in Finland that I became genuinely interested in the international student experience. While living and studying in Finland, I also had a much richer social life than before. I had daily interactions, deep conversations, and long-lasting friendships with other students who were like me yet unlike me – we had similar, first-hand “international” experiences but often interpreted them differently. Some of my fellow student were born and raised in Finland but had studied elsewhere. Some had fled their countries of birth with their family and grew up in Finland. Some were exchange students from other European countries, and others were international degree students like me. It was through these interactions and conversations I began to understand our shared and unique expectations and ambitions, struggles and opportunities, joy and frustration, and how our different positions and past experiences made us interpret the world differently. I also experienced the discrepancy between how people saw me and how I saw myself, which did not help me integrate nor give me a sense of belonging no matter where I went. The tension would often arise during social interactions when the social pressure of cultural essentialization clashed with my longing for an eclectic existence.

I compromised to the extent that I would not argue unnecessarily when being essentialized. However, deep inside, I would not compromise my ideals for a world free of borders and hierarchies. Perhaps I have paid the price, and will keep paying even more dearly for these ideals, almost fatalistically, as they become part of who I am. My own story is that of a constant feeling of being alone in the world, a world I never belonged
and will never belong to. Only recently, through some struggles, as I stumbled through the long and tedious process of thesis writing, I have learned to come to terms with this feeling. Perhaps it is the pain of being a cosmopolitan, always the minority, the miserable, and the misunderstood. Surely, my pain is nowhere near that of a true martyr of cosmopolitanism such as Diogenes. I have not been able to sacrifice the egoistic self for something bigger. From a third party’s perspective, my struggle for freedom was no different than that of many others who seek greener pastures, or those who migrate to a first-world country.

Back in Finland, most of my international colleagues in a similar position either tried to stay after their completion of the degree or had plans to return to their home countries upon graduation. Unlike them, however, I took the path of a wanderer, travelling around the world and fulfilling the goal stated on that first day. Despite my colleagues’ harmless laughter, I somehow proved it was not a joke. Though the international trips and sojourns delayed my graduation, those three years were perhaps the richest and most meaningful time in my life so far. Those stories and anecdotes from my stay in Finland, India, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Peru can easily fill in more than the full length of a PhD thesis could possibly allow. Still, every tale would come to an end. By the end of 2014, I was tired and broke. Without attending the convocation, I took my degree, said goodbye to my friends, and headed to my hometown where my worried parents were eagerly waiting.

Though it was nice to be close to my parents, and the job I got as a language instructor was interesting, I never truly entertained the idea of settling in China for the rest of my life. The idea of getting married, having a child, and letting the child go through the same torture of a hideous education system I once had, was dreadful and nightmarish. To endure the misery of being different was one thing, but reproduce the misery? As long as my consciousness was intact, the answer was always a firm “no”.

As I became familiar with the new workplace and gained new experience day by day, I began to enjoy teaching, especially once I realized that there, unlike in public schools, I could enjoy the freedom of designing my own lessons instead of following a fixed curriculum. I also discovered that most of my students were from quite well-off families
and going abroad was often an agenda imposed on their children by their parents. The possibility of coming to Canada emerged during the communication with a student’s parents. I learned that they planned to send their child to Canada to finish high school because they also had plans to move, but they would go there as guardians for their child first and then decide if the wanted to migrate. As our relationship grew closer, I expressed to them my willingness to leave China. “Go check their immigration website. Your English is so good. If you want to go, there shouldn’t be a problem.”

So it happened. My restless spirit and longing for freedom took me to a new continent where, once again, I found myself a stranger. Since I also got accepted into a master’s program of education, I took the opportunity to look further into study abroad, a topic I was always fascinated about, and a topic that could always baffle me with endless questions. Thus my story came to a full circle and arrived at the starting point of this thesis, the place my initial ideas and questions for a PhD thesis came from. It also marked the starting point of a new chapter, of a new identity, of a new stage of transformation.

1.4 Conceptual notes on my own understanding of global mindedness

“Is all that we see or seem,
But a dream within a dream?”

– Edgar Allan Poe, A Dream Within a Dream, 1850

Who am I, to take an interest in global education, and to ask the questions about global mindedness? In the previous section, I started a brief recounting of my formative and perhaps transformative experiences – laying out the experiential baggage I carry into this study. Now I shift to unpacking the conceptual baggage.

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of global mindedness and its development through narratives from global scholars and study abroad participants. By adopting an inductive approach, I let the data speak to and answer the questions, rather than interpreting the data through the lens of any theory. Therefore, I
avoid using of terms such as “theoretical framework” or “conceptual framework” in this thesis. I did not use any theory systematically as a tool of interpreting the data, nor did I construct any of my study around any particular theory or concept. Nevertheless, there are a few theories I am aware of that had a significant influence on everything from the choice of topic to the formulation of research questions and certainly, the way I collect, read, and interpret data. For this reason, I believe it is helpful to make these theories visible at the beginning of the thesis. I also see it as part of the researcher positionality statement, as I do not talk about theories and concepts as objective truth or facts, but rather my own reading and understanding of them based on my own experience. In this sense, the experiential and conceptual baggage can hardly be separated.

Positionality, almost inevitably, reminds me of the “blind men and elephant” parable, cited in Tarc (2013) as a “curriculum object” to illustrate the challenges of learning in global education. In my thesis proposal I also mentioned the parable in comparison to global mindedness, but I also made a twist to the story by removing the subject-object or men-elephant duality. To my understanding, the inquiry of global mindedness is epistemologically far more challenging than figuring out the shape of an elephant, or any phenomenon it represents, from the outside. The main reason is that I am part of the elephant, or the global mindedness complex. As my stories from the previous section show, I have been, and still am, chasing the global dreams. My passion and involvement in global education, as well as my identities as an international student, an educator, and now a researcher of global education, make it impossible to study the phenomenon externally. In my version of the parable, the “blind” inquirer is part of the elephant, concealed in a “black box” (Tarc, 2013, p. 19) or as the famous drawing from The Little Prince (Saint-Exupéry, 1934) shows, inside a boa constrictor, and trying to make a sketch of the elephant.

Here I would like to distinguish between two types of “blindness” or insensitivity, though both are related to global education and the main theme of the thesis. The first type, which I see as a problem to be addressed, is the uncritical pedagogical pursuit of global education without any serious intent to understand its whys and hows. I see this type as a kind of herd mentality, resulted from the pressure to join the “invisible herd” of
globalization (Friedman, 2012). While a deeper understanding of global mindedness can be seen as a remedy for this first type of insensitivity, the second type is more concerned with the conceptualization of global mindedness itself. It refers to one’s situatedness in the wider world and the resulted limitations of one’s view and understanding of the world.

Back to the question of researcher positionality, I believe it is important to acknowledge this second type of insensitivity, since the inquirer is situated, and can only look from, within the elephant or the black box. It does not imply, however, that global mindedness can be better understood from the outside. Just like in The Little Prince, the elephant may look like a hat from the outside. I still keep the suggestion from the original parable that there are multiple and perhaps even numerous ways of knowing, describing, representing, and teaching global mindedness, depending on how one is positioned in the world, or the “elephant”. Indeed, as far as global mindedness is concerned, there is no single story of truth, but only perspectives on it. Though appearing contradictory at first glance, the awareness of one’s insensitivity coincides with “perspective consciousness”, a key dimension in Hanvey’s (1982) construct of a global perspective. According to Hanvey (1982), perspective consciousness indicates the awareness that one’s “view of the world […] is not universally shared” and “that this view of the world has been and continues to be shaped by influences that often escape conscious detection” (p. 163). To point out the inherent nature of one’s insensitivity is to admit the limitation to this consciousness of other possible perspectives. The assumption here is that one is always on the way of learning and to becoming globally minded, because there will always be influences that “escape conscious detection” and these influences also keep changing and evolving. Perspective consciousness, like global mindedness, is an ideal that cannot be completely or perfectly achieved, but still worth pursuing.

The recognition of one’s situatedness, and the rejection of projecting one’s view as universal, also align with the ideas of cosmopolitan learning (Rizvi, 2009) and cosmopolitan literacies (Tarc, 2013). To be cosmopolitan means to accept not just differences but also the possibility of dialogues and learning from each other (Appiah, 2006). It implies an ethical attitude, and value orientation “to be outward-looking,
interested in engaging and learning from others [...] and reflexively aware of how one is situated within these webs or relations” (Tarc, 2013, p. 101). Considering my own journey of chasing the global dreams, as I outlined in the previous section, it is not surprising that I became gravitated towards these ideas. While my life and work experience since my first job in Shanghai exposed me to a kind of “banal cosmopolitanism” (Beck, 2002), academic training first in international development and then in education equipped me with a more critical lens to look at the world and my position in it. “Cosmopolitanism”, argues Rizvi (2009, p. 263), “is only worth pursuing if we are able to see it as an instrument of critical understanding and moral improvement.” As a traveller and educator deeply troubled by the status quo, such an instrument certainly has its appeal. Meanwhile, in my research I also became aware of the complexity, philosophical traditions, historical impacts, and debates over the ideas of cosmopolitanism, especially in light of its recent surge in popularity (Andreouli & Howarth, 2019). Initially I used the term “cosmopolitan consciousness”, but to avoid confusion I later switched to “global mindedness” as a less philosophically laden and more vernacular form of the same idea or ideal.

Another ideal that has a clear impact on this thesis, albeit less visible from the title or research questions, is perspective transformation. This concept comes from Mezirow’s (1978; 1999; 2008) transformative learning theory. As mentioned earlier, I used transformative learning as a major conceptual framework in my master’s thesis (Tang, 2019). I first encountered the theory while doing literature search for that thesis and it immediately grabbed my attention. Perhaps it resonated with me because I saw myself going through a perspective transformation, from the pre-global version of me and a product of a nationalist education, to the passionate chaser of global dreams and a traveller on a journey towards global mindedness. Transformative learning indicates a process starting from an unusual experience and leading to a broadened worldview, a move “toward a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable (open to other points of view), and integrated meaning perspective” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 7). If global education aims to instill global mindedness in the learner but the institutionalized and nation-state-based education system is fundamentally incompatible with such an ideal, transformative learning seems to be the key.
While working on my master’s thesis, I was already aware of some of the limitations and critiques that transformative learning had faced. In 1.2 I mentioned the difficulties in testing out the entire learning process due to many empirical studies’ short-term focus. When following Mezirow’s (1991) ten-phase model of perspective transformation, the demonstration of participants going through the first two phases, namely the disorienting dilemma and self-examination, is not enough evidence that a transformation would occur. As Cranton (2016) notes, transformative learning is not necessarily a linear process. Illeris (2014) even entertains the possibility of a “regressive transformation”. In my MA thesis (Tang, 2019) I proposed the idea of “experimental transformation”, a rather temporary but potentially radical shift to a context-dependent, alternative identity, particularly in the case of study abroad. While I still believe the idea is worth exploring with more data from empirical studies, I did not proceed with this avenue in my PhD work since my current focus is not the process of transformation, but its goal. It somehow returns to the age-old question of what really gets transformed through transformative learning (Kegan, 2000), and into what? In my research, I still see transformative learning as one potential means to become globally minded, but I am also open to other possibilities of learning and life experiences that can produce global mindedness.

As for the critiques to transformative learning as a theory, some have been constructive, aiming at revising the theory, such as Illeris (2014), while others more dismissive, questioning the theory’s legitimacy. For instance, Newman (2012) calls TL into question by arguing that any ‘good learning’ is transformative. Howie and Bagnall (2013) go even further to call transformative learning a ‘beautiful metaphor’. These critiques, however, did not stop educational scholars from exploring the theory or using it in research (Hoggan, 2016; Finnegan, 2019). At the time of writing, I just returned from an annual conference hosted by the Transformation Learning Center at the University of Central Oklahoma, where a wide range of topics were discussed. To this day, there are still at least two peer-reviewed journals dedicated to the theory, and two major conferences held annually or biannually in North America. I see transformative learning as a living and evolving theory, or “metatheory” (Hoggan, 2016), with interesting ideas to draw on in discussing findings in my studies (see chapters 2, 3, and 4).
Meanwhile, there are two major issues to be noted here in regard to the topic of this thesis. First, the word “transformative” has been used too extensively that it becomes not just detached from Mezirow’s original theory but also a fancy shell with no genuine content. Illeris (2014) has pointed out this trend that is reducing transformative learning to a “floating signifier”. Empty or floating as it may be, transformative and transformation can still make catchy phrases to sell “unconventional learning experiences” such as study abroad programs (Doerr, 2019). Part of the rationale for my study in chapter 4 is to put some content back to the empty signifier. By re-examining the qualitative evidence reported in empirical studies by study abroad participants, I hope to find what has really been changed in students and how, before any attempt to call it a transformation. The second issue, somehow related to the first, is the pedagogical endeavor to create transformative experiences through institutionalized and often short sojourn type of international learning programs. It is what Tarc (2013) calls the “schooling” of “international experience, which ultimately short circuits transformative learning” (p. 19). According to transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991; Cranton, 2016), the frame of reference is formed principally by one’s earlier life experience and transformed through the inducing of disorienting experience. Even creating an experience that can be universally disorienting while disregarding the highly heterogeneous and individual earlier experiences would be extremely tricky, let alone the consideration of key factors such as critical reflection, dialogue, and action, which play crucial roles in the later phases of perspective transformation. Moreover, the claim that the international experience can be designed for transformative learning would contradict the Deweyan principles of continuity and interaction (Dewey, 1938; Elkjaer, 2009) that characteristic an experience. My adopting of a life story approach, particularly in the study of chapter 3, is partially in response to this issue as I expand the scope to any significant experience, both within and outside the systemic or institutional framework of education, while focusing on its significance to global mindedness.

1.5 Introducing the following chapters

Following this Introduction are three studies that were conducted to answer the two overarching questions (1.2). By exploring narratives of three groups of informants and
experimenting with both empirical and meta-analysis methods, I intend to engage the two questions through the perspectives of these individuals. Due to the difference in their positions, experiences, ways and stages of learning to becoming globally minded, their narratives offer multiple perspectives, and multiple angels of looking at the phenomenon of global mindedness.

In chapter 2, the narratives come from thirteen (auto)biographical accounts of US based educational scholars, who were granted the Distinguished Global Scholar Award for their contribution to the global education movement (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018). This study aimed at shedding light on the significant events and experiences for the 13 scholars to become key players in the global education movement. Initially I planned to use transformative learning theory as the main framework to evaluate each scholar’s learning experiences and processes, but as the analysis carried on, I decided to take a more inductive approach and let the data speak of its significance. Theories, including transformative learning, were drawn upon to help the interpretation of data instead of determining the results. It was also during this process that the concept of global mindedness emerged and later took the central stage. Since the research questions focus on the “significant experiences”, they also beg the question of “significant to what?” Global mindedness came out as the “what”, an ideal or desirable subjectivity that global education seeks to promote and establish. The assumption here was that these scholars, due to their “distinguishedness” in the global education movement, were qualified representatives and embodiment of global mindedness. Due to the limitation of scale and the data accessible to the study, a more thorough analysis of the concept and what it constitutes was to be carried out in the next study (chapter 3).

The study documented in chapter 3 is the central piece of the thesis, and it can be seen as a continuation and expansion of the chapter 2 study. Here, global mindedness became the central concept to be investigated. From the previous study, it took up the question regarding what constitutes global mindedness, and it followed up on the thread of elucidating significant experiences, but with a different group of scholars from more diverse and global backgrounds. While I did not mean to discredit the diversity represented in the 13 scholars of the previous study, most of their work was based in the
social contexts within the US. Therefore, in this study, I intentionally chose to interview scholars who had most of their life experiences outside the US. Methodologically, firsthand data was gathered via interviews, and I could ask questions directly and specifically related to the research questions. In the process of data analysis, I moved further away from theories. As a narrative case study, the focus was on constructing narratives to answer the research questions. Although themes were established and compared across narratives, compared to the previous study, the focus was shifted to the content and uniqueness of each narrative.

As mentioned earlier, my research interest in study abroad experience led to my MA and the start of my PhD program. In chapter 4, I return to this point of departure, to take a closer look at the phenomenon of study abroad and international student mobility. I try to answer the same questions about the meaning of global mindedness and the processes and experiences leading to its development, but within the context of study abroad. Instead of interviewing another group of participants, I took a less common methodological approach. The study in chapter 4 is a qualitative meta-analysis, where data come from study abroad participants’ stories documented in primary qualitative research studies. Through examining and comparing study abroad experience reported in 20 selected studies, common themes are identified and discussed. In this study, I also touch on the question regarding the value of study abroad as a pedagogical intervention and how it can be improved practically.

1.6 References


Chapter 2

2 What makes a ‘distinguished global scholar’ in global education? (Trans)formative experiences toward global mindedness

Having an abroad experience, often through international student mobility programs, has been a consistent theme in global education. There are a multitude of research studies on how study abroad programs foster or seek to foster forms of global mindedness. In these studies, it is common for researchers to interview study abroad participants and ask them to reflect on their recent experience, transformations, and learning. In this chapter, we took an alternative and slightly experimental qualitative approach to dig into the processes of becoming globally minded. Using existing and documented narratives as data, we examined the life-long learning processes of thirteen “distinguished global scholars.” Our study illuminates the formative and transformative experiences that contributed to these scholars’ global mindedness. Five common themes emerged from our document analysis: (1) Experiencing war and/or political tension; (2) Encountering social injustice; (3) Inspiration from pedagogical and personal relations; (4) Engaging with socio-cultural difference; and (5) Leaving the familiar / reaching out to the unknown. The findings and discussion deepen the understanding of how global mindedness is developed and offers insights for educational interventions.

2.1 Introduction

Under heightened global connectivity, migration, and cultural/educational flows of recent decades (Appadurai, 1996; Rizvi, 2009; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) forms of global/international education have gained much prominence (Tarc 2013a, 2019; Mannion et al., 2011; Merryfield, 2012; Pike, 2008). Increasingly, we hear demands that schooling should develop students who are globally knowledgeable and aware, students with a sense of responsibility to diverse others in an interdependent and precarious natural and human-made world. Various terms are used to describe these idealizations of what students are supposed to learn and how they are supposed to be; for example, we hear calls for education to develop learners who are “global citizens,” (Ledger et al.,
2019; Mannion et al., 2011), “internationally-minded” (IBO, 2017) and globally competent (OECD, 2018; OME, 2015). While these terms (among others) have distinctive meanings / translations depending on their conceptual starting points and discursive interlocutors, they all basically refer to a set of learner dispositions that forms of global education aim to foster. In this study we use the term ‘global mindedness’ as an open overarching term to signify this idea of the desirable pedagogical effects or outcomes of global education. Rather than formalistically prescribing a fixed definition to the term, we seek to inductively examine global mindedness and how it develops via empirical manifestations (Kurusawa, 2007).

This grounded qualitative research orientation is important, because the rationales and prescriptions for developing globally minded students and prospective citizens tend to outrace deeper understandings of what ‘global-mindedness’ entails or ought to entail (Tarc et al., 2012). Indeed, in these educational discourses, too little is known about the formative and transformative experiences and lessons pivotal to developing global mindedness as a lifelong process. In this study, we take a step back from the dominant focus on idealizations of, and prescriptions for, global education, as well as school-based interventions (such as study abroad programs) for global mindedness. Rather, our priority is to illuminate in a more fundamental way the experiential and lifelong processes of becoming globally minded, by considering the experiences and reflections of globally minded educationalists, and specific to this study, a group of scholars who have advanced or are continuing to advance the United States-based global education movement. Our chosen objects of analysis are thirteen autobiographical or biographical narratives presented in the edited collection, The Global Education Movement: Narratives of Distinguished Global Scholars (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018).

Developing globally mindedness from an international experience has become a rising trend with secondary and post-secondary level students (pre-covid). Research studies on short-term study abroad with youth are plentiful (Twombly et al., 2012; Walters et al., 2016). Many of these studies draw upon the framework of ‘transformative learning’ with its goal of “perspective change” arising from reflection on experiences (Mezirow, 1991). Given that the ‘abroad’ experience seeks to catalyze new perspectives in students or even
to “change lives,” as study abroad marketing materials attest (Doerr, 2019), ‘transformative learning’ seems a logical fit. Nevertheless, research studies on short-term study abroad face a number of challenges, such as: the shortness/superficiality of the international experience itself, the reliance on self-reporting in the data collection phase, and the lack of time for students to appreciate how the experience has or has not had an impact (Tarc, 2013a; Kiely, 2004). Tarc (2013a) found that even teachers who have spent considerable years living overseas struggle to understand and articulate the existential impacts of their experience and how they have, or have not, become more worldly or interculturally aware. Additionally, ‘transformative learning’ has been somewhat vernacularized from its development as a theoretical construct and can come to stand in for just any ‘good’ learning (Newman, 2012). On the other hand, the model developed by Mezirow (1991), arose from his own grounded theorizing of a specific bounded case (Biasin, 2018) and yet it has sometimes been taken as a stable category to tautologically organize data analysis, rather than as a heuristic for empirical testing and scrutiny.

This study takes a different tack from conducting yet another set of participant interviews with relatively young sojourners, who are asked to reflect on the ‘transformative’ effects of their ‘abroad’ experience. We consider the phenomenon of changing one’s perspective from an (auto) biographical stance, and across a longer temporal arc. We ask: how is global mindedness developed and how does it manifest? Rather than basing knowledge claims on study abroad students’ short-term experiences and their attendant ‘on demand’ reflections, this study engages the narratives of globally minded scholar-educators who have had considerable experiences, time, perspective, and both conceptual and material resources to critically reflect upon their own ‘global’ learning and investments in and through global education. Finally, this study takes an alternative and slightly experimental methodological approach within global education. It moves away from the more common approach of generating first-person accounts through interviews, to consider the global scholar narratives as already-existing data, circumscribed within an edited collection. While the content in each narrative may not contain all the relevant data we are seeking, there is also an upside: since we didn’t orchestrate the conditions that produced the data, we have not had any influence on this data source itself. In examining already-existing narratives from globally minded, life-long educators, we avoid shaping
the participant narratives from our own conscious and subconscious perspectives/frames. Our biases/frames then do not enter until the analysis phase.

The term ‘makes’ in the question posed in our title, 'what makes a distinguished global scholar…?', can be read in two ways. First, it can point to the criteria used to be recognized as a distinguished global scholar in the domain of late 20th century-based global education. The edited collection addresses this reading, via documentations of the significant contributions these scholar-educators have made to the field of global education in the United States. Second, ‘makes’ can refer to the enabling conditions and processes of becoming a globally minded scholar/educationalist. Our study focuses on this second meaning, as in, what larger histories and personal experiences make and shape such a globally minded scholar-educator. Specifically, by analyzing the biographical and autobiographical accounting in each of the book’s chapters, we illuminate common (and unique) features of experience and ‘perspective change’ that have made these scholars leaders in global education. Our textual analysis is guided by the following core research questions:

1. What were the significant experiences of these individuals in becoming globally minded scholars?

2. What features do these experiences have in common and what are some of their unique qualities?

3. How does the process of becoming globally minded, based on these scholars’ narratives, reflect, or challenge the idea of transformative learning?

Beyond the primary contribution of the analysis presented in our Findings section, the Discussion, via research question three, explores the usefulness of transformative learning as a framework to understand the making of the globally minded scholar-educators profiled in the edited collection. Following this introduction, this chapter has five subsequent sections. First, as a point of entry and as a working frame to illuminate the making of globally minded scholars, we discuss the intersections of global education and transformative learning. Next, we outline our methodological approach and detail our
method of analyzing the autobiographical and biographical accounts. The penultimate section presents the findings of our analysis of the narratives; and, in our final section, we discuss the implications and significance of our findings and study as a whole.

2.2 Framing: Global education and transformative learning

As more basic research, our focus is to enhance thicker and more nuanced understandings on the potential pedagogical effects of global education, a phenomenon that we call ‘global mindedness’ in this study. We seek to shed light on the experiential processes of becoming globally minded and how such processes align with transformative learning theory, which is a dominant framework to research ‘study abroad’ practices and global education more generally. In this section we explicate how we understand the relations between global education and transformative learning.

On the practical level, the seeking of international/global experiences, often through international mobility programs, has been a consistent theme in global education (Ramaswamy & Ramaswamy, 2016; Wilson, 1986). In the US context, institutionalized study abroad can date back to as early as the 1920s, though its roots can be traced even further back to the grand tour tradition among the elite class in the United States (Contreras, 2015; Dietrich, 2018). Advocates of global education often call for the integration of international or intercultural experiences into curriculum (Cook, 2016; Dervin & Gross, 2016; Lai et al., 2014; Muller, 2012). Study abroad experiences are often promoted under the labels of ‘transformative’ and ‘life-changing’, but these labels and their supporting discourses have also attracted critical scrutiny (Chakravarty et al., 2020; Michelson & Álvarez Valencia, 2016; Moreno, 2021). Are certain experiences intrinsically transformative? What features make an experience ‘transformative’ or ‘life changing’? When these questions are left unanswered, a self-reported ‘transformation’ or ‘life-changing’ experience counts little more than empty signifiers put in the mouths of study abroad participants’ to describe their learning. The logic and assumptions behind the practice of predetermining transformative experiences are highly questionable (Tarc, 2013). In the study abroad industry, Doerr (2019) criticizes the “hierarchy of experience” (p. 100), according to which certain experiences labeled as ‘immersive’ are more beneficial to participants, and have higher life-changing potential, than the ‘non-
immersive’ ones. She argues that the immersive/non-immersive dichotomy is often based
on assumptions that the study abroad students come from a homogenous home society on
the one hand, and the romanticized image of an also homogenous but culturally foreign
host community on the other. Considering these questions and critiques, we take a more
cautionary stance in our analysis of experiences. First, we view experience in its broader
sense, beyond the limits of institutionalized learning activities. Second, we as researchers
do not intentionally privilege certain experiences over others simply because they are
more popular or held in higher regard by current global education discourse. Instead, we
try to follow the narrators’ interpretations on the qualities and significance of each
experience. We are open to the possibility that certain experiences can be life-changing or
transformative in the direction of global mindedness. To understand transformation
through cycles of experience, reflection, and learning, we turn to Mezirow’s (1991)
transformative learning theory.

Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991) has become an increasingly popular
framework of research studies within global education where focused on the desired
effects of international/intercultural experiences. Like experiential learning theory (Kolb,
1978), the theory of transformative learning, or perspective transformation, conceives of
learning as a meaning making process built upon lived experience (Mezirow, 1991).
Cranton (2006) also notes that “we develop or construct personal meaning from our
experience and validate it through interaction and communication with others” (p. 23).
Experiences, however, have two different roles according to Mezirow’s theory: (1) to
form ‘meaning perspectives’ or ‘frames of reference’, which are “structures of epistemic,
cultural, and the psychic assumptions within which our past experiences assimilate and
transforms new experiences” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 62); and (2) to disrupt and potentially
transform these meaning perspectives to “make them more inclusive, discriminating,
open, reflective and emotionally able to change” (Mezirow, 2009, p. 116). Adult learning
is regarded as more experiential in nature (Mezirow, 2012), and when an adult learner
encounters a new experience, two scenarios may occur. In the first scenario, the new
experience acquires meaning through, and in turn, validates an existing meaning
perspective, usually formed since childhood; in the second scenario, the new experience
does not fit into any available meaning perspective, thus causing confusion in the learner, and leading to a ‘disorienting dilemma’ (Mezirow, 1978, 1991, 2009).

Transformative learning scholars generally believe that this *disorienting dilemma* represents the beginning, or initial stage, of a lengthy process of perspective transformation. As Mezirow (1991) summarizes, the process “involves a sequence of learning activities that begins with a disorienting dilemma and concludes with a changed self-concept that enables a reintegration into one’s life context [with] a new perspective” (p. 193). The transformation process has been concretized by the following 10-stage model (Mezirow, 2008, p. 92):

1. A disorienting dilemma.

2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame.


4. Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared.

5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and action.

6. Planning a course of action.

7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plan.

8. Provisional trying of new roles.


10. A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s new perspective.

The growing popularity of transformative learning theory in educational discourses in recent years, as Finnegan (2019) highlights, is likely due to the “transformative times” we are living through, catalyzed by education’s unpreparedness for the “pressing challenges of an ever more tightly meshed, unequal, and interdependent world” (p. 107). In some
sense, the longer running 20th century global education movement arose from a growing awareness of a shrinking world with problems that required international perspective and solutions (Meras, 1932). In the edited collection we are examining in this study, Kirkwood-Tucker (2018) provides an updated articulation in her Introduction:

In education, the impact of globalization on humanity necessitates a paradigm shift that will empower youth in the United States and other nations with a deep knowledge of the world, a positive attitude toward those perceived as different, and a sense of responsibility to the world community. (p. xix)

This “paradigm shift” that global education strives to bring about resonates with the perspective transformation that transformative learning theory is dedicated to understanding and promoting. In this way, global education seeks transformative learning.

Thus, it is not surprising to witness the growing trend in global education research that employs transformative learning theory to frame learning outcomes and explain research findings. Since individual experiences are central to transformative learning, these studies often concern learning through international or intercultural experiences, the ‘experiential’ side of global education. In these studies, researchers often interview university students (McDowell et al., 2012; Sathe & Geisler, 2017; Seifen et al., 2019), teacher candidates (Dunn et al., 2014; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011), or new teachers (Martin & Griffiths, 2014) who have participated in global educational activities such as study abroad or global service learning. Drawing on transformative learning as a construct or more comprehensively as a conceptual framework, researchers aim to show if and how their participants have been positively transformed.

As stated, this type of research has significant limitations. Most of the international experiences reported in these studies only cover a short period of time, often less than a year (Walters et al., 2016; Witkowsky & Mendez, 2018). The course of perspective transformation, however, can take much longer (Cranton, 2016, Kegan, 2009). Some researchers resort to focusing on the initial stage of a transformative learning process (Dunn et al., 2014; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011), while others leave the process and its
various phases largely undiscussed. Kiely (2004), as an important counter-example, takes a longitudinal approach by following a group of participants over several years; his study finds that initial notions of how a participant is transformed by the international experience may be premature given participant practices over the longer term. Similarly, in two other studies (Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011; Sathe & Geisler, 2017), the researchers trace the participants over a relatively long period. Both studies also show that participant interpretations change across time. Such revelation inevitably troubles findings from research conducted within short time frames.

Additionally, transformative learning can come to represent a wide spectrum from instrumental learning, personal empowerment, to critical consciousness raising toward systemic transformation; at times, liberal-humanist and critical (Freirean) perspectives are conflated. As far as learning results are concerned, many of these studies conclude that participants have experienced at least some extent of transformation, largely within the personal empowerment (liberal) frame. The content of transformation can range from increased self-awareness, enhanced personal efficacy and cultural understanding (Mwebi & Brigham, 2009), a high assessment score in critical reflection (Walters et al., 2016), increased confidence and cultural competence (Dunn et al., 2014) to development of visual literacy competency (Seifen et al., 2019). These research findings range from abstract ideas to concrete test scores, from researchers’ theorization and abstraction to quotes from participants’ verbatim answers. What they tend to share in common is the label of transformation, thus provoking the decade-old question “what form transforms?” (Kegan, 2000, 2018).

When academic theories become influential and popularized, they tend to be prone to various interpretation and being used for purposes unintended by their original authors. Mezirow’s theory, as Kegan (2018) argues, is no exception as “[t]ransformation begins to refer to any kind of change or process at all” (p. 35). Many critiques launched at transformative learning also target the theory’s ‘openness’. Newman (2012), for instance, argues that transformative learning theory is no longer needed since any ‘good learning’ is transformative. Illeris (2014a) also points out the risk of transformative learning becoming a ‘floating signifier’ if the concept continues to be interpreted in many ways.
For our analytical purposes, we focus on the notion of ‘perspective change’ as the core of transformative learning. ‘Perspective’ in our conception refers to the entire constellation of values and beliefs that form one’s identity and shape one’s habit of thinking as well as behaviour. According to Cranton (2016), “[e]ach perspective is made up of interwoven beliefs, values, feelings, and assumptions that together create the lens through which we see the world and form the basis for our actions in the world” (p. 28). These belief and value systems may be consciously learned through explicit lessons or unconsciously acquired through experiences and they, in turn, serve as filters of subsequent experiences from which meaning is derived. Our conception of perspective is a close proximation of ‘meaning perspective’ and ‘frame of reference’ in Mezirow’s (2009) theory, but it also corresponds to the ‘mind’ of global mindedness. On the conscious level are expressed opinions or ‘points of view’ (Mezirow, 2009). Changed opinions may result from perspective transformation but they cannot be used alone as evidence of transformative learning.

A perspective transformation only becomes evident when certain ‘habits of mind’ (Mezirow, 2009) are considerably shifted or renewed. Habits of mind are usually tacit and below awareness until the expected experience compels the learner to call them into question. However, since they are deeply rooted mental structures, habits of mind cannot be expected to shift drastically overnight, which leads to our next premise that the process of perspective transformation usually happens over a long period of time. As researchers, we intend to identify and uncover perspective transformation through narratives that cover such long periods. Drawing on Mezirow (1978, 1991, 2009), we try to identify and investigate the key components/phases during a perspective transformation to understand its process, including disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, informed action, and competent reintegration. Worth mentioning is that Mezirow (2009) uses ethnocentrism as an example of a ‘habit of mind’, which is set against global mindedness. Since our research is based on the premise that the 13 scholars are globally minded, at least in some ways, we accept their claims of perspective transformation and focus on the experiences and processes that led to their evolved perspectives/mindedness.
2.3 Methodology, methods, and data sources

Aligned with a qualitative, interpretive research methodology, this study seeks an in-depth understanding of how individuals experience and make sense of their lives across time as storied and epistemically inter-subjective (shaped by their relations with others). Interpretivism is a major educational research paradigm (Scotland, 2012). Its ontological position is relativistic, conceiving external reality as subjectively encountered and thereby constructed at the level of representation; its epistemology is subjectivism, that meaning is “constructed through the interaction between consciousness and the world” (p. 11). According to Cohen et al. (2002), the interpretive paradigm “is characterized by a concern for the individual” (p. 22), where researchers endeavour to understand the phenomenon from within. Thanh and Thanh (2015) also note that the interpretive paradigm “allows researchers to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants” (p. 24). In our study, we do not have any ‘participant’ in the conventional sense. Nevertheless, we still work to understand each global scholar’s experiences from the emic perspective of the author.

Qualitative research, according to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), is “a systematic process by which we know more about something than we did before engaging the process” (p. 5). “Engaging” indicates the role of researcher as the primary instrument, while “systematic” means the researcher needs to carefully design the course of investigation and follow a plan. Our approach of using pre-existing narratives in an edited collection as data is somewhat experimental in global education. Nevertheless, the use of documents, including (auto)biographies, is not uncommon in qualitative research (Coffey). As Patton (2015) notes, qualitative inquiry is about meaning making, and one of its major contributions is “capturing stories to understand people’s perspectives and experiences” (p. 12). Researchers may capture stories presented in various forms by using diverse approaches. In the case of this study, we as researchers were also actively involved in the process of determining the credibility and usefulness of data, as well as selecting what sections of the book chapters would be analysed as data, according to our research purpose and practical concerns such as time, cost, and accessibility.
Our study could also be considered a secondary qualitative data analysis in the sense that it “involves the re-use of pre-existing qualitative data derived from previous research studies” (Heaton, 2008, p. 34). In our case, however, the edited collection is not a research study, the narratives as ‘data’ included in the book were created and edited for purposes different from our research. In terms of the mode of analysis, our data was acquired through the mode approximate to ‘formal data sharing’ (Heaton, 2008), because the narratives are formally published and thus accessible to the public.

Our eventual choice of the edited collection as our source of data may result in limitations commonly faced by qualitative researchers who use documents in their research. Some limitations of using documents, as Merriam and Tisdell (2015) outline, include the incompleteness of available materials from a research perspective, the information contained in the documents being not useful to the investigator, and the lack of means to determining the authenticity and accuracy of documents. These are legitimate concerns for document-based research in general and are relevant to our study; nevertheless, we believe that these limitations, while present, did not undermine the feasibility or credibility of our research given our objectives. Conversely, using documentary data has inherent advantages such as the stability of material, easy accessibility, and reduced time and effort spent in gathering data (Bowen, 2009). Moreover, we believe that the authority of the editors and narrators offer credibility and authenticity; these narratives, while performed for the imagined readership, were attempting to accurately portray how these scholars developed and how they contributed to global education. Our focus on the former is less about their successes and more about the stories they have told themselves and others about their formation as globally-minded scholars.

2.3.1 The narratives

In the context of qualitative research, the term ‘narrative’ may have various meanings. In narrative inquiry, for instance, narrative is an inquiry method that “names the structured quality of experiences to be studied” and “names the patterns of inquiry for its study” while “story” refers to the phenomenon (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). According to Cohen (2018), narratives are one type of discourse and therefore share generic
characteristics of discourses as language practices of meaning representation that “are both located in, and create, their own contexts” (p. 686). A narrative, or narrative discourse, has its own unique features including “a purpose, a plot, and a human element” (Denscombe, 2014, cited in Cohen, 2018, p. 694). In our study, each narrative is a life story (McAdams, 2008), a collection of personal stories of experiences, lived by one scholar. These narratives are also condensed forms of life histories due to the space limitation in the edited collection, with 12 narratives all fitting into a book of less than 500 pages. Presumably, to best fit the book’s purpose, each narrative only includes brief and highly selective accounts of personal experiences. The purpose of creating the collection of narratives is stated by the editor in the Genesis of Book:

First, […] to honor the professional achievements in and contributions to global international education of [the 13 scholars included in the book]; [second,] to offer globally minded individuals, educators, scholars, administrators, and policymakers in the United States and other nations an opportunity to learn about the multitude of [global educational] professional activities, teachings, partnerships, exchange programs and research […]; [third,] to expose educators across the world to empowering role models [set by these 13 scholars]; [and fourth,] to celebrate the Distinguished Global Scholar Program of the International Assembly of the National Council for the Social Studies [or NCSS, the organization that awarded the 13 scholars the Distinguished Scholar Award from 2005 to 2016]. (pp. xi-xii)

Most of these narratives are autobiographical, with four exceptions regarding the four scholars who had already passed away when the edited collection was composed. First, Kirkwood-Tucker (2018 a), the editor of the collection, wrote the biography for James Becker, in which Becker’s first-person recounting of his personal life was included and organized chronologically. Second, Barbara Cruz (2018) wrote the biography for the major professor of her doctoral program and a long-time mentor, Jan Tucker; she explained: “Over the years, as my relationship with my major professor deepened, I gathered the pieces that started to fill in his life story” (p. 38). The third account is the combined narrative of a scholar couple, Charlotte and the late Lee Anderson, penned by
Charlotte Anderson (2018) in an autobiographic style. The author states at the beginning of the narrative that she is “absolutely certain that Lee would have a variant on the story” (p. 60), but she is also convinced that the best option is to tell a story for both her and her late husband, which she characterizes as “a love story.” The fourth and last exception, also unique in its own right, is Kenneth Tye’s biography written by his wife Barbara Benham Tye (2018); she uses the first-person point of view, so it reads like an autobiography. Apart from these four, each narrative is a scholar’s autobiographical account of his or her own life trajectory from childhood to their contributions as distinguished scholar in the global education movement.

2.3.2 Methods of data analysis

The research questions were used to determine which sections of narrative content were relevant to be included in the analysis. From this filtering phase, our method of analysis was inductive in “establish[ing] patterns or themes” (Creswell, 2006, p. 37) emerging from the coding of the relevant sections. Thematic analysis and document analysis were the two major methodological strands that informed our analytic strategy. Document analysis, according to Bowen (2009), “is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents” (p. 27). The procedure “involves skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination), and interpretation” (p. 32).

As Bowen (2009) notes, the process of document analysis may involve content analysis and thematic analysis. In this study we mainly employed a thematic analysis approach to identify themes from the narratives. Our analytic method is primarily inductive in the sense that “data coding and analysis is a bottom-up approach and is driven by what is in the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p.58). However, as Braun and Clarke (2012) point out, a purely inductive approach that completely ignores the semantic content of research data would be impossible in the actual analytic process. In our research, the initial and preliminary content analysis overlapped with skimming and reading in the aforementioned procedure of document analysis, during which we intended to identify “meaningful and relevant passages of text” (Bowen, 2009, p. 32). For each chapter in the book, we first skimmed through the text in large chunks, and ranked each section as ‘high priority’, ‘low priority’ or ‘uncertain’, based on its relevance to our research questions.
Since all our research questions concern experiences, sections within each scholar’s narrative, which focus on topics such as publications, projects accomplished, awards and endorsements received, were marked as ‘low priority’. On the other hand, sections that contain first-person, descriptive and detailed accounts of experiences were given high priority. After skimming, we went back to a closer read of each chapter. This time we would focus on identifying the specific content relevant to our research questions, especially contents of the ‘uncertain’ sections worthy of analytic attention. We also tried to verify if the sections marked as ‘low priority’ might contain any valuable information that we would otherwise miss. We also took casual notes on the potential codes that might come out of the data, thus paving the way for the next phase.

Through our preliminary analysis by skimming and reading, we became familiar with the entire thirteen chapters and identified passages most meaningful and relevant to our research questions. Next, we began to conduct a thematic analysis, following a procedure from Braun and Clarke (2012) that includes generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing, then defining and naming themes.

During the phase of generating initial codes, we read each chapter again. In this round of reading, we assigned initial codes to each experience highlighted in the previous round. In line with the inductive and data-driven nature of a thematic analysis, we focus on “coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.83). Occasionally, multiple codes were assigned to the same experience. For example, Jim Becker’s experience of fighting WWII in Germany as a tank commander had five codes, including ‘leaving home first time at age of 22’, ‘travel across Atlantic with US Army’, ‘fighting War in Germany’, ‘Russian soldiers repaired Jim’s tank’ and ‘Victory Day, significant incident’. By the end of this phase, we put all the codes from one scholar’s narrative together and created a table that includes codes from each scholar (Appendix A).

Then we began to search for themes, first by connecting codes from each scholar’s narrative, and afterwards by comparing similar codes across narratives. For example, a potential theme ‘international mobility’ came out of codes that we had identified from
Kirkwood-Tucker’s narrative including ‘study visit to Japan’, ‘conference in Russia’, ‘school visits in Siberia/Russia’, ‘fellowship in China’, ‘travel-study in Vietnam and Nepal’, ‘leading student exchange/homestay program to Russian’, ‘conference trips to Korea and Germany’. Then by comparing similar codes across narratives, we found that the theme regarding international travel appeared in most of the scholars’ narratives. In relation to our research questions one and two, we marked the theme as a potential pattern of significant experiences.

After having identified a number of potential common themes across narratives, we started the phase of reviewing themes. During this phase, we first checked whether the common themes were significant in the context of each related narrative. Then we put together all the codes from related narratives that confirmed the significance of a common theme to check the theme’s coherence across these narratives. In this reviewing process, we dropped a few potential ‘pattern of significant experiences’ identified in the previous stage, such as ‘a desire to break free’ and ‘leaving home for the first time at a young age’, due to their lack of coherence or lack of supportive evidence from narratives. Another potential theme, ‘lucky encounters, accidental decisions and taking chances’, was also dropped simply because it could not tell a meaningful story to elucidate our research questions. We also reviewed minor themes and, where possible, combined overlapping ones into major themes.

Good themes, according to Braun and Clarke (2012), “should ideally have a singular focus”, “are related but do not overlap” and “directly address your research questions” (p. 66). In the phase of defining and refining themes, we examined the scope and content of each theme in relation to the other themes and our research questions, to ensure that each theme is clearly defined, not overly complex, and has a meaningful ‘story’ to tell. Still, these themes are connected to each other, and the ‘story’ from each theme can be put together to tell a larger story. In this phase we redefined and fine-tuned a few previously identified themes. For example, we found the theme ‘international trips, moving and migration’ rather awkward, and changed it to ‘leaving the familiar and reaching out to the unknown’.
A final note on the methodology is that in our analysis process, the phases of analysis mentioned above were used as a general guideline. No phase in the thematic analysis procedure was singled out as clear-cut or separated from other phases. While reviewing themes, we kept going back to the codes and their textual content to check if the evidence was clear and sufficient. When we decided to drop a theme, we would re-examine its corresponding codes to determine if they were still relevant to our research questions and, if so, they could be reassigned to support other themes or form a new theme.

In the actual work of data analysis, we treated the process of a thematic analysis neither as linear nor stand-alone. The process was circular in the sense that after the first round through which we had identified and named five themes, we ran the process again with another read of each scholar’s narrative to review the themes. Meanwhile, we also ran through codes identified in the previous round and attempted to identify new and potential themes. As Bowen (2009) notes, when doing document analysis, researchers “should establish the meaning of the document and its contribution to the issue being explored”, and they also “should consider the original purpose of the document” (p. 33). A critical re-reading helped assess the quality of the initial findings and paved the way for consolidating the findings presented next.

2.4 Findings: Features of experience toward global mindedness

The thirteen scholars included in the book experienced distinct life trajectories before coming into their leadership roles in global education in the United States. Not surprisingly, each had unique and impactful experiences that shaped their identity and perspective. Nevertheless, in considering these diverse experiences, a few common patterns emerge, in part, because of the somewhat shared larger conditions and contexts in which their experiences were embedded.

In this section, we report the experiences and reflections of each scholar as represented by the author of the chapter. The specific claims made on the individual scholar’s history, experiences and/or insights, thus, come directly from the accounts presented in the chapters and are not our speculations as the analysts. For readability, we do not
constantly include phrases as ‘according to the author’ or ‘as reported in the book chapter.’ Five core themes emerged from our analysis of the life narratives shared in the chapters as follows:

1) Experiencing war and/or political tension

2) Encountering social injustice

3) Inspiration from pedagogical and personal relations

4) Engaging with socio-cultural difference

5) Leaving the familiar / reaching out to the unknown

2.4.1 Experiencing war and political tension

Multiple scholars reflected on the significance of their experiences with wars and conflict, as these experiences prompted their reconsideration of the role of education and encouraged their involvement in the global education movement. Two of them, James Becker and Toni Fuss Kirkwood-Tucker, experienced WWII directly. At the age of 22, James Becker joined the US army and fought the war in Europe from 1942 to 1945. Participation in the War was life-changing, as he noted: “The dramatic newscasts leading up to the War and participating in the War as a tank commander in the liberation of Europe were major influences on my career and focus on international and global politics and education” (Kirkwood-Tucker & Goldstein, 2007, p. 10, cited in Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018a, p. 6).

Across his life history it is possible to identify a perspective transformation. His pre-war education instilled in him a relatively uncritical frame of reference regarding conflicts among nations and a citizen’s role in these conflicts: “Having first learned about war in the 1920’s when patriotic fervor engendered by World War I was still in vogue, I probably acquired attitudes about such conflicts and impressions without serious thought” (Becker, n.d., cited in Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018a, p. 27). Participating in the War, however, completely challenged this frame of reference he had acquired since the aftermath of WWI. He might have had a series of critical incidents as an American
soldier crossing the Atlantic and fighting in Europe, which triggered self-examination and critical reflection. Then a pivotal moment came on the Victory Day. He noted that he was relieved but was without joy after witnessing “too much destruction and human misery” (Becker, 2006, p. 51, cited in Kirkwood-Tuckera, 2018, p. 5). After the War, his perspective on conflicts and international relations became transformed: “Seeing the results of war convinced me that war is not the last resort as politicians were telling us, but a futile way to seek to resolve conflicts among nations.” (Kirkwood-Tucker & Goldstein, 2007, p. 10, cited in Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018, p. 2) From this point on, he was resolved to prevent wars among nations and took up education as the way to work for a more peaceful world.

The other scholar reporting first-hand experiences with WWII is Kirkwood-Tucker (2018b). She grew up in Germany during the Nazi era. She recalled the tragedies she witnessed as a child when her relatives and neighbours lost their loved ones to the War. The fear she had when Allied bombers flew pass her village has stuck in her memory throughout her life. These childhood experiences alongside the influence of her dissident father, who, in solidarity with Jewish people, secretly rebelled against the Nazi regime, were formative. Similar to Becker, personal and direct experiences with the War informed her strong opposition to war and her commitments to global education.

Although never having participated directly, other scholars, including the Andersons and Kenneth Tye, also shared vivid memories from the time of WWII. When writing about hers and her husband’s childhood years, scholar Charlotte Anderson mentions how the War arrived at their hometown “in the form of 10-year-old boys defending the ‘Home Front’, prisoners of war (POWs) working the fields, and internment of Japanese Americans” (C. Anderson, 2018, p. 60). She also mentions the difference between her real-life encounters with the POWs and the message received from the mainstream political discourse: “While I dimly recall that they were friendly to me, I also recall nightmares in which these farm workers reverted to my vision of the frightening ‘goose-stepping soldiers’ shown in newsreels at the local movie theatre” (p. 61). While still a boy, Lee Anderson would “ride his horse regularly out into the desert to watch for any Japanese soldiers who (as propaganda implied) may have made it to Idaho from their
purported west coast landing” (C. Anderson, 2018, p.60). According to Charlotte Anderson (2018), Jan Tucker also had similar experience of self-appointed patrols on the east coast. Similarly, being a schoolboy, Tye’s experience of WWII came through his volunteer work as an aircraft spotter. “After learning the shape of every kind of Japanese and American aircraft, my assigned partner Mrs. Crane and I would climb up to the roof of the legion hall three times a week and scan the sky for our allotted 6 hours” (Tye, 2018, p. 201).

The experiences with WWII were not limited to the years of the War itself, but also its aftermath and lingering effects. For example, Lee Anderson witnessed allied soldiers patrolling downtown Vienna when he was studying in the still occupied Austria (C. Anderson, 2018). Hahn’s (2018) uncle served in the US army and was posted in the postwar Germany. Ken Tye taught in postwar Germany in the 1950s, and according to his description, “even 10 years after [Victory in Europe] Day […] every town and city still showed signs of the war: bombed-out buildings and rubble everywhere” (B. Tye, 2018, p.202). Wilson (2018) recalls her father having “been involved in planning town hall meetings” (p. 292) in the last years of the War. Also, during a summer job at a Cleveland settlement house camp, she worked with Udo, a camp counselor from Germany: “I remember Udo telling us about the Russians arriving at Berlin at the end of World War II” (p. 293). To these scholars, their postwar experiences often served as a reminder of the devastation of War and how deep a mark it had left on world history and the collective memory of people from near and far.

When narrating their formative experiences, many scholars in the book also recount the impact on their socialization during other conflicts. These were historical periods of international conflicts, when political tensions were high between the US and other nations. Two such signature times mentioned in many narratives were the Cold War and the Vietnam War.

In her autobiography, Hahn describes memories from growing up in the atmosphere of the Cold War, including the Cuban missile crisis. Even more impactful was the Vietnam war, as she expressed:
…it was the Vietnam War that was the darkest cloud hanging over my generation. While female students, like myself, were enjoying the extracurricular activities of high school and college, our brothers, boyfriends, and male classmates were haunted about what they would do after they registered for the draft at age 18 (Hahn, 2018, p. 328).

While Hahn showed her deep concern about the Vietnam War as a student, Grossman (2018) actively opposed the War as a young scholar. He joined a group of scholars who were “concerned about America’s involvement in [Vietnam]” (p. 266). Both Grossman and Wilson also noted the missile crisis in the narratives. Unlike Hahn, however, they were both abroad when the incident occurred. Grossman was studying in India and got a taste of the incident from the perspective of the “Other”. In his own words, “the crisis was literally over before we became aware of it in India” (Grossman, 2018, p. 262). Wilson was volunteering for the Peach Corp in Liberia during the missile crisis, when she became concerned about her family and cities back home that might become targets of a potential Russian nuclear attack.

As the only African scholar included in the book, Josiah Tlou (2018) experienced the impact of war and tension between pre-independent African nations and their colonial powers (Rhodesia and Britain in his case). Tlou’s case is unique because it represents the intersection of three themes, the first being conflict and war, the second social injustice and the third, migration. It shows the interconnection between themes identified in our analysis. The unfair treatment of Africans in Rhodesia resulted in struggles that escalated into “guerrilla warfare waged by African nationalists” (Tlou, 2018, p. 220). Then the Smith government’s unilateral declaration of independence served as a tipping point that intensified anticolonial warfare on the one hand, and the torturing and locking up of dissenting Africans on the other. Tlou escaped Rhodesia right before this tipping point, thanks to an opportunity to study in America, and thus avoided being arrested for “[having] openly opposed . . . the policies and practices of segregation” (Tlou, 2018, p. 221). One of his brothers and a brother-in-law of his were murdered by the colonial regime. Tlou’s trip to America, or “escape” from Rhodesia in his own words, was a turning point in his life and led to subsequent experiences that further shaped and, to
some extent, transformed his worldview and perspective. We will return to these experiences later, but it is important to notice their link to the political tensions and conflicts in the place where he grew up.

2.4.2 Encountering social injustice

Related to experiences with war and conflicts are personal encounters with social injustice such as racism and gender inequality. Many scholars have mentioned incidents from their personal experiences living through times marked by social unrest and injustice, and the impact such experiences have had on their lives and careers. The most telling example comes from the narrative of Tlou, who was born and raised in the former British colony of (Southern) Rhodesia. Growing up as an African under the British colonial rule, he experienced racial segregation and other forms of discrimination firsthand. He vividly describes these firsthand experiences of racism in his narrative. One telling example is the layout of the church, which visually represented the discrimination towards Africans in its crudest form:

The physical structure of the church was divided into European and African sections. There was no ceiling on the African side […] The seats were planks and boards that were movable. The European side had comfortable pews, chairs and a ceiling (Tlou, 2018, p. 219).

When once he and a friend attempted to sit on the European side of the church because the African section had been fully occupied, they were made to feel “greatly intimidated” and “uneasy throughout the service” by the humiliating staring from audience and the preacher’s reference of the devil’s way in people who assumed “seats which were not reserved for them” (p. 219). Tlou also describes the unjust political system in Rhodesia, which assigned privileges exclusively to European settlers and denied Africans their rights to participate in governance, especially when the political tensions were high, and the colonial state was desperate to crush any resistance from local Africans: “Rhodesia was a police state if you were a Black person” (p. 220).
The other scholars in the study are of European heritages. They were not direct victims of racial discrimination. However, many of them also recount their experiences as witnesses of colonial and race-based injustice. Charlotte Anderson’s early-life encounters with Natives Americans triggered her reflection on the deficits of the educational systems:

I recall being especially intrigued to see Native Americans [in a nearby town…] I am now perplexed – and hope I might have been then – why in our fourth-grade lessons on “Indians” our information came from the textbook without reference to our own knowledge of or experiences with these nearly “neighbors” (Anderson, 2018, p. 61).

Anderson (2018) also recounts her experience with racism as a student teacher, when she taught at “an all-or-mostly Black elementary school” that “had recently served a white community” (p. 69). She was rather uncomfortable with the demonstration given by a white male teacher on “how to use the sharp edge of my ruler to strike the hand of any ‘bad’ student I was sure to encounter” (p. 69). She also recalls the “flash of anger” she felt every time she drove through the racially divided Chicago neighbourhoods (p. 70).

Merry Merryfield (2018) grew up during “a time of overt racism”, as she recalls in her autobiography: “One of the transformative moments in my childhood was an experience when the everyday racism of my community led me to literally walk over Black bodies [protesting in front of a theatre]” (pp. 122-123). She then goes on to describe the ‘theatre incident’ that occurred on a Saturday afternoon in 1961 when she and her friends went to see a movie:

As we walked towards the ticket box we saw Black students protesting segregation by lying on the [pavement] in front of the theater and singing freedom songs. They were not allowed inside as Knoxville was segregated. A white usher came out to lead us over and around Black young people into the movie. It was a profound moment as I realized the privilege I had because my skin was white. (Merryfield, 2018, p. 123).
Such childhood experiences had an impact on her later life, including her choice of study at the university: “In an effort to understand the racism of my world, I majored in history and took all the courses offered in ‘Black History’” (p. 123). Besides racism in American society, she also recounts social justice issues arising in Sierra Leone, from ethnic rivalries, abuse of power, human rights violations including female circumcision, to the British colonialism that “permeated the curriculum” in local schools (p. 125).

Kirkwood-Tucker (2018) uses the phrase “traumatizing experiences” (p. 151) to describe the racial discrimination she witnessed upon her arrival to the US from Germany. Her earlier notion of America as a land of freedom and equality was utterly “shocked by the blatant segregation that African Americans in the United States had to endure in their daily lives” (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018, p. 150).

A few scholars in the book also mention in their narratives instances of the gender-based discrimination they experienced. “Gender stereotypes were common in the 1950s”, notes Torney-Purta (2018), and “[s]cientific subjects were unwelcoming to females” (p. 365). She recalls an incident in which the high school chemistry teacher was reluctant to give her an A despite her outstanding performance in that class. Charlotte Anderson (2018) recalls an incident when the university refused to provide her a tuition rebate simply because her husband worked at the university. She also recounts her direct experience with sexism:

While all the men in my graduate-school “class” were inducted into a premier education honor society, Barbara Winston and I were not. This exclusion had nothing to do with our academic standing and everything to do with the fact that at that time the organization restricted membership to men only. (p. 72)

However, these women scholars were not kept down by these incidents. Torney-Purta (2018) eventually got the A she deserved from her high-school chemistry class, and against all odds, became a “data person” as she launched her life-long research career. Charlotte Anderson (2018) joined women’s rights groups to work on policy change towards gender equity in her faculty.
2.4.3 Inspiration from pedagogical and personal relations

A third pattern regards significant relationships that paved the way to becoming globally-minded scholars. These experiences include relations and influences from family, a childhood role model, a teacher, or a mentor who encouraged and inspired them to pursue a career in global education. Many scholars mention the formative influence of their families since childhood. Jim Becker recalled his childhood spent in a farming community: “Growing up in a community of farmers, where co-operatives were a way of conducting business, shaped my approach to life” (in Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018, p. 3). Similarly, Cogan (2018) mentions that through his parents and childhood experience of volunteer work on a dairy farm, he developed “a sense of hard work, responsibility, dedication, honesty and perseverance”, which gave him “a grounding that remains the foundation of my personal and professional life” (p. 100). Many scholars identify specific members from their family that strongly impacted their worldview formation. Jan Tucker had a “progressive” mother who loved photography (Cruz, 2018). John Cogan’s high school principal father served as his role model: “I admired my father a great deal and always wanted to emulate him” (Cogan, 2018, p. 100). Kirkwood-Tucker had a “dissident father” who secretly defied the Nazi regime and told his daughter never to salute Hitler neither in class nor on the street (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018). Although Wilson’s (2018) parents had never traveled outside the US when she was a child, she believes that “their roots had been previously watered by a larger world and thus they were able to give us both roots and wings” (p. 292). Hahn (2018) is grateful to her grandmother who “planted the idea that travel to other countries is a wonderful enriching experience” (p. 327). Torney-Purta (2018) writes about the influence she got from her mother, who “worked as a secretary for the authors of the book: *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno, et al., 1950)”: “Perhaps hanging out in this office after school or proofreading manuscripts with my mother shaped my later choice of a research focus” (Torney-Purta, 2018, p. 365).

Apart from family influences, the empowering and inspiring experiences often come from schooling. Despite their diverse life trajectories and experiences, most of the scholars followed a pattern of developing their global scholar identity, which can be summarized as a “student-teacher-scholar” pathway. A typical example comes from
Hahn’s (2018) summary of her career: “I was introduced to global education when I was a graduate student at Indiana University in the early 1970s, and I soon became a convert to the new movement” (p. 326). Other scholars, such as Tucker (Cruz, 2018), Cogan (2018), Ken Tye (B. Tye, 2018) and Grossman (2018) also got acquainted with key ideas of global education during their years of formative education, and their teaching experience deepened their understanding, leading to a life-long devotion to the movement.

However, the most impactful of their educational experiences can often be attributed to personal relations or encounters with respected teachers or mentors. These encounters could occur in their childhood, youth, or adulthood. For example, Ken Tye’s fourth-grade teacher, Miss Tviemto, introduced him to what he later understood to be “classic progressive pedagogy” through activities that “had a lasting impact” on his development (B. Tye, 2018, p. 200).

Lee Anderson remembered his high school principal, Mrs. Arms, who told him, “the best lesson he could possibly have had to learn that information without understanding, at best, is worthless, and, at worst, can have dire consequences” (C. Anderson, 2018, p. 62). That lesson was taught when Lee was a high school sophomore, who was “sent to the principal’s senior English classroom to sit and await discipline for some infraction” (p. 62). When the principal asked the class to recite a poem, Lee showed off in front of his senior schoolmates by reciting it with little difficulty. Then to his surprise, Mrs. Arms asked him to explain its meaning, which neutralized his ‘smart-alec’ answers.

For Cogan, it was his university professor Dr. Read, who had a direct influence on his career as a global scholar. From his autobiographical account, it seems quite accidental because initially he did not consider taking any Dr. Read’s Comparative Education course to finish his bachelor’s degree. Even when his father suggested Dr. Read’s courses, Cogan resisted. Eventually, however, these two last courses in Comparative Education turned out to be “both life-changing experiences” (Cogan, 2018, p. 102).

Below are a few more examples of important teachers and mentors. Jan Tucker learned from his university professor Dr. Teng to view “the human condition through the eyes of
Grossman (2018) got his life-changing experience of studying in India from Professor Hane at Knox College. When Tlou came to the US and began his undergraduate study, he took a class from Professor Schwarz, who inspired him to become a creative artist. Learning to make pottery was an empowering experience for Tlou; it enriched his life and became an expression of the *ubuntu* philosophy, as he puts, “at the end of the day I greatly appreciated the ability to merely create with my hands and mind” (Tlou, 2018, p. 222).

Besides parents, relatives and teachers, mentoring, empowerment, and inspiration also come from marriage partners, colleagues, and other significant relations.

In terms of marriage partners, some of the scholars mention their partners as someone working in the same field. A few scholar couples coauthored publications and collaborated on research projects. After his first wife’s untimely death, Jim Tucker “married Anna Sultanoff Ochoa, a colleague and prominent social studies educator at Indiana University” (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018, p. 4). Jan Tucker was Toni Kirkwood-Tucker’s major professor in graduate school. They got married later and worked together on various projects. Lee and Charlotte Anderson were another married couple who supported each other, and like Toni and Jan, they both received the Distinguished Global Scholar Award. However, Toni and Jan’s marriage came after a failed first marriage on both sides. The Andersons, on the other hands, had a life-long relationship and companionship. Apart from being colleagues later in life, Charlotte and Lee also had a shared early life of growing up in the same town, attending the same high school and both graduating from University of Idaho. Though not one of the ‘Distinguished Scholars’ herself, Barbara Tye wrote the biography of her late husband Kenneth. She and Ken first were colleagues, but later they got married, traveled to work together overseas, and worked together on various projects in the United States (B. Tye, 2018). Wilson (2018) and her husband, Jack, both worked for Peace Corps, and traveled together globally. Torney-Purta (2018) describes her husband Paul Purta, a fellow social studies scholar, as being “extraordinarily supportive” (p. 364) of her work.
These scholars also represent a loosely bound social and professional network. Below are just a few of the many examples documented in the narratives. Grossman (2018) took courses taught by Jan Tucker when he was a doctoral student as Stanford. While working at the East-West Center in Hong Kong, he invited other global education scholars such as Hahn, Merryfield and Cogan to work on collaborative projects. Merryfield (2018) acknowledges Jim Becker’s mentor role in her research career, as he provided her “with hands on experiences in researching global education across the Midwest” (p. 126). She also regards Angene Wilson as “an inspiration”, with whom she “shared a love of Africa and the Peace Corps experience” (p. 127). Apart from “the power of a mentor” (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018, p. 144) she got from her late husband Jan, Kirkwood-Tucker was also grateful for the encounters with “extraordinary global international scholars from all around the world” (p. 188) who had a special influence in her life. Torney-Purta (2018) recalls her first meeting with Lee Anderson, who introduced her into the field of research on global education, and how she began a “lasting friendship as well as a professional association” (p. 364) with Carole Hahn.

2.4.4 Engaging with socio-cultural difference

Engaging with differences is another pattern we identified from the narrated experiences of these global scholars. Merry Merryfield captures this theme well in her statement: “As I look back over my life, I find that my most critical learning came about as a result of interacting with people whose culture, experiences, or worldviews differed significantly from my own” (2018, p. 122). Under this theme are intercultural experiences, which can be acquired home or abroad, intentionally and unintentionally.

The unintentional engagement with diversities often occurred early in life and was associated with the not so ‘bounded’ or ‘culturally homogenous’ environment where the scholars grew up. For instance, Jan Tucker grew up in a “small but important railroad town” (Cruz, 2018, p. 39) and John Cogan (2018) recalls his childhood spent in an active shipping port. Kenneth Tye remembers growing up in Port Chicago, "a real melting pot [that] shaped my outlook" (B. Tye, 2018, p. 200). He played with other kids from Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Greek, and Swedish families, and in the 1930s, the town welcomed families from Oklahoma. Similarly, Grossman (2018) grew up in an "ethnically diverse
community” (p. 260) and Torney-Purta (2018) spent her childhood in a community both “racially and culturally diverse” (p. 365). Wilson (2018) recalls her family sending CARE package to Germany and getting wooden puppets in return. The global perspectives of these scholars may find their roots in the early exposure to differences as an integral part of their childhood experience, which they carried on into their adulthood and professional life. In the biography of Jan Tucker, Cruz (2018) mentions that according to Jan’s son, Jan would make friends with “outsiders” and “especially international people” (p. 40) wherever he lived. This engagement with differences can often be related to the family influence discussed in the previous section.

If the intercultural experiences in early life were largely unintentional, yet formative, the encounters with difference in adulthood were often more intentional and transformative upon reflection. More often than not, scholars chose to expose themselves to differences. These intentional exposures are often connected to another theme we identified, “leaving the familiar and reaching out to the unknown”, a theme we present in the following section. The overlapping of the two themes is another example that the themes we identified across narratives are distinct but interconnected. In the current theme, we focus less on physical mobilities and more on cultural flows and the willingness to learn about cultures, worldviews and philosophies as well as foreign educational systems and practices.

These encounters have transformative potential when they lead to expanded worldview or perspective change. For instance, Cogan (2018) remembers the first time he visited China for a comparative education seminar:

[…] I found the people to be completely different from anything I’d been led to believe by the U.S. media and press. Indeed, they were very much like myself. […] This experience ultimately led to my leading nine comparative education seminars to China for teachers and [scholars]. (p. 105)

Cogan’s story is an example of how intercultural encounters can stimulate critical reflection on one’s perspective. These experiences can also spur action and lead to
important career decisions. We will come back to discuss their significance in section Five.

Merryfield’s autobiography provides an even more telling example, where she recounts a moment from when she was teaching ninth grade world cultures and had invited a Nigerian guest speaker into her class. After the class, the speaker confided to her that the students “were not interested in the real Nigeria”, but rather “the exotic, the superficial, the extreme, the Africa of the movies” (Merryfield, 2018, p. 124). This incident triggered her reflection on the content and curriculum of the course, which in turn led to her research/career trajectory. She states: “So began my lifelong critique of the way in which American schools teach about the world” (p. 124). After realizing the limitations of what American schools could teach about Africa, she also decided to experience Africa firsthand through volunteering for Peace Corps.

2.4.5 Leaving the familiar / reaching out to the unknown

The last theme includes international trips and incoming migrations—that is, stepping across different geographical and social spaces. These experiences are also closely related to the previous theme because the engagement with differences is often precipitated by leaving the familiar and encountering the unfamiliar.

First, all scholars in the collection traveled internationally. Some studied abroad as undergraduate students. Lee Anderson, for example, got a scholarship to study at the University of Vienna during his junior year (C. Anderson, 2018). Grossman (2018) spent an academic year in India via the College Year in India program at Knox College. Wilson (2018) participated in a summer study abroad program in Paris. These global scholars highlight the significance of their international trips in their development.

International travel also continued to be important for many scholars in their careers as globally minded educationalists. For example, Tucker led groups of American teachers to visit China and Japan as part of his research and teacher training work (Cruz, 2018). He and Kirkwood-Tucker also visited Russia on many occasions during their career (Cruz, 2018. Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018b). Other examples include Becker’s first time returning to
Europe after the War while working for Atlantic Information Centre for teachers (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018a), Cogan’s (2018) trips to Japan and China to attend comparative education seminars, Merryfield’s (2018) trip to Hong Kong as a visiting scholar, and Tye (2018) working in Oslo, Sydney and Dubai, among other places. Travel also extended beyond study and work. As a married couple, Toni and Jan took a personal trip in Japan where they climbed Mont Fuji and visited Akita city (Cruz, 2018; Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018). Wilson (2018) did her “retirement travel” with her husband to many African countries where they had formerly worked and had connection to, as well as Scotland, China, Guatemala and Myanmar.

Many scholars note in their stories the significant impact of traveling, studying, and/or working abroad on their life and career. “[T]raveling to distant places”, writes Hahn (2018), is “a practice that continually renews my commitment to global education” (p. 330). Wilson (2018) also confirms that “[i]nternational experience has an impact, including positive consequences for teachers, students, and schools” (p. 302). Reflecting on his career in global education, Cogan (2018) is grateful for the opportunity he had to travel to the “East Bloc” for his first education seminar abroad. He described a key moment of making the decision to step out of his hotel room in Budapest and ‘into the unknown’:

> When I got to my room in the hotel, I told myself, “Cogan, you can either hole up here and just go on the planned seminar events or you can suck it up, boy, and get out into the city and meet the people and try to get a better understanding of their lives.” I chose the latter and it has made all the difference these past forty-five years. (p. 103)

Both Merryfield and Wilson served as Peace Corps volunteer teachers in Africa. Merryfield (2018) recalls how the experience in Serra Leone altered her former perspective: “Within days of being in country I realized that just about everything I had learned about Africa in my Master’s degree and my own reading was either outdated or useless in living and working in Serra Leone” (p. 124). For Wilson (2018), Peace Corps played a central role and had continuous influence in the development of her global
educator identity: “Peace Corps and Africa, especially Liberia, do represent the beginning, middle, and end of my career and life” (p. 320). She described her teaching in Liberia a “double cross-cultural experience” (p. 297). Working in Liberia helped her gain a new perspective on the world and her home country. It also introduced her to more career opportunities and meaningful social relations later in her life.

Kirkwood-Tucker and Tlou were born outside the US, and they spent their childhood years in Nazi Germany and British-occupied Rhodesia, respectively. As young adults, however, they both decided to migrate to the US, where they established themselves as global scholars. Both scholars expressed their gratefulness for this major shift in life. Tlou (2018) describes in his autobiography how the opportunity to study in the US helped him escape the chaos in South Rhodesia, when the colony declared independence and life “became a nightmare for both Europeans and Africans” (p. 221). Initially, he experienced difficulties as a new immigrant separated from his family; but eventually they were reunited. The family was able to overcome the obstacles, for which Tlou was thankful to his wife: “The children and I owe her a debt of gratitude for her huge sacrifice for keeping the family together in a strange land, a strange culture, and a strange environment” (p. 223). Although pained by the memory of her crying parents when she left Germany for the US, Kirkwood-Tucker (2018b) does not regret her decision to migrate, as it triggered in her a perspective transformation: “My nation-centric perspective, grounded in my birth country, was irreversibly expanded following my trans-Atlantic migration” (p. 149). Looking back at the influence of that decision, she writes: “My arrival in the United States heralded in a profound epoch in my young life during which time I greatly broadened my Western perspective of the world” (p. 150). As mentioned earlier, she was shocked upon her arrival by the prevailing racism and social inequality in the US, but it became a transformative experience for her: “I have recognized the multiple realities surrounding us which led to my international sensitivity, intercultural competence, and world-mindedness” (p. 192).

The move across geographical and sociocultural space does not only include crossing national borders. Understandably, immigration can have a drastic and profound impact on an individual’s life trajectory, as the examples of both Kirkwood-Tucker and Tlou
demonstrate. For neither scholar, however, the move to the US signified a singular or ‘once-and-for-all’ type of life event leading to permanent settlement in a particular place. Kirkwood-Tucker (2018b) moved from New Orleans to Miami. Although the majority of her research work was centered around Miami schools, she took many international travel-study trips to places such as China, Japan, Vietnam, and Russia. Tlou (2018) initially lived and studied in Iowa upon his arrival in the US, but later taught public schools in Illinois, before starting to work at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. He also traveled to countries such as Botswana, Malawi, and Zambia for international projects. Similar to Kirkwood-Tucker and Tlou, each life story of the other eleven scholars is also marked with a series of moving and relocating.

These moves refer to resettling in a place, usually due to work, and living there for a significant amount of time. They thus exclude travel-study trips and conference trips discussed earlier. Not a single scholar in this book spent their life predominantly in one city or one state. The willingness to move is often associated with their open-mindedness, an adventurous spirit, and a strong desire to learn. For instance, Wilson (2018) recalls her eight moves in eleven years. “In almost all those moves”, she notes, “I was lucky to find ways to continue to learn and teach” (p. 299). Another example is Jan Tucker’s decision to leave Stanford where he got his first academic post, knowing he could have stayed “at one of the world’s eminent educational institutions”, but he still chose to join Florida International University in the hope of becoming “part of something new and great, creating it from ground up” (Cruz, 2018, p. 42).

The five reported themes representing the core of our findings are interconnected and together they accentuate the most significant features of life experiences that contributed to the formation and transformation of the global scholars’ perspectives. There might be other significant experiences that contributed to the global mindedness of our thirteen global scholars, but they were not represented within the narratives analyzed. Beyond the core themes, there were a number of experiences that were less pronounced but worth mentioning. One such ‘less-dominant’ theme regards the experience of appreciating and engaging the creative arts. Examples come from Tlou (2018)’s story of becoming a creative artist by making ceramic pots, and Torney-Purta (2018)’s story of performing.
folk music in Finland. Similarly, Jim Becker was a poet (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018a), and John Cogan (2018) also indicates his fondness of poetry by closing his autobiography with Frost’s poem *The road not taken* as his ‘guiding light.’ Ken Tye (B. Tye, 2018) wrote his first novel at the age of 80. We need more evidence, however, to examine the role of arts as means to transcending boundaries, and their links to global mindedness. If understanding the larger conditions shaping individuals identities is a fundamental part of being globally minded, perhaps the unique and creative life of each individual is another fundamental part.

Another minor theme related to language, multilingual experience and learning new languages. Wilson (2018) recalls her experience of learning French during a college summer study abroad program, “later with my experience with Liberian English, Krio and Mende in Serra Leone, Akan and Fanti in Ghana, and Fijian, I learned how important language is” (p. 294). Hahn (2018) took French and Spanish classes at high school but can “only recall grammar lessons” (p. 327) when writing her story. Merryfield (2018) took courses of Hausa following advice from her mentor O’Meara. Kirkwood-Tucker (2018b) recounts her experience of speaking both “Goethe’s German” and “Bavarian vernacular” before arriving in the US, but she also draws on her struggle with English to better understand “immigrant challenges.” Tluo (2018) indicates his knowledge of the Sotho language, although he received his formal education in English. However, the scholars’ narratives did not deeply engage the possible impact of (learning) languages in their journeys towards global mindedness.

The role of religion is a final minor theme. Josiah Tlou (2018), who attended a Lutheran Mission school in Southern Rhodesia, relates Christianity and its practice in Africa to the European colonization of the continent. Reflecting on the impact of missionary education (Tlou, 1975), he concludes that “the missionaries in Rhodesia emphasized the spread of Western civilization abandoning African values including the concept of *ubuntu*” (p. 218). His experience with the church is linked to the theme of encountering racism mentioned earlier in this section. Many other scholars also mention religious institutions and communities in their narratives. For instance, Becker’s family had a German Catholic background; Tucker attended a college “founded by the United Brethren Church, a faith
built on beliefs of social justice and the promotion of peace” (Cruz, 2018); Kirkwood-Tucker (2018b) was born and raised in the part of Germany “where most of the inhabitants are Catholic” (p. 145); Merryfield (2018) learned about “the call to prayers and the tenets of Islam” (p. 125) as well as “ways to integrate Mende traditions with Catholic theology” (p. 122) from religious communities in Sierra Leone. Wilson (2018) experienced “the general acceptance of a mix of Christianity, Islam, and traditional religion” (p. 298) while working in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Charlotte Anderson (2018) mentions ‘religion leaders’ as part of the counter-force which offset the deficits in the worldviews she and Lee had formed in their childhood (p. 61). However, no details are given on the role religion and spirituality played in forming or transforming perspectives. Further research would be needed to shed light on their significance. We discuss this issue together with other methodological limitations later in this thesis chapter.

2.5 Discussion

In this section, we respond to the research questions posed at the beginning of this chapter. We develop and discuss our ‘answers’ in light of the findings above and the literature presented in section two.

2.5.1 Reflecting on the significance of ‘significant experiences’

Research questions 1 and 2 both concern the common features of experiences that are significant to the development of global mindedness. As the previous section shows, in our analysis, we have identified these experiences and organized them into themes based on their common features. Now we look a bit deeper into the qualities of these experiences that make them significant.

First, an experience involves both the learner as an active, forward-looking agent, and the learner’s world. Our conception can be traced to Dewey’s (1938) notion of experience as an “active-passive affair”, a transaction between the subject and object. The world may include the learner’s environment of upbringing, such as growing up in a family of educators (Cogan, see 4.3), or a town of cultural diversity (Tye, see 4.4). It may also include socio-cultural backgrounds such as being white middle class American. Historical contexts can also be part of the world, and they refer not just to events such as
the World War II or the Cold War, but also policies such as the GI Bill for returning veterans that enabled Jim Becker to pursue a higher education, and the creation of Peace Corps that allowed Wilson and Merryfield to teach in Africa. On the learners’ part, they also take an active part in choosing and interpreting (the significance of) their experiences. As examples from 2.4.4 and 2.4.5 suggest, scholars in our study would often actively choose to engage in difference and step out of the familiar. As far as global mindedness is concerned, our findings tend to confirm the results from Corano (2010), that family attitudes, exposure to diversity, minority status, a curious disposition, participation in global education courses, international travel, having a mentor, and professional service may all become contributing factors to the development of a global mind. However, considering the diversity of the world from the narratives, no evidence could show a certain learning environment that would on its own contribute to the development of global mindedness. ‘Internal factors’, on the other hand, such as curiosity, a strong desire to learn and to engage in dialogues, as well as a sense of empowerment, often had a more significant role to play.

Our findings can also speak to a popular discourse of ‘immersion’ through student mobility, which some scholars criticize (Doerr, 2013, 2019). In practice, the ‘immersion discourse’ often translates into a ‘how to’ list of experience hunting including “home stay or living as the locals” (Doerr, 2013, p. 231). Yet in Cogan’s example (2.4.5), he stayed in the hotel in Budapest, a typical tourist, rather than immersive, experience, but still had his life altering experience when he decided to step out of his hotel room. While not challenging the value of ‘immersion’, our findings do suggest reconsidering immersion beyond this popular discourse. It can also include stepping out of a hotel during a conference trip, as in Cogan’s case above. It may also happen in the form of a new immigrant finding oneself in “a strange land” (Tlou, 2018, p. 223). For intercultural learning and becoming globally minded, an experience needs not be ‘immersive’ in a foreign context to be significant. Merryfield’s conversation with a guest speaker from Nigeria (2.4.4), Wilson’s summer job with a German counselor who experienced the War (2.4.1), and Anderson’s teaching experience in a school where the student population was predominantly African American (2.4.2) are just a few examples. No evidence from the narratives could show which type of experience, immersive or not, was most valuable.
across all narratives, as its value may depend on the learner’s previous experiences and ability to actively engaging in critical reflection.

Where did the internal factors and reflexivity of these scholars, as active experiencers, come from? The answer to this question leads to our second point, that many global scholars in this study had supportive environments and empowering relationships which facilitated the development of global mindedness in their formative years. As discussed earlier (2.4.3), many scholars had mentors and role models from childhood. Moreover, abilities and mentalities such as cooperation and networking, which contributed to their career success, could also be traced to formative experiences. Examples may include Becker’s and Cogan’s working on the farm (2.4.3), Tucker’s participation in team sports, or Wilson’s volunteering at a settlement house camp (2.4.1). In 2.4.3, we have noted parents and family members that provided a supportive and empowering environment for the development of global mindedness. At the beginning of the book, Kirkwood-Tucker (2018, p. x) also give thanks to her sister and her niece who, though stayed in Germany, provided support for her to pursue her “wildest dreams”. None of the scholars mentioned growing up in an abusive environment or having childhood trauma from personal relations.

According to Dewey (1938), “every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (p. 35). This principle, also known as the principle of continuity, indicates that in order to better understand the significance of an experience, researchers need to trace back the timeline and examine earlier experiences. In the narratives of global scholars, many critical incidents and milestones in their careers can be traced back to experiences in early life. Themes 3 and 4, in particular, highlight the importance of formative learning since childhood.

Third, these experiences, significant to the development of global mindedness, were organic and integrated in life. These significant experiences were not introduced intentionally as pre-designed pedagogical components, and these global scholars’ global mindedness was not an ideology externally imposed through any political agenda. Even
when learning did become political, these scholars would learn through lived experience in a social context, such as witnessing racist practices and being exposed to the atmosphere of civil rights movement or anti-war movement. They might have intentionally chosen to accept and apply a certain ideology in their work and teaching philosophy, such as *ubuntu* philosophy in training the trainer (Tlou, 2018), progressive pedagogy (B. Tye, 2018), or post-colonial pedagogy (Merryfield, 2018). These choices were made based on their experiences and reflections. On the contrary, many of the ideologies acquired through political agenda and propaganda became objects of critical reflection, and eventually discarded. Examples include the War and nationalist propaganda in Becker’s story (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018a), racial hierarchy imposed through a colonial curriculum in Tlou’s (2018) story, the fascist leader worship enforced on schoolchildren of Nazi Germany (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018b), the Cold War competition mentality linked to the Sputnik effect (Grossman, 2018), and the Eurocentric bias in American high school curriculum (Merryfield, 2018). From these findings we may conclude that for the global scholars in our study, their global mindedness grew organically from and through lived experience. The resultant reflexivity offered them conceptual tools to critically engage propaganda and to identify ideological influences in educational practice. Of course, there are likely other normative discursive forces in play that are not explicit in the presented narratives, such as U.S. exceptionalism, relations of need, and liberal benevolence (Bishai, 2004; Dyrness, 2021), which would require further research.

### 2.5.2 Global mindedness in the context of the Global Education movement: Grounded idealism

After examining the features of the significant experiences, the next question is how these experiences were connected to the development of global mindedness. The short answer is that these formative and transformative experiences contributed to what we call ‘grounded idealism’ demonstrated in the narratives of lifelong learning and becoming. The term ‘idealism’ here is used in its common and everyday sense, referring to “the practice of forming ideals or living under their influence” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) rather than a school or tradition in Western philosophy (Guyer & Horstmann, 2021). In this
section we discuss the common ideal underlining global mindedness, as the narratives reveal, and its three layers of grounded-ness.

The 13 scholars are idealists in the sense that they are dedicated to the realization of global education as a noble ideal. They firmly believe in the necessity of global education and the positive effects it can bring to the citizenry of the nation and beyond. Such firm belief is perhaps best illustrated in Lee Anderson’s book chapter titled “Why should American Education be globalized? It’s a non-sensical question” (L. Anderson, 1982), in which he draws parallel between the question “why should American education be globalized?” and “why should we die?” “The only real issues [with globalizing American education]”, he insists, “are how, with what degree of quality, and how rapidly will American education become more globalized” (p. 160, cited in C. Anderson, 2018, p. 86).

Global education, or the globalization of American education, is the common ideal shared by all 13 scholars. Each scholar, however, arrived at the ideal through a unique path of significant experiences. Some got the ideal through dramatic and traumatizing events, such as in the case of Jim Becker, who participated in the war. Others simply followed a seemingly ‘natural’ and smoother path, such as John Cogan (2018), who, in his younger years, followed the steps of his father and “never really thought about any other career than one in teaching” (p. 100), or in the case of Angene Wilson (2018). “Perhaps”, she writes, “I was predestined to become a global educator” (p. 292). Even in the case of Grossman (2018), who describes his career as “a series of carpe diem opportunities that I have been fortunate to have, and the relationship I have had with key mentors” (p. 286), a dominant proportion of his career was dedicated to promoting global education. As our findings and earlier discussion suggest, even a smoother path does not exclude critical incidents or crucial learning moments.

Apart from the common ideal, and shared goals of global education in the US context, each scholar also has his or her ideal vision of global education. For Becker (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018), the ultimate goal and vision were promoting peace, preventing war and improving the human condition. For Merryfield (2018), her work in global education was
driven by promoting equity and social justice. For Wilson (2018), her goal, as the title of her autobiography indicates, was to bring ‘the world’, knowledge of the wider world, ‘back home’ to American learners. Binding these goals is a type of grounded idealism – holding on firmly to their ideals and working steadily to achieve them. ‘Grounded’ has three folds of meanings here. First, the idealism is grounded in their lived experiences. Second, the idealism is grounded in the social and political contexts. Third, their idealism is grounded in their teaching practice, research projects and publications. The three aspects of ‘groundedness’ are closely related, and what ties them together is the concept of identity formation.

Based on the developmental psychology theory by Erikson, Illeris (2014) argues for the concept of psycho-social identity, which bridges the gap between the psychological identity of self-perception on one end, and the sociological identity that involves identifying with cultural and social groups on the other. Illeris (2014) also introduces a three-layered identity model. At the centre is the ‘core identity’, usually formed in the first few months, remaining stable throughout one’s life, while on the periphery is the ‘preference layer’ that keeps changing over a lifetime. Between these two layers is the ‘personality layer’ of identity that concerns individual’s relation to oneself and others in the world. According to Illeris (2014), the personality layer is formed by experiences since childhood, gradually stabilizes as the individual matures, but can also be changed in adulthood through transformative learning. The scholars, as we argue, are idealists, people who identify themselves with ideals. Lived experiences since earlier life can form and transform ideals. Childhood experiences of watching ships leaving the port, or trains coming and leaving the station, schooling, teaching, traveling and research experiences all contributed to the ideals they hold on to dearly. Rooted deeply in their lived experiences, these ideals have become an essential part of their identity as ‘global scholar/educators’.

Just as experiences are socially-bound, so are the ideals. Wilson (2018) summarizes the influence she got from her parents as “both roots and wings” (p. 292), so she could be grounded in the reality of the US society and be encouraged to go out to learn about the bigger world. We find the expression ‘roots and wings’ a perfect analogy of the idealism
grounded in historical, geographical and social contexts. Carole Hahn (2018) also draws comparison between the global education movement to the ‘right-leaning, S-shaped curve’ that depicts the diffusion of innovation. Based on evidence from their narratives, we find that these global scholars can be viewed as those who ‘ride the curve’ – their ideals were slightly ahead of their time but represented a budding trend that eventually became dominant. This budding trend emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, the “pre-global years” according to Hahn (2018, p. 326), when James Becker was leading the experimental “Foreign Relations Project” that engaged US school “in discussion of world affairs” (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018, p. 8). With more educational projects being carried out and more research published, the following decades saw global education “on the rise” in the 1970s (Hahn, p. 330) and reached its “Golden Years” (Tye, 2009, cited in Grossman, 2018, p. 275) in the 1980s and 1990s. “By 2000”, describes Hahn (2018, p. 326), “globalization’ had become the dominant paradigm in the educational literature, as well as in the wider societal discourse”.

The grounded idealism is not antithetical to realism since the ideals are grounded in, rather than detached from, the reality. The global education scholars are also realists in the sense that they have taken advantage of opportunities present in their reality to advance their ideals. Jim Becker, for example, after returning from the War, took advantage of the GI Bill, which “provided special benefits to returning war veterans” (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018, p. 6), to complete his university education. When these scholars were young, progressive pedagogy, study abroad, international conference and global service (including Peace Corps volunteering) were not common phenomena as they are today, but they were able to spot the potential of these trends and took the opportunities when they were arising. The formation and transformation of their personal identities and perspectives are attuned to the paradigm shift on the societal level.

The global scholars’ work and teaching can be viewed as both an expression, or manifestation of their ideals and identity, but at the same time, their work also contributes to the change and development of their ideals. Often through collaboration with each other, they created some of the seminal works that advanced the global education movement. Examples include the collective edition *Schooling for a global age* (Becker,
in which scholars such as Jim Becker, Lee and Charlotte Anderson envisioned what a ‘world-centred’ school would look like. Many of these scholars are also influential theorists who contributed to the theorization of ideals in global education, including world-mindedness (Merryfield, et al., 2008), global-mindedness (Cogan & Grossman, 2009), and global citizenship (Hahn, 1884). Through their work of promoting global education, they also shaped the organizational cultures where they worked, and transformed their social contexts.

Ideologically, global education may be grounded in certain philosophical traditions, such as liberalism (Festl, 2020). Many scholars in our study mention in their narratives the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a foundational piece in the global education movement. This kind of liberal universalism, however, has been criticized for its Eurocentrism and its connection to the colonial ‘civilizing mission’. “The notion of global”, argues Niyozov and Tarc (2015), “can serve as camouflage hiding the contextual production and parochial intentions with universalizing moves; in effect the ‘global’ here ‘speaks’ on behalf of all humanity as proposing these best practices as non-contextual…” (p. 6). Meanwhile, on the philosophical level, global education and its objects are often not well-theorized. As Heilman (2006) argues, “theorists [of global education] assert what global education should consist of, but they do not locate and argue for their claims within particular philosophical and epistemological traditions” (p. 192). These theoretical roots and tensions are beyond the scope of discussion in this study but are worth exploring in future studies.

2.5.3 Revisiting transformative learning

To answer research question 3, we use the findings in this study to revisit transformative learning. We focus on key concepts in Mezirow’s theory mentioned in 2.2.2, especially ‘disorienting dilemma’, ‘critical reflection’, as well as the process and stages of a ‘perspective transformation’.

According to Mezirow (2008), learning emerges from experiences, and experiences that do not fit an established frame of reference could induce a disorienting dilemma, the initial stage of a perspective transformation. In our findings, these disruptive and
disorienting experiences could come from mentors, education programs and engaging with difference, as in themes 3 and 4. Even more significant, however, are themes 1, 2 and 5.

War, high political tension (2.4.1), social oppression and injustice (2.4.2), are more likely to trigger disorientating feelings and negative emotions such as “fear, anger, guilt or shame” (Mezirow, 2008, p. 118). According to transformative learning theory, these emotional responses are linked to the initiation of a transformation process. Nevertheless, how strong and powerful these emotions are, depends first on how close and direct the experience with war and injustice is. When the experience was close and personal, and the emotions were intense, an ‘epochal’ type of perspective transformation could occur, with “sudden major reorientations in habit of mind, often associated with significant life crises” (Mezirow, 2008, p. 94). Such was the case of Jim Becker (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018a). Being a soldier on the battlefield, witnessing death and destruction was undoubtedly traumatizing. Even when the War was over and the world was celebrating, he could not forget: “Relief, yes! Joy, no. Too many of our buddies and commanders didn’t make it. Too much destruction and human misery, too many agonizing questions […]” (Becker, 2006, p. 51, cited in Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018, p. 5). Due to its directness and intensity, Becker’s experience with the War initiated his transformative learning process in a drastic fashion. Through critically reflecting on this experience, Becker went through a paradigm shift from fighting for peace to the belief that war was not even the ‘last resort’ to peace but should be completely avoided. For those who experienced the War from a distance, such as the Andersons and Ken Tye, they might also have experienced fear and anxiety for the ‘approaching enemies’ often featured in the news and war propaganda, though unlike Becker’s case, their emotions largely came from imagination. These emotions are consequential, as evidenced in Charlotte Anderson’s (2018) nightmares of “goose-stepping soldiers” invading her hometown. In either case, no epochal transformation could be identified, but we do not exclude the possibility that the emotions induced by imagination could trigger a perspective transformation.

Transformative learning scholars often speak positively of the role of imagination. “Imagination of how things could be otherwise is central to the initiation of the
transformative process” (Mezirow, 2008, p. 95). “Imagination”, according to Dirx (2001), “plays a key role in connecting our inner, subjective experiences of emotions and feelings with the outer, objective dimensions of our learning experiences” (p. 68). However, we argue that imagination functions as a double-edged sword. Imagination, when induced by political propaganda, as discussed in 5.1, could also disempower the learner and thus cripple the potential of perspective transformation, as learner empowerment is another key factor in transformative learning (Cranton, 2016). Transformation could still be possible, however, when this kind of negative imagination was countered by alternative reality and perspectives, such as the friendly POWs Charlotte encountered in her real life, or empowering role models such as Kirkwood-Tucker’s (2018) father, or when the learner was already empowered enough to plan for and launch into a course of action, such as the activism Grossman (2019) engaged in during the Vietnam War. The course of action driven by imagination also includes moving and emigration, such as Kirkwood-Tucker (2018) and Tlou (2018), who left their countries of origin (2.4.5). In the case of Merryfield (2018), the early life close encounter with racism might have led to her decision of choosing to live “within a bustling immigrant community” (p. 125) after moving back from Africa. In the case of Tlou (2018), being a member of the oppressed group was disempowering, but education acted as a counter-factor that helped him become more aware of the racially discriminatory practices.

Since Mezirow (1978) proposed the theory of perspective transformation, he has always maintained that critical reflection is a central and essential factor in the process. Most scholars contend that transformative learning is an adult learning theory, and regard reflective thinking as a goal of adult learning (Cranton, 2016). However, our findings suggest that critical reflective skills can be fostered since young age. Some early life mentors mentioned in theme 3 (2.4.3) played a vital role in cultivating critical thinking in the young individuals. Diverse worldviews and opinions encountered in childhood and schooling (2.4.4) may also contributed to the development of critical reflective skills, and challenged their taken-for-granted assumptions. Closely related to critical reflection is the endeavour to engage in reflexive dialogues and rational discourses (Mezirow, 1991). Many experiences from themes 3 and 4 were related to dialogue and discourse. A typical example was the census assigned to Ken Tye by his fourth-grade teacher Miss Tvitmo.
He recalls how he “knocked on every door” to gather data, and “rehearsed the oral report” to deliver it to the town council (B. Tye, 2018, p. 201). Other activities such as student activism and community volunteering could also help developing dialogical skills and capacity.

“Imagination of how things could be otherwise is central to the initiation of the transformative process” (Mezirow, 2008, p. 119). The development of a ‘worldly’ imagination could be attributed to some early mentors and family members (2.4.3), such as Hahn’s (2018) grandmother who sent her dolls from Germany, or Cogan’s missionary aunt, whose stories about exotic places he enjoyed as a kid: “I thought to myself that I too was going to visit many of those places when I grew up” (Cogan, 2018, p. 101). Also important are the geographical and social spaces where diversity, change, and flow of people and information are constantly present (2.4.4). “Jan’s house was located near the railroad hub, the ever-present sounds of locomotives serving as a backdrop for a young boy’s imagination” (Cruz, 2018, p.39). “As ships from Europe and Asia would arrive in Ashtabula, […] I was intrigued by what the distant places they sailed to and from were like and more importantly, who the people were who lived in those places” (Cogan, 2018, p. 100).

“Learner empowerment”, claims Cranton (2016), “is both a goal and a condition for transformative learning. An empowered learner is able to fully and freely engage in critical reflection, participate in discourse, and act on revised perspectives” (p. 59). The role models and mentors in theme 3 were examples of empowering figures. Toni’s (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018) father showed his daughter that even under the rule of Hitler’s Nazi regime, it was possible and vital to disobey.

Although transformative learning has been regarded as an adult learning theory (Merriam & Taylor, 2008), some scholars such as Illeris (2014b) also entertain the possibility that transformation may occur, or the process may start before adulthood. In a recent study, Rajagopal and Mateusen (2021) also apply transformative learning theory to analyse virtual mobility in secondary education. As discussed in 2.5.1, the findings of our study depict a lifelong learning process of becoming globally minded scholars. This process
involves perspective transformation, which may start to occur before adulthood and continue to later life. One example was the incident Lee Anderson had with his high school principal, Mrs. Arms (2.4.3). Though we could not learn what kind of feelings and thoughts Lee went through when being sent home, what we do know is that through this critical incident, he was no longer comfortable with (the distorted perspective of) repeating information without understanding. Instead, he became aware of the worthlessness and possibly ‘dire consequences’ of such uncritically accepted information (C. Anderson, 2018).

Another typical example is Merryfield’s (2018) ‘transformative moment’ of the ‘theater incident’ (2.4.2) which happened in her childhood. It was, in her own words, “a profound moment” that led her to “begin to question the inequalities and prejudices that permeated my community, church, and school” (p. 123). In other words, before that moment, she had largely taken for granted the inequality and prejudice in her community, and perceived practices such as racial segregation as ‘normal’. This critical incident did not cause a paradigm shift overnight, but it appeared to have initiated a ‘disorienting dilemma’ and self-examination, the first two phases in Mezirow’s (2008) model, although whether she experienced strong feelings such as anger and shame was not explicated in the narrative. As she started to ask questions but “met with a wall of silence” (p. 123), it resembled the phase ‘critical assessment of assumptions’ in the transformative learning process (Mezirow, 2008). As she grew up, graduated from high school and entered college, the process of transformation continued with exploration of new roles and planning a course of action:

Eventually, I would draw on this tacit knowledge in my work for equity, diversity, and global interconnectedness. I also came to realize that no matter how parochial or racist a person’s background may be, our backgrounds do not prevent us from becoming anti-racist global educators. (Merryfield, 2018, p. 123)

Her planned course of action included preparing to become a teacher, and learning about Africa through Peace Corps. Taking Black History courses at university, reading African American literature, actively engaging in equal rights groups correspond to the phase of
‘acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans’ in Mezirow’s (2008) theory. She tried on new roles such as student activist, schoolteacher and Peace Corps volunteer. The perspective transformation was consolidated with her ‘reintegration into life’, the concluding phase in Mezirow’s (2008) model, when she took on the role of an ‘anti-racist global educator.’

However, simply adopting Mezirow’s ten-phase model to frame Merryfield’s narrative would do little justice to her lived experiences. Comparable to the metaphor of ‘cutting one’s foot to fit the crystal shoe’, such arbitrary and unreflective use of theory would mean ignoring the details and complexity of her learning journey. Even Mezirow (1991) states that “the sequence of transformative learning activities is not made up of invariable developmental steps; rather, the activities should be understood as sequential moments of ‘meaning becoming clarified’” (p. 193). As noted earlier, we privilege lived experiences over any theory in this study. Through examining the learning journey, we are able to identify ideas presented and articulated in transformative learning theory, including ‘disorienting dilemma’, ‘self-examination’, and ‘reintegration’ as discussed above.

As Cranton (2016) notes, transformative learning is not necessarily a linear process of change. The learning process may also involve two or more competing perspectives that learners encountered since young age. Evidence may come from theme 4, ‘engaging differences’ identified in the findings (2.4.4). Competing perspectives may also be attributed to early life mentors (2.4.3), such as Kirkwood-Tucker’s (2018) dissident father who directly challenged the perspective of ‘being obedient to oppressive authorities’ taught by her school. Illeris (2014) reconceptualizes transformative learning as change in learner identity. However, the complexity of identity is beyond the ‘multilayer model’. The change in identity, even only within the ‘personality layer’ and concerns only professional identity, needs not be linear either. As evidence from our data shows, accepting or constructing a new identity does not always imply discarding or supressing the old ones. For instance, when Torney-Purta (2018) was introduced to global education and became a global educator, her identity as ‘a data person’ and developmental psychologist were still fully present. These ‘old’ and ‘new’ identities only compounded and strengthened each other. Finally, as earlier discussion (2.5.1) shows, formative
experiences may help fostering rational discourse, imagination and skills of critical reflection. These factors, according to transformative learning theory (Cranton, 2016, Dirkx, 2000, Mezirow, 2008) are key contributors to a successful perspective transformation.

2.5.4 Reflections on our choice of ‘data’

As mentioned in section 2.3, in this study, we used an edited collection of biographies and autobiographies as source of data, upon which we conducted thematic analysis. By using secondary qualitative data, we avoided inducing our influence as researchers in the data collection process. On the other hand, we faced limitations.

First, the details of experiences aligned to our research questions were not always as rich as we would like in the narratives. For research question 3 in particular, we needed details of critical incidents and ‘life changing’ experiences to better understand the features of transformative learning in the process of becoming globally minded. Our data, however, sometimes did not offer a detailed description. Due to the lack to details we are unable, for example, to fully understand why Jan Tucker compared his entire course of growing up to the movie “Hoosiers” (Cruz, 2018), or what happened during Ken Tye’s stay in rural Liberia that made him particularly “interested in schooling in newly independent African nations” (B. Tye, 2018, p. 204).

This limitation could be a case of what Heaton (2008) refers to as the ‘problem of data fit’, which researchers of qualitative secondary analysis often face. In our case, our data – the narratives included in the edited collection (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018) – were not meant for our research purpose or to answer our research questions. As mentioned in 2.3.1, the book’s purpose of promoting global education, featuring the 13 scholars as role models, and celebrating the work of NCSS may lead to intrinsic biases such as highlighting work and projects related to NCSS, and omitting experiences that are deemed irrelevant, or contradicting to the scholars’ global educator images. Maybe there was a pressure to focus more on the positive and hopeful stories of growing awareness, over being stuck or closing down.
As noted earlier, the book as the source of data for this study includes narratives of US scholars, and their experiences are also limited mainly to the geographical and political context of the United States. Although Kirkwood-Tucker and Tlou were born, and arguably had their formative education outside the US, their work in the field of global education took place after they moved to the United States. The majority of scholars included in this study are white, or European descendants. Even though they experienced racism, they did not have the personal experience of being racialized. Their positionality, therefore, could not only limit their criticality towards racism, but also allow them to benefit from the unequal system. The GI Bill, for instance, provided Jim Becker the special benefit as a (white) veteran to resume formal education, but as Turner and Bound (2002) reported, it also exacerbated racial inequalities for Black veterans. Both Merryfield and Wilson speak highly of Peace Corps in their narratives, but neither has critically reflected on its limitedness. Amin (1999), for example, while endorsing the noble course the Peace Corps was dedicated to, and acknowledging its positive effect on the American society, also noted the skepticism many African Americans had towards the organization:

All the positive aspects of the Peace Corps failed to convince most African Americans. For many, the Peace Corps was a distraction from the real struggle in the United States, which was the antiracism crusade. Additionally, in the 1960s most Blacks perceived the Peace Corps as an agency for White, middle-class Americans. […] Also, Blacks complained that they did not have the luxury of giving up 2 years of their lives for service in some far away land. (pp. 817-818)

Similar to race are these scholar’s social economic status or social class, and how it contributed to the development of global mindedness. Though coming from a variety of communities, localities, and backgrounds, none of the scholars mention their own experience of living in poverty.

As a qualitative study, the findings are not intended to be generalizable. On the other hand, our study is still limited to illustrating the learning and becoming of 13 particular individuals. ‘Distinguished’ as they are, these scholars do not represent the entire,
worldwide global education scholar community. Also, we might consider that these retrospective accounts could misrepresent the actual experiences of the scholars. Due to the limited scope of the study, we do not use other sources of data to triangulate these experiential accounts. The stories told in the book are more reflective of the act of iterative storytelling than reaching back to the actual feelings and thoughts of the individual undergoing the experience. Perhaps such temporally layered and narrative-mediated memory/identity work is ubiquitous? As storied beings (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), we narrate our lives from memories of events but also memories of past stories told to or by us. The point is to highlight that we have examined and analysed a set of stories or accounts of the significant experiences in the journey to become globally minded, and not the journeys themselves. Of course, interviewing participants directly to produce primary data does not get us out of this predicament.

2.6 Conclusion

This study is the first inquiry component in an integrated doctoral thesis of the first author. The overarching question I try to answer in my thesis regards what consists of global mindedness and how it is developed. Below I reflect on how the findings from this study may connect to and guide the other two components of the integrated thesis.

In this study, we used a thematic analysis approach to investigate the narratives of 13 US based education scholars. We analyzed the significant experiences that contributed to their life-long learning and becoming globally minded. We identified five common themes of these experiences across multiple narratives and noted the unique features in each individual experience. These experiences speak to global mindedness as ‘grounded idealism’ as we have discussed in 2.5.2. The process of becoming globally minded can happen in the form of transformative learning, which may start before adulthood and continue throughout their adulthood and professional career.

Methodologically, we have demonstrated through this study how documented narratives such as (auto)biographies may be useful as data in international experience and global education research. In our future studies, we may also consider combining the use of documented narrative with other formats of data including interviews and field
observation in our methodological design. Through elucidating the continuity of experiences (2.5.1), the results of our study could also explain the shortcoming of study abroad programs due to their short-term focus, as “the [study abroad] experience is often disconnected from [participants’] subsequent studies” (Kamdar & Lewis, 2015, p. 9). Researchers who are interested in the value and benefits of international experiential learning, apart from interviewing study abroad participants during or shortly after their return, may also opt for collecting memoires and autobiographical accounts from former participants to understand their learning and change over a long period of time.

2.7 References


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Chapter 3

3 Becoming globally minded: A narrative case study of six cosmopolitan educational scholars’ life stories

As globalization continues to shape the contemporary conditions of the world, the pursuit of global mindedness in education tend to outpace deeper qualitative inquiries into the phenomenon. Continuing the endeavour initiated in chapter 2, this study seeks a deeper understanding of what global mindedness entails and how it is grounded in the participants’ lived experiences over a long period of time. In this study, I co-constructed and examined the life stories of six cosmopolitan educational scholars, who came from diverse cultural backgrounds and were based in six globally diversified geo-political regions. The findings shed light on the meaning and qualities of global mindedness, as well as the world conditions, experiences, and processes through which it could be developed. Through revealing the colonial conditions and social contexts underlining many scholars’ experiential accounts, findings from this study also challenge the dominant narratives in global education and call for a more critical examination of its historical roots, practices, and social impacts.

3.1 Introduction

This study represents the major empirical inquiry component of the thesis. Sharing a common problem space and purpose of inquiry, it can be seen as an expansion on the previous study (chapter 2), which examines the development of global mindedness in 13 United States-based global educational scholars. Findings from the previous study also informed the design and data analysis of this study, as explained in the Methods section.

The contemporary world conditions highlight the significance and intensity of global connectivity. On the societal front, new challenges arise under these changed and changing conditions, demanding the full realization of education’s “transformational potential” (UNESCO, 2021). On the pedagogical level, this transformational potential of education is translated to the increasing demand for change and reform towards an idealistic vision of global education (Grossman, 2017; Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018; Fuller & Stevenson, 2019). Teachers and educational institutions are expected to instill and
develop in students a set of values and capacities that can better prepare them for a hyper-connected world and its emanating global challenges (Sahlberg, 2016; Tarc & Budrow, 2022).

In this study, I use the term ‘global mindedness’ as a placeholder. It signifies the pedagogical ideal of global education—the learning and formation of its users. In pursuit of this ideal, the enthusiasm and prescriptions for teaching and developing global mindedness tend to outtrace the deeper understanding of the phenomenon—what it is and how it comes to be. One common prescription for becoming globally minded is the sojourn to have an ‘international experience’ such as in study abroad, international internships, teaching practica and volunteering. However, without being accompanied by a deeper understanding, the pursuit of global mindedness can be superficial or meaningless, or even lead to problematic learning results and negative experiences to the seekers of such international experience. Perhaps even more concerning is the potential damage caused to the hosting populations and communities, many of whom, are already vulnerable and will be further marginalized by the forces of globalization. Evidence reported in empirical studies is abundant. Examples include: study abroad programs advertised under the banners of “global citizen” and “life-changing experience” failing to deliver what they promise (Zemach-Bersin, 2008); international teachers returning home with reinforced negative stereotypes of the host countries (Savva, 2017); study abroad participants confirming preconceived biases and failing to adapt well (chapter 4); international development interns and volunteers causing harm to the local communities (Mahrouse, 2012).

Admittedly, the causes to these problems are multifold, including the profit-driven and neoliberal agenda behind globalization and the internationalization of education (Pike, 2015). Instead of engaging these problems, this study takes a step back in seeking a deeper understanding of global mindedness and its development. It continues the effort initiated in the previous study (chapter 2) to examine what global mindedness entails and how it is grounded in the lived experiences of a set of educational scholars over a long period of time. These scholars (both in this study and the previous one) are also individuals privileged to have enough time, capacity, and intellectual resources to reflect
on their lived experiences of encountering and engaging in intercultural/international experiences and activities over time to empirically ground the ideal and the process of becoming globally minded. Unlike the previous study, however, this study expands the scope of global mindedness beyond the field of global education and beyond the U.S. context, to include Education scholars from a wider range of geographical locations with diverse disciplinary backgrounds in sociology, history, philosophy, literature, and linguistic studies.

The study takes a narrative approach (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) in considering the life stories of six cosmopolitan educational scholars (see 3.3.2). These narratives were co-constructed based on the in-depth, individual interviews I had with each scholar. The inquiry is guided by the following questions:

1) Given the life stories of the six cosmopolitan educational scholars, what constitutes global mindedness?

2) What were the significant social, historical, political, and ideological conditions, as well as learning processes and living experiences of these scholars that contributed to their development of global mindedness?

3.2 Global mindedness

As mentioned earlier, global mindedness is used as a placeholder to represent the pedagogical ideals of international/global education. For this reason, I intentionally avoided fixing a narrow definition to the concept. Meanwhile, I acknowledge that my discussion of global mindedness in this study is largely situated, and thus limited to, the modern, Eurocentric, and Anglo-American intellectual tradition. In other words, it cannot be treated as completely open. Further, my intention is not to universalize a particular version of global mindedness. By adopting a personalized narrative perspective, the study can also be seen as an effort to move away from the universal and generalizing approach, and to contextualize and critically examine the concept, within the wider trajectories of my participants’ life histories.
The idea of global mindedness can be spotted throughout the history of educational literature. Scholars have used a plethora of terms to depict an overlapping set of values and qualities that international and global education strives to develop with their users (Tarc, 2023). Its roots can often be traced to the philosophy of cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2008; Maxwell & Yemini, 2019). Decades before the global education movement started to take momentum (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018) and internationalization of education became a buzzword (Schoorman, 2000), similar ideas had already started to appear in literature—albeit at different historical moments (Tarc, 2009)—such as “world-mindedness” (Meras, 1932).

The term “global mindedness” or “globalmindedness” first appears in early literature more than half a century ago. For instance, Sampson and Smith (1957) defined it as an “interest in other cultures and perspectives” (p. 99). More recently, it becomes associated with the Global-mindedness Scale (GMS), a survey instrument developed by Hett (1993) and colleagues. Here, global mindedness is defined as “a worldview in which one sees oneself as connected to the world community and feels a sense of responsibility for its members, a commitment reflected in an individual’s attitudes, beliefs and behaviors” (p. 143). Meanwhile, other terms are in use that convey the same or similar values and ideas of the adeptness in an interconnected world. Among them is ‘international mindedness’ advocated by the International Baccalaureate (IB) and defined as “a view of the world in which people see themselves connected to the global community and assume a sense of responsibility to its members” as well as “an awareness of the inter-relatedness of all nations and peoples, and a recognition of the complexity of these relationships” (IBO, 2017).

In this study I intend to ground these rather abstract definitions of global mindedness and similar terms through my empirical study. Using a narrative approach (Creswell, 2007), I focus on the embodied and personified global mindedness, its characteristics, and processes of development in the six participants. In demonstrating the individual learning journeys towards global mindedness, the concept becomes experientially grounded. Theoretically, I also take a critical stance in the sense that I do not subscribe to a universalist assumption of what global mindedness is or should entail. This positioning is
aligned with Rizvi’s (2009) cosmopolitan learning approach as opposed to the interpretation of cosmopolitanism as hinged on universal moral ideals. Meanwhile, I am cautious with the single noise in what is being selected to depict the global mindedness of the study participants. Therefore, I refer to the above-mentioned definitions as conceptual handles. My interpretation is influenced by, and largely grounded in, the ideals of international and global education and guiding principles of the global education movement (Hanvey, 1982; Tye, 2003), emphasizing values and attitudes such as the recognition of global interconnectivity, complexity, and openness towards cultural differences. As mentioned earlier, this study is also informed and influenced by the results of chapter 2 on global educational scholars, which is presented in the previous chapter.

3.3 Methods of inquiry

3.3.1 Research design

This study is designed as a narrative-based inquiry of six participants (or cases). Philosophically it is aligned with interpretivism, featuring all four attributes described in Wedeen (2010). Methodologically, it follows the framework of a narrative case study (Wells, 2011). Combining the advantages of both the narrative and the case study frameworks, the design allowed me to explore the lives of chosen individuals to better understand their lived experiences while focusing on in-depth description of the case (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

As Cohen (2017) notes, narrative can be both a method of inquiry as in “narrative analysis”, and the subject to be analyzed; or in the words of Connelly and Clandinin (1990), “narrative is both phenomenon and method” (p. 2). In this study, I use both meanings of “narrative”. First, it is used interchangeably with “story”, the product co-created by me as the researcher and each participant. The defining features of a “narrative”, according to Riessman (2005), are its “sequence and consequence: events are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience” (p. 1). Since narratives in this study are co-constructed with the participants, during the interview process, participants would select and organize their stories that they
considered meaningful, significant, and appropriate to share with me. These features became eminent again in the analysis of research data, when I selected and evaluated the raw interview data according to the relevance to my research questions. In the presentation of data, I connected the quotes and fragments, and organized the participants’ life stories to make them meaningful to my audience.

I also used narrative as a method of inquiry. Narrative research, according to Creswell (2007), “is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals” (p. 55), and therefore a fit for this study’s focus on depth and details. More specifically, I chose the life history approach (Atkinson, 2007; Lieblich et al., 1998) due to the study’s focus on development of global mindedness over a long period of time. According to Atkinson (1995):

> A life story gives us the benefit of seeing how one person experiences and understands life over time. In telling our life story, we gain new insights into human dilemmas, human struggles, and human triumphs, while also gaining a greater appreciation for how values and beliefs are acquired, shaped, and held on to. (p. 4)

A life story, therefore, has the power to connect individual experiences with the shared human existence. The focus of this study is the phenomenon, and pedagogical ideal, of becoming globally minded. The individual experiences come from six cases. The use of “case” here, as suggested by Stake (1995), is more of what to be studied than a method of inquiry. Each case is the life story of a participant in a bounded context. In terms of research design, this study can also be classified as a collective, or multiple-case, study as it uses multiple cases to illustrate an issue of interest (Creswell, 2007).

3.3.2 Recruitment of participants

As per the procedure of a case study, recruitment was informed by the strategy of “purposeful sampling” in choosing a case, as suggested by Creswell (2007). Combining the “criterion”, “convenience”, and “maximum variation” sampling strategies (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159), I selected six participants for this study. The convenience strategy
applies here because the participants chosen for this study were individuals relatively easy to reach out through personal connection and professional network. In terms of the criterion sampling, I used the characteristics of cosmopolitan educational scholars as criteria of selection, and to set the boundary of the case. To qualify as cosmopolitan educational scholars, all participants met the following conditions:

- Holding a professorship (including full professor, associate professor, assistant professor, or emeritus professor) at an academic institution.

- Having more than a decade of research experience in an area of scholarship involving educational, social, and cultural theories of human differences.

- Having worked or studied in three or more geographical locations/cultural contexts and having spent a significant amount of time in each context.

- Working-level proficiency in at least two languages.

Six scholars were selected and consented to participate (Table 1).

Table 1: A brief list of participants profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar</th>
<th>Gender (man/woman)</th>
<th>Place of birth/origin</th>
<th>Current country/place of residence</th>
<th>Research interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>Asia/Middle East (British colony)</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Language education, educational policy, decolonization, interculturality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>woman</td>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>International, multicultural and anti-racist education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As mentioned earlier, this study is a continuation and expansion of chapter 2, and participant selection reflected this purpose. In that previous study, data came from (auto)biographical narratives of 13 US based global education scholars. Their works and publications were considered most significant to the global education movement. Most of them were retired professors that held key positions at research institutes (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018). As a continuation, in this study the participants are also scholars experienced in their areas of scholarship and based in research institutions. To expand and diverge from the previous study, however, I chose scholars who were still active in their research career. They were actively involved in research projects and working on new publications. I also intentionally excluded US based scholars. Based on the maximum variation strategy (Patton, 2002), the six selected participants came from diverse cultural backgrounds and their current work was based in six globally diversified regions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Field of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>woman</td>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>A region in Asia dubbed as “MetropoliX” in the remainder of the paper</td>
<td>Social justice in education and cultural studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Globalization and education, international and multicultural education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>Southern Africa (British colony)</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Social justice in education, rural education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>woman</td>
<td>South America</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Comparative and international education, sociology of education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
geo-political regions (South America, North America, East Asia, Oceania, Southern Africa, and the Middle East, respectively). While the participants’ diverse backgrounds and their shared research interests might reflect the ideal of cosmopolitanism – “universality plus difference” (Appiah, 2008), and I acknowledge the richness in the philosophical tradition of cosmopolitanism (Van Hooft, 2014), the term “cosmopolitan educational scholar” was rather casually chosen to refer to the six participants. The selection criteria were also tentative and were to be reflected on in the discussion of research findings.

3.3.3 Interviews

I used the life story interview (Atkinson, 2007) method to gather data from participants. My role as the interviewer was mainly to facilitate the story-sharing and capture enough details to compose a life history, “an account of one person’s life in his or her own words” (Tierney & Clemens, 2012, p. 271) for each participant. Individual interviews were conducted remotely (via Zoom and Microsoft Teams, using an institutionally generated, secured link), with each interview lasting no longer than one hour. I had two interviews with each participant. The first-round interview mainly aimed at getting an outline of the participant’s life trajectory from childhood to school education and academic work. The second round was planned as follow-up interviews that aimed at obtaining more detailed information to fill the gaps in the life story and to reveal the most significant life events or critical incidents.

The interviews were semi-structured and non-structured. They took the form of open-ended, in-depth dialogues where participants were encouraged to share stories and elaborate on their significant life events (Atkinson, 2007). For the first-round interviews, I prepared a list of preliminary questions and used it as a guide and reminder (see Appendix D). However, during the interview process, most questions came up spontaneously. Instead of following the order of questions on the list, I tried to guide participants to focus on key topics including family background, important people in their childhood, educational and schooling experiences, career decisions, and international mobility. In the second round, the interviews were more open, and no question list was used. With each participant, I would use information from their first interview as prompts
and invite them to share more details on specific topics. Towards the end of the second interview, I also asked participants to reflect on their own ideation of global mindedness based on their life experience and research interests. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis immediately after. Raw data and coding were securely stored and handled according to the institutional ethics protocol.

### 3.3.4 Data analysis

The entire data analysis procedure was approximately as Cohen et al. (2017) describes, starting from “preparing and organizing the data” (p. 644), after the interviews had been transcribed. Following the research ethics protocol, I reviewed the raw transcripts and anonymized the participant information. Answers and quotes from the same participant were organized chronologically and according to a narrative approach (Atkinson, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018). As mentioned earlier, I used the narrative form to describe and present data in this study. For each participant, a longer version of narrative that included more and longer quotes was used for analytical purpose, while a more concise and readable version is presented in section 4.

**Table 2: Open codes from each narrative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Open codes related to RQ 1</th>
<th>Open codes related to RQ 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Open-mindedness; adaptability; accept multiple worldviews; reject single mother tongue; think of language and identity as complex; impatient to be in one place; critical reflection; translation; live together with difference; accept ignorance; willing to unlearn and relearn</td>
<td>Multicultural/multilingual/multinational family background; colonial context; minority; international/intercultural mobility; racism; interest in literature; study linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility to the community; criticality; positive value and recognition of difference; empathic connection to minority; seeking alternative narratives</td>
<td>Multifaith family and community; university experiences and activism; photography; development work; international travel; immigration; graduate school, reading, and mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adaptability; curiosity to the world outside; interest in history and culture; independence; positive attitude towards problems and challenges; caring about the others; humanist perspective</td>
<td>Multiculturalism in hometown; encounter with ‘other’; enter university/ move to big city; summer school; graduate study/living and working in MetropoliX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Criticality; reflexivity/perspective taking; historical understanding; cultural sensibility; thinking about difference as a productive source; looking for learning opportunities in the ordinary</td>
<td>Lifelong minority experience; postcolonial condition/political tension; scholarly influence from parents; migration to Australia; graduate study in England; work in the US; international mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anti-colonial stance, (recognize/re-build) connection to the roots; empowerment; enrichment</td>
<td>Colonial education; university and move to the urban context; study in Canada, work/migration to South Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis of narrative data followed a content analysis approach (Flick, 2013). Since the study aims to describe experience and explore the concept of global mindedness, as the research questions imply, the analysis is inductive. Accordingly, I started with open coding similar to that of a grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These codes were also marked according to their relevance to the two research questions (RQ 1 and RQ 2). After open codes were generated (Table 2), I used the strategy of axial coding (Cohen et al., 2017) to organize the codes and to form themes. Next, codes and common themes that emerged from the previous study (chapter 2) were brought in for reference (Table 3). However, these pre-existing codes were not used as categories to organize and interpret data in this study. Common themes across narratives are presented and discussed in section 5 below.

**Table 3: Pre-existing codes used as reference in data analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes most relevant to RQ 1</th>
<th>Codes most relevant to RQ 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love peace/anti-war; critical reflection; cooperativeness; passion/idealism; visionary; open-mindedness; cultural curiosity</td>
<td>Family members; role models; teachers and mentors; war; racism; political tension; schooling; activism; Peace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This analysis procedure produced a list of common themes, categorized into two groups according to the two research questions. These themes and selected evidence from the narratives are shown in Appendix E. The common themes and their relevance to the research question are also discussed in section 3.5.1. The initial draft of the discussion session was structured around these themes. While focusing on the commonalities, the innovatively and qualitative depth became lacking in the discussion. Therefore, a second round of analysis ensued, with a focus on the details and uniqueness of each participant’s experiences and qualities of global mindedness. In the second round, I prioritized data over methodological specificities since “empirical data is central to the work” of narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The process of analysis involved a re-reading of each scholar’s narrative from the raw data of interview transcripts, field notes, to the narratively organized re-storying (Creswell, 2007) and summaries (section 4). In this process, I gave less attention to following any established analytical strategy and let the data speak for itself, giving highlights to any particular experience and learning that stood out as unique to each scholar. The findings and discussion evolved around the unique qualities and experiences that emerged from each personal account, as presented in section 3.5.

3.4 Overview of narratives

In this section, I give a brief account of each scholar’s life story. Each narrative was based exclusively on the information provided by each scholar during the interviews. I organized the information in chronological order during the writing process.

3.4.1 Scholar 1: Learning to fight back and learning to translate

“I grew up with different languages, different cultures…”
Scholar 1 was born in a British colony in the Middle East. However, he and his family were minorities in the country since they were neither Arabs nor Muslim. His father was educated in Portugal and his mother came from a British colony in South Asia. At home, his parents used to communicate in French. As a result, he acquired four languages since childhood: Portuguese from his father, English from his mother, French as a common language of his parents, and Arabic as the local language spoken by the majority. He also acquired four nationalities, two from each side of his parents. Apart from speaking different languages, his parents also had different worldviews, including the attitude towards British colonization: “I grew up with my mother’s family, let’s say, licking the boots of the British colonizers, because they benefited from the British colonizers. They were part of the local elites”. “[But] my father […] was against the collaboration with the British colonizers”. 

As Christians, the only school in the region that he and his siblings could attend was an Italian school. Since the language of instruction was Italian, he picked up the language successfully. However, school was interrupted by an anticolonial war, and his parents decided to send him and his brother to a boarding school in England. Before departure, his father said, “these people rule more than half the world. Learn how they think, so you can fight them.”

It was at the boarding school he experienced racism in the most direct and personal manner. Although racism also existed in the colony, he had been sheltered by his parents’ elite status so he could not fully grasp it. He recalled times when he and his family were invited to parties with colonizers, where “the Asians would be together in one place, and the White English would be in some other place”. When asking why they were separated, his grandmother used to hush him and say, “no, you don’t speak like that!” Upon entering the elite boarding school, he thought that he would be treated equally since his parents were also elites, but soon he realized his English classmates treated him and his brother as inferior. While his brother got depressed and then learned to become “more British than the British”, he decided to fight back:
[At first] I would write to my parents complaining, [and asking them] what to do, because if you fought, you were punished […] and my mother would write back, saying “No, avoid fights.” I couldn’t take it. Then my father would say, “Don’t allow anyone to treat you as inferior.” So I decided to fight back. […] I thought, “Ok, why do I need to be afraid of being punished? If I’m convinced that the way they think is not the way I think, and if punishment is for those who don’t think like them, then punishment is normal for me.” [Then] I stopped worrying. I didn’t tell my parents I was punished. I didn’t complain. […] I fought, and I knew that I was going to be punished, so I took it as normal.

Although fighting back eventually stopped his classmates from using violence against him, it did not stop racism:

After a few years, I didn’t have to fight anymore, because they respected me for the wrong reasons. They didn’t respect me for being equal. They respected me because they were afraid that I would fight back.

When it came to making his career choice, he also decided to fight back, and this time, against his parents. Since his family on both parents’ sides were doctors, pursuing a medical career was almost a default for him and his other siblings. In his early life, his also never thought about having to making his own career choice. However, the experience at the boarding school made him think, “Why do I have to be what other people want me to be?” However, when the time came for him to choose what to study at university, he found it hard to decide himself: “[I knew] I wasn’t going to be in medicine, [but] I didn’t know what I wanted to do.” First, literature came to his mind since he enjoyed reading literature since childhood, but on second thought, he gave it up: “[when] I studied literature at high school, I found that the way they taught literature was not the way I liked to read literature.” Recalling that he had been taught little more than “the right way” of reading literature at high school, he became concerned that the university would continue that way of teaching and decided to give up on choosing to study literature. Then another interest of his life, language, became the most apparent option, and he decided to study linguistics. During his second year at the university, however, he
was no longer sure about that decision: “I was disappointed with my professors. I reached a point [when] I decided I was going to abandon university.” Such a decision was strongly opposed by his father, who insisted that university education was obligatory for his children.

Meanwhile, he travelled extensively during breaks from university to places such as Portugal and Belgium, where he could visit some relatives. At that point, he was already used to international travel, since his father, who studies traditional medicine, would take frequent trips across the world with the entire family. Therefore, he had already visited many places in Asia, Europe, and Africa before university. As giving up university was not an option, he looked elsewhere for a place to complete higher education, and eventually chose to study Sanskrit in Italy. He explains:

It sounds weird, but I’ll tell you why. Because Italy has this long tradition of Orientalism. All the Europeans in the 17th and 18th centuries, how they studied Europe from a European perspective. They always treated […] Asian languages and cultures as mythical. They were fascinated. They idealized especially China and India… and that caught my curiosity.

During the two years of studying in Italy, he became fascinated with the Europe-invented India. Although graduated with a degree in Linguistics, he had no interest in becoming a linguist. This was another point when he did not know what to do next. It happened that his father was working in Mozambique, helping a friend at the Ministry of Health, setting up public health institutes. His father invited him to work in Mozambique, saying, “Do something useful. Come and work for the revolution.” Yet after a few years, Mozambique entered a war with Rhodesia. He was forced to leave, but this time, instead of going to Europe, he chose Brazil.

Reflecting on his decision of choosing Sao Paulo and Brazil as a place to live, where he has worked for more than forty years, he recalls that even though Brazil had always been present since his childhood, “it wasn’t somewhere we wanted to go to”. However, his impression of the country changed one summer when he was invited to attend the
Carnival by a few Brazilian friends who studied with him at the same university.

Recalling his arrival in Sao Paulo:

I found it was such a beautiful city, […] a city […] twice the size of London, which to me was the megalopolis in my mind. […] I was really, pleasantly surprised, and I fell in love with Sao Paulo. And I decided that this would be a place where I could live.

The choice to settle down in Sao Paulo was also related to the birth of his first son, a point that he sees as “the end of adolescence”. Even though the experience of travel since childhood had made him “footloose”, he says, “when my son was born, I had to change my way of thinking.”

In terms of his career choice, the entry to his current field of scholarship could largely be attributed to a meeting with his doctoral supervisor, a major scholar in postcolonial studies. In their first tutorial, he asked his supervisor what he meant in some text he had written, the professor said, “There is no right reading and wrong reading. The important thing is the context.” Then the professor asked him, “Now, you tell me what you understood from each text that I wrote, and more importantly, why did you understand what you understood?” Since completing his doctoral study in postcolonial literature, Scholar 1 has been writing on language education and decolonialization. He has also been involved in social justice work, especially on issues related to human rights of indigenous communities in Brazil. He can relate this work to his earlier and ongoing experience with racism and colonialism and see it as “fighting back” against the dominant epistemology that silences alternative aspects and ways of knowing.

3.4.2 Scholar 2: diversity, community, and care

Scholar 2 considers her family “unusual” in the context where she grew up, because her parents came from different social-class and religious backgrounds. Her mother was Buddhist, and came from a very wealthy family, while her father was Catholic whose family was not very well off. They had to elope to get married. As a result, scholar 2 had very little contact with her grandparents since she was born, but as their only child, she
“was very close” with her parents. Instead of growing up surrounded by her blood relatives, she “had a close friendship circle, which […] grew into an interfaith spiritual community.”

Under the influence of her parents, since childhood, community was always important in her life. The ethics of “being in a community [means] to be able to give back” played “a very important part […] both in the Buddhist [and] the Christian” faiths. Her parents were always generous and welcoming to their neighbours: “[…] our home was always […] like an open house in the sense that people felt […] free to come and I was encouraged to bring my friends home, and it was something I always remember”. This community ethics of caring for others and giving back was also present in her school culture. In the Christian school she attended, “there was this culture of looking after the needs of others.” The school had service days when students would go to volunteer in seniors’ homes. She also recalls gathering gifts and taking them to a homeless shelter and an orphanage.

When she was still little, her father passed away, and it was a struggle for her mother and her to survive those years. However, her father had helped many people in his life, and those people returned to help his family after his unexpected passing. Scholar 2 recalls having unexpected help from all the people who had been helped by her father. They kept coming back to take care of her family, telling her, “Your father never turned us away when we needed help. Now it’s our responsibility to give back.”

Talking about her learning at school, she recalls, “[…] it was a private, girls’ school. At that time, private schools were not [so] expensive [as nowadays]. It was almost a norm if you lived in [a big city]. They were usually set up by Christian missionaries […] in colonial times.” As a product of colonialism, the school adopted a full British curriculum, and courses were instructed in English. Due to the colonial history of her native country, her parents were also had an English education, so she found it “natural” to speak English even at home. Moreover, at her school, students were required to study subjects such as British history. On the other hand, they learned little about their own country. Reflecting
on her schooling, she says, “when growing up, I knew very little about my own people, […] but interestingly, I [learned] way more about the [outside] world”.

At school, she was a high achiever, meaning that she could almost always “walk away with the top honours” in her class. Back then, it was common for top students to be streamed to the O levels and to focus on studying science-related subjects. However, she did not have a lot of passion for science. Instead, she made the decision to switch to A level\(^1\). Even her teachers were shocked to learn about her decision. Luckily, her parents, being open minded, encouraged her to follow her interests rather than going after societal expectations.

At university, she chose to major in English literature. The entry to university, however, marked a turning point in her life. It came in a time when a wave of massive insurrection swept across the country, and many young people and university students who stood up against the government got killed. “It was a very tragic time”, she recalls, “even my university entrance was delayed because of that.” Starting her university life, she realized that until then, she had always led a very sheltered and privileged life. At university, she came in touch with the reality of the broader society, and she got to know many students who had “lived a very different life”. It was then her critical mind started to develop, when she became uncomfortable with the knowledge she had acquired at school. For instance, she started to ask, “why I didn’t even know about my own civilization?” At university, she got involved in student activism, and she even refused to attend her convocation out of a protest of the hypocrisy of her department.

She remembers that as a student, she never worried about her career and “never thought of going into a job”. Nevertheless, opportunities arose through personal connections. “I think it was at the end of my university career”, she recounted, “I remember a very close family friend of ours [came to talk with me]”. The family friend offered her an opportunity to get involved in a development project. “She was a teacher. She used to

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\(^1\) O level and A level are qualifications typically used in the British high school system.
work in what we could call in our language, an inner-city school.” The idea of a
development project was formulated when on her way to work, “she […] had to walk
through a slum, which was on the bank of a […] very polluted water canal”. Seeing that
people living in that slum suffered diseases and malnutrition, her friend decided to
mobilise resources to start a pop-up clinic: “We got donations from drug companies [and]
got a couple of doctors whom we knew”. Since then, she has always been involved in
development work. She even became the chair of an international NGO.

She also worked as a freelance photographer and photojournalist, and this job gave her
the opportunity to travel internationally.

[I remember once] I was invited by a lobby group in the US […] so I spent three
months in Washington DC with this group as an international intern. […] I
learned all about the American system [while working] there as a photographer.

Through similar opportunities, she also worked and traveled in countries such as England
and India. Reflecting on these international experiences, including her later move to
Canada, she did not recall any significant culture shock, other than adapting to the food
and climate. Neither did she believe that any of the places that she visited contributed to
her development of global mindedness, since most of the cultural encounters were brief
and superficial. On the other hand, her work experience made a difference, as she says, “I
learned more about global mindedness in terms of common global issues from the work
that I did […] rather than the actual place I was in.” She believes her upbringing and her
English degree helped her “adapt and fit into places”, and since she mostly travelled in
English speaking countries, she did not encounter a language barrier. She also sees her
international trips as a way to seek out the familiar, what she learned during her British-
styled school education and for her English degree: “my aspirations of going overseas
was […] to see and experience all the things I had learned about in my growing up eras.”

The move to Canada, however, was another significant event in her life. The move took
place two years after a civil war broke out in her native country. While Canada offered a
new start, the move also brought up challenges she had not encountered in her previous
international trips. “The aspect I found difficult”, she thinks, “was the kind of systemic
forms of exclusion or discrimination”. As a new immigrant, she went through the tedious process of immigration, and found herself in a disadvantaged position when looking for a job: “[when I] came [to Canada], nothing of what I had done [in Sri Lanka] was recognized here.” Then, as she stayed home to raise her kids, she noticed that her children “also faced various forms of racism” while “going through the school system”. However, she still considered herself and her children lucky: “because my husband, he was White and his friend group formed my community, so fitting in was really easy in that sense.”

Job opportunities came as she settled in. First, she got a job teaching ESL to new immigrants. Then, through a friend, she got a contract position at a university. It was here that she met a “really important mentor” in her life. Talking about this former boss of hers, she says, “he had this amazing ability to bring together people who were interested in the work [no matter] they were academic or not”. He also encouraged her to enroll in graduate school, saying, “Here you already work in the field. This is something you can research [and] make a contribution.” Recalling her graduate school experience in Canada, she says,

I entered graduate school as a so-called mature student. I would sometimes drop my kids off at school, and then just head to the [university] library […] browsing through the shelves, […] I discovered all kinds of books and started reading them.

She read ferociously and “discovered postcolonial literature”. She still remembers the excitement as it gave her the language to express her criticality and explore the questions she got from past experiences. At graduate school, she also had a professor who made her think, “if this is what […] academia is about, I’m really excited about it.” Graduate school marked the entry point to her academic career, as she recalls,

[…] so it was like all the things that I had done in my life were coming together, so to speak. It was a very rich time that I had never expected […] to be hired as a faculty member, because at that time I still had this love-hate relationship with the university as an institution.
After obtaining her PhD, she continued her research work and teaching at the university. Talking about her relationship with the institution of higher education, she says, “I still have a healthy skepticism”, and “I’m taking on a more activist role in the institution.”

3.4.3 Scholar 3: struggles and opportunities, journey from a small town to the larger world

Scholar 3 grew up in the part of an East Asian country that was occupied by the Japanese before World War II. Her hometown was a small city where multiple cultures were present. Even though her family belong to the ethnic majority, she remembers growing up with a strong influence of Korean culture, especially food. Her hometown also had a Korean school, and as a student she used to visit it: “sometimes my school would organize activities, and we could visit [the Korean] school, so we had chances to see those [Korean] kids. They performed their traditional dance, music, songs… they were quite different […]”.

Unlike many other scholars in this study, scholar 3 has a clear sense of home; and she is always attached to her hometown and its unique culture diversity. She expresses her concerns over the change in her hometown that threatens such diversity:

My hometown has a lot of such things, like festivals [and customs], which are gradually disappearing, but […] because maybe I am […] a very sensitive person, in my impression, they still exist. At school, they never teach such things, [which] are derived from real life. […] With urbanization, I can see they are gradually disappearing. I actually feel quite sad about it.

She was born in a working-class family as the younger child of two. Compared to nowadays, she recalls that there was less inequality in the society where she grew up, and most people were neither very rich nor very poor. Her school culture was very competitive but only in terms of academic performance, and students would not compare each other’s family background or wealth. Since grade one, her teachers would make a ranking list after every exam, and let every student take it home to their parents. “I still remember, after every examination, we receive this kind of list. It’s like a ritual.”
Upon finishing high school, she was faced with the decision of choosing a university, and a career. She had a high school teacher who influenced her decision to go out into the bigger world: “She encouraged us to go to [the capital], to other cities, and look around the world. […] I was motived to go to university outside the region [of my hometown].”

In terms of career choice, she thinks that entering the field of education was initially not her own decision. Instead, it came from her parents, especially her father, who “didn’t expect me to be quite ambitious”. Her parents wanted her to be a teacher since she was very young. According to scholar 3, her parents were both “very traditional” in the sense that they wanted their kids to be obedient and get good marks at school, and “patriarchal”, because they had “different expectations for girls and boys”. Her father wanted to have a son but only had two daughters. As the younger one, she was given a name that in her mother tongue sometimes would make people think she “was a middle-aged man, and very strong”.

Her first choice of university major was Japanese. That decision could be traced back to a critical incident in her high school years when as a top student, she was offered a scholarship from a Japanese university. She was also invited to attend the reward ceremony where she met Japanese people the first time in her life. The impression they gave her was very different from what she had been taught about the Japanese and their cruelty during WWII. They showed her respect and she “was moved by their kindness”. This event spurred her interests in Japanese language and culture. On the other hand, as a working-class family, whether to pay her tuition would make a big difference for her parents, and her father wanted her to apply for a teacher education program not only due to his career expectation for her, but also because it was tuition-free. Eventually she chose to go with the decision that made her father happy.

The journey from her hometown to the capital city took 18 hours. The start of university and life in a big city brought a lot of excitement, and she still remembers the first time she used the metro, which was a very modern and uncommon transport for her. She also felt her university campus “was very international”, especially compared to her hometown. Meanwhile, the new life also brought challenges she had never faced. Reflecting on her university life, she says,
University […] for someone from the countryside, or someone like me, a student from a small city, it was very unfair. […] a lot of things you learned in middle school are not able to be transferred to university very easily, and [the university] values many life experiences that we haven’t had a chance to get.

At this university, she encountered teachers who were educated in the West. They brought research topics on multiculturalism, which was new in her native country back then, and she was impressed. She also recalls a critical incident. It happened in a class right after the 9/11 attack. The professor asked the students about their opinion on the incident. Since the US was negatively depicted in the media, she and her classmates praised Bin Laden as a hero, but they were scolded by the professor:

In fact, [that professor] had also been a visiting scholar in the United States before. He said, "Think on behalf of those victims," and "you should not politicize it, because most people who died in this attack were civilians, and they were completely innocent.

That lesson helped her gain a humanist perspective and humanist care, which in turn influenced her later academic development. She started to see the value of human life underneath any cultural differences. Then, in her junior year at the university, she got an opportunity to join a study trip to visit MetropoliX and stayed there for some days. It was also during this trip she interacted with some students from the US.

Later, she got a scholarship to start her graduate studies at a university in MetropoliX, a highly internationalised region in Asia. She remembers that it took about a year to overcome the culture shock that came from both the academic culture on campus and the local culture in the region:

[…] we could clearly feel that the two cultures were crushing down on us at the same time. One was the university culture, which had already been completely Westernized, and the other was the local culture outside the university campus [such as the food and the climate].
The biggest challenge in her graduate study came from language, since not only were the courses instructed in English, but she also had to read and write in English. The first semester was spent on adapting, and by the end of the second semester she started to get used to it.

After getting her PhD, scholar 3 worked for a university in East Asia. Working at the university has offered her opportunities to travel abroad for conferences and collaborative projects: “Now I’m really grateful for this job, working at the university. It gives me a lot of opportunities to go out, explore the world and see things. These experiences are really valuable.”

3.4.4 Scholar 4: Living out the destiny and seeing differences through minority eyes

I suppose I have lived the minority experience throughout my life, and that has led me to speculate […] the difficulties and challenges […] of living in a space where you are not necessarily welcomed, [and to explore] the possibilities of […] thinking] about difference as a productive resource.

When asked about his journey to become the renowned scholar he is now, scholar 4 says the journey could have already started before he was born. It started with his family, especially his father, who was a major scholar of Islamic studies: “I was brought up in a milieu of scholarship. It was all around me. [My parents’] expectation was that I would become a scholar, and in many ways, I am realizing that expectation”. He feels lucky to grow up under the influence of his father: “[…] it was through osmosis, you know, it was through being around him that I became a scholar.”

Born in a newly independent South Asian country, in his childhood, he experienced both the nationalist enthusiasm and the tragic aftermath of colonialism. In terms of socioeconomic status, growing up in a family of scholarship, he had a childhood of “basic middle-class experience”, and he explains, “I was not part of the ruling class, and I was not part of the rich commercial class, nor was I a poor farmer or poor worker […] We were straight down the middle class.”
In terms of religion, his family was the minority. He experienced the difficulties associated with being a minority since as early as he could remember. Scholar 4 describes his childhood experience of coming from a Muslim family in his native country as “conflict ridden and contentious”, and he explains:

I was living in the shadows of conflict [and] a civil strife that was really, really horrific, and many of my family members [were forced onto a dangerous journey of migration], and some of them never made it. They died in the journey […] all that was really part of my childhood. All of this actually emerges out of my understanding [of] what people went through in creating a new nation out of the history of colonialism.

When scholar 4 was in his mid-teens, his father got a position at an Australian academic institute. As a result, the entire family moved to Australia. Back then, Australia had the highly discriminative “white Australia” policy, which denied the non-white population from immigrating to Australia. However, his parents were considered “exceptional cases” because their knowledge and skills were much needed in Australia. As a result, he became a highly visible minority at school, as he recalls, “when I went to school at the age of 16, I was the only, only one, non-white student in the whole of the school, of around 11 hundred students.” Due to the socioeconomic status and the scholar reputation of his parents, he did not experience many overt cases of racism. He only encountered implicit forms of racism such as being stared at or people trying of touch his hair. However, fitting in at school was not easy, not just because of his skin colour, but also the language barrier, as he explains, “in [my native country] I did not go to an English medium school […], so my English was very limited [on my arrival in Australia]. I had to learn English very quickly…” The challenges made him work harder than his peers, and perseverance became one of the most valuable lessons he learned from school. “You try as hard as you possibly can […] to overcome the negatives.” The other important lesson from his schooling experience in Australia came from those individuals, especially teachers, “who were really decent and supportive”. Those teachers taught him the value of education – to make positive change, and they served as role models for him when he became a teacher.
In terms of learning about the wider world, scholar 4 recalls that in both his native country and in Australia, he got “incredibly limited” exposure to alternative views and diversity. In his native country, he only learned about some of its neighbouring countries “in highly nationalistic terms”, and about Britain due to its colonial influence. On the other hand, he says, “I knew nothing about Africa. I knew nothing about the Middle East.” Then, in Australia, he learned about British history because it “created Australian history”, while nothing was taught about the history of the aboriginal people.

After completing his undergraduate studies, he pursued his postgraduate education in England. Compared to the move from his native country to Australia, he found “the contrast between England and Australia is not as great [because] Australia higher education system is deeply British”. Even in terms of culture, “the differences were not that great” since he was used to living in a metropolitan. He spent seven years in England, until completing his PhD studies, on a topic about Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language. During these years, he had several mentors who helped him. However, when talking about mentors, he considers Wittgenstein his most important intellectual mentor, even though the philosopher had died several decades before his PhD. He explains, “people don’t quite understand how I could regard somebody who had been long dead as a mentor”, but “I regard him as my mentor because his words [and ideas] are doing the mentoring”.

Another country to which he feels deep connection is the United States. After England, he lived and worked in the US for ten years. Talking about his impression of the US, he says,

[…] there are some very, very committed people who want a different kind of America, different to the America that you see outside the university town. […] when you go into the suburbs or into the rural areas, you would come across some of the most prejudice people that you’re ever likely to come across, but you come inside the university, and you would come across some of the most enlightened [and] most polite people that you’ve ever come across.
He recalls a critical incident that happened to him in the US that influenced his research interests. It was a time when he got pulled over by the police for speeding. Although the police let him go after just giving him a warning, the incident frightened him as it reminded him of what he had learned about “the ways in which American police treat non-white people”. Due to the circumstance of the incident and the way it happened, it became an important learning moment. Reflecting on the incident, he says, “[after the incident] critical race theory has become something of an interest to me, largely because I’m filtering my learning through that very short experience that lasted no more than two minutes.”

In terms of career choice and the decision to enter his current field of scholarship, he describes it with the word “serendipity”, viewing his academic career as a “series of accidents”. Although there was no clear entry point to his scholarship, he still identifies a few key moments and critical incidents that influenced his decision: “the time when I first started thinking about globalization most seriously […] was in 1989”. He recalls many incidents that happened in that year, including the Tian-an-men incident, and Salman Rushdie incidents, where protesters were murdered by oppressive governments. It was also a time when the Soviet empire was collapsing, and the Cold War was coming to an end. Also in 1989, he attended a lecture by a famous sociologist: “he talked about globalization, and that was the first time that I started thinking seriously about globalization.”

From then on, he started reading and writing about globalization. Then, while working at an Australian university, he also noticed the change in student demography:

[…] and then around the same time Australia started taking large number of international students, and that changed the demography of our campuses, […] those are some of the things that led me into global education, and once the ball started rolling, and I basically continued to work on this. […] but] there was never a time when I just started saying, “oh, this is my area of expertise” or “this is the area I want to be known for”. It just happened.
Now, scholar 4 has been known for his work on global education, and he has taught in many countries around the world, including South Africa, Finland, and Canada.

### 3.4.5 Scholar 5: Entering the larger world, reconnecting to the roots

Scholar 5 was born and raised in a rural community in a part of Sub-Saharan Africa which, at the time of his birth, was still colonized by the British. Recalling the place where he spent his childhood, he says, “it was quite different from what you find in the urban areas.” There was no means of transport like cars or buses, so people had to walk most of the time. There was not even TV or radio, let alone internet and the electronic devices that are common in people’s daily life nowadays. Every day after school, he would play games with his friends on the side of unpaved dusty roads or attend livestock in the fields. There was no shower or bathtub, and people would bathe in the river. In terms of the social unit around which life was organized, community was at the core of social life instead of the nuclear family, “it was more community life rather than family life, most of the time [we were] doing things for […] the community”. As part of the community, even kids were expected to work, and take on responsibilities since very young, as he explains, “we had a lot of responsibilities. [N]owadays […] in the West, one would consider that as […] child exploitation [or even] abuse”. Although he considers his parents his main caretakers when he was little, the relationship with his parents were more about “looking after each other rather than [being looked after]”, as in a community, “each one depended on the other to some extent”.

The community life of his childhood helped him develop a strong work ethic and understand the importance of cooperation. However, it did not prepare him for print literacy that was necessary to enter the wider world: “[…] in my home community, […] there wasn’t any culture of reading”. The experience of learning to read was not pleasant, as he recalls, “[reading] was imposed on us. […] If you [went] to school without doing the homework, without reading, you knew that you would be beaten, and that fear of the pain forced everyone to read.” Even though he does not consider reading a habit developed naturally and from within, he still believes in its value, because it was through reading, he discovered his interest in historical literature, and found the tools needed to
challenge the hegemony of knowledge: “eventually that interest becomes your own
treasure”.

The school he attended was a colonial institute imported by the British. Since grade one,
most of his courses were instructed in English, a language he did not find useful in the rural context, but he admits that eventually, he benefited from the English literacy developed since primary school: “[it] gave me an advantage as I proceeded into teacher education, and […] when I tried to apply for studies [abroad, because] I laid a strong foundation in English”. Apart from the language, the school curriculum was also disconnected to his rural upbringing and daily experience outside the school, as he recalls, “from very early years of my primary schooling, I struggled, really, to understand most of the knowledge that was taught. It was a challenge […] to relate [what was taught at school] to my experiences.” He can still remember some very difficult assignments. Once his teacher asked the students to write about a snowy day. There was another time when he was asked to write about a journey by train. For him and his classmates, it was almost impossible to imagine what a train was like: “no one in our class had ever boarded a train or a bus, or even heard the sound of its engine”.

In contrast, he scored very well in another assignment, because the topic was closely related to his personal experience:

[That time] we were told to write about a day in the bush. OK, so I thought I had a lot to say about that experience, because it formed part of what I used to experience every day after school. I would go in the bush, look for firewood, run after the goats… and so, we had the eloquence with which I wrote that assignment. It was quite different from the ‘snowy day’, when I had no idea of what the snow was like.

Reflecting on the colonial education and its impact on him, scholar 5 says, “I acquired knowledge about other parts of the world, […] but it kind of uprooted me from my own person.” He also mentions that in the colonial era, education was strongly linked to the religion of Christianity, as the first schools were established by missionaries: “They came as a package. You had to get the faith and the school at the same time.”
school he attended was also a Christian school, where the guideline required observation of Christianity, although students were not obliged to convert to the religion. The exposure to religion at school, and especially the Bible study course, triggered his interest in not just Christianity but all religions: “I think there was a level where we were to see the parallels between the Christian texts, the Old Testament and other writings, writings from Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam”.

Another one of his favourite subjects at high school was history. He attributes his strong interest in the subject chiefly to his high school history teacher: “he impacted my thinking about history, [not only] what it could do to me, [but] also what it could do to the nation, and also to the world.” While applying for university, students got admitted based on their strong subjects at high school. Since he had been very good at history, it became his major at university, together with religious studies.

He confirms the great significance of starting university as it represented a big move from the rural to the urban context. It was a critical moment that marked the start of his understanding of the world and his identity:

[The moment] I set my feet on the urban contexts [...] was when my understanding of my location [...] in the larger world started to expand, either through that material experience, but also through reading more about what the world entails, and how I could participate in and probably beyond my current experience and knowledge.

He uses the words “adventure” and “excitement” to describe his university experience. The country was newly independent, which also brought excitement and hope of change. The urban context presented him with new challenges, but at the same time, a university education “meant a change in status”. Since he also started working around the same time, he could not identify a turning point from being a student to being professional: “I think my academic career spans throughout my life, as I worked, I was studying, as I studied, I was working”.
Another significant change in life came many years later, when he was working as an assistant registrar at a university of his native country. Since the early 2000s, he noticed that many of his colleagues were leaving the university and going abroad. He started to ask, “what is happening?” Then, he called a colleague who was about to leave and learned that he had just been accepted to a Canadian university to start a PhD program. He became curious and asked about the process of application, and his friend sent him the link, saying, “Now, check this, and they have scholarships also, if you’re interested.” After checking the information, he became interested and decided to apply to study in Canada. Reflecting on that decision, she says, “it just so happened that when the opportunity came, I just found myself there.”

Just like his move from rural to urban, the move to Canada was another big event. Scholar 5 summarized his experience in Canada in “three broad categories: one is social; one is academic; and [the other] would be financial”. All three were interconnected. Due to the financial strains, he was determined to complete the program before his funding ran out, and his social life became rather limited. While other students were partying and socializing, he was either studying or working: “I was either in my office, reading, or I was trying to make ends meet to support myself as a student. So socially, I didn’t learn much about the culture.” On the other hand, he enjoyed the academic experience in Canada because his teachers and colleagues appreciated his previous knowledge, experience, and values he had brought from the African context. He also developed research skills that he still finds useful. Another reason he had a limited social life and spent most time on campus was that outside the university, he often felt not welcomed, and had a few incidents that “might be reflective of an underlying […] racial problem within Canada”.

Upon completing his PhD program, he decided to go back to work in his native country. This decision surprised many of his Canadian colleagues and teachers, who asked him, “Why are you leaving? Why shouldn’t you stay?” He felt that even though they might have asked the question “out of generosity”, they also expected him to say, “it's far much better here than being back home”, without wanting to understand his personal experience of living in Canada.
Upon returning, however, due to “a whole chain of events […] not even within my control”, he was forced to “take refuge in South Africa”. As the political situation in this native country became very unstable, he settled in South Africa with his wife, although his children remained in Canada and even got Canadian citizenship. Reflecting on the notion of home based on his experience of moving and migration, he says, “[home is] a place [which] you have strong connections with, [where] you can [relate] your past [to] your present, and also even think about what to do in the future”. According to him, colonial education and its contemporary forms in the post-colonies are good at “uprooting people from their homes” and making people hate their past. Therefore, he strongly believes in the importance of decolonizing education, which motivates him to carry on his current research and teaching in the African context.

3.4.6 Scholar 6: language, identity, and the understanding of others

Scholar 6 grew up in a Jewish family in the capital of a South American country. The living experience in a minority community had a strong presence and influence on her identity since very early in her life. In her family, her parents spoke Yiddish, but she was taught in Spanish at school. Her parents also sent her to a Jewish school, where education was conducted within a religious framework, and the language of Hebrew was taught. It was her parents’ idea as they believed Hebrew was strongly connected to the Jewish identity. During her childhood, she got the most influence from her mother, who was a Zionist and always saw Israel as their place of belonging in the world: “She gave us this idea that […] we were different, especially different in religion, even [though we] weren't so religious.” Scholar 6 recalls her mother telling her and her siblings, “We are in [this country] by chance, but it’s not our choice…”, and that if she could have chosen, her mother would always prefer to be in Israel.

A critical moment came when she was 11. Due to some family trauma and Israel’s policy of recruiting young Jewish people globally, her mother decided to seize the opportunity and send her and her brother to Israel. Upon arrival in Israel, she enrolled in a boarding school with other minority students, where she encountered cultural and linguistic barriers. Recalling that time, she says, “I was frustrated”, and suddenly, “the question of
understanding the others [became] very important.” She identified this experience from early life as crucial to her life-long interest in language learning: “this feeling of [unable to understand others] because you don’t know their language […] made me think that language was important.”

During her secondary school, she experienced Kibbutz, a “completely different framework”. She describes Kibbutz as “a very communitarian” type of education, and “it was very important in the formation of the state”. The experience was very different from what she had been used to, as children were “not living with their parents” but in specially designated housing. Through that experience she witnessed the social changes that took place in Israel. However, after two years of high school in Israel, and after the Six-Day War, she was called back to her native country: “I was [in Israel] with my brother who was in the army during the war, and then my mother was really upset, and then she [told me to come back].”

The society in her native country had also undergone significant change while she was studying in Israel. After returning to finish her high school, she had to adapt again to a new cultural context even though she had no language barrier: “it's not a question of language alone. It’s a question of culture.” She felt isolated from her peers because she was not familiar with the TV programs they were watching or the pop songs they were listening to. Meanwhile, she started to work as a teacher. Being a teacher was not a career she desired since her childhood dream was to become a scientist. However, she picked up teaching even before finishing her high school, and she found the job “very easy” because she “was always a good student”. As a good student, she was used to explaining things to others, and teaching became “a natural skill”. Scholar 6 describes her daily routine back then when she was only 16:

In the morning we studied the general study, as in every school, and in the afternoon, I was not in school because [I was] teaching Hebrew […] at a primary school […] My status was very weird. In the morning I was a student. In the afternoon I was a teacher […]. Then in the evening, I was learning, in […] a college for teachers.
The parallel life of studying and working made her mature at a relatively young age, or in her own words, “the change of status can do something to your mind”.

After graduating from high school, she got married and with her new family, she moved to another city in her native country, where she lived for another 10 years. While raising her children, she kept learning languages such as English and French. She also taught Hebrew to adults and got involved in an education committee. Then, while teaching Hebrew at a Jewish school, she met an important mentor in her life, a principal of the school. It was also at that school where she “started to be interested in sociology”. She recalls an important conversation she had with the principal:

She studied sociology, and she started to ask me questions about […] the roots of this school. I said, “Why is it so important?” [She said], “Ah, in order to understand the dynamics of today, you have to understand what was going on before.” It was very interesting, and then I started to read about [sociology] and then it became very interesting…

Not content with the idea of being a schoolteacher for the rest of her life, and inspired by her principal, she had the idea of studying sociology at the university. However, at that time her native country was under the rule of a military regime, and social science subjects such as sociology, psychology and anthropology were all forbidden. She explains the frustration she had, “[There was] nothing you could do […] Everything is mixed with the history of the country.”

Only after moving to Israel again, she was able to pursue her dream of higher education. The Israel she returned to was not the same as she remembered from childhood. Despite her previous knowledge of the country, she had to “discover it again”, and adapt to “the university, the cultural context, the political context”, which were all unfamiliar to her. She remembers that once she had a question in a methodology exam. It was about drinking water in the army. Since she had never served in the army, she had to ask the teacher, “Is it good in the army to drink a lot of water or not to drink a lot of water?” There were also many political questions she had not been aware of when she was
younger. She recalls, “the Intifada, the uprising of Arab people… all that, I didn't understand at the beginning, but I started to try to understand what was going on”.

There was also a critical incident during her first year at university. She saw it as an important example of “multiculturalism, and the way people see minorities or new immigrants”. During that academic year, she had a group of friends. They would study together in the same course and prepare for the exam after class. Then in the exam, she got a good mark. However, when she shared her mark with one of her friends, he says, “We can see that the marks are not real one… because you don't speak very well Hebrew. How it happens that you can get this mark?” Although this comment hurt her feelings, in reflection, she says, “it was not because he was a bad guy”, but rather, it was the idea that as a non-native speaker, “I couldn't have [such a good] mark.” She explains that even though she understood Hebrew well enough to succeed academically, she sometimes appeared at loss in daily conversations because she was unfamiliar with the “everyday culture”. However, it gave her friend the impression that she did not know the language well. This incident made her believe that it was important for the university and teachers to pay attention to the experience and struggle of minority students.

Her strong academic performance allowed her to continue with graduate studies. For her master’s thesis, she focused on identity and studied it from an educational perspective, largely due to her early experience of studying in Israel. Then, for her PhD work in comparative education, she went to France to do fieldwork. The experience of living in France came with new challenges. Although she had learned French, she needed to learn slangs and adapt to new cultural contexts. Also, while studying in her PhD program, her supervisor became another important mentor, and her role model. Talking about her supervisor’s influence, she explains,

I believe that for minorities, [...] it's very important to have role models… She was my supervisor, but not only that. We spoke about other problems, about family and other issues.

From her supervisor she learned the importance of human relationships between professor and students. When she later became a professor, she tried to be like her mentor
with her own students, to care about not only their academic needs but their needs as humans. She emphasises the importance to be empathetic towards students, especially those working towards a PhD, since it can take a long time and sometimes students get married or have problems outside the university. Therefore, “it's very important to be caring” and “to have good communication”.

3.5 Remarkable findings and discussion

In this section, I discuss the findings that emerged from the narratives in relation to the research questions posed at the beginning of the chapter. I start with the common themes that emerged in the thematic analysis. Then, digging deeper into each narrative, I try to highlight each scholar’s unique qualities of global mindedness and the most significant experiences contributing to the development of these qualities.

3.5.1 Common themes related to the research questions

Following the thematic analysis method described in 3.3.4, a few themes were identified in relation to each of the two research questions. The details of these themes can be found in the two tables included in Appendix E.

Responding to the questions of what constitutes global mindedness, common themes across narratives include: (1) empathy and ability to relate to others; (2) openness, curiosity, and positive attitude towards diversity; (3) adaptability and acceptance of difference; (4) critical thinking and reflection. These themes speak to the shared qualities of global mindedness, and they correspond to concepts in global education literature. For instance, international mindedness also emphasizes a sense of responsibility towards a wider global community (IBO, 2017), as well as the “openness” to cultural diversity and difference with “receptiveness, curiosity, respect, [and] adopting a positive attitude” (Hill, 2015, p. 40). Empathy is regarded a key element in global citizenship education (Edgar, 2020; Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016).

Similarly, related to the question of experiences and conditions for developing global mindedness, the following common themes emerged from the narratives: (1) colonial legacy; (2) living the minority experience; (3) family and community influence in early
life; (4) school as a site of critical learning; (5) travel and migration; and (6) teachers and mentors. Again, the commonalities often seem to base on superficial comprehension of the narrative evidence, such as the common wording or description of experience. These themes are interrelated, and they could be viewed as key threads that weave together into an outline of experiential ground for the development of global mindedness. Influence from the previous study (chapter 2) is also evident. Themes 3, 5, and 6, especially, echo the findings and similar themes from the chapter 2 study.

Themes 1 and 2, however, have little in common with any common themes from the previous study. All six scholars have lived as a minority at some points of their lives. Often due to the history of colonization, some of these scholars (1, 4, and 6) were born into minority experiences that continued to the present day. Such experiences influenced their choices of education, career, and research interests, as well as their experiences of international mobility (theme 5). Among the six scholars, four (1, 2, 4, and 5) were born in British colonies or newly independent former colonies. The impact of colonization was not as direct and remarkable in the narratives from scholar 3 and scholar 6. However, the colonial legacy can still be identified in both cases. For instance, the official language in scholar 6’s native country could be seen as a legacy from early colonization, and Israel’s formation and conflicts with neighbouring countries could also reflect the colonial history of the region. In scholar 3’s narrative, the history of (imperial) Japanese invasion and occupation influenced her early knowledge of Japan and her first meeting with the Japanese (3.4.3), while her later experience living and studying in MetropoliX was impacted by the region’s history of British colonization.

While these common themes correspond with the research questions posed at the beginning of the chapter, their ‘commonness’ fails to provide the depth I was looking for. The content of these themes, which came out of coding the original narratives and comparison of codes, become generalized and sometimes the specificity was lost. In the process of searching for commonalities, the unique qualities and characteristics of global mindedness embedded in each participants’ personal story were left out. The remainder of this section centers these unique, yet outstanding qualities embedded in each of the individual narratives that generate a set of grounded notions of global mindedness.
3.5.2 Translation and translatability

“[Over the years,] what I learned about living amongst different cultures is how to translate.” In scholar 1’s narrative, knowing “how to translate” is a unique and important feature of global mindedness.

In the interview, scholar 1 used the example of food to illustrate the concept of translation. “What is good food in my culture is not considered to be delicious in another.” In the English context, for instance, the word “sweet” is related to sugar. However, the word takes on a different meaning elsewhere: “for my maternal grandparents, if [the food] wasn’t pungent, it was sweet.” This kind of difference in meaning is often beyond what words can convey and it requires the interlocutor or translator to understand the cultural context in which the word is used. Instead of assuming the same word always has the same meaning, globally minded individuals are willing to inquire the contextual subtleness in their communication, especially in unfamiliar cultures.

As a scholar of linguistics, scholar 1 is critical towards “the idea that translation is how to transform one language into another” since it “traditionally presupposes the possibility of commonality in language”. He used an example to explain this problematic assumption of commonality: “This word in my language is equivalent to that word in your language, so let me transform this word into that word, and then we understand each other.” For scholar 1, the equivalence is only superficial, while the deeper meanings associated with the two seemingly equivalent words from two languages are inevitably lost in translation.

I understand translation as cultural translation and not just linguistic translation. […] Translation is dealing with the gaps [and] differences in cultures and languages, […] dealing with frustration [and] difficulty in understanding. […] It’s [about] understanding that we don’t understand.

This notion of translation here goes beyond its roots in linguistics. In a philosophical sense, it indicates a departure from the humanist dream of one single humanity, where differences are swept under the carpet. The problem with this universalist ideal,
according to scholar 1, is that in the process of “becoming one”, the less dominant cultures will inevitably disappear and get assimilated into the dominant ones. “We should all become one, but who’s the one? [Should] you become like me, or I become like you? Who decides?” The pursuit of unity at the expense of diversity is not an option for globally minded individuals.

Based on scholar 1’s narrative, I use the term translatability to describe this key component of global mindedness – the attentiveness and ability to translate. Globally minded individuals, therefore, are capable of living with differences, with the frustration of not understanding and with the understanding that they do not always understand. It includes a habitual acceptance of one’s own ignorance as a starting point for becoming globally minded. This starting point is similar to Hanvey’s (1982) explanation of “perspective consciousness”, that one’s “view of the world […] is not universally shared” and that “others have views of the world that are profoundly different from one’s own” (p. 162). The notion also resonates with the concept of “cosmopolitan literacy” articulated in Tarc et al. (2013), which entails knowledge constructed from “encounters across difference” and one’s “capacity to bear and engage with foreignness” (p. 4). However, translatability goes one step further to emphasize the sensitivity to the context, which is often untranslatable verbally or linguistically. The ability to translate the non-linguistically signified means a deep understanding of the contextual differences and nuances. To develop such an ability, according to scholar one, it is important “to question our ways of thinking when we encounter difference and be open to unlearning and relearning”. Translatability requires critical reflection (Mezirow, 1991), the process of self-examination and critical assessment of one’s own values and assumptions. It also requires the learner to engage the unfamiliar culture beyond superficial “encounters”.

As evident in scholar 1’s narrative, his ability to translate was developed since childhood through living with different and even opposing views of her parents, as well as his experience of “fighting back” at school (3.4.1). These experiences are highly personal, quotidian, and integrated into one’s daily life and identity formation, but at the same time, they can be difficult, disorienting, and transformative upon reflection. It is highly questionable that such experiences can be institutionally designed, inserted into the
curriculum or (re)created by any pedagogical interventions such as a study abroad program. While the educational programs strive to create a safe space for the learners, scholar 1’s story of struggling at the English boarding school serves as a counterexample. The real learning that led to his development of translatability and global mindedness was induced by the aversive racial discrimination, bullying from peers, and punishment from teachers. Had there been a safe space to avoid the confrontation, the self-debate and its consequential action of fighting back would have been unlikely. The loss of a guaranteed safe space, however, is just one of the many pedagogical difficulties educators would face when trying to design learning for global mindedness. Disorienting experiences would also be hard to advertise. Also, when facing the same kind of adversity, it would be impossible for each learner to follow the same path leading to a certain learning objective, or a pre-designed form of global mindedness in this case. As scholar 1 cautioned in the interview, certain sociopolitical conditions and experiences may contribute to global mindedness, but there is also a “psychological aspect” that can make a difference. For instance, while both facing racism at the boarding school, scholar 1 and his brother opted for different strategies. His brother, instead of fighting back, chose to try to assimilate and become “more British than the British”.

Worth noting here is that fighting back is not the only viable strategy for global minded individuals when experiencing discrimination or injustice. Scholar 6, for instance, opted for empathy and perspective-taking, as demonstrated in the case when an Israeli colleague questioned her ability to excel academically in Israel. Even though the colleague’s comment was hurtful, it did not lead her to judging him as “a bad guy”. Rather, she tried to understand the problem from her colleague’s perspective, and to make sure that when she was in his position, she would act differently.

To claim that a universally designed learning program can achieve the same and designer-desired learning objectives for each learner would be unrealistic at best, and misleading and toxic at worst. It does not mean, however, that the results from this study are not useful to educators. Adopting a narrative approach, I do not intend to dig out good or desirable experiences that can be readily packed for pedagogical delivery. I believe the
most valuable lesson here would be an ideological shift away from any universalism in conceptualizing, teaching or learning global mindedness. As scholar 1 cautions:

[…] there’s no one right way of thinking and one wrong way of thinking. The right way of thinking is the way of thinking of the context in which you are in, but when you move into a [different context,] you have to be careful with presupposing what you think is natural or right [would be accepted by others in that context.]

This quote summarizes an essential quality of globally minded individuals – the ability and habit to think in relation to the context, and to avoid making moral evaluation across contexts. To develop in students the attentiveness to cross-cultural translation, it is important for educators to help them question, revisit, and unlearn their universalist moral principles. In transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2008; Cranton, 2016), these moral values are part of the learner’s frame of reference, which can be challenged through the introduction of disorienting experiences and examined with critical reflection. At the same time, teachers, especially when teaching internationally or outside the context they are familiar with, also need to pay attention to the contextual differences and learn about the local context where they teach. Critical reflection skills are important for both students and teachers to move beyond universalism.

In terms of significant experiences (research question 2), living with racism, colonialism, and fighting back is central to scholar 1’s conceptualization of global mindedness (3.4.1). While the action of fighting back was an approach to being globally minded in scholar 1’s case, the spirit of resistance against any form of domination and cultural assimilation can be seen as a key quality of global mindedness.

Due to his personal experiences not just with racism but being subjected to discrimination, scholar 1’s understanding of anti-racism education and multiculturalism would be different from many White American scholars of the previous study (chapter 2), who were also anti-racist but only witnessed racism from an onlooker or oppressor’s perspective. Indeed, there are multiple aspects of anti-racism, depending on one’s positionality. For educational policy devoted to antiracism to be actionable instead of
non-performative (Ahmed, 2006), however, a crucial step would be incorporating the voice of those who suffered racism first-hand and taking their views and interests into account. Other scholars (2, 4, and 5) also mentioned experiences of being racialized in their narratives but scholar 1’s account is the most detailed and it seemed to have a greater impact on his identity development. On the other hand, it can also be argued that the racism these scholars were subjected to was still limited and that they had certain (class) privileges that protected them from otherwise more devastating consequences. Scholar 1, for instance, was still qualified to study at that elite school in England and was able to graduate with his highly regarded qualifications. Similarly, scholar 4 explained that his family’s “middle-class-ness” protected him “from overt cases” of racism. Despite the racist immigration policy, scholar 4 was still able to enroll in a middle-class Australian high school.

While these privileges do not make the experience with racism less legitimate or impactful, they are factors to be considered in the development of global mindedness. Also worth noting is that one learns to develop global mindedness not as a result of any experience per se, but the reflection on experiences. These scholars were privileged to have the capacity and opportunities to engage in critical reflection. The access to reading, higher education and scholarly training could be seen as enabling factors for critical reflection. In scholar 2’s narrative, for instance, she describes her excitement after discovering postcolonial study and other critical theories during her graduate school, since the literature gave her the language and tools to reflect on her earlier and ongoing experiences. For scholar 1, a graduate supervisor of his played a critical role in helping him think critically: “he made me […] think of what brings me to understand what I understand”. He recalled the first meeting with his supervisor as a critical incident:

[In our first tutorial] I said, “professor, I’d like you to explain to me what you meant in this text, in that text…” He said, “No, no, no, hold on a minute. There is no right reading and wrong reading. The important thing is the context.”

Instead of doing the interpretation for students and feeding them with indoctrinated meaning, the professor showed that meaning is always constructed in a context. This
lesson is a critical learning experience for scholar 1 and connected to the concept of translatability. It can also provide valuable insights for educators of global education. They may consider guiding students to pay attention to the context and teaching them to use conceptual tools for critical reflection. Pedagogical interventions such as study abroad programs or international teaching practica may provide students with valuable experiences and opportunities of transformative learning (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Walters et al., 2017). On the other hand, as demonstrated in the scholar narratives, the process of becoming globally minded can be highly diverse and interrelated to the learner experience. Educators should be cautious about over-promoting or exaggerating the value of a single international sojourn and simply using it as a prescription to produce global citizens or develop global mindedness (Tarc, 2013; Zemach-Bersin, 2008).

3.5.3 Scholarly upbringing and aspiration to the value of differences

As mentioned earlier, scholar 4 attributes his choice of a scholarly career primarily to the influence from his parents (3.4.1). His father, in particular, was a major scholar in his field of study. Therefore, scholar 4 had a role model to follow since childhood. From his father he learned the virtues of study, hard work, and setting high expectations for himself. The previous study (chapter 2) has revealed the importance of role models in one’s formative years. In scholar 4’s narrative, however, the influence did not come through any critical incident, but the daily interaction and incremental change and added up to form his habitus. This accumulative influence, or “osmosis”, upon reflection, became a determinant factor contributing to his becoming a scholar: “it was through being around him that I became a scholar.” Here, “scholar” is more of a habitus - “a socialized body” (Bourdieu, 1998), composed of a set of durable dispositions (Bourdieu, 2005), rather than an identity marker.

As noted in 3.5.1, influence from family is common for all participants in this study, but in scholar 4’s case, the influence is more direct and straightforward: “[My father] did anything he could to encourage me to become a scholar.” Unlike scholar 1, who fought back at his parents’ decision for him to become a medical doctor, scholar 4 followed his parents’ example and expectations to become a scholar (3.4.4): “I think my profession
was kind of inherited.” Reflecting on his career, scholar 4 made the comparison: “[just] like a lucky carpenter who hangs out in his father’s […] carpentry becomes a carpenter, or an agriculturist’s son becomes an agriculturist [by hanging around his father].”

For the cosmopolitan scholars in this study, their global mindedness is formed and manifested in their scholarly career. The process of becoming globally minded cannot be separated from their scholarly identity. Scholar 4’s narrative is the most telling example. The experience of growing up in a family of scholars, studying and working internationally at highly reputable institutions provide an optimal environment for developing the virtues key to global mindedness – “historical understanding of how we are located in any particular context [is] important. […] reflexivity [and] criticality [are also] important.” In terms of the significant experiences leading to his interest in multicultural and international education, which is also related to global mindedness, scholar 4 believes it was rooted in his life-long minority experience (3.4.4). Albeit its significance, his minority experience was particular and case specific. As a child, scholar 4 witnessed the tragic incidents that occurred to some of his extended family members. As a religious minority group, many of them were forced to migrate and some even lost their lives in the political turbulence and violent conflicts in his native country. Scholar 4 and his immediate family, however, were privileged minorities. They were fortunate enough to avoid being harmed, and to have the opportunity to move abroad. Moreover, his father’s reputation and his parents’ profession as scholars provided enough academic capital to bypass the racial barriers imposed by the Australian government’s unjust immigration policy, so his family was granted residency and a secure livelihood in Australia. As mentioned earlier, his parents’ profession and social status also protected him from encountering racism in its more blatant forms. Also, as demonstrated in section 4, other scholars (1, 6) were also privileged minorities who were able to have and benefit from the international mobility.

At the same time, I do not mean to overlook the difficulties the scholars went through, despite the privileges and social capital they had. In 3.5.1, I mentioned “travel and migration” as a common theme of significant experiences. Travelling and being internationally mobile alone, however, did not contribute to the development of global
mindedness in these scholars. In their narratives, they emphasized how they encountered and to some extent overcame difficulties in unfamiliar cultural spaces. The most meaningful learning and a deep understanding of both the host society and one’s position in the world were achieved through the process of overcoming difficulties, adapting to and thriving in a new environment. The challenges and difficulties that come with moving and resettlement, such as language barriers, unfamiliar social and cultural norms, unjust policy, intolerance and unwelcome attitude from others, are often lacking or missing in the vacation type of international experiences or in a short-term study abroad program (Bain & Yaklin, 2019), particularly for White Anglo students. From an educational perspective, more attention still needs to be paid on student learning rather than the mere pursuit of an international experience (Tarc, 2013), the value of which many scholars in this study are skeptical to.

In the face of the difficulties associated with international mobility, certain qualities become most valuable. Perseverance, as scholar 4 pointed out, helped him overcome the language barrier after moving to Australia, and achieve academic excellence there. Fighting back, as noted before in scholar 1’s narrative, when he moved to study in England, would also require perseverance and courage. It can also be identified in scholar 6’s narrative that courage is important for an international sojourner to step out of one’s comfort zone and “mix with other people even if they don’t pay attention to you”, and that patience is needed when things do not go as one has expected. These qualities, including perseverance, courage, and patience, though not defining characters of a globally minded person, may be perceived as preconditions and useful personality traits for developing global mindedness. From the perspective of an educator, scholar 4 problematized the practice of study abroad, pointing out that participants are often “thrown into the experience […] without […] given the tools for interpreting and engaging with it.” The tools of engaging with challenges can include the aforementioned qualities. Another important tool for interpreting experiences is criticality, which, according to scholar 4, is a key component of global mindedness, and can be practiced through Socratic dialogues. He explains that criticality cannot be taught via knowledge transmission, but teachers can guide students through a Socratic dialogue by asking critical, reflective questions: “Criticality is a habit. […] [Students] have to learn [critical
questioning,] then practice and practice […] until it becomes a part […] of their normal life.”

Scholar 4’s global mindedness also manifests in the form of aspiration to the positive values of diversity. A major part of his recent scholarly work has revolved around the question of how to “think about difference as a productive resource rather than a challenge or a problem”. As a cosmopolitan scholar, he believes that diversity is ubiquitous, and that “hybridity is […] our default condition of social existence.” The interpretation of diversity, however, can never be universal. It always depends on the historical, national, and social context (Vertovec, 2019). To become globally minded, one needs to learn about and try to understand the context and where the interlocutor is positioned when talking about diversity.

While recounting his early experience of education, work, and migration, scholar 4 mentioned how intersectionality affected his identity and experiences: “[my] class, and academic background […] helped, so that I was not subjected to the kind of criticism that I heard other people experiencing”. Although in his native country, he felt marginalized because his family belonged to a religious minority community, scholar 4 self-identified as non-religious, and he stated that religion did not have an impact on him in Australia: “[in terms of] intersectionality, […] perhaps gender did [play a role], perhaps language did, perhaps colour did, but not religion.” He then explained that during his stay in Australia, the country “was in the process of becoming secular, and religion was being abandoned in Australia at a very rapid rate”. Although not specified in the narrative, choosing to be nonreligious could be a result of adapting to the Australian society or avoid being further minoritized.

Based on the findings of the previous study (chapter 2), I listed religion, together with language, as a potential factor of significance in the process of developing global mindedness. Unlike language, however, in their narratives, none of the scholars singled out religion as a significant factor that contributed to their becoming globally minded. For some scholars, religion did play a role, such as in scholar 1, scholar 4 and scholar 6’s experience of living as a minority in their respective native countries, as well as in
scholar 2’s experience of growing up in a multifaith community. In scholar 3’s narrative (3.4.3), her research interest in religion was clearly influenced by her family, especially her sister’s devotion to Buddhism. However, since none of these scholars self-identified as religious, I can only speculate that their experiences with religions, rather than religious identity, had an impact on their learning and becoming globally minded.

3.5.4 Colonial education, identity, and home

As mentioned in 3.5.1, colonial legacy is a common theme emerged from the narratives. All six scholars had educational experiences that were influenced by the history of colonization. Unlike other scholars who grew up or lived in post-independence (former) colonies, scholar 1 and scholar 5 spent their early life in British colonies – societies actively colonized by the British when they were born. Both scholars experienced colonial education firsthand. As mentioned in 3.4.1 and discussed in 3.5.2, scholar 1’s identity was further complex because both parents were diasporic in the colony where he was born. The multiculturalism in his experience was introduced not just through colonial education, but also the minority status, and the difference in his parents’ positions within the colonial apparatus.

In comparison, scholar 5 had a rural upbringing, which left a strong impact on his identity formation. School became his major point of contact with British colonialism. Becoming English-literate, urban and global was at the expense of his local ways of being and knowing. His narrative (3.4.5) highlights the discrepancy between the rural context and the school as a colonial institution. This discrepancy is best illustrated in his recounting of the contrasting writing assignments. For scholar 5, the assignment “a day in the bush” was a successful learning example not just because he got a good mark, but he also had a sense of efficacy as he enjoyed describing an experience that constituted part of his daily life. In this example, the learning goal of literacy was achieved through capitalizing on the student’s previous experience. This learning model was well aligned with the key principle of experiential learning – that for students to better understand and effectively apply the knowledge taught in the classroom, it needs to be connected to a concrete experience (Kolb, 1984). In contrast, assignments such as “a snowy day” or “a journey by train” were examples where “[there] wasn’t any close association between what was
taught and what was the experience”. Students could only reply on the teacher’s description to imagine what the snow or a train was like. This type of knowledge transmission also resembles ‘the banking model’ criticized by Freire (1970), which, in a colonial context, reinforced the oppression of the colonized population.

The knowledge and qualifications gained through a colonial education system were, on one hand, highly valued both for the colonial power and the colonies. The advantage associated with a British colonial education was demonstrated in the narratives from multiple scholars in the study (1, 2, 4, and 5). It served as a transnational cultural capital (Waters, 2006; Ong, 1999) when they studied and worked internationally. In the case of scholar 5, he admits that an English-language-based education helped him adapt well when studying in Canada, although in his scholarly work he took a critical stance towards establishing English as a global language. On the other hand, the colonial education associated knowledge with the colonizer’s experience, thus disregarding the experience of the colonized as inferior or unworthy. In practical terms, the curriculum would include places and historical events far away from the local context. For instance, scholar 5 remembers that he learned about the geography of Canada and the French Revolution in high school, while very little was taught about Africa. The student, a colonial subject, would think, as scholar 5 describes, “Now that I know what exists out there, […] probably my experience wasn’t the best.” The same problem was noted by scholar 2, who attended school that adopted a British curriculum: “We studied all the things that British children studied, [such as] British History”. As a result, she learned more about faraway places like Europe and Canada than the history and traditions of her native country (3.4.2).

Scholar 5 believes that education should aim at fostering the growth in students so they can become holistic individuals. His philosophy resonates with Dewey’s (1938) idea that the experience is continuous, and that an experience-based education should connect to the learner’s past and be forward looking at the same time (Elkjaer, 2009). The colonial education system failed in this respect as it severed the connections to the learners’ past experiences, cultural backgrounds, and identities: “[…] what colonial education did was to enable you to know things other than yourself; […] and it didn't [aim to] produce a
wholesome, a holistic individual.” This educational philosophy, which emphasizes making connections to one’s past and future, is best summarized in the notion of “home” – a notion I will return to later in my discussion of global mindedness. For scholar 5, “[home] is a place where you have strong connections with, […] your past, your present, and […] think about what to do in the future.” For scholar 5, successful education should establish in students a clear sense of home, where they feel safe and comfortable to learn and to become who they want to be.

I think colonial education has been good at […] uprooting people from their homes, and making them something else, […] Yes, of course education can change you, but I think it should change you for the better, not to be different, and not to hate your past.

After reviewing scholar 5’s experience with colonial education, it becomes easier to understand his skepticism towards global mindedness. For scholar 5, the “global” as in global mindedness or global education has a colonial undertone. It implies a knowledge hierarchy that the global, the knowledge of “what exists out there”, is more valuable and prestigious than the local, the indigenous and traditional knowledges:

[…] being globally minded seems to say, “Now, forget about [your childhood] within that small village community where you grew up. There is a lot out there.” But I think the more you go out, the more you distance yourself from your roots, which I think […] is not the proper way […] of understanding being globally minded.

Scholar 5’s narrative figures an anticolonial and counterhegemonic understanding and conceptualization of global mindedness (Drerup, 2020). Instead of promoting global education as inherently good or a trend to be followed, it problematizes what it really means to be global, as well as how global education is taken up and perceived by people who are positioned differently in the global and hierarchical educational landscape. Working in a postcolonial African context, scholar 5 strongly believes in the importance of (re)instating the value of local knowledge and experience as part of the continuous
effort of decolonization. Talking about his scholarship, especially regarding teacher education, scholar 5 says:

[In my research] I tried to understand […] what contribution my local knowledge, indigenous knowledge, might bring on the table, to the discussions […] about justice, about education and teacher development. […] How do we develop teachers who are conscious about the local knowledge where most of our students live? […] How do [teachers] deal with some knowledge […] not documented but which forms part of the daily experience of the learners’?

In the context of global education, these questions are very relevant. Educators need to be careful not to install or assume a hierarchy of knowledge, especially when working with already vulnerable and marginalized student populations. Otherwise, albeit unintentionally, they may repeat the mistakes of colonial education (Dei, 2008). Another implication here for global educators is to pay attention to the connections between the teaching content and student experience in the process of internationalizing the curriculum. Teachers and policy makers cannot expect meaningful learning by simply bringing into the class concepts and examples from other countries that students cannot relate to their personal experiences.

Worth nothing here is that scholar 5 does not deny the value of documented knowledge or “the knowledge we refer to as western knowledge because of its origin”. As his own story shows, even though the process of learning to read was painful, he benefited from literacy and the habit of reading, as well as English and knowledge of the wider world. The question is not whether to accept or to reject the modern and the western knowledge, but how the knowledge is taught and how literacy is developed, whether at the expense of uprooting the learners from their home, cultural roots, and the local knowledge. Of course how to do so pedagogically without advancing a hierarchy of knowledges remains a challenge. Ideally, according to scholar 5, cosmopolitan learning can “marry […] the local knowledge with” western knowledge introduced from outside. However, “a clean union” is not easy because “most of the time, when […] we try to discuss these issues, there is immediate persuasion to disqualify indigenous knowledge as not worthwhile [to
teach] within the school context.” His narrative and educational philosophy add another layer of criticality to global mindedness, revealing the power-knowledge nexus in the global and international education discourses, as well as the need and practical challenges to decolonize global education.

3.5.5 Separation, leaving home, and intercultural sensitivity

Scholar 3, just like scholar 5, also shows a strong sense of home towards the place where she grew up. The hometown of her childhood became a foundation of her identity. Her narrative also echoes the criticality towards school and the importance of learning through daily experience.

My hometown has a lot of such things, like festivals, taboos, which are gradually disappearing, but […] because maybe I am […] a very sensitive person, in my impression, they still exist. At school, they never teach such things, [which] are derived from real life. […] With urbanization, I can see they are gradually disappearing. I actually feel quite sad about it.

As mentioned in the quote above, being sensitive can be seen as a key factor that contributed to her development of global mindedness. For scholar 3, the quality of her global mindedness also includes sensitivity towards culture and history in everyday life. Unlike scholar 5, who believes his global learning began outside his local home context, scholar 3 traces her global mindedness to her hometown where cultural diversity was present in her daily life, from Korean food, cultural festivals to various religious practices.

“Many things, when you are conscious of them, they will become your experiences, and part of your life.” When this kind of consciousness is present in the learner, exposure to diversity since childhood could help the development of global mindedness, as also demonstrated in scholar 1 and scholar 2’s narratives (3.4.1, 3.4.2). However, the element of diversity was largely missing in scholar 3’s school education. As she noted in the quote above, “they never teach such things”. School left her a “cruel” impression due to its heavy emphasis on testing and competition. It also adopted a highly national
curriculum that did not reflect the regional differences and diversity, making her feel that her hometown or even that region had little significance to the country: “I read about [a tree], and [a flower] in the textbook, but […] there were no such plants in [the part of the country where I grew up]”.

It can be argued that her criticality and reflexivity – the habit of questioning, as discussed earlier, made her aware of the deficiency of the education she had at school. Criticality and reflexivity have also been mentioned earlier as a common theme regarding qualities of global mindedness (3.5.1). Also important is the ability to learn from daily experiences outside school. Each of the scholars had a unique pathway of developing these qualities, but they all had higher education and research experience in social science and humanity, which might provide them opportunities to learn and develop these qualities. At the same time, an academic career also would require these same qualities to become successful. In scholar 3’s narrative, a few critical incidents can be identified that contributed to the development of these qualities. They include her encounter with Japanese people that challenged her previous knowledge, the professor who taught her to re-evaluate the 9-11 incident from a more humanist perspective, as well as the disorienting experience of starting a university life (3.4.3).

One critical incident that shaped her character, however, came much earlier in her life. This unique experience that stands out in scholar 3’s narrative was the childhood incident of being separated from her parents and her older sister. According to scholar 3, it is evident that the incident had a very significant impact on the development of her personality:

[…] the impression is quite deep. For a child, she has just become independent, separated from her parents for the first time, and then, you have to […] integrate into this society, to communicate with outsiders… adults, […] and then figure out why this happened, and what kind of relationship was between people. So when I think about it now, it might have made me […] more independent, […] that is to say, I will solve many things by myself, […] I believe in my own judgement, and will not rely too much on others.
The unexpected incident, the family’s decision to separate the kids, and the change of living space all happened too fast and perhaps too difficult for a five-year-old child to comprehend. Before the series of unexpected events, she had never been separated from her parents before. To make sense of the sudden change and the unfamiliar situation, she had to learn to think like an adult, to communicate with the adults around her, and to be part of the adult world. She also needed to overcome a “strong sense of loneliness”, and she started to ask questions about her identity and responsibility to others. Clearly, it was an experience of being forced out of one’s comfort zone. For a five-year-old, her immediate family was not just a comfort zone but perhaps even all the world she knew about. Although in this case, she did not leave her hometown, the impact of the incident is no less significant than that of an international experience. She learned to adapt, to cope with hard emotions, to solve problems alone, to communicate and integrate, to be strong and independent, all of which resemble key learning goals and expected outcomes of study abroad experiences (Mapp, 2013; Walters et al., 2017).

Scholar 3 believes that she had developed a “strong character” that helped her thrive in the fierce competition at school and cope with “the pressure of getting into university”. Having gone through the experience of family crisis and separation, she also learned to take responsibility for her family. As a child of her “traditional” parents who wanted her to study hard, she did her best to live up to their expectation by becoming a top student in class. Family influence is a common theme in the six scholars’ narratives (3.5.1). Compared to scholar 1, who rebelled against his parents’ choice, and scholar 4, who followed his father’s footsteps, scholar 3’s decisions represented a middle ground. She followed her father’s advice to choose a career in education, but instead of becoming a schoolteacher, she tried to get into graduate school with a scholarship and succeeded.

University was a significant time for scholar 3’s development of global mindedness. “[My] university was very international. […] I felt there was a lot of internationalization inside the campus”, she recalls. The move from a small, marginal city to the capital, the encounters with students from big cities, and with teachers educated or with research experience abroad, teachers who broadened her horizon with social theories and research methodologies originated in the West. All these experiences contributed to her renewed
understanding of the wider world and her own position in it. Her university experience was also another example that the key qualities of global mindedness could be developed through experiences other than study abroad or international travel, experiences that dominate in the literature (Tarc, 2013; Miller-Perrin & Thompson, 2014). Scholar 3 uses “international awareness” and “international understanding” to refer to these qualities – the knowledge and understanding of the wider world beyond a certain nation-centered curriculum, as well as the awareness of world events, global issues, change, development, and cultures beyond the national border. They resonate with the components of a “global perspective” (Hanvey, 1982), which can be attained without necessarily crossing any international border. It could be argued that her university was a particular space where opportunities of international and multicultural exchange abounded during her time of studying there. On the other hand, she describes herself as “sensitive” and as a student, she was “very curious about the West”. Her sensitivity and curiosity could also have helped her take advantage of these learning opportunities. Scholar 1 uses the term “a psychological aspect”, and scholar 4, while talking about whether study abroad can contribute to global mindedness, said:

[…] we need to make a distinction between somebody who is globally mobile, to somebody who is globally sensitive. You can be globally sensitive, while you are in the same place, but [be] globally insensitive, even if you move to 100 different places, your tastes don’t change […]

As mentioned earlier, scholar 3 felt her university was very international, but her transition from high school to university was difficult due to her place of origin. Even though she studied hard and was always a top student at high school, the university “[required] a different kind of knowledge” and “[valued] many life experiences that [students like her had not] had a chance to get”. Although she believed in the importance of international understanding, there were systemic barriers that prevented students from certain social backgrounds the access to the opportunities to become globally minded.

Through her university experience, scholar 3 acknowledged the importance of English as a “channel for […] international understanding”. However, compared to students from
big cities in her native country, she and others from small cities and rural areas faced an unfair disadvantage in learning English, due to the lack of resources and exposure. “This is not a problem that can be solved with hard work.” Reflecting on the role of university, she made the comment, “undoubtedly, university can help a person increase international awareness”. Nonetheless, not every student was placed on the same starting line, and back then when she first entered university, there were much fewer international learning opportunities than nowadays. She was lucky enough to seize the opportunity of the summer study in MetropoliX, which further introduced her to diverse perspectives through personal interactions with teachers and fellow students from MetropoliX and the US. This unique experience also influenced her later academic career and research interests.

Although international learning can take place at home, scholar 3 does not deny the importance of international travel and mobility in developing global mindedness. Like other participants in this study, and many US global education scholars from the previous study (chapter 2), she enjoyed travelling: “I’m quite interested in […] the history, the cultural things about different places”. She believes that if one has no genuine interest in the history and culture of the places they visit, “then everywhere is kind of the same”. In her recounting of her life experiences, she demonstrates what Mills (1959) called the sociological imagination, as well as the ability to reflect on and problematize not just social phenomena but social constructs such as global mindedness. Again, these qualities can be attributed to her academic career and research experience.

3.5.6 Neither here nor there: home as an imaginary space and anchor for intercultural identity

To close the discussion, I return to the notion of home. As a common notion or signifier that shows up in each narrative, it reflects the multiplicity and complexity that characterize global mindedness as a process of becoming, a process that can involve leaving home, returning home, and one’s ever-changing understanding of where and what home is. The explanation and implication of what home means, based on one’s life experiences, can also illustrate the divergence and convergence in each scholar’s understanding of global mindedness.
In the narratives examined throughout the study, home has at least three folds of meanings. First, home can refer to one’s parents, family, and community. The significance of the influence from this sense of home, especially during one’s childhood, has been identified as a common theme (3.5.1). It may look simple at first glance, but as the narratives in section 4 and the earlier discussion in this section show, home – its meaning and significance – may take various forms. Migration and scholarly influence from parents (scholar 4), a community where everyone depends on everyone else (scholar 5), a critical incident of separation (scholar 3) are just a few examples.

Second, home can also be a city, a country, a geographic region or place one is familiar with, and one feels attached to. As mentioned earlier (3.5.4, 3.5.5), scholar 3 and scholar 5 could both identify a concrete place they call home. For the other scholars, to identify a single place is more difficult. Home is often an imaginary space, neither here, nor there. One most interesting case can be found in scholar 6’s narrative. In her childhood, her mother has a strong presence and influence on her. For her mother, their home is Israel, even though none of the children were born or raised there:

[My mother used to tell us that] we were Jewish people, we were different. She used to [say], “We are in [my native country] by chance, but it’s not a choice to [leave Israel].” She would prefer to be in Israel, because […] that was our place.

In her interview, however, scholar 6 said that even though now she would identify Israel as her home, “because I have my work here, I have my family here, my children here”, she still felt attached to her native country. Reflecting on her experience of living in various parts of the world, scholar 6 believes that home is not “something permanent”. If one can adapt well to the language and culture, one “can feel very well at home” anywhere in the world, while feeling attached to the places one has lived before. Here, home is defined by a person’s feeling of being at ease with the place, wherever it may be. This sense of home is related to one’s open-mindedness and adaptability.

For scholar 2, after settling down in Canada with her family, home becomes a tricky concept as it can mean multiple places, but at the same time it means neither her native country nor Canada. Interestingly, when talking about home, it usually means the place
she is not at currently: “[...] when I’m in Canada, I say going home, [I mean] going [to my native country], but when I’m in [my native country] I mean go back [to Canada]”. Here, home is defined by absence rather than presence. It becomes an imaginary space one can only look forward to returning to.

Regarding research question 2, one common significant experience across various narratives is a key moment of leaving home, which is consistent with a major theme from the previous study on US based scholars (chapter 2). For scholar 1, it was moving to England and enrolling in the boarding school. For scholar 6, it was the first time studying in Israel. Scholar 5 describes it as, “[the time] I set my feet on the urban contexts, [...] was when my understanding of my location in the larger world started to expand”. Scholar 2 believes getting into university was a key moment in her life: “I had a very sheltered life until then, but then I became in touch with the reality [that] many students [had] lived a very different life than my own.” The critical moment of leaving home often led to transformative learning experiences and development of global mindedness, as discussed earlier.

Finally, the meaning of home can also be part of one’s identity. Home as identity is most evident for both scholar 3 and scholar 5. Even though they can both identity a place they call home, that place is more about the people they were surrounded by, the events that happened, and their memories of childhood, rather than the actual physical place. For scholar 3, as the quote at the beginning of 3.5.5 shows, the culture and customs in her hometown that make up part of her “home” are disappearing, but she claims, “in my impression, they still exist”. They have already become part of her identity. She carries them wherever she goes, and even into her research interests. Same can be said about scholar 5’s home, the collection of memories in that rural community where he grew up. He no longer lives in that community, and he can never go back to find it the same way as it was in his childhood. However, as discussed in 3.5.4, those experiences formed his cultural roots, and his work in decolonizing education could be seen as the effort to “return home” and asserting his cultural identity.
Home as feeling, as absence, and as identity may be summarized as a deterritorialized home, another feature of global mindedness coming out of the narratives analyzed in this study. For these cosmopolitan scholars, home is dynamic, flexible, and imaginary, rather than a certain fixed place with clear boundaries. For example, scholar 4, after having lived in Australia for more than 50 years, identifies Australia as home, but rather than the physical location or the nation as a political entity, it is more about a cultural identity he carries wherever he goes. He mentioned an occasion when he was in the US and people treated him as someone from his country of birth, which he did not identify with:

[When I was in the US] they [Americans] would say, “Oh, you contribute to the diversity of Australia.” And I say, “No, I am an Australian. I don't contribute to it. I'm part of Australia. I contribute to your diversity, but not to Australian diversity.”

This story is also an example of how one’s self-identity can differ from the social identity imposed on the person, especially as one travels and enters spaces where different identity frames are applied. It concerns questions about globalization and identity, positionality, intersectionality, as well as further layers in the meaning of home, which can be explored in future studies.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Using a narrative approach, this study examines the life experiences of six cosmopolitan scholars. In the process of investigation, I co-constructed a life story with each participant, analyzed the content of each life story, and drew on common themes to answer the research questions. The findings shed light on the meaning and qualities of global mindedness, as well as the world conditions, experiences, and processes through which it could be developed. The life story approach allowed each experience or condition to be examined in the context and personal history for its significance. It confirmed the importance of early memories as “an ideal tool with which to understand an individual and his or her foundational view of life” (Wells, 2011, p. 47), since the development of global mindedness could be traced to influence from individuals and events in early life.
Meanwhile, the findings of the study may raise more questions that challenge the dominant narratives in global education. Below are a few questions that may serve as a point of departure for future research. First, the colonial conditions and social contexts underlining many scholars’ experiential accounts beg the question regarding the nature of globalization and its relationship with global education. Unlike the previous study of US based global education scholars (chapter 2), where the narratives point to global education as an imperative response to the undeniable reality of globalization, the narratives in the present study challenge the nature of globalization and the premises of global education. They reveal the depth and pervasiveness of colonization and coloniality, the impact of which neither globalization nor global education can simply shake off. These narratives confirm the critique to globalization from decolonial literature (Mignolo, 2021), the aspect of which is largely missing in the dominant global education discourses, adopted by organizations such as the OECD or IB (Tarc, 2022). They prompt a rethinking of what possible alternatives to the globalization in act may look like, what the possible future of global education may be, and what role education may play in epistemic decolonizing under the current world conditions.

Second, the narratives in this study point to the deficiencies in the school systems that the scholars experienced. As shown in the narratives of section 3.4, all six scholars recalled some problems and deficiencies in the education systems they experienced. Some of the findings echo the narratives analyzed in the previous study (chapter 2), where many global education scholars also mentioned the school experiences that they later found problematic. Problems such as systemic racism, coloniality, nationalism, rigidness and impracticality of curriculum, as well as a lack of care for student wellbeing, were further highlighted in this study. These findings prompt the continuation of questioning and (re)imagining the role of school and how it can become a better place of learning for students of all backgrounds (Riddle & Apple, 2019; Williams & Toldson, 2020).

Regarding the process of learning to become globally minded, the study sheds light on the importance of overcoming challenges, as well as the strategies of dealing with adversities and injustice at school. While these problems with school and adversities with schooling could induce a disorienting dilemma and trigger critical reflection (Mezirow, 1991), they were not sufficient for the development of criticality, since other individuals
facing the same conditions might not be privileged to have the cultural capital and resources these scholars have had at their disposal. Therefore, further research is needed to understand the process of transformative learning in relation to the diversity of backgrounds and cultural capital of families.

Finally, the narratives speak to not just the commonality but complexity in international mobility’s relation to developing global mindedness. Methodologically, it also approved the strength of a life story approach in unveiling the long-term impacts of a relatively short-term experience. The deeper meaning of trips such as scholar 3’s first meeting with the Japanese (3.4.3) or scholar 1’s student trip to Brazil (3.4.1) could only make sense when examined within the individual’s life history—narratives of a life-long series of experiences. Short-term studies such as those on the student experience in a study abroad program, on the other hand, would be unable to reach the deeper meanings and continuing impacts of the experience. The findings could help study abroad practitioners to rethink and redesign programs to offer students a more integrated international experience. The discussion in chapter 5, on the other hand, reveals the difficult and even traumatizing experiences associated with international mobility, which would require a deeper understanding of the context and one’s position, and upon critical reflection, could lead to transformation and development of global mindedness. It also raises questions about the limitations of what can be delivered through the institutionalized and often commercialized study abroad programs.

As a case study, the six scholars in this study may represent six independent cases. The boundary of the case could also be redefined to include the entire group (Cohen et al., 2017), sharing common characteristics of ‘cosmopolitan educational scholars’. The narratives contain distinct paths of becoming globally minded, and they also offer qualitative elements on the phenomenon of global mindedness. Indeed, there is no standard formula of becoming globally minded. No path towards global mindedness can be taken out of the individual case and replicated. The findings, however, can speak of the larger phenomenon of global education and its underlying world conditions. They can be of interest to scholars and educators who work to better understand and potentially steer the ever-shifting landscape of global education.
3.7 References


Chapter 4

4 How does study abroad foster global mindedness? A meta-analysis of qualitative empirical accounts

As study abroad activities resume in a post-pandemic world, questions and debates continue regarding the value of a study abroad experience. Focusing on investigating the development of global mindedness, this qualitative meta-analysis explored university students’ experience of study abroad. Data came from 20 selected primary qualitative studies. Four major recurring themes emerged from the analysis: (1) enhanced (inter)cultural understanding and awareness; (2) perspective and identity change; (3) learning through overcoming challenges; (4) learning through interaction and immersion. While confirming the valuable learning opportunities that study abroad can offer, the study also raised concerns over the limitations and problematic assumptions associated with study abroad. The findings from this study could be interesting to educators working on designing, coordinating, and evaluating study abroad programs. Researchers interested in university students’ study abroad experiences may also find relevance in these findings.

4.1 Introduction: Defining the problem space

Traveling and staying overseas for educational purposes has a long history that goes far beyond the modern times (Bufmack, 2013). Recently, coupled with the rise of globalization is a steady growth in study abroad interest and activities (Dietrich, 2018; Goel et al., 2010; Teichler, 2004, Engle & Engle, 2003). Cushner and Karim (2004) note the trend of an increasing number of US students studying abroad since 1996. They also point out that “[o]n the global scale, the number of participants in study-abroad experiences is certainly on the increase” (p. 291). This growing trend was interrupted by the global COVID outbreak in 2020, as universities worldwide were forced to suspend study abroad programs (Gibbs, 2022; Martel, 2020) and replace them with online learning activities (Liu & Shirley, 2021). As education resumes in a post-pandemic world, questions have been raised concerning the future of study abroad (di Giovine & de
Uriarte, 2020), calling for a re-examination of learning incurred in such programs and activities.

Questions and concerns on the value of study abroad existed even before the start of the pandemic. Some critiques focus on the ideological level, pointing out the neoliberal zeitgeist and market-driven nature of the popular study abroad or international mobility discourse (Courtois, 2020; Tarc, 2013). As far as the value of experience is concerned, a most notable challenge comes from Gaudelli and Laverty (2014). Drawing on Dewey’s conceptualization of experience, they contend that despite the widely held belief that study abroad experience can “increase awareness and cross-cultural competence”, “such beliefs are not yet empirically supported” (p. 15). In a similar critical note, Doerr (2018) calls for more “rigorous analytical frameworks” (p. 4) to understand the learning in a study abroad experience. In this meta synthesis, I re-examine some of the most recent empirical evidence on study abroad experiences and construct a conceptual framework for qualitative research on study aboard experiences.

4.1.1 Study abroad

Widely used in literature and often without being clearly defined, “study abroad” has become a rather generic term that may cause confusion. In this study, I am in favour of a broader term “education abroad” defined by the Forum of Education Abroad (2011) as “[education] that occurs outside the participant’s home country” (p. 12). While the focus of this study is on student experiences of study abroad within the higher education domain, a more inclusive definition can permit the examination of a wider range of study abroad experiences from a more diverse student population.

As a pedagogical intervention, study abroad has been promoted by governmental organizations with the belief that it can aid students in both their personal and professional development, so they can get better prepared for an increasingly globalized world (NAFSA, 2008; Twombly, 2012). For instance, Canada’s latest version of International Education Strategy states that “study and work abroad can help [Canadian youth] acquire [soft] skills and can also help them develop intercultural competencies, strong international networks, and a deeper understanding of economic regions of
importance to Canada.” (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 5) Aligned with policy and strategies of international and global education at multiple levels, evidence from research on study abroad has demonstrated positive changes in participants. Some changes have been measured quantitatively, such as improvement in cultural and global awareness (Haas, 2018; Sherman et al., 2020), while changes reported in qualitative studies have included a better understanding of one’s own culture, better adaptability, appreciation of diversity, and tolerance of differences (Clement & Outlaw, 2002; Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Kambutu & Nganga, 2008).

Study abroad programs vary in length and forms (Cushner & Karim, 2004). Most popular among university students are short-term study trips (Dietrich, 2018; Mapp, 2012). Researchers have made effort to understand how different types of study abroad programs may benefit students differently. For example, using the Hett Global-mindedness Survey (Hett, 1993) as a measurement tool with more than 500 students, Kehl and Morris (2007) demonstrate that participants of long-term study abroad programs tend to score higher than short-term sojourners. Adopting a longitudinal design that tracked participants’ intercultural and personal development over five decades, Dwyer (2004) confirms the popular belief that the length of study abroad does matter, as participants of year-long programs showed more significant change than those who studied abroad for only one semester or one summer.

Though rarely reported and often as a sidenote to the overall positive learning outcomes (Gullekson et al., 2011; Kambutu & Nganga, 2008; Mapp et al., 2008), opposing evidence from empirical studies has challenged the value of international experience in developing global mindedness. For instance, a participant in Carano’s (2010) study, who had never been to anywhere outside the US, scored higher on the Global-mindedness Survey (Hett, 1993) than the participant with the most international travel experiences. In the same study, the participant with the highest survey score had only been abroad once as a tourist. This “surprising” finding also resonates with Doerr’s (2018) concern over the blind pursuit of an immersive experience abroad and Berg and colleagues’ (2012) question over the effectiveness of immersion programs. Doubts about the value of international mobility may also come from research out of the field of study abroad. For
instance, in a study conducted by Parkhouse and colleagues (2015) with ten global educators, the authors conclude that international travel experiences are not necessary for preparing globally competent teachers. Similarly, in Patterson’s (2013) study, the four social-study teachers who participated in a study trip in China came back to the US with little change demonstrated in their teaching. Personal change was self-proclaimed but unclear, as the author concluded that “while all four participants spoke with great enthusiasm and passion about the far-reaching effects [of their study abroad experience], articulating those effects proved problematic.” (p. 165) One participant even failed to explain what he meant by “life-changing” when asked by the researcher.

4.1.2 Research questions

Considering the questions and debates over the value and benefits of having a study abroad experience, I conduct this study to deepen understanding of the processes and effects of university and college students’ study abroad experiences. However, instead of interviewing yet another group of study abroad participants, I take a step back to (re)examine the existing evidence in recent literature by employing a qualitative meta-synthesis approach. Based on the results of the selected studies, I pose the following questions to empirically qualify ‘global mindedness’ as the idealized outcome of study abroad:

- How do the selected primary studies define and describe the ideal effects of study abroad (what this study names ‘global mindedness’)?

- What kind of experiences and processes reported in the selected empirical accounts lead to the development of global mindedness in study abroad participants?

- Based on findings from these primary studies, what are the implications for study abroad programming?
4.1.3 Conceptual framework: Global mindedness

The central concept that guides the inquiry, as indicated in the research questions above, is *global mindedness*. Earlier scholars have defined and used the term ‘global mindedness’ in their research studies, including the global-mindedness scale by Schmidt (1975). A more recent and more notable usage is Hett’s (1993) Global-mindedness Survey. As mentioned earlier, the survey has been widely adopted as a quantitative research tool in study abroad literature to measure student change and the learning outcome of international experiences. The survey tool was designed based on Hett’s definition of global mindedness, “a worldview in which one sees oneself as connected to the world community and feels a sense of responsibility for its member, a commitment reflected in an individual’s attitudes, beliefs and behaviors” (p. 143). The survey tool needs not be confused with Hett’s conceptualization of global mindedness, which I refer to later in discussion of the findings. Though worded differently, other definitions of global mindedness often encompass similar ideas. According to Hadis (2005), for example, the concept “entails a concern for issues and processes that affect the world, as well as awareness that local issues are connected to global ones” (p. 61).

Key ideas in the definitions of global mindedness, such as the awareness of global connectivity, resonate with a cluster of concepts frequently used in literature to describe the goals of global education. They may include but are not limited to “global perspective” (Hanvey, 1982), “international mindedness” (IBO, 2017), and “global competency” (OECD, 2018). Other variants that emphasize the learner’s awareness of their “situatedness” in the world as “cosmopolitan learning” (Rizvi, 2009; Tarc & Budrow, 2022) are also relevant. These terms often overlap in meaning but differ in practical emphasis and ideological orientation (see Tarc, in press).

In this meta-synthesis, I take a more naturalistic and less terminologically rigid approach (Timulak, 2014). I use *global mindedness* as an open and overarching term. Developing global mindedness in learners represents a collection of desirable pedagogical effects and ideals of global education (chapter 2). The focus of this study is on study abroad as a form of global education to develop globally minded subjects. Rather than adhering to any specific definition of what it means to be globally minded, or any ready-made
formula of what global mindedness entails, I seek a deeper understanding of how the desired pedagogical effects of study abroad are interpreted in the literature. By analyzing findings from qualitative empirical studies, I work to reveal and analyze the pedagogical ideals of study abroad that the primary study authors are seeking.

4.1.4 Position in the thesis

While all three components in my thesis concern experiences and processes towards becoming globally minded, the current study focuses on university students’ international mobility and cross-border educational activities. It employs a meta-analysis approach, and thus contains no original, first-hand empirical data. By saving resources on collecting data directly from participants, it allows a larger number of total participants with more diversity in both student demography and study abroad details (see Methods section for more details). Compared to the other two studies, which predominantly focus on life-long learning process of well-established scholars in global education, this study shifts the focus to the learning that occurred over a short period and from a single abroad experience for each participant. The participants included in this study are university and college students. They are predominantly much younger and less experienced than the global scholars studied in the other two studies. The demographic shift to a younger generation also indicates a shift of research focus on an earlier stage in the life-long process of becoming globally minded. In terms of the research problem, this study zooms in on the phenomenon of study abroad as pedagogical intervention.

4.2 Methods of inquiry

Following a qualitative meta-analysis design, this study uses findings from primary studies as data and draws on grounded theory approach to code the data and identify themes. Qualitative meta-analysis, according to Timulak (2014), “is a secondary analysis […] of the primary, original, studies addressing the same research questions” (p. 481). In terms of the use of data, “[q]ualitative secondary analysis entails the use of already produced data to develop new social scientific and/or methodological understandings” (Irwin, 2013, p. 295).
To ensure the quality and relevance of data, the following criteria were used in the literature search process. Methodologically, selected papers are qualitative, empirical studies based on valid first-hand, self-reported experiences. First, only primary qualitative research studies were considered. Therefore, literature reviews, theoretical papers, quantitative studies as well as other secondary-study and meta-synthesis papers were excluded from the search results. Second, qualified studies must contain first-person, *thick description* of personal experiences from study abroad participants. Thick and rich description is a validity-ensuring feature of qualitative studies (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Selected papers may include data from qualitative interviews, focus group discussion, reflection papers, and journal entries. On the other hand, yes/no answers and short responses to surveys or questionnaires do not count as thick description and are thus not considered as data for this study. For the same reason, I also omitted research papers that only contain their authors’ retelling or summary of qualitative data without including any study abroad participant’s direct account of their experiences. Thus, my approach to this meta-analysis is to study those studies where findings are richly qualified with study abroad participant narratives.

To further ensure the trustworthiness of data, selected studies must be published in peer-reviewed journals included in major databases. Since qualitative meta-analysis is still a methodology in the making, and its rigor has been questioned, Major and Savin-Baden (2010) suggest the need to develop rigorous methods of screening to ensure quality of the primary research data. The peer-reviewing process of research journals is a built-in and widely trusted quality-checking mechanism. I limited my search to peer-reviewed journal articles that are also searchable in one or more of the reputable social science and education databases including EBSCO, Eric, and ProQuest Education.

Besides quality and trustworthiness, considering fit is also essential to identifying and selecting primary studies (Levit, 2018). In this meta inquiry, selected studies need to be relevant to the research purpose, and useful to answering the research questions listed in the introduction. Therefore, only studies that include participants’ description of their own study abroad experiences were selected. In terms of participant demography and the scope of experience, I only included papers that aim to elucidate the international
learning experiences of college/university students’ outside their countries of residence. On the other hand, research papers with only faculty members, university teachers or administrators, or high school students as their participants, as well as research studies on internationalization at home, were excluded from search results.

4.2.1 Data sources

I began with the most common strategy of keyword search (Swift & Wampold, 2018). Using terms including *study abroad, student experience, higher education* and *qualitative* as key words across databases, the initial search yielded over 50 results (Figure 1). Then I did backward and forward searching (Finfgeld-Connett, 2018) to expand search results. I also hand-searched a few journals to check more recent publications that were not yet included in the databases. During the screening process, repetitive results were dropped. I also eliminated studies that do not meet the quality-control criteria listed above, and I read through each article to make sure its findings are relevant to my research questions. At the end of the screening process, 20 papers were chosen for the analysis (Table 4).
Initial search of databases

- Databases:
  - Arts and Humanity; Education; Social Sciences (23 databases selected)
- Search strategy:
  noft("global experience") OR ("international experience" OR "international experiences") OR "study abroad" OR "study overseas" OR "international mobility" OR "internationally mobile") AND noft("global mindset") OR ("international mind" OR "international mindedness") OR ("worldly minded")

Journals selected for hand-search

- Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad
  [https://frontiersjournal.org/index.php/Frontiers](https://frontiersjournal.org/index.php/Frontiers)
- Journal of Studies in International Education
  [https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jsi](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jsi)
- Journal of International Students

Figure 1: Strategies of literature search

Table 4: Selected literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected papers</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Student origins</th>
<th>Study abroad destinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vatalaro et al., 2015</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dai&amp;Garcia, 2019</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sato&amp;Hodge, 2015</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang, 2020</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee &amp; Green, 2016</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Country(ies)</td>
<td>Location(ies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onosu, 2021</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Multiple countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaeger &amp; Gram, 2016</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>China and Denmark</td>
<td>Denmark and China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh &amp; Nussli, 2014</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young &amp; Snead, 2017</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lickteig et al., 2019</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Finland and Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fukuda &amp; Nishikawa Chávez, 2021</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huffman et al., 2020</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Multiple countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsiao et al., 2021</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceição et al., 2021</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rybo-LoPresti &amp; Rhein, 2021</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sobkowiak, 2019</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Multiple European countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prieto-Arranz et al., 2021</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Multiple European countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon et al., 2020</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>China and South Korea</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the process of data preparation and analysis, I find the workflow summarized in Levitt (2018) helpful. Other works such as Finfgeld-Connett (2018) and Timulak (2014) also provide useful guidance. The process includes identifying and describing primary data before conducting the analysis, as well as generating initial units and labels (codes) from primary research findings and organizing these units into categories and themes (Levitt, 2018). The process of analysis also entails moving back and forth between data source and preliminary findings, so that new codes may be generated, and initial themes be dropped, revised, or combined to form new themes.

In this process, I prioritized direct quotes from participants, which I labeled as primary data. Summaries, comments, interpretation, and conclusion from primary study authors were used as supplementary and supportive data. They were read alongside primary data for better understanding of the experience and learning reported by participants.

The analysis involved a careful reading of each selected article with constant reference to the three research questions that guide this study. The research questions provide a framework which, according to Timulak (2014), “allows breaking up data into manageable” domains and units (p. 489). I highlighted key words and phrases related to the three research questions, and marked them with Q1, Q2, and Q3, respectively. I also marked up sections in papers that could offer answers to the research questions for further examination. To facilitate the analysis, I created a table with three columns corresponding to the three questions, and each row containing data from one article. An updated coding table was then created and filled with key words and phrases marked earlier with Q1, Q2, and Q3 (Appendix F).

While the three columns serve as domains, data in each domain can further break down into units (Timulak, 2014). The coding process began with the data prepared in the table
of analysis, but I would always go back to the original article to read the selected and marked section in its context before assigning a code. As Finfgeld-Connett (2018) cautions, “[to] avoid decontextualizing research findings, it is important to extract qualitative findings in context” (p. 34). Codes were assigned to data (quotes) within each domain. By reviewing and comparing the initial codes, themes were identified, and data were further organized under each theme, or category. These initial categories were in turn reviewed to identify higher order categories (Levit, 2018), and they became major themes. For example, within the domain Q2 (experiences) were data coded with “nervous of the new”, “fear of the new”, “isolation”, “not belong”. These codes were combined to the theme “disorienting feelings”, which was put under the major theme “learning through overcoming challenges” together with “language barrier”. All themes are presented in the next section.

4.3 Findings: Common themes and notable details

Following the methods in the previous section, several themes emerged from the data. Major recurring themes include: (1) enhanced (inter)cultural understanding and awareness; (2) perspective and identity change; (3) learning through overcoming challenges; (4) learning through interaction and immersion. While themes (1) and (2) speak to aspects of global mindedness, themes (3) and (4) concern experiential processes of study abroad that contribute to becoming globally minded. It is worth noting that all themes identified in this study are interconnected. For clarity, I explain these major themes individually in this section together with minor themes.

4.3.1 Enhanced (inter)cultural knowledge, understanding, and awareness

One of the most common results reported in the selected studies is the enrichment and expansion in students’ knowledge and understanding about cultures (Vatalaro et al., 2015; Young & Snead, 2017; Onosu, 2021; Sobkowiak, 2019; Fukuda & Nishikawa Chávez, 2021; Yang, 2020; Oh & Nussli, 2014; Lickteig et al. 2019; Huffman et al., 2020; Lee & Green, 2016; Rybo-LoPresti & Rhein, 2021). Culture here includes
language usage, lifestyles, customs, beliefs, social and organizational norms, as well as culturally inflected ways of teaching and learning (Moran, 2001).

First, the majority of the selected studies reported students’ improvement in foreign language knowledge through their study abroad experiences. “[M]y English has improved especially in terms of fluency”, summarized a participant in Prieto-Arranz et al. (2021), “I would speak English all day” (p. 6). In intercultural communication theories, languages are not merely treated as a skill or a tool of communication, but a central component of cultural awareness (Baker, 2012; Yassine, 2006). Study abroad enhanced the cultural aspect of language learning. For instance, students in Fukuda & Nishikawa Chávez (2021) gained a better understanding of Japanese social values encoded in concepts such as “gambari”, “giri”, and “wabi-sabi” through direct experiences (pp. 837-839). Enhanced language proficiency facilitates intercultural learning, as a student in Baker et al. (2022) commented, “for me English was the first bridge to the international world, [and] I got to learn more about other people through English” (p. 9).

Second, findings from these studies show that study abroad experiences helped students broaden their horizon, gain valuable insights, and form a more detailed view of cultures in their host countries. Participants of study abroad appreciated the differences they encountered, such as the simplicity of teaching and student autonomy in Finland reported in Lickteig et al. (2019). A participant in Young and Snead (2017) thought “the dress code [for female university students in the US] is cool and make[s] the student comfortable” (p. 42). A student in Yang (2020) learned “to celebrate differences” (p. 112). “The journey widened my worldview”, commented a participant in Hsiao et al. (2021, p. 6). Similarly, wrote a participant in Huffman et al. (2020), “this program exposed me to foreign cultures and made me aware that I had previously lived in such a narrow world” (p. 58). Thanks to personal encounters, stereotypes and national labels were debunked, such as in Sobkowiak (2019), where participants found out Spaniards were “more conscientious and hard-working” (p. 700) than depicted in the stereotype, and that “the Finns are not cold” (p. 700).
Third, through comparing the unfamiliar cultures that they encountered, many students also returned with a renewed understanding of their home cultures. After experiencing the education system in Indonesia, a student teacher in Lickteig et al. (2019) wrote, “through those differences […] I learn more about the system I am familiar with” and “I have learned more about the American [education system] than I ever imagined” (p. 12). The study abroad experience helped some participants to see their home countries in a more positive light. For example, many Brazilian students in Conceição et al. (2021), after studying in the US, reported renewed understanding of not just the host country but also their home country, as one participant said, “Formerly I thought that just Brazil had problems. But now I [can] see that all places have problems, and that in some points Brazil is better than other places. […] Now I see Brazil in a different way.” (p. 138) By comparing with the host country (Netherlands) experience, a participants in Sobkowiak (2019) realized “Polish spontaneity suits me” and “Polish grocery products are of much higher quality” (p. 698). In other cases, however, participants became more critical towards their home country cultures. For instance, one participant in Vatalaro et al. (2015) studying in Italy reported, “Before I had no idea, but now I realize that we [citizens of United States are] consuming as much as possible […], and] being lazy, impatient, and selfish” (p. 50). A participant in Onosu (2021), after studying in Guatemala, realized the nation-centered view commonly witnessed at home (in the US), “We talk about American issues as if they are worldwide issues […]” (p. 8). In Moon et al. (2020), a Chinese student studying in the US became aware of the differences with the instructional style that he had previously experienced in China, “In China, the teachers are traditionally lecturing all the time […] Without the student-centered learning community, we cannot develop critical thinking” (p. 40). Participants also became more aware of how their collective identity labels such as “American” (Medina et al., 2015), “white woman” (Onosu, 2021), “Spaniard” (Prieto-Arranz et al., 2021), or “Muslim” (Young & Snead, 2017) were received in the study abroad contexts. In Lee and Green (2016), participants also gained a deeper understanding of the construction of Black identity, “biologically there’s not reality of race, but there is a political reason to be Black” (p. 71).
The awareness of differences and nuances in cultures both home and abroad, of both the Self and the Other, is often referred to in the intercultural education literature as intercultural awareness (Dasli, 2011; Baker, 2015). The selected studies also use the term (Medina et al., 2015; Baker et al., 2022) and other similar terms to describe the goals and outcomes of study abroad. They include “cultural awareness” (Huffman et al., 2020, p. 58; Oh & Nussli, 2014, p. 69), “intercultural growth” (Sobkowiak, 2019, p. 682), “intercultural sensitivity” (Sobkowiak, 2019, p. 685), “intercultural competence” (Sobkowiak, 2019, p. 685, Baker et al., 2022, p. 9), “transcultural competence” (Prieto-Arranz, 2021, p. 2), and “intercultural citizenship” (Baker et al., 2022, p. 3).

4.3.2 Perspective and identity change

Gaining knowledge and understanding of cultures both home and abroad also contributed to change in participants’ perspectives. The term perspective here draws inspiration from a central concept in transformative learning theory – “meaning perspective” or “frame of reference” (Mezirow, 1991; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). It is defined as “[a structure] of culture and language through which we construe meaning by attributing coherence and significance to our experience” (Mezirow, 2008, p. 92). Change in belief, mentality, habit of thinking, and value orientation falls into this category.

Findings in the selected papers suggest that participants became more open-minded, tolerant, empathic, and less biased toward the unfamiliar cultures both home and abroad. Below are a few telling examples:

Oh and Nussli (2014) find that student teachers became more empathic towards their students (EFL learners), as one participant reported that after “two very lengthy meals” with her Korean host family where she could hardly participate in a conversation, “I genuinely felt like my ELL students must feel” (p. 80). Participants in Medina et al. (2015) reported their changed view towards minority groups in America and other nationals after the study abroad experience. One participant, who used to believe “minority groups [in the US were] ignorant [and] hadn’t made enough effort [to integrate]”, realized “[it’s] a lot harder to fit into a society that Americans think it is” (p. 85). Another participant in the same study stated, “I used to believe that America was top
dog and [other nations were] somehow beneath us. In Germany, not being the top dog really made me realize that this is not the case at all.” (p. 86) One participant in Baker et al. (2022) stated, “… I used to be quite conservative and quite nationalist, but now I’m not like that anymore, and my mind has opened, and I learned a lot of things from that.” (p. 10) One participant in Sobkowiak (2019) stated, “I have learned to approach people unprejudiced”, while another expressed similar change, “I used to judge people in a very shallow and superficial way, [but now] I try to pay attention to nuances concerning what people are doing and saying.” (p. 701) A participant in Onosu (2021) commented after the study abroad experience, “you can now look at things from an outsider’s perspective, and you see yourself and the bubble you grew up in from a different lens” (p. 8).

It is worth noting that empathy developed in study abroad participants are not restricted to the empathic attitude towards certain cultural or linguistic groups as demonstrated above. Apart from intercultural empathy (Zhu, 2011), I use the term humanist empathy to refer to a deeper level of empathy based on the shared human identity across cultural differences. “I think nationalities and languages are just a shell of who we are”, claimed a participant in Baker et al. (2022, p. 10). One student from Yang (2020) noted, despite the difference between American and Chinese societies, “at the deepest level […] we are really not all that different after all” (p. 116). Similarly, a student from Huffman et al. (2020) said, “I used to think that foreigners and foreign countries were very different from Japan. […] However, after the experience, I realized that they worry about things and cry about things just like me.” (p. 58) Participants in Onosu (2021) also “became aware that generally, all people are in search of the same fundamental human needs” (p. 9).

With renewed knowledge and understanding about oneself, culture differences and similarities, as well as the context of learning and living in the host society (4.4.1), participants also adopted or constructed a new identity. The concept of identity is similar and closely related to perspective and perspective transformation. Illeris (2014) even defines transformative learning in relation to identity. Acknowledging the complexity of the concept (Côté & Levine, 2002), here I only focus on the social and cultural aspects of identity. In some cases, the change is related to adapting to a new environment. For
example, in Dai and Garcia (2019), participants adopted a new learner identity and “became independent and active” due to the change of academic context from China to Australia. According to one participant, “To fill these gaps [between the course content and assessments], I needed to be a self-regulated and motivated learner […]” (p. 371). In other cases, a new (inter)cultural identity was constructed. One Chinese student in Jaeger and Gram (2017) commented, “[study abroad] gives you a kind of identity that you have a certain understanding of things, which is [highly valued in the contemporary Chinese society]” (p. 40). The study by Lee and Green (2016), where Black American students learned about the racial hierarchy in South Africa, contains multiple telling examples of identity reconstruction. For one participant,

[…] before [studying in South Africa,] I would identify as African over Black, […] but being there and seeing Black Americans interact with Black Africans and this cultural exchange […] helped me to come to terms with the fact that identities are complex, and you don’t have to find one space or one box to fit yourself in. (p. 70)

Another participant in the same study had the experience of being identified as “Colored” rather than “Black” in South Africa due to her fair skin tone. She reflected after coming home by saying, “The study abroad adventure has made me more Black!” (p. 70) She associated her renewed identity with a sense of duty towards the Black community back home: “I realize that I don’t have to identify as black there, so now I have a duty” (p. 70). Learning about the shared experience and history of being the oppressed also helped participants develop a strong sense of solidarity across national borders.

4.3.3 Other themes and counterexamples of global mindedness

Findings from primary studies also reported other cognitive and behaviour changes uncovered in the themes above. Some students gained confidence when confronted with unfamiliar cultural and linguistic spaces. One participant in Huffman at al. (2020) said, “In the end, I lost my fear speaking out in English.” (p. 58) A student in Hsiao et al. (2021) reported confidence in voicing their opinions in class, “Once you developed the courage to say what you thought in class, you became confident.” (p. 8) A student in
Yang (2020) summarized, “It helped me be relaxed more in myself. It helped me learn to trust others.” (p. 113) Participants also became more curious and more willing to learn about the wider world. “You would understand the importance of experiencing other lifestyles, and not to be confined to your current life […]”, reported one student in Hsiao et al. (2021, p.7). For the students teachers in Vatalaro et al. (2015), the experience in Italy “increased their desire to travel [and] learn about other cultures” (p. 50). Students in Huffman et al. (2017) also realized “the need for deeper understanding of their own country’s culture” (p. 59).

Despite the overall positive results that demonstrate the development of global mindedness, some seemingly contradicting cases can still be noted. Certain stereotypes could be reinforced rather than changed through the study abroad experience. For instance, Prieto-Arranz et al. (2021), where some Spanish and Catalan speaking students studied in Italy, one participant commented, “I had the perception prior to departure […] that Spaniards showed no respect for language issues and Catalan. And going to Venice helped me check it out for myself” (p. 10). Findings from other studies reveal some students’ inflexible or narrow-minded views. One example comes from Young and Snead (2017), as some participants appeared not to appreciate certain cultural norms they encountered. One (male Saudi) student reported, “I don’t like sometimes U.S. men sitting next to [Saudi] women”, and another said, “I don’t like when women wear [shorts] and short dresses and clothes [showing stomach]. A university should be a place to learn [and] not to show your body off.” (p. 43) In other studies, national stereotypes and generalizations can be identified from participants’ narratives. Sobkowiak (2019) reported stereotypes such as “[the] Spaniards spend a lot of time in cafes” (p. 693), “[the] Portuguese are often late and very loud”, and “[the] Belgians are quite reserved and withdrawn” (p. 694). For one Danish student in Jaeger and Gram (2016), “it is very Chinese that things change every other minute” (p. 41). Such generalization also seems to occur in Fukuda and Nishikawa Chávez (2021), demonstrated in quotes such as “[the] Japanese people would stand by themselves quietly, they would not want to sit next to me […]” (p. 836). Medina et al. (2015) mentioned the case of a US student studying in Germany. When she “received a new roommate from a Middle Eastern country”, she even had the thought, “Could he be like a terrorist?” (p. 83) However, not enough
evidence is included or reported in these accounts to indicate whether these participants changed their opinions and views over time.

4.3.4 Learning through overcoming challenges

Every selected study reports participants’ encounter of challenges during their stay abroad, thus forming a major theme. Two subthemes emerge from all the reported challenges. The first subtheme concerns linguistic challenges, or language barrier, while the second includes emotional challenges, or disorienting feelings caused by encounters with the unfamiliar.

4.3.4.1 Language barrier

In the findings, one of the most common experiences for study abroad participants is the language barrier. Though some English-speaking students also reported language barriers such as in Vatalaro et al. (2015), Medina et al. (2015), and Rybo-LoPresti and Rhein (2021), the challenge was more pronounced for non-native English-speaking students, especially when academic performance was concerned. Taiwanese students in Hsiao et al. (2021), for instance, “experienced a direct barrier to learning due to their lack of fluency in English” (p. 8). A Korean student in Moon et al. (2020) confessed, “My biggest difficulty in the U.S. is language.” (p. 35) The challenge was not always fully expected, as one Saudi student in Young and Snead (2017) noted, “Before I came here I understand some word but I was surprised when I talked with some native language [speakers]” (p. 41). Pre-departure language preparation was often not enough for students to feel at ease abroad. Despite having taken English courses at her home university in China, a student in Dai and Garcia (2019) reported, “I still felt that English was one of the significant barriers in my studies […] in Australia” (p. 369). A participant in Baker et al. (2022) said, “what I learnt in my English class [in Thailand] was different from what I experienced in my real life” (p. 8) even for simple things such as greeting, while other participants were surprised by the variations of English or accents they encountered.

The experience of language barrier can cause emotional distress. One participant in Sato and Hodge (2015) explained, “I felt horrible that [the American student I talked to] had to deal with my English.” (p. 213). Another student in the same study also “felt
subordinate” as she “had difficulty in adjusting from belonging to a dominant language group [in Japan] to a minority” (p. 213). American students in Oh and Nussli (2014) also experienced language barrier in Korea, especially upon arrival, as one student stated, “I get frustrated that I can’t have a conversation with 99% of the people that we’ve dealt with so far” (p. 73), and “we were dying because we couldn’t talk to the cab driver” (p. 74).

Upon encountering the language barrier, students were faced with the more passive option of avoiding social interaction in the foreign language or the active approach of taking steps to overcome it. One participant in Sobkowiak (2019) mentioned, “At first I was reluctant to talk to local and other foreign students because of a language barrier, but step by step I managed to overcome it” (p. 689). Though it takes time, the process of overcoming the language barrier can lead to not just improved language proficiency but also the development of global mindedness. A variety of coping strategies were reported. A Brazilian student in Conceição et al. (2021) said, “speak[ing] in English obliged me to rethink my first language in order to speak correctly” (p. 135). One Saudi student in Young and Snead (2017) stated, “I always search the internet on how to improve my academic language. I listening to the radio and reading in English as much as we can and listening to the news and reading.” (p. 41) One Japanese student in Sato and Hodge (2015) felt “minimizing the social distance helped improve his English proficiency”, as he explained, “I kept asking questions until I fully understood.” (p. 213) Similarly, a Japanese nursing student in Huffman et al. (2020) also benefited from overcoming her shyness in communication, “I tried to communicate with people in Canada as much as I could, and I noticed a huge improvement in my speaking and listening skills.” (p. 58)

4.3.4.2 Disorienting feelings

Findings from the selected study show that many study abroad participant had disorienting feelings while trying to adjust to the new contexts. “I was kinda freaked out in the beginning,” a participant in Rybo-LoPresti and Rhein (2021) described her feeling upon arrival in Thailand. Study abroad participants’ discomfort was related to, but not entirely caused by the language barrier discussed above. For instance, a Japanese student in Sato and Hodge (2015) believed her academic struggle was caused by a “cultural
mismatch”, as she explained, “It could be the language, but I do not have any American cultural and social backgrounds. That was my problem.” (p. 214) The cultural mismatch could also occur in daily life such as greeting. In Sobkowiak (2019), one (female) Polish student “expressed discomfort relative to being kissed on both cheeks by […] a complete stranger” (p. 696). Another student in the same study had an incident when a Muslim girl refused shaking hands with him, and he considered the situation “problematic and confusing” (p. 696).

Many studies found that students had the feeling of loneliness, isolation, and being an outsider in the study abroad destinations: “[Y]ou are not German, […] you’re a Spaniard studying in Germany. No, no, you’re not one of them.” (Prieto-Arranz et al. 2021, p. 8) A student teacher in Oh and Nussli (2014) said, “I truly felt like an outsider” (p. 80). In Vatalaro et al. (2015), participants “experienced a sense of being an outsider and felt disliked by some native Italians” (p. 49). Some Chinese students in Dai and Garcia (2019) also reported “a sense of isolation” and feeling of being “a stranger” (p. 375). In Sato and Hodge (2015), most Japanese students had “shared experiences of feeling like unwelcome outsiders from a foreign land” (p. 216). Particularly, during group discussions, many students felt isolated in the classroom, which caused a sense of failure. One participant expressed her feeling of marginalization and disappointment because “there was no way to join in the discussion. Group members did not care about me”, and she added, “[t]his type of experience made me feel lonely and I do not think my study abroad is a success.” (p. 217) Similar experiences were reported in Moon et al. (2020), as some Chinese and Korean students felt they were not treated as equals in group work by their native English-speaking classmates. One participant remarked, “They might not think I am the same level. […] Sometimes, I feel I am not part of the class.” (p. 38) In Fukuda and Nishikawa Chávez (2021), “[s]ome students revealed the feeling of isolation and rejection in the public space” (p. 836), as one student wrote in her final essay: “American culture is almost completely the opposite of Japan. […] I felt so out of place” (p. 837).

Racism was experienced by some students. One participant in Prieto-Arranz et al. (2021) felt not accepted and that her skin colour made her stand out, “I didn’t feel part of the
local community, and the worst thing for me was that I have tanned skin. So, every time I went to class is like everyone staring [at] me, even the teachers; and, yeah, I feel like... I know I’m not from here.” (p. 8) A more extreme case was reported in Young and Snead (2017), as a female Saudi student felt not just ignored but also treated with hostility: “Some people don’t like me because I wear hijab. […] My neighbor ignore[d] me when I was sitting out my house and when I sa[id] hello. She ignore[d] me and slam[ed] her door.” (p. 42) Other participants in the same study also recalled similar incidents, such as “some students laugh when they see me because my cover […]” (p. 42), and “a white male spit at my wife” (p. 42).

Certain coping strategies can be identified, such as focusing on academic goals and change learning strategies (Dai & Garcia, 2019), or in the case of student teachers in Oh and Nussli (2014) and Lickteig et al. (2019), focusing on their professional practice. A participant in Sato and Hodge (2015) mentioned turning to fellow Japanese students for help when having problems. However, most of the studies do not give any details on how students coped with their disorienting feelings, with the exception of Onosu (2021), where a student offered a detailed narrative of how she moved “from the feeling of anger and discomfort” when she had even made up her mind to leave “to a point where she could […] learn from the situation”: “I let go of my expectations, and I realized that with that, you enjoy things, and you look for the best [in things you experience] as they are” (p. 8). Successfully applying the coping strategies usually leads to better learning results.

Previous experiences in the study abroad destination could make the adjustment process easier, as one student in Rybo-LoPresti and Rhein (2021) explained, “I […] took a trip to Thailand with my family when I was young. […] I think it made my adjustment much easier [than my peers]” (p. 4). Similarly, a participant in Prieto-Arranz et al. (2021), who “had already spent one and a half months… in Italy with a family” before her study abroad trip, said, “When I first met Italian girls I didn’t find it at all difficult to integrate” (p. 8).
4.3.5 Learning through interaction and immersion

The last major theme of common experience concerns social interaction during study abroad. Two recurring sub-themes can be identified, namely interaction and immersion. Admittedly, immersion in a cultural space can hardly happen without interaction with people, and thus the two can hardly be discussed separately. However, in the subthemes of immersion identified in this study, the focus is on the personal, physical, and attentive presence in the place and being a reflective observer. While interaction and immersion are abstract terms, a more concrete form of interactive and immersive experience that recurs in the findings is that of home stay.

4.3.5.1 Interaction with people from diverse backgrounds

According to participants in the selected studies, study abroad provided opportunities for them to interact with people in a multicultural environment, which resulted development of global mindedness. Participants in Fukuda and Nishikawa Chávez (2021) “enjoyed spending time with [local Japanese students]” (p. 835). Participants in Sobkowiak (2019) benefited from being “surrounded by local and fellow international students” (p. 681), as one student described, “I spent 99% of the time with foreign peers, both Erasmus and local students” (p. 691). A student in Prieto-Arranz et al. (2021) enjoyed living “an international lifestyle” (p. 8). A similar example is from Onosu (2021) that “living with about six to seven people all from different countries […] was a learning experience” (p. 8). A student in Baker et al. (2022) mentioned “spending time […] with other students and lecturers who have different cultural backgrounds and speak different first languages” (p. 9). This kind of interaction led to improvement in various aspects of global mindedness, such as intercultural awareness (Sobkowiak, 2019), language proficiency (Sato & Hodge, 2015), and identifying as a global citizen (Baker et al., 2022).

Despite their effort to interact with the local and a more culturally diverse population, some students still stuck to the bubble of their compatriots during their stay abroad (Rybo-LoPresti & Rhein, 2021; Sato & Hodge, 2015; Medina et al., 2015; Prieto-Arranz et al., 2021). The segregation could be “unintentional”, as a student in Medina et al. (2015) explained, “I’m not sure why but we just sorta self-segregated so most American
students sit with each other” (p. 5). It could also be strategic, as one student in Sato and Hodge (2015) stated, “I believe that there are many benefits when I hang out with Japanese students” (p. 216). Participants identified language and cultural barriers as factors that prevented them from having more meaningful interaction (4.3.4), but the relation between language and social interaction can be complex, as one participant in Prieto-Arranz et al. (2021) commented, “[The] Spanish [students] are a group that do not take in anyone other than fellow Spaniards, which is why they always speak Spanish among themselves.” (p. 8) For one student in Rybo-LoPresti and Rhein (2021), her lack of knowledge in Thai language even contributed to “a bonding experience with the local people” since they had “to work together” to understand each other (p. 6). Despite the language barrier, students who actively reached out for support had more success in learning, as an American student in Yang (2020) described, “I was able to ask [my Chinese peers] questions and not feel awkward or ashamed not knowing […] They really provided the support [I needed]” (p. 117).

4.3.5.2 Immersive learning

Many students reported the unique value of immersion or being on site in helping them develop global mindedness. As one student in Onosu (2021) commented, “you could go to Jamaica [while] never really experiencing Jamaica […] if you are not immersed in the host community” (p. 7). A student in Lee and Green (2016) also emphasized the importance of “being in that space and learning” with first-hand experience (p. 71).

Among the selected studies, Lickteig et al. (2019) provides the most descriptive accounts that highlight importance of direct, immersive experiences from two student teachers/co-authors. The immersion documented in the study involves sensory experiences, emotions, and reflections. The co-authors conclude that “even brief exposure to” teaching practices in different contexts would present teachers “with an expanded repertoire of strategies and methods” to apply in their own teaching (p. 13). A student teacher in Oh and Nussli (2014) also spoke highly of cultural immersion for teachers, “I do think that an immersion experience should be required for all teachers because I feel that it really challenges you and forces you to do your best in uncomfortable and unfamiliar situations.” (p. 79)
4.3.5.3 The host family experience

As an “ideal type of immersion experience” (Doerr, 2018, p. 127), staying with a host family is reported in many selected studies. Most homestay experiences were described in a positive note. One participant in Onosu (2021) said, “the host family […] is one of the best things about the program […] it gives you a way in, and once your family accepts you, the community accepts you” (p. 7). Two telling examples come from essays written by two students in Fukuda and Nishikawa Chávez (2021). In the first example, the student has a puzzled moment with her host family’s mother:

On one occasion, she confided in me and told me that she constantly worried that her son would not be a successful adult since he was not capable of controlling his emotions. I thought this was a very exaggerated and drastic way of viewing and talking about her son’s future, I later came to understand that this is a real concern for many people in Japan… (p. 838)

Eventually, as the authors explain, the student “learned the hidden meaning of her host mother’s comments [by] connecting them with the idea of ‘giri’” (p. 838) or social obligation, and its importance in Japanese culture: “According to conventional Japanese thought, when girī declines and ninjo escalates, social harmony is threatened” (pp. 838-839). In the other example, the student had a moment of confusion when his host family’s father played for him an old guitar “that bolstered a deep scratch below the bridge”, and when the student questioned him, the father explained, “it may not be the most expensive guitar I own, but there is none other like this one” (p. 839). “This moment”, wrote the student in his reflective essay, “was a breakthrough in my understanding of how the Japanese mind works in relations to my own western views” (p. 839). Through the incident, he “discovered the exact sensation of how the Japanese appreciated beauty in imperfection” (p. 838).

However, not all host family experiences were positively received, and even in the same study abroad program, the experiences can be mixed. Such is the case in Oh and Nussli (2014), where three out of the five participants had positive experiences with their host families, but the other two “had rather negative experiences due to misunderstandings
caused by the language barrier, cultural differences, and divergent expectations” (p. 74). According to one participant, even though her host family “was really nice”, she still did not enjoy her homestay because, as she explained in an interview, “I just felt like such an inconvenience to them” (p. 74). The causes identified by the authors suggest that through predeparture cultural-linguistic screening and preparation, the negative home-stay experiences, such as the ‘inconvenience’ feeling, could be effectively mitigated or prevented. Similarly, one participant in Yang (2020) described, “Sometimes I would sit with the host dad and he would make me eat all this food that I just didn’t want to eat […] but I just was horrible at communicating […]” (p. 114). Apart from the language barrier identified by the participant, the author also attributes the difficulty of communication to ‘cultural barriers’, stating that participants “usually felt socially obliged to eat or try something they did not like” due to (their inability of negotiating with) “the rule of being a guest” (p. 114). One participant in Onosu (2021) also had a negative experience with her host family in Colombia, who woke up early in the morning to start their day, “…I don’t know why […] nobody was trying to be quiet […] There were times that I would be woken up at 4 a.m., and I was like, I cannot do this; I was so frustrated.” (p. 6) However, through guided reflection, the student “was able to understand the reason” (p. 6) of her frustration and eventually shifted her perspective on her host family.

Comparing the positive and negative experiences with host families reported in the selected studies, evidence suggests that interaction and communication are key factors that make a difference in the experience. As Onosu (2021) noted, “transformative learning during cultural immersion [depends] on the willingness and the intensity with which the participants engage with the people [in their host community]” (p. 7). In the two examples from Fukuda and Nishikawa Chávez (2021), the host mother in the first example “confided in” the student, with whom she shared her concerns about her son; the host father in the second example played guitar for the participant, who in turn asked him about his choice of instrument. The willingness to communicate and the engagement in social interactions were evident in both examples. In comparison, the two students in Onosu (2021) and Oh and Nussli (2014) both appeared passive and kept feelings to themselves.
4.4 Discussion

Study abroad is not a new phenomenon, and ample research has been conducted to understand its impact on students. In this section, I return to the research questions while highlighting a few points that complicate the knowledge base of current study abroad literature. The discussion is based on the findings listed in the previous section and centered on the concept of global mindedness.

4.4.1 Revisiting the concept of global mindedness

Returning to question 1, findings in the previous section show that the aspects of global mindedness developed through study abroad include acquisition of first-hand knowledge of cultures in the host society, language improvement, and a better understanding/awareness of cultures home and abroad (4.3.1). The findings also confirm that learning about other cultures is accompanied by self-learning, as “no understanding of others is possible without self-understanding” (Rizvi, 2009, p. 267). With heightened (inter)cultural awareness comes change in perspective and identity (4.3.2), resonating with the “cultural pluralism” dimension in Hett’s (1993) definition of global mindedness. Compared to the theoretical construction of global mindedness and similar concepts (4.1.3), however, what is represented in the findings still appears fragmentary and superficial.

For instance, the humanist empathy noted in 4.3.2 may resemble the “sense of belonging and kinship with all people over the world” (Hett, 1993, p. 89) in one of the dimensions of the Global-Mindedness Scale. A closer examination of the dimension will reveal that the empathy in Hett’s concept is based on the understanding of the interconnections between all cultures and societies. The dimension of “knowledge of global dynamics” in Hanvey’s (1982) construct of “global perspective” also emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence within “the world system”, the awareness of which is still largely missing in the findings. Responsibility towards the global community, expanded beyond national borders and even to the future generations, is another key component in the theoretical constructs of concepts such as international mindedness (IBO, 2017; Singh & Qi, 2013) and global citizenship (Pigozzi, 2006). In her
definition of global mindedness, Hett (1993) also includes the dimension of “ethics of responsibility and care”. This global sense of care and responsibility is largely missing in the findings, and only in Lee and Green (2016), a renewed sense of responsibility was reported towards the Black community in the US (4.3.2). Due to the design of these studies, the behavioral dimension of global mindedness can hardly be spotted in the findings. Future studies may consider following up the study abroad participants over a period after their return to understand how change in their perspective are reflected in their daily life and professional practices. One example is Oh and Nussli (2021), in which some participants from Oh and Nussli (2014) were interviewed a decade after their study abroad experience. The more recent study reveals how the study abroad experience from a decade ago still influences their current teaching practices.

On the other hand, the prejudice, generalization, and stereotypes presented in the findings (4.3.3) demonstrate the limitations to intercultural understanding and awareness that study abroad alone cannot resolve. Exposing the limitations is not to deny the value of study abroad, but rather to point out the need for better-designed pre-departure and post-return education as well as opportunities for future research. Researchers may consider following participants over a period abroad and after return to find out whether prejudice and stereotypes can dissolve over time. Educators working in the field of study abroad need to help students identify these limitations so that better pedagogical tools can be developed.

As Gaudelli and Laverty (2014) argue, while global experiential learning has been widely promoted, the *global* has not yet been “sufficiently sorted out” (p. 14). Young (2010) also points out the lack of clarity in the conceptual construct of global education. Without a solid theoretical basis, notions such as global citizen, critical thinker, and independent thinker can easily become floating signifiers. Researchers and study abroad practitioners need to avoid uncritically feeding participants these notions. Here I use an example mentioned in 4.3.5. In Baker et al. (2022), when asked “Do you now see yourself as a global citizen?”, a student answered, “Before studying abroad, I was not sure […]”, then after recounting their experience “doing activities such as planting trees with” others from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the participant concluded, “Therefore,
I am quite certain that I am now one of the global citizens.” (p. 9) The global citizenship discourse, however, goes much deeper than simply doing activities with a multinational group. Simply self-identifying as a global citizen without further explanation does not imply any understanding of the term, and the interview question serves little more than putting the term in the participant’s mouth. Further, educators may consider deepening participants’ understanding by asking them to clarify key concepts in their narrative. For example, when a participant identified herself as a global citizen, a teacher may ask her to further explain what being a ‘global citizen’ means. The purpose here, however, is not to lead students to any standard and uniform explanation of any of these terms, but rather a deeper and nuanced understanding. Students may understand a term in various ways, reflecting their backgrounds and previous experiences. In Sato and Hodge (2015), for instance, some Japanese students described critical thinking as a skill necessary for success in American universities but not in Japan. Similarly, becoming independent, an outcome reported in studies such as Dai and Garcia (2019) and Yang (2020), is associated with western individualism. In these cases, educators may consider exposing students to alternative meanings of being critical or independent. Meanwhile, students can also be knowledge producers, and their alternative understanding needs to be further explored to enrich the existing concepts and to develop theories in study abroad and global education.

4.4.2 Revisiting the discourse of study abroad experience

As for research question 2, the selected empirical accounts show that social interaction and immersion within a multicultural environment, as well as the process of overcoming challenges imposed by unfamiliar linguistic and culture settings, can help study abroad participants develop global mindedness. Regardless of their countries of origin and study abroad destinations, participants commonly face language barriers (4.3.4.1) and experience disorienting feelings such as loneliness and being an outsider (4.3.4.2). However, students from non-English speaking countries would often face more pressure of fitting in their English-speaking host countries. On the other hand, English speaking participants often showed little willingness to learn to speak the languages or fit into the cultures of their study abroad destinations. Apart from showing the persistent dominance
of English that has already troubled global education (Spero, 2022), this lack of interest in multilinguism contradicts the characteristic of being globally minded (Singh & Qi, 2013).

Here I turn to the complexity of study abroad experiences and the discrepancy between the actual experiences reported by students and the assumptions of what students ought to experience. I refer to the latter as the discourse of experience, which, despite its popularity in study abroad practice, has been under critical scrutiny. Tarc (2013) offers an insightful critique on the promotion of international experience under the banners of transformation and life-changing, pointing out the neoliberal ideology behind the enthusiasm and contradictory evidence from the ground (Zemach-Bersin, 2008). Doerr (2018) also questions the popular clichés such as speaking like a native or living like a local, which are promoted as exemplary experiences that study abroad can offer. There are signs in the selected literature that show the influence of experience discourse on study abroad participants. For example, in Baker et al. (2022), a student from Thailand was disappointed for not having “a purer English-speaking community” and that people in Malaysia “didn’t speak proper English” (p. 9). Another interesting example comes from Rybo-LoPresti and Rhein (2021), where the homestay option was not available, and a student said, “I would love to have a 2-week homestay option where you could stay with a Thai family and get a taste for what Thai life is really like” (p. 5). The example shows that under the influence of the discourse of experiences, the participant might have idealized homestay as well as the notion of a real local experience. To counter this influence, educators may consider asking questions such as “What would a pure English-speaking environment be like?” and “What in your opinion is a real Thai life?”

By taking a closer look at commonly reported intercultural learning experiences including social interaction and immersion (4.3.5), the findings also show that the format of experience, such as homestay, matters less than the participants’ attitude and actions. Whether staying with other participants (Onosu, 2021; Sobkowiak, 2019) or with a host family (Sato & Hodge, 2015), participants who had successful communication and actively interacted with people from different backgrounds also reported more positive learning results.
4.4.3 Implications for study abroad pedagogy

First, it is worth noting that the value of certain pedagogical practices has been confirmed in the literature. For instance, community building activities that involve interaction among study abroad participants and with local students are positively emphasized in participants’ reports. They include cultural excursions organized by Erasmus coordinators (Sobkowiak, 2019), the buddy program reported in Prieto-Arranz et al. (2021), as well as sport tournaments and cultural nights documented in Yang (2020). Collaborative and student-led research projects, when well-integrated into the study abroad program, can also facilitate intercultural learning (Lee & Green, 2016).

Since language barrier and disorienting feelings are identified as two main challenges for study abroad participants (4.3.4), more effort and resources need to be devoted to help students productively respond to these challenges. The findings in 4.3.5 indicate that social interaction and immersive learning often have a positive role in developing global mindedness, and participants who had better communication with their host families enjoyed and benefited more from their homestay experiences. Therefore, pre-departure training needs to focus on enhancing students’ social and communication skills and commitments to persevere in communication. More on-site support may also be necessary to facilitate communication between the participants and their host families/institutions. Although the orientation programs can be helpful in certain cases (Yang, 2020), students may lack interest in the more traditional forms of orientation such as lectures and information sessions (Baker et al., 2022). More individualized forms such as the buddy program (Prieto-Arranz et al., 2021) were more effective and could lead to more direct interaction and immersive learning.

As Doerr (2018) points out, study abroad participants are far from being a homogenous mass. By inviting participants from immigrant and ethnic minority backgrounds to share their stories, she also challenges the hierarchy of experience in the mainstream study abroad discourse that frames “study abroad as privileged students’ pursuit of cultural capital” (Doerr, 2020, p. 92). Indeed, the diverse cultural backgrounds of study abroad participants and their past experiences, from growing up as an immigrant child, moving and changing school, to learning a new language, can all serve as valuable resources to
prepare them for the challenges they may encounter at the study abroad destinations. These experiential resources can also be shared among participants before departure. Educators working with study abroad participants, on the other hand, need to identify points of intervention and create a safe space for sharing and learning. Since students with previous knowledge and experience in the host country are often able to adapt more easily (4.3.4), they may be trained as facilitators for other students who have more difficulties. Findings also show successful examples of effective coping strategies that helped participants overcome difficult situations (4.3.4). These returned participants may play an active role in pre-departure sessions by sharing their stories of overcoming the challenges that new participants are likely to face.

Finally, it needs to be noted that study abroad is not the only way to develop global mindedness. Although the focus of this meta-analysis is on study abroad as a field where the concept of global mindedness is explored, I have no intention to privilege international travel over other venues of developing global mindedness such as virtual tours and online exchange (Liu & Shirley, 2021). Since becoming globally minded is an ongoing process that does not end with the return from a study abroad trip, post-return support is necessary not only for helping students resettle but continue their intercultural learning and developing. Oh and Nussli (2021) offers an example that practices such as teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds can sustain the learning occurred during study abroad. Educators may consider helping returned study abroad participants explore such opportunities so that they can continue developing global mindedness.

### 4.4.4 Limitations

While this study focuses on the learning experience of study abroad and its contribution to global mindedness, I acknowledge the complexity of the phenomenon of study abroad and the personal nature of each experience. Students participate in various types of study abroad programs (Cushner & Karim, 2004). They may also choose to study abroad for a variety of reasons (Trower & Lehmann, 2017). In the selected studies, students in Oh and Nussli (2014), Vatalaro et al. (2015) and Lickteig et al. (2019) are pre-service teachers whose experiences abroad centred on teaching practices in an unfamiliar social and cultural setting. Students in both Sobkowiak (2019) and Prieto-Arranz et al. (2021) were
participants in the Erasmus exchange program, while participants in Young and Snead (2017) were studying for a master’s degree. While some students never planned to stay in their host countries, others such as some participants in Dai and Garcia (2019) had considered the possibility of immigration after completion of study. These factors need to be further considered and potentially disaggregated in future research regarding study abroad and the development of global mindedness.

Methodologically, qualitative meta-analysis has its intrinsic limitations. They may include common lines of criticism faced by qualitative researchers, such as the limited scope, lack of generalizability, and the author’s bias in interpreting data (Timulak, 2014). In each selected study, the data available to my analysis is also limited to the participants’ quotes and reports selected by the primary study’s authors. As each of these studies has its own purpose and research questions to answer, I face the inevitable “problem of data fit” (Heaton, 2008, p. 40). While limiting the data source to peer-reviewed studies can ensure data quality and validity (4.2.1), the downside is that due to the length of each selected journal article, many full-length quotes from participants and their contexts become inaccessible. In future meta-analysis studies, researchers may consider using data sources less restricted by length, such as books and dissertations.

4.5 Conclusion

My motivation for this study was to attempt to deepen my own and others’ understandings of university students’ education abroad experience via a meta-analysis of existing findings over completing a new case study on the experience of yet another group of study abroad participants. Ultimately, the findings reveal that by exposing university students to different cultural and social spaces, study abroad can provide the enabling conditions to develop global mindedness in the forms of enhanced (inter)cultural understanding, perspective shift and identity reconstruction. The learning process that contributes towards global mindedness often involves active participation in intercultural communication and overcoming challenges such as language and cultural barriers.
On the other hand, findings also confirm that study abroad alone does not guarantee the development of global mindedness, as biased assumptions and stereotypes can be carried to and even reinforced by study abroad experiences. It remains to be further understood as how biased views may change over time and with pedagogical interventions. Participant narratives also demonstrate that study abroad programs can run the risk of proliferating the superficiality that popular and market-oriented study abroad discourses have been criticized for (Tarc, 2013).

In this study, I also applied a meta-analysis approach to answer my research questions. Cojoining a set of reputable studies allowed me rapid and cost-effective access to a broader range of data without sacrificing trustworthiness. Although the analysis was limited by the relevant data available in the published papers, where details, contexts, and completeness of participant narratives are often lacking, a primary study relying on self-reported experience from a large number of participants would face similar issues. As a novel methodological approach in the field of higher education (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010), qualitative meta-analysis may be employed in future research on topics related to student experience.

4.6 References


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Chapter 5

5 Concluding discussion

In this final chapter of the thesis, I reflect on the three studies as a whole. I start with a final discussion on the research design and methodology. Next, I highlight the most significant findings that speak to the development of global mindedness. Coming back to the overarching questions posted in chapter 1, I revisit the concept of global mindedness, its pedagogical significance and its implications for educators and researchers. Finally, I reflect on my own journey of inquiry as a PhD student-researcher and how it changed my understanding of global mindedness and its development.

5.1 Reflections on the three studies

The three studies presented in the previous chapters all contribute to the understanding of global mindedness as both an educational ideal and a phenomenon. Each study represents a unique angle through which global mindedness is examined. In this sense, the findings from each study can complement and offer deeper insights to the others. In this concluding discussion of the thesis, I try to tie the three studies together to discuss the significance of their findings in a larger context. I also take the opportunity to reflect on what worked well and what could be done differently.

5.1.1 Research methods and theories

First, I reflect on the design and methodology of each study in relation to the others, how they worked together, and how the research methods changed and evolved over the course of my doctoral research. Research design, according to Cohen et al. (2017), “is governed by ‘fitness for purpose’. The purposes of the research determine the design of the research which, in turn, informs the methodology.” (p. 173) In chapter 1, I touched on the genesis of the research topic and its connection to my MA thesis. The purpose of my doctoral thesis – acquiring a deeper understanding of global mindedness, could be seen as a result of problematizing the MA thesis (Tang, 2019). Though I continue the investigation of experiences, I am no longer satisfied with basing my research solely on more self-reported experiences abroad, experiences of what happens during or around a
short period of time. The three studies in this thesis are designed to go beyond the limitations of analyzing self-reported (short-term) international experiences.

The decision to write a multi-paper, or integrated thesis was also a critical one since it determined the entire structure of the dissertation and the course of research. Now, reflecting on that choice, I think it made each study manageable in a certain time frame, but it also demanded better time-management skills and multitasking. Other noticeable advantages include a wider range of methods to practice and experiment with, which could mean more workload in the process of completing a thesis, but at the end I find it more rewarding. As a strong believer of global education’s aspiration to challenge the “single story” (Adichie, 2009), I also find it more appealing epistemologically. A multi-case study, such as chapter 3, already contains multiple perspectives from participants. The integration of multiple studies in one thesis made it possible to incorporate even more diverse perspectives. For instance, chapter 4 utilises data from 20 primary studies, each containing views and experiences from multiple participants. The combination of primary research with meta-synthesis and the analysis of documented narratives afforded an expanded diversity of perspectives.

Perhaps even more importantly, the decision on an integrated thesis was made out of practical reasons. While working on the research design and choosing methods of inquiry, one of the most important lessons I learned is “practicality first”, which means prioritizing the practical elements of a research plan such as its feasibility and timeliness. On this note, an integrated thesis is first and foremost a practical design. Being practical does not mean giving up depth of study, but it requires a more flexible and creative mindset. The practical plan involves exploring new routes to pursue the ideas, comparing and debating the optimal research strategy and methods, and making adjustments along the way. At the initial stage of my doctoral research, a major concern was to complete the thesis within the designated four-year time frame without the risk of loss of funding. After deciding on my research topic, the central focus became the empirical study on cosmopolitan scholars (chapter 3). The design of the first study (chapter 2) – using documented and published narratives as data and document analysis as its main methodology – permitted for an earlier start and the chance to ‘try out’ the components of
doing research. While preparing for the research ethics review and participant recruitment for the empirical study, I was already engaged in the data analysis for chapter 2. The same logic also applied to chapter 4, which did not require any fieldwork or first-hand data collection. Due to the pandemic-related interruptions, data collection for chapter 3 took longer than originally expected. However, my overall progress was not severely hindered, since I never needed to passively wait for new data to come in to continue the work on my thesis. Before I finished the first-round interviews, chapter 2 had already been completed; and by the end of the second-round interviews, the bulk of data analysis for chapter 4 was also in place. Therefore, I had more freedom and flexibility to manage the progress of the three studies.

Initially, chapter 2 and chapter 4 were planned to be shorter studies. Chapter 2 was designed as a pilot study for chapter 3. Document analysis was chosen not just to save time on data collection but also to prepare for and complement the following research, especially by suggesting questions that need to be answered and areas to be further examined (Bowen, 2009). I remember the long conversations I had with my supervisor, when we discussed how to move forward, because back then I was concerned about not having enough data for the analysis. As I read through each narrative, I struggled to find content in the text as relevant to my questions; but I kept reading, over and over. As I pushed through the frustration, the importance of getting familiar with the data became evident. I also learned the importance of digging deeper and making the best of the available data. As the analysis started to flow, I realized that my earlier notion of insufficient data was premature. When I wrote down the findings, the problem became having too much data to include, instead of too little. In the end, I had to remove some of the data analysis so that the findings section would not become too lengthy and cumbersome.

Though started last, chapter 4 was the next of the three studies completed. Methodologically, it shares many similarities to chapter 2, but the complexity level is higher, because the source of data was no longer contained within a set of chapters. As a meta-analysis, I was not required to gather data, but there was still a process of selection. My previous experience doing literature reviews came in handy, as I started with a
literature search and identified relevant primary studies to be examined in the analytical process. The work that followed became somehow familiar, since chapter 2 had prepared me for the “data mining” and coding. I plowed through the papers to find interesting information, or data that could speak to the research questions. Through a procedure similar to the thematic analysis I did for chapter 2, I once again arrived at major themes and brought them together for discussion. Once again, I ended with more relevant data and a longer findings section than initially expected.

Chapter 3, the main study of the three that examines primary data, is most interesting to me but also most challenging from a methodological perspective. This study took more time and effort to plan, prepare, and execute in comparison to the other two studies. Beyond the time to recruit, set up interviews and interview, I also spent more time working on the data collected. Here I share an interesting story from doing the interviews for this study. Initially, I thought I was already familiar with the tool of interviews, since for my MA I also used the same kind of semi-structured interviews to collect data, and I also had experience doing interviews remotely. I did expect some differences, since my participants would be scholars instead of students. However, the actual interview process was still surprising to me. It helped me understand better the following quote from Atkinson (1998): “It is impossible to anticipate what a life story interview will be like, not so much for how to do it but for the power of the experience itself.” (p. 22) Even though the interviews went well, and I got a chance to ask the questions I designed based on my research questions, the participants’ answers would still, at times, disorient me. Some of my participants would go on to theorize or challenge the questions I asked, leading to a critical discussion. Following the interviews there was again a process of mining for data. Unlike the other two studies, chapter 3 involved storying and re-storying that are characteristic to narrative inquiry (Creswell, 2007).

Through my first-hand research experience with the three studies, I gained a better understanding about how to conduct qualitative research. I realized that more often than not, there is no standard blueprint or readymade recipe to follow (Cohen et al., 2017). Qualitative data analysis is different from practical skills such as driving or swimming, where practice and experience get solidified into a kind of instinct. Although experience
is still important as it contributes to efficiency and confidence, at times, it is more important to break the instinct. In the case of this thesis, it could be best illustrated by the data analysis for chapter 3. At first, the experience with the other two studies gravitated me towards a familiar process of coding, comparing, and extracting common themes. My first draft of findings looked rather mediocre. With the help of my committee I realized that I strayed from what I had intended to find with a life story approach. I was compelled to re-read into the data and the narratives. This time I was not just able to reach more interesting findings, but also to understand better the true power of life stories – revealing the depth of life experiences, the unique and detailed events, contexts, decisions, and life trajectories. Conducting this empirical study offered me a unique opportunity to learn about and apply narrative inquiry, an analytical approach with great potential that truly fascinates me.

5.1.2 Significant findings

In this section, I try to tie together the findings from all three studies included in this thesis. I holistically reflect on these findings and their significance, in relation to the ideals of global education and the main theme of the thesis – global mindedness. What are the most significant findings across all three studies? To answer this question, it is helpful to take a brief review of the findings from each study before making comparison and drawing connections. To facilitate the discussion, a summary of the major themes from all three studies are presented in table 5.

Table 5: A summary of major themes from the three studies

| Significant experiences of the 13 global scholars (chapter 2) | Characteristics of global mindedness from the six cosmopolitan scholars (chapter 3) | Significant experiences and conditions for the six cosmopolitan scholars (chapter 3) | Significant learning from study abroad (chapter 4) |
In the previous section I discussed commonalities and connections between chapter 2 and chapter 3 from a research design and methodological perspective. When the narratives from the two studies are brought together, similar experiences and processes can be identified between the two groups of scholars. For example, in terms of the process of becoming globally minded, both Grossman (2018) and scholar 5 believe they seized the right opportunity at the right time. Ken Tye’s (Tye, 2018) memory of playing games with kids living in the same neighbourhood but from diverse cultural backgrounds can be related to scholar 3’s childhood experience with the Korean culture in her hometown, and both are examples of encountering cultural differences and the global as found in the
local. In terms of career choices, both Cogan (2018) and scholar 4 were strongly influenced by their fathers; and similar to Wilson (2018), scholar 4’s choice of a scholarly career was also almost “predestined”. In scholar 3’s story, she followed her father’s expectation to study at a teacher college, but later decided to become a research scholar in a different cultural context. Similarly, Kirkwood-Tucker’s (2018) writes in her autobiography: “My father wanted me to become a teacher. Instead of studying at the University of Munich, I rebelliously married an American and left for the United States.” (p. 151)

Similar patterns are also noticeable when comparing the major themes in these two studies (Table 5.1). However, I do not find it surprising to come to these similarities. As mentioned earlier, the results from chapter 2 influenced chapter 3 on multiple levels, from participant recruitment, data collection, to data analysis. What I find more interesting, and more significant to report, are the differences beneath the similarities and the details in each personal experiential account beyond common themes.

For instance, major themes 4 and 5 from chapter 2 are also applicable to all the scholars in chapter 3. In the context of chapter 3, however, these themes become rather shallow since they are implied in the criteria of being a cosmopolitan scholar. Indeed, all six scholars left the familiar as they moved out of their native countries; and engaging with social and cultural differences was an inevitable part of their immigrant experiences. Significant in the findings, however, are the depth and nuances in these apparently shared experiences: what the familiar, the unknown, and the socio-cultural difference entail, and specifically how these individuals left the familiar, reached out to the unknown, and engaged with the differences. A major contribution of chapter 3 is revealing these nuances and adding depth to the common themes. One example of leaving the familiar is scholar 3’s separation from her parents as a child, which I discussed in section 3.5.5. It shows how an incident that did not involve international travel or even moving out of one’s hometown, can still be significant to shaping one’s worldview and transforming one’s understanding of the wider world. Scholar 1’s story (3.4.1), detailing how he chose to “fight back” at the British boarding school, was a unique example of engaging with differences. Here the differences were multi-folded and encountered on multiple levels:
the local elite social status that differentiated him but granted him access to the boarding school, the contradicting views on colonization from his parents, the experience of being racialized and minoritized in a foreign context, the choice between compliance and fighting back, the difference between his reaction to racism and that of his brother’s.

Another example of personal experience with colonial education can be found in scholar 5’s narrative (3.4.5). Similar to scholar 1’s story, it also shows that cultural differences are often attached to power and used as political tools for domination – aspects that are often downplayed in the mainstream global education narratives.

Similar to the first major theme in chapter 2, war and political tensions were also mentioned by many scholars (1, 2, 4, and 6) in chapter 3. Significant experiences and key incidents, such as scholar 1’s study in the UK and scholar 2’s migration to Canada, could be related to the wars in their native countries. However, none of them experienced the war so directly as Jim Becker (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018), who participated in WW II as a soldier of the US Army. Becker’s story about the war, therefore, was unique and much more compelling than noting a common theme, since the war had a most profound and significant impact on his worldview and decisions later in life. The theme “teachers and mentors” in chapter 3 resembles the major theme “inspiration from pedagogical and personal relations” from chapter 2. Indeed, most scholars from both groups recall the significant influence they received from mentor figures. However, scholar 4’s story stood out as unique and the most interesting, as he believes the mentoring does not need to come from an actual pedagogical or personal relation, and hence a deceased philosopher was named as one of his most important mentors. Another common theme in chapter 2, “encountering social injustice”, is also present in all six scholars’ narratives in chapter 3. Yet for most of the global scholars in chapter 2, their awareness and understanding of social injustice such as racism are limited due to their privileged social position as white, middle-class US citizens. They could never fully understand the experience of being racialized, being a colonial subject, or the struggles of a new immigrant coming from the Global South. The scholars in chapter 3, on the other hand, are able to gain a deeper understanding of social injustice, as their lived experiences in the position of the oppressed can offer them an epistemological vantage point in viewing such issues (Smith, 1987).
Also worth noting is that an experience’s significance is always related to the person experiencing it. For this reason, any theme regarding significant experiences will become shallow and irrelevant when taken out of its narrative context. For example, after recounting the incident with the police in the US (3.4.4), scholar 4 added that even though the incident was very brief and seemed rather mundane, it had a significant impact on him because of his knowledge, academic interest, and mental preparedness for critical reflection at that moment. In comparison, experiencing war at an earlier age did not strike him as significantly.

Inevitably, the difference in life trajectories would also influence the understanding and manifestation of global mindedness by the two groups of scholars. Although US based scholars in chapter 2 and the cosmopolitan scholars in chapter 3 share the common characteristic of being internationally mobile, a difference in their patterns of migration is still quite noticeable. Most of the cosmopolitan education scholars, unlike their counterparts in chapter 2, emigrated from their countries of birth and some never returned to settle again. The majority of these scholars portray a more complex sense of home, with less attachment to any particular nation state. Global as they might be, most of the scholars in chapter 2 still have worldviews and understandings of reality that are somehow US-centered. Examples include Grossman’s (2018) narration of “while the world was on the brink of a nuclear war, I sat in a place that had no role, no say in that matter” (p. 263), as well as Wilson (2018) recalling her fear for the safety of “American cities where our families lived […] while we might be safe in West Africa” (p. 298). Even the term “Cuban Missile Crisis” used in both narratives was somehow US centric and neither of them mentioned the US deploying missiles in Turkey preceding the event. In the narratives of chapter 3, on the other hand, such nation-centered views are much less pronounced or even hardly traceable. Instead, I find quotes such as “[there] are many things I like in [my country of birth]. There are things I hate [there too]. There’re things I like [where I live], and things I hate [here]” (scholar 6). Similar quotes can be found in other narratives such as scholar 1 and scholar 4’s, regarding things they liked or disliked about a country. Their views are based on their lived experiences in those places without demonstrating any clear national affiliation. Even scholar 5, who has a strong sense of his roots, did not associate the idea of home with any particular nation state. His critique
towards the westernised notion of global mindedness shows an undertone of pan-African solidarity and anticolonial sentiment.

By comparing the findings from chapter 2 and chapter 3, I have also noticed that most of these scholars from these two studies are strong independent thinkers who dare to take a “less travelled” paths, as Cogan (2018) describes his personal philosophy and his journey to become a global scholar. They do not simply follow or conform. Some of them, such as Tlou (2018) and scholar 1 challenged authorities. Others such as Merryfield (2018) and scholar 2 were involved in student activism. Qualities such as courage and curiosity would facilitate their decisions and actions of defiance and fighting back, while an intellectual upbringing (scholar 4), being exposed to multiple worldviews (scholar 1) and influence from dissident parents (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018) could all contribute to the development these characteristics. Evidently, the choice of an academic career offered them the opportunity and resources to engage in critical thinking, which would further develop their non-conforming characters.

Findings from the third study (chapter 4) highlight the importance of communication, as well as the preparedness and determination to overcome challenges such as language and cultural barriers encountered in a study abroad context. These key findings can also be related to those from the first two studies. In chapter 4, I discussed the role of communication in resolving misunderstanding and facilitating adaptation, especially during the immersive learning, since many difficult situations reported by homestay students could be resolved through supported dialogues. Many scholars in chapter 2 and chapter 3 also demonstrated in their narratives their strength and willingness to engage in communication and intercultural dialogues. For example, scholar 6 mentioned in her narrative the incident of asking her Israeli professor about the context of an exam question, and about her effort to initiate dialogues with minority Arab students. Many critical incidents or decisions were results of an important conversation, such as Merryfield’s (2018) talk with the guest speaker from Nigeria that led to her decision of going to Africa (chapter 2).
On the other hand, scholar 1’s narrative in chapter 3, together with the concept of translation, add complexity to the role of communication, the context and conditions for meaningful and effective dialogues to take place. His story of encountering racism and fighting back shows that dialogues cannot happen easily when the interlocutors do not see each other as equals. In scholar 1’s case, after experiencing racism on a regular basis at the boarding school, he realized “it was not through dialogue or talking that they would accept you as equal.” In a situation of oppression and injustice, the oppressed must first resist and fight back, even violently and repeatedly, if necessary, before they can have a chance of meaningful dialogue with the oppressor. Also, as discussed in chapter 3, the concept of translatability explains the limitations of verbal communication. Therefore, globally minded learners need to recognize that meanings are lost in translation and cannot be communicated transparently across cultures. Despite the importance of communication, miscommunication and frustration is also unavoidable at times.

In chapter 4, I also discussed how the courage and effort to overcome challenges was often an integral part of successful adaptation, transformation, impactful learning, and becoming globally minded. Examples of overcoming challenges such as language and cultural barriers are also abundant in the first two studies. Apart from scholar 1’s example of fighting back in the second study, scholar 4 also mentioned learning to persevere at the Australian school where he was the only student of colour. The difference is that the study abroad participants in chapter 4 knew they would soon return to the familiar, whereas the scholars in chapter 3 – minorities and immigrants – did not have the certainty about such a secured future. Since the consequences of giving up or failure would be too costly, they were often forced to try their best. Similarly, the two immigrant scholars in the first study (chapter 2), Kirkwood-Tucker and Tlou, also demonstrated exceptional courage and resilience in living through challenging situations after they had arrived in the US.

5.1.3 Limitations

In the previous chapters, I have discussed the limitations to each of the three studies. To avoid repetition, here I only reflect on the common and overall limitations when all three studies are brought together.
To begin, I faced constraints in my research trajectory to finish each study within a relatively short period. As a result, the scale was limited and the analysis could not go too deep. I also had limited financing power and other resources disposable. For instance, I could not travel to recruit or interview participants. The COVID lockdowns also caused delays and disruption in the research process. For instance, I initially planned to present my research plan at a 2020 conference, where I might meet with potential participants and build rapport, but the event was canceled. During the lockdown period, it also took many participants longer to reply emails and schedule an interview, while my own health and efficiency were also affected.

For a qualitative research paper, the sample size is not a major concern, but this thesis still offers a rather limited representation of global mindedness and how it could be developed. For instance, the meta-analysis on study abroad experience could have included not just peer-reviewed journal articles but also conference papers, book chapters and dissertations. In the empirical study, a scholar based in a Nordic country or a former Soviet nation may offer another unique perspective on (becoming) globally minded. Again, due to the time and resource constrains, and by prioritizing depth of analysis over the width or scale of data, I limited my recruitment to six participants for the study. Conversely, I had more time working with the available data at the analytical stage to uncover unique qualities and experiences, and to dig deeper into their significance.

Another type of limitation, common to all three studies, can be summarized as structural or systemic. Since all the scholars in chapter 2 and chapter 3 have spent most of their career working at academic institutions, they may suffer the “blindness” or insensitivity mentioned in chapter 1, which may also be referred to as limitation of the habitus – formed through years or decades of working in the field of an Anglo-western academia. Their views and experiences might be affected by the systemic and structural limitations of the institutions they work or worked for. The same may apply to the authors of studies selected in the meta-analysis (chapter 4), who did the selection and processing of raw data for academic publications. Similarly, student participants from these selected primary studies might also face institutional constrains in reporting their study abroad experiences.
Finally, the interpretation of data is also affected by my limited research experience, as well as my life experience and bias, which will be unpacked later in this chapter.

5.2 Implications and future directions

In previous chapters I have mentioned the implications of the findings from the three studies to both future research and for pedagogical interventions. Here I summarize the key implications in the current context of global education.

5.2.1 Pedagogical implications

Regarding the qualities and key features of global mindedness, the findings from this thesis concur with global education literature, where the ideal subject of global education is often said to be open-minded, flexible, adaptable, especially in a multicultural environment or cross-cultural setting (Hill, 2012; IBO, 2013). The question that follows is how these qualities can be developed through educational experiences inside and outside the classroom.

First, it is important to note that no single intervention, activity or experience can guarantee learning and the development of global mindedness. As discussed earlier, one experience, such as war, may be life changing for one person but have much less effect on another. As the findings in chapter 4 demonstrate, simply landing in a foreign country without adequate preparation can result in awkward situations such as getting annoyed by the noise at 4 a.m. without knowing what to do, feeling embarrassed sitting at the same table with the host family, or criticizing the local students’ dressing on campus. These examples may serve as real-life cases for educators to reflect on and to discuss with students.

Regarding flexibility and adaptability, findings from the three studies indicate that the participants’ ability to adapt well and thrive in an unfamiliar cultural setting is often related to their willingness and resourcefulness to overcome challenges. Therefore, educators need to focus on fostering students’ willingness and mental resources to take on challenges and work on resolutions. In chapter 4, more specifically, I identified language barrier and disorienting feelings (such as loneliness, isolation, and culture
shock) as two common challenges facing study abroad participants. Many students’ successful adaptation and positive experience with cultural immersion could be attributed to their well-preparedness, such as previous experience in the host country (Rybo-LoPresti & Rhein, 2021), or language learning before departure (Fukuda & Nishikawa Chávez, 2021). In the pre-departure stage, educators can direct students intended to study abroad to language learning resources, intercultural training, and help them start preparation as early as possible. Meanwhile, survey tools and questionnaires can be combined with direct questions and observation to assess students’ willingness to engage in immersive intercultural learning (Hartman et al., 2023). Those who express their reluctance in learning the language of the host country or communicating with people in the host community should be advised not to participate in study abroad but visit the country as a tourist instead. In a conference I attended recently, I presented a tool called “preparing the seed” (Tang, 2023), which can also help educators identify student expectations from a study abroad experience. Students need to be informed of the potential challenges they may face and get prepared in advance. However, after arriving at the study abroad destination, they may still encounter unexpected situations and disorienting feelings. Educators leading or facilitating the program should be able to make sure students who need support get access to counselling services and other mental health resources. They also need to recognize the transformative learning potential that comes with disorienting experiences and help students engage in critical reflection activities (Hartman & Kiely, 2014).

Adaptation, however, is not equal to assimilation (see the discussion in chapter 3). As mentioned earlier, cultural differences are neither value neutral nor power free. One example comes from participants in chapter 4 who felt isolated in a classroom discussion. When these students sensed a huge power distance between themselves and their native English-speaking classmates, an equal and open dialogue was unlikely to occur. Such cases would necessitate intervention from educators.

Examining power relations is also related to criticality as a key component of global mindedness. Educators can design learning activities that help students develop critical thinking skills needed for unpacking and challenging the unequal power relations in
global learning settings, such as a study abroad or global service-learning trip. They may bring to the classroom literature, arts, poetry as well as multimedia and web-based resources such as videos, documentaries, and even TV series to examine issues of power (Byker, 2016; Rushek, 2019). Teachers and educational leaders can also consider employing pedagogical tools such as the questions and prompts of power analysis suggested by Hartman (2017). The pedagogical intervention can also produce valuable data for future research.

5.2.2 Implications for future research

The limitations of the thesis in its scale and the depth of the findings, as noted earlier, imply future research effort in two directions. First, in terms of expanding its scale, narratives of more participants coming from diverse backgrounds can be examined in future studies where alternative views and experiences on global mindedness are represented. Different research designs and methods, such as ethnography and phenomenology, can be employed in gathering data, and constructing and analyzing narratives. More qualitative meta-analysis can be conducted by focusing on a global education phenomenon beyond study abroad, such as international volunteering, international career experience, or international schooling.

The second direction is going for more depth in the themes and significant findings that come out of the three studies. Features and qualities of global mindedness that emerged from these studies can be further elucidated with more evidence. For instance, in chapter 2 I discussed the notion of grounded idealism, and mainly touched on the social context of the common global educational ideals reflected in the scholars’ global mindedness. The notion also opened up new questions regarding the ideals’ “grounded-ness”, including ideological roots, and more contextual factors about history, geopolitics, and economics. The concept can also be elucidated or potentially challenged and complicated by narratives from other US based scholars that come from more diverse backgrounds such as being an ethnic or sexual minority or from lower SES groups that are not well represented. Alternatively, a narrative inquiry can focus on only one or two of these scholars, but include multiple sources of data to capture more details about their learning journeys and critical incidents. Similarly, some interesting themes emerged from chapter
3 can also be further investigated. These themes may include the legacy of colonial education on the concept of global mindedness and its development, translation and translatability, living the minority experience, and the complexity in one’s sense of home. Future studies can also centre their topics on a more specific geopolitical context, such as education for global mindedness in Scandinavian countries, or understanding global mindedness in ex French colonies in Africa.

Apart from the five major themes discussed in the findings of chapter 2 (also see Table 5.1), the first study also yielded a few minor themes. One of them concerns language learning and multilingualism, a theme further explored in both chapter 3 and chapter 4. Language learning has been a constant theme in study abroad literature (Tang, 2019). Multilingualism has also been regarded as a pillar of international mindedness (Singh & Qi, 2013). Findings from the previous chapters indicate that more studies need to be conducted to understand the connections between language learning, translation, and minority experiences in the context of global education. Another minor theme from chapter 2 is the role of religion in developing global mindedness. Findings from chapter 3 show that religions are connected to the minority experience and being exposed to multiple religious or spiritual traditions can serve as an enabling condition for the development of global mindedness. Further evidence is needed to understand better how students’ religious belief or practice may affect their study abroad experience and other international learning experiences. Finally, on the theme of creativity and global mindedness, not enough evidence is provided in the narratives of chapter 3, and further research is required to understand whether and how engaging in creative activities such as arts, music, and poetry can contribute to global mindedness.

As noted in the limitations, the scholars in both chapter 2 and chapter 3 are privileged individuals. Their privileges can be understood not just in terms of positionality such as their parents’ social status, economic resources, racial and ethnic background but also through the lens of Bourdieusian capital theory. These individuals have inherited or had the opportunities to accumulate the social capital and cultural capital sufficient for certain experiences such as work or study internationally, and their choice of an academic career. These experiences and career opportunities, in turn, contributed to their global
mindedness. Due to the scale of the thesis and my focus on the research questions, I did not get a chance to analyse the narratives in these two studies using the conceptual framework of cultural and social capital. Following the completion of this thesis, however, I am planning to work on this research idea and write out a paper based on the narratives available to me.

Another interesting and related idea from Bourdieu’s sociological theory is habitus. For the scholar in the first two studies, their global mindedness could be understood as attached to or incorporated into a type of habitus – a “socialized [and] structured body […] which has incorporated the immanent structures of a world or of a particular sector of that world – a field […]” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 81). For the cosmopolitan and global education scholars, the field is a globalized and to a large extent Eurocentric and colonially inherited academic network, and for the US-based scholars in chapter 2, the institutional structures of the global education movement. I find that the concept of habitus, unlike cultural capital, is far more complex (Nash, 1999; Illeris, 2014). To meaningfully unpack the level of the ‘global’ in familial habitus would need both a thorough understanding of the theoretical background of the concept and extensive effort of in-field data collection. This avenue may be interesting to pursue but it would require far more details on the social contexts and the individual behaviours than what a short autobiographic account or a narrative based on one or two hours of interviews can produce.

5.3 The journey so far

In chapter 1, I compared my experiential process of ‘becoming globally minded’ to a journey, which is composed of more journeys both literally and metaphorically. I also used the term “research journey” to describe how my research interests in global education and study abroad evolved into the study that enabled the production of this dissertation. This final section of the thesis is meant to bring a full circle to the journey. However, I choose not to use wordings such as the final words or concluding remarks, because neither my journey as a global education researcher, nor my lived experience with mobility and global mindedness ends with this product. I use this section as a place
not just to look back on my doctoral journey in the past four years, but also to look forward into the somehow unknown future and the journey ahead.

5.3.1 Global mindedness revisited

In chapter 1, I posted two overarching questions regarding what global mindedness is and how it can be developed. Surely, there is no definite answer to these questions. However, the findings from the three studies can offer some interesting insights and tentative answers that are worth reflecting on.

Inspired by the pedagogical tool “tree of life”, presented in Merryfield’s (2018) narrative, now I compare global mindedness to a growing tree. In some life stories there was a budding moment, when the seedling broke the soil. This moment could be a critical incident in one’s early life, such as walking over Black protesters in front of a movie theatre (Merryfield, 2018, see chapter 2), separation from one’s parents (3.4.3), or a trip to a dreamed homeland far from one’s birthplace (3.4.6). Just like how tall or how big the tree can grow depends on many factors such as water, sun, and soil, the extent, shape, and features of global mindedness also depend on the conditions under which it grows or develops. Global mindedness could also simply grow without one realizing it, until one moment, when looking back, one would feel being destined to become a global scholar (Wilson, 2018), through a series of carpe diem moments (Grossman, 2018), or through osmosis by being around a scholar parent (3.4.4).

Certain social contexts and experiences may act as catalyst for the development of global mindedness, such as growing up in a multicultural, multifaith environment, or being minoritized by a dominant cultural group. When combined, they form the enabling condition, comparable to the fertile soil that nourishes the tree of global mindedness. Just like no two trees are identical, each life story manifests global mindedness in its own unique way. At the same time, certain qualities that make a person globally minded are shared across narratives. Some of these qualities are highlighted in the findings of the three studies, such as open-mindedness, empathy, criticality, adaptability, translatability, courage and perseverance.
Many of these findings also speak in accordance with the existing global education literature. Yet I am more interested in the findings that disrupt the accordance, such as the counter examples of being globally minded in chapter 4. They show that no single experience is transformative in a vacuum, and that educational interventions need to be supported by a better understanding of global mindedness. Meanwhile, findings from chapter 3 reveal the legacy of colonialism and structural injustice embedded in mainstream global education and its ideals, demanding a more critical re-examination of global mindedness, its imperfections and limitations.

A few days ago, while preparing a conference proposal, I noticed “risk takers” as one of the ten featured attitudes in the International Baccalaureate (IB) learner profile (IBO, 2013) and how it can be related to themes across the three studies. The major theme from chapter 2, “leaving the familiar and reaching out to the unknown”, for example, implies one’s willingness to take risks and solve problems encountered in an unfamiliar environment. Risk taking is also related to the non-conforming attitude discussed earlier in this chapter and the courage to fight back as demonstrated in scholar 1’s narrative in chapter 3. However, as implied in the notion of “grounded idealism” (chapter 2), it might be argued that these globally minded scholars are calculated risk takers. There might be a few exceptional cases such as Tlou (2018) who criticized the colonial government of Rhodesia. Most of them did not take the kind of risks that would endanger their life or even career. It raises the question then, about to what extent the globally minded learner should be a risk taker. When facing a global crisis in dire need of resolutions, would it be enough to merely be calculated risk takers? This line of questioning may take us to the relation between politics and education as Tarc (forthcoming) notes.

Another idea, often constructed as a capacity or competency that global education aims to install in the learners, is to experience the world “through other eyes” (Andreotti & de Souza, 2008). Ideally, through global education and with the help of global educators, students “can begin to see the world from other perspectives and learn from people whose voices they may never have had the opportunity to hear” (Merryfield & Subedi, 2006, p. 290). The notion of translation, however, as discussed in chapter 3, shows the limitation to what one can see through other eyes. There are also lingering questions such as how
far global educators can expect students to see the world from other perspectives. After all, who is the other? Should students try to see the world from the eyes of a tyrant, or a terrorist? With the unequal relations of power being considered, it would probably make more sense to ask if, and how, we can let the “others” – those marginalized in multiple ways in a globalized world – describe what they see and how they see the world.

5.3.2 Personal reflections

“But it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil.”


Getting through the PhD program was a special experience. During this journey, I met and interacted with colleagues from various fields and backgrounds. Very often, an extended self-introduction would involve describing my research topic in a few sentences. I see each of these “elevator pitches” an opportunity to reflect on my research, to communicate it to people outside my field, and to get feedback. In this process, my research story gets refined and each time I talk about it, I get an altered and sometimes clearer sense of what I try to understand via my research.

Conducting research and writing the thesis has been a challenging but rewarding learning journey for me. I have come through many challenges and difficult situations in the past four years, especially during the Covid lockdowns, as the isolation and loss of social life took a big toll on my mental health. I remember moments when I was on the edge of a breakdown and I thought about giving up, but the stories I worked with, together with writing and reflecting on my own stories, pulled me back. During these difficult times, I drew inspiration from my informants – scholars whose narratives I used as research data. When I became familiar with their narratives, I also realized that some of them clearly lived through tougher days, but they persevered and eventually succeeded in both career and life. As mentioned earlier in the final reflection on the findings, perseverance to overcome challenges is a defining quality of global mindedness. Having role models is
also a significant experience shared by scholars from both chapter 2 and chapter 3. I looked up to these scholars as role models, while knowing that my own journey towards global mindedness and my own form of global mindedness could be vastly different from any of theirs.

Working with personal narratives can be challenging, since they “are complex forms of evidence that demand sophisticated analytic techniques” (Maynes et al., 2012, p. 41). At certain times, such as when doing data coding and thematic analysis, I found it necessary to distance myself from the narratives I worked with, so that I could see a bigger picture and identify patterns more easily. More often, however, the analysis would involve interpretation – extracting meaning out of the data, which would require getting closer. It was at such times when I began to understand, through personal experience and in the most direct manner, that I, the qualitative researcher, was the instrument. Some of my experiences came in handy when I talked to the participants or read their stories. These personal experiences served as common ground and points of connection for me to relate to the participants, and to understand better what they experienced and how they felt. For instance, when a participant was telling me about the student ranking after an exam, I immediately understood what she was referring to, as I recalled my own experience at high school. Another participant told me about his lack of social life during his PhD studies because he must finish everything before the funding ran out. Again, I was able to understand his situation instantly since I was facing the same pressure to finish this thesis on time. These were occasions when I did not need to imagine standing in their shoes because I had stood or I was even walking in the same shoes. In other occasions, I came face to face with the limits of my own experiences. It does not help with the frustration simply acknowledging the gap between the teller and the listener or reader of the story (Gudmundsdottir, 1996). For instance, I had never gone through a war, and I had never been a parent. At such times, I had to resort to second-hand experience and conceptual knowledge to continue the interpretive work. To deal with the frustration, I would tell myself that no researcher would have all the experiences in the world, and that no matter how much experience one has, one’s interpretation is always biased and has its limitations.
Sometimes the comparison would also bring out the self-sabotaging voice in my head, saying, “Look, this person had done such and such at this point of life. But now, look at you!” Luckily, I also had resources to build up resilience and counter the negative thoughts. Eventually, I developed enough strength and confidence to win the inner battle by telling myself, “It makes no sense to compare. Each person lives through their unique circumstances, and you also have a unique path that suits you best. You can become successful in your own way.” This experience helped me learn the importance of self-care as a qualitative researcher.

I was also aware of the danger of assuming the difference or the common experience. When I heard the participants talk about their minority experiences, I had a sense of familiarity since very often I also felt being a minority or being minoritized in multiple ways. However, I quickly realized that each minority experience was unique in its own right, and to understand it better, I needed to ask follow-up questions or read about the historical context. Many scholars in both chapter 2 and chapter 3 were immigrants, a common identity and experience I could relate to. In her autobiographical account, Kirkwood-Tucker states: “the complexity of my own immigrant existence is well articulated by […] W. E. B. Du Bois’ (1903) notion of double consciousness.” (p. 150) On one hand, I find it problematic about her appropriation of the term double consciousness, especially as a European descendant in a society where the European heritage was privileged. Despite all the confusion and misreading of the Du Boisian notion (Allen, 2002), it was born out of the late 19th century Afro-American sentiment of “simultaneously […] to be a part, yet not a part of American society, virtual exiles in the land of their birth.” (p. 242) On the other hand, I could not help but relate to her when I read “the ever-present invisible veil”, or “border crossers like me always feel a sense of being marginalized […] in their adopted country” (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2018, p. 150).

Needless to say, I have changed during the doctoral research journey, due to experiences in and outside the academia, and as a result of the research. Have I gone through a transformation, or the process of transformative learning? Considering the long timeframe of a transformative learning process, I still need time to digest and reflect on many of the disorienting events that happened in the last few years, before I can notice a
clear and significant enough shift in my frame of reference that I can call a transformation. Also, my research and narratives from the scholars have complicated the conceptual model initiated by Mezirow (2008). For instance, one participant added that transformative learning was quite often a retrospective ascription. Another participant challenged the concept in saying that “progression is a very subjective perception” – “I’m different from what I used to be, but the person I used to be coexists with the person I am now”. These intriguing thoughts and ideas about transformative learning are rich for further probing.

5.3.3 The journey continues

« La liberté a toujours un prix ». – Marjane Satrapi, Persepolis, 2007

Cosmopolitan and ‘world citizen’ are among the very few identity markers I still accept. In this aspect, I have not been “transformed”. In fact, I had identified myself as such long before starting this research journey, though at times I had to compromise or pretend for practical reasons. I still do, but I simply wear these political or social identities for convenience so I can avoid unnecessary hassles and focus on more important things, while holding on to my core identity as an anchor in the stormy sea of uncertainties.

What are the “more important things” then? Freedom? Love? Dreams?

In the course of my doctoral research, I was intrigued by the participants’ stories of living through the minority experience, because they resonated with my own lived experience and feeling of being a minority. Perhaps we cosmopolitans are always minorities in the world, a world divided by borders, hierarchies, and all the identity labels.

I also felt connected to my participants and informants based on our common experiences such as travel and migration – our shared privilege of international mobility. Though most of us are not privileged minorities such as the slave masters or colonizers in a colony, we are still minorities with privileges. For me, at least, I certainly feel privileged for getting a master’s degree in Finland, for travelling the world, and now, for earning a
PhD title in Canada. I admit that I was envious when some of my interviewees told me about them having multiple passports or multiple citizenships that enabled them to travel freely and work internationally. The freedom I have enjoyed already cost me dearly, but I am still fortunate. Would I also be able to relate to other minorities – the less fortunate ones, someone living in a slum, or a refugee camp, someone who was denied a chance to go to school?

In a recent trip to Cuba, I had many interesting conversations with local residents. They helped me realize that for most Cuban citizens, it was extremely difficult to get a passport, let alone travel abroad. Due to the harsh economy, some risked their lives to board a smuggler’s boat heading to the US. Many of them never lived to see the shores of the “free world” they had dreamed about. Some time ago, it came to my notice that two YouTubers, Russian soldiers who had recorded the harsh conditions they had endured on the frontline with a sense of humour, died in a battle. The two young men were ethnic minorities from the Russian Far East, perhaps with dreams about a better life after their service in the army, dreams about getting married, about better education for their future kids... In the videos, they complained about how they were lured to the front line, how they were lied to about the army life, but when they realized the truth, it was too late. They did not have a second chance, not even a chance to surrender. They died a “patriot” death for a government that marginalized their community and used them as cannon fodder.

I used to call anarchists and cosmopolitans “my people”. I still strongly identify with these people. Though we are scattered all around the world, minoritized and even persecuted, we are still numerous and powerful. In a borderless world we will no longer be the minority. I still believe so. However, I find the term “my people” quite silly, as I begin to grow a wider sense of solidarity with all the heroes who are courageous to chase their dreams and stand firm in action to their belief of a more equal, just, beautiful and loving world.
For me at least, cosmopolitanism or global mindedness is not a moral high ground to stand on, and nobody should have the right to criticize their fellow humans for being less globally minded. Never.

Just recently, I talked to a friend who was still living in Kyiv during the frequent Russian air raid. She told me that almost every night, she had to get up to go to a shelter after hearing the alarm, and that she could only have about four hours of sleep. Worried about her health and safety, I asked her, “Why don’t you leave?”

“Leave? Where?” she replied, “This is my home. I love my country. I can’t abandon her, at least not in these most difficult times.”

At that moment, I felt stupid for asking that question. For her decision to stay, I certainly had nothing to criticize. Nothing could I have but admiration and respect.

If there is anything valuable in this thesis, I would like to humbly dedicate it to those who gave up everything to chase their dreams, and those who were martyred for holding on to their dreams of freedom and of a better world.

They are my heroes. Perhaps the best I can do to memorise them is to live on, to dream on, and never stop chasing dreams. As such, my journey continues.

5.4 References


## Appendix A: Table of data preparation and initial analysis for chapter 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Formal coursework experiences</th>
<th>Transformative experiences</th>
<th>Physical memory/visual incidents</th>
<th>Material memory/mental events</th>
<th>Other potential/transformative experiences</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>James Becker</td>
<td>grew up in a family with (implicit) white privilege (as told in interviews) through which he acquired an optimistic perspective on life.</td>
<td>Transformed into a middle-aged man who learned to see the world through a more critical lens.</td>
<td>Frustration with the current state of affairs.</td>
<td>Met and worked with the team to initiate policy reform.</td>
<td>OMS, G-18 (creation of OMS)</td>
<td>Hired as a consultant to provide strategic advice to the African Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan Carter</td>
<td>grew up in a &quot;small but important&quot; household, where family business was key to the family’s success.</td>
<td>Developed a strong work ethic and organization skills.</td>
<td>Frustration with the current state of affairs.</td>
<td>Met and worked with the team to initiate policy reform.</td>
<td>OMS, G-18 (creation of OMS)</td>
<td>Hired as a consultant to provide strategic advice to the African Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Charlotte Anderson</td>
<td>grew up in a family with (implicit) white privilege (as told in interviews) through which he acquired an optimistic perspective on life.</td>
<td>Transformed into a middle-aged man who learned to see the world through a more critical lens.</td>
<td>Frustration with the current state of affairs.</td>
<td>Met and worked with the team to initiate policy reform.</td>
<td>OMS, G-18 (creation of OMS)</td>
<td>Hired as a consultant to provide strategic advice to the African Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>John Garcia</td>
<td>grew up in a family with (implicit) white privilege (as told in interviews) through which he acquired an optimistic perspective on life.</td>
<td>Transformed into a middle-aged man who learned to see the world through a more critical lens.</td>
<td>Frustration with the current state of affairs.</td>
<td>Met and worked with the team to initiate policy reform.</td>
<td>OMS, G-18 (creation of OMS)</td>
<td>Hired as a consultant to provide strategic advice to the African Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Linda Hernandez</td>
<td>grew up in a family with (implicit) white privilege (as told in interviews) through which he acquired an optimistic perspective on life.</td>
<td>Transformed into a middle-aged man who learned to see the world through a more critical lens.</td>
<td>Frustration with the current state of affairs.</td>
<td>Met and worked with the team to initiate policy reform.</td>
<td>OMS, G-18 (creation of OMS)</td>
<td>Hired as a consultant to provide strategic advice to the African Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Amanda Tate</td>
<td>grew up in a family with (implicit) white privilege (as told in interviews) through which he acquired an optimistic perspective on life.</td>
<td>Transformed into a middle-aged man who learned to see the world through a more critical lens.</td>
<td>Frustration with the current state of affairs.</td>
<td>Met and worked with the team to initiate policy reform.</td>
<td>OMS, G-18 (creation of OMS)</td>
<td>Hired as a consultant to provide strategic advice to the African Union.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes
- The table above provides a summary of the data preparation and initial analysis for chapter 2. Each entry in the table represents a chapter and the associated personal experiences and transformative experiences. The table reflects the diverse perspectives and backgrounds of the individuals involved, highlighting the complexity and depth of the data collection and analysis processes.
Appendix B: Research ethics approval for chapter 3

Western Research

Date: 28 April 2020

To: Dr. Paul Tucr

Project ID: 112569

Study Title: Re-grounding transformative learning: Examining intercultural transformative experiences of cosmopolitan educational scholar

Short Title: RGLIL

Application Type: NMREB Initial Application

Review Type: Delegated

Full Board Reporting Date: June 5 2020

Date Approval Issued: 28/Apr/2020

REB Approval Expiry Date: 28/Apr/2021

Dear Dr. Paul Tucr:

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

Documents Approved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Name</th>
<th>Document Type</th>
<th>Document Date</th>
<th>Document Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>interview guide pt</td>
<td>Interview Guide</td>
<td>18/Mar/2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>letter of information</td>
<td>Written Consent/Assent</td>
<td>10/Mar/2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Materials</td>
<td>Recruitment Materials</td>
<td>18/Mar/2020</td>
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</table>

No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMREB operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Research Ethics Office on behalf of [Signature], NMREB Chair

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).
Appendix C: Letter of information and consent for chapter 3

Western

Letter of Information and Consent

Project Title: Re-grounding transformative learning: Examining intercultural formative experiences of cosmopolitan educational scholars

Principal Investigator + Contact: Dr. Paul Tarc, Education, Western University.

Student Investigator + Contact: Haoming Tang, Education, Western University.

1. Invitation to Participate
   You are being invited to participate in this research study which attempts to understand the formative (intercultural) experiences and transformative learning constituting a cosmopolitan orientation. You are invited as a senior educational scholar with a cosmopolitan orientation.

2. Why is this study being done?
   The purpose of this study is to better understand the processes leading to a cosmopolitan orientation. It will hopefully shed light on the links between intercultural experiences, transformative learning and cosmopolitan sensibilities.

3. How long will you be in this study?
   It is expected that you will be in the study for two or three interviews of up to 3 hours in total. Also, you will be invited to review the transcript of each interview. The review of transcripts is optional, and it may take up to 1.5 hour to review all transcripts if you choose to do so.

4. What are the study procedures?
   If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in two or three interviews. The first interview is unstructured, in which you will be asked to share some learning experiences and an outline of your journey of becoming a cosmopolitan educational scholar. It will take place at a place of your choosing. You will be asked if the interview can be audio recorded or not, and in either case, your names and identities will stay confidential.

Version Date: 10/03/2020
You will also be invited to review the transcript of your interview for accuracy. You may make changes to the transcript. You will receive an email from the researcher with a unique link to your transcript only, to be accessed from the university server. You can review the transcript and return it to the researcher if you would like to make changes. This review is optional.

5. What are the risks and harms of participating in this study?
There are no known or anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study.

6. What are the benefits of participating in this study?
You may not directly benefit from participating in this study. However, the results of this study can benefit the society by contributing to the knowledge and potentially improving the practice of cosmopolitan and transformative education. Also, the narratives constructed in this study may be inspiring for new and future educators.

7. Can participants choose to leave the study?
If you decide to withdraw from the study, you have the right to request (e.g., by phone, in writing, etc.) withdrawal of information collected about you. If you wish to have your information removed please let the researcher know and your information will be destroyed from our records. Once the study has been published, we will not be able to withdraw your information.

8. How will participants' information be kept confidential?
Electronic copies of the audio files from the interview will be saved on a password protected USB stick, and electronic copies of transcripts will be kept on the university’s server, which is protected by password. The stored transcripts will only have pseudonyms. Consent forms for the study and paper copies of transcripts will be stored in the researcher’s locked office at Western University. A master list with your email address, name and pseudonym will be stored on a password protected USB in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s office at Western University. Only the researcher will have access to this information. All research data will be destroyed in seven years, as per Western University’s policy. If participants choose to withdraw from this study, their data will be destroyed and removed from the server and USB drive.
Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to the study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research.
If the results of the study are published, your name will not be used. However, the researcher might use and publish quotes which are not directly attributable to an individual. While we do our best to protect your information there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so. The inclusion of your professional role in dissemination of the results may allow someone to link the data and identify you. If data is collected during the project which may be required to report by law, we have a duty to report.

9. Are participants compensated to be in this study?
   Participants will not be compensated.

10. What are the rights of participants?
    Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to be in this study. Even if you consent to participate you have the right to not answer individual questions or to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose not to participate or to leave the study at any time it will have no effect on your professional standing or your academic reputation.
    You do not waive any legal right by signing this consent form.

11. Whom do participants contact for questions?
    If you have questions about this research study, please contact:
    Principal Investigator: Dr. Paul Tata,  
    Student Investigator: Haoming Tang,  

    If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics  

*This letter is yours to keep for future reference.*
Consent Form

Project Title: Re-grounding transformative learning: Examining intercultural formative experiences of cosmopolitan educational scholars

Document Title: Letter of Information and Consent

Principal Investigator: Dr. Paul Tarc, Education, Western University.

Student Investigator: Haoming Tang, Education, Western University,

I consent to the use of unidentified quotes obtained during the study in the dissemination of this research.

☐ YES ☐ NO

I agree to be audio-recorded in this research.

☐ YES ☐ NO

I have read the letter of information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name of Participant</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date (DD-MM-YYYY)</th>
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</thead>
</table>

My signature means that I have explained the study to the participant named above. I have answered all questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name of Person Obtaining Consent</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date (DD-MM-YYYY)</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Version Date: 10/03/2020
Appendix D: Interview guide for chapter 3

- First round interview:

This interview will be unstructured. It will be expected to begin with some small talks to warm up the conversation and make participants more comfortable to share their stories.

Then I will ask them in a natural way to share their story of becoming cosmopolitan educational scholars. Some of the conversational prompts could be:

“I’m really interested in how you became the kind of person and scholar as you are today.”

Can you talk a little bit about where you have lived and taught?

Where or what is home for you?

Do you see yourself as a cosmopolitan? How do you understand what it means to be ‘cosmopolitan?’ Why or why not?

“Can you talk a bit about your formative experiences in your childhood, youth or adulthood that shaped you as a person and as a person open to engaging others in the world? How has your experience living in different places and working in cross-cultural contexts shaped your scholarship?

- Follow-up interview:

In the second interview, the interviewee will be asked to elaborate on some key incidents or events they have mentioned in the first-round interview, and their reflections on them. The interview will be semi-structured. Questions will be developed based on the interviewee’s answers in the first-round interview. Below are how some of the potential questions may look like:

“Last time you mentioned… I find it very interesting so could you tell me a bit more about…”

“Last time you mentioned… Why was that (particular)… so important to you?”

“I find… that you told me about very interesting. Is there anything more about that event/from that time you would like to share with me?”

“I would like to know more about how you think about…”

“I would like to learn more about your opinion on…, the… you mentioned last time.”

“Last time you said when…, your… changed completely. How did that happen?”

“From the story you told me last time, I noticed a big change in your… I was wondering how that (change) happened?”

“Last time you said you spent… years/months in… Is there any special experience from there you would like to share?”
### Appendix E: Table of coding for chapter 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Becoming creative</td>
<td>1) Stranger/outsider feeling</td>
<td>1) Language support (both pre-departure and on-site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Becoming critical thinkers</td>
<td>2) Language barrier</td>
<td>2) Integrating (intercultural?) and community building activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Gaining confidence</td>
<td>3) Disorienting and uncomfortable feeling</td>
<td>3) Guided reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Becoming more independent</td>
<td>4) Devising coping strategies</td>
<td>4) Organized experiential learning activities (practicum for preservice teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Better understanding of host society</td>
<td>5) Immersion/immersive experiences</td>
<td>5) Faculty support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Changed view towards differences (tolerating and appreciating)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Better self-understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Recognizing similarities among cultures and people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Becoming more empathetic and willing to help marginalized groups.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Potential themes:** personal empowerment (1,2,3,4); perspective shift (5, 6, 7); social responsibility?

Identity deconstruction and reconstruction

Main themes: steppingstones to GM; deeper shifts toward GM

**Potential themes:** culture shock/disorientation (1,2,3); active effort of learning and coping; cross-cultural interaction and intercultural communication

**Main themes:** (1) intercultural encounters and immersion; (2) challenges; (3) coping strategies

Common themes: (1) enhanced (inter)cultural understanding and awareness; (2) perspective and identity change; (3) learning through overcoming challenges; (4) learning through interaction and immersion.
**Curriculum Vitae**

**Name:** Haoming Tang

**Post-secondary Education and Degrees:**
- Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, 2019-2023 PhD.
- McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 2017-2019 M.A.
- University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland, 2012-2014 M.Sc.

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- Western Graduate Research Scholarship, 2019-2023

**Related Work Experience:**
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**Publications:**