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TEACHING & RESEARCH ABOUT GLOBALIZATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDE & BEHAVIOR

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I. BACKGROUND

This Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) research project was inspired by the UCF-USU³ Certificate Program in International Political Economy (IPE)⁴. Based on a U.S. State Department University Partnership grant, the purpose of this program was to provide new training to Russian students in the distanced Udmurt Republic to be prepared for the growingly globalized international community. Implemented in a geographic region far from Moscow, the IPE certificate provided new knowledge and skills necessary for a new generation of Russian students who aim to use emerging regional and global opportunities to improve not only their own economic and political status, but also those of their republic.

An implied goal of this program was to promote a sense of world citizenship among the bright and relatively isolated educated graduates of the USU. The post-industrial society requires both economic development as well as a growing sense of a community. In such communities, there is need for a new idea of a citizen, who not only cares about his own immediate environment, but also about the world beyond his reach.

In the past two decades, there is a great deal of discussion about the notion of “world citizen”, referring to individuals who care about their homeland while they are also concerned about the future of mankind. The idea of world citizen has significantly grown and spread with the process of globalization. In fact, one may Beyond their

¹ Dr. Houman Sadri acknowledges the financial assistance from grants awarded by the US State Department (2000-2003), Rotary International (2002), and UCF (Faculty Center for Teaching & Learning SoTL 2007 Program). None of these institutions, however, are responsible for the ideas presented in this work. Moreover, he is also grateful to Dr. Jean Kijek (co-PI of UCF-USU grant program), Dr. Ildar Latypov for collecting the USU data, Ms. Evelyn Tonn for collecting the UCF data, and Ms. Jennie Zilner for re-coding, re-organizing, and running data, as well as completing the bibliography.

² The authors use this opportunity to thank Dr. Galina Merzlyakova (USU Dean of Social Communication Institute), Dr. Roger Handberg (UCF Political Science Chair), Mr. Eric Main (UCF, FCTL), and Ms. Dahlia Forde (UCF, FCTL) for making this Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) project possible.

³ UCF stand for University of Central Florida a comprehensive major university located in Orlando Florida. With more than 47,000 students (based on the 2007 enrollment), UCF is one of the top 7 largest universities in the US. (See: www.ucf.edu) USU stands for Udmurt State University, located in Izhevsk city, the capital of the Udmurt Republic, is one of the major and largest Russian universities (See: <http://v4.udsu.ru/english/index>).

⁴ This certificate program was based on a U.S. State Department University Partnership Program grant for the period of 2000-2003. As the academic coordinator, instructor, and co-PI of this \$300,000 grant project, Houman Sadri was well-positioned to set project objectives, organize program capabilities, observe daily operation, and finally examine the results of this three-year teaching program.

heavy human and material cost, the unusual global natural disasters of the 21st century have led to a growing sense of global empathy for the victims of human and natural disasters, like genocide, tsunami, earthquakes, hunger, global warming, and so on.

A. Who is a Global Citizen?

Acting as a global citizen requires first of all self-awareness and mindfulness. A global citizen recognizes that there is a bigger picture of life beyond our immediate surroundings. This consciousness is vital since the larger world always affects our small portion of the globe, if we realize it or not, and if we like it or not. Secondly, he realizes that the cultural values and social rules of conduct are perhaps different from those of our own. Thirdly, we need to discover the common characteristics of the two worlds as a starting point of an effective mood of cross cultural communication. Next, global citizens identify the key cultural values of others, so they would avoid unintended disrespect and unwanted conflict. Finally, such individuals build a mutually cooperative and beneficial relationship based on established culturally clear and comprehensive lines of communication focused on common interests packaged in sound solutions.

One way to measure the effectiveness of the UCF-USU academic partnership in terms of teaching is to measure the level of global citizenship developed among the USU graduates as a result of the certificate program. For USU students, the completion of this certificate program has required successfully passing six extra full-term courses, which included: International Political Economy, International Environmental Law, Science & Technology, Environmental Policy, Political Analysis& Methodology, and State & Local Government.

A new concept of «Global thinking» was utilized to measure the development of “world citizenship” among those students who were certified for the program. Thus, it is important to say a few words about the evolution of Global thinking in comparison with cosmopolitanism in the literature.

B. Evolution of Global thinking

Although to some political philosophers the idea of “global justice” beyond the national and state level is relatively new, the concept of cosmopolitanism first emerged far back in time. The idea of “cosmopolitanism” or of a “cosmopolitan” can be traced back to the Archaic and Greek Classical periods, during the origination of Western thought and writing. It is necessary to look at cosmopolitanism from the Archaic and Greek Classical periods in order to follow its path of development to the eighteenth century and today. To start, we can draw from Herodotus, in *The Histories* (440BC) and find that the descriptions from the traveling Greek historian match that of early Western thinking. In addition to his forward thinking rationale, the universal system of shared values also appears in Homer, such as the *Odyssey*. In such early models of cosmopolitanism, universalism is quite apparent. In the case

of Herodotus, the universalistic characteristics are referred to as representative universalism, which comprises that humans share characteristics that are “equal and accessible to all”⁵.

From the writings of Herodotus and Homer, the beginnings of cosmopolitanism can also be aligned with Plato and the “foundations of universalism”. In *Dialogues*, Plato outlines a model of universalism, but leaves it to the individual to master. Plato recognized the truth and good within universalism and then applied these universal forms to the actions of states and individuals. Later, Aristotle discusses particularism, and emphasizes Plato’s idea of self-mastery. Through Plato’s reasoning, he defines a significant part of cosmopolitanism: individuals can control their own behavior and actions through spirit and reason and the knowledge individuals’ gain can spread throughout a community or a city. Plato and Aristotle both recognized the capabilities of citizens to reason within universal order, but at this time focused on the city-state and did not yet expand to the global community of citizens⁶.

It was when Diogenes declared “I am a citizen of the cosmos”, or “I am a citizen of the world”, that the ideas of Plato and Aristotle were forced from the confinement of a polis, or city and into the cosmos, or world. Asked where he came from, Diogenes thought of himself as a “cosmopolites”, or a citizen of the world.

In 1795, Immanuel Kant wrote an essay about “Perpetual Peace” and how humans can solve the problem of violence and rise up from the state of nature among nations with a new form of cosmopolitan law, Global thinking and “a peaceful federation among all peoples of the earth”. Kant’s definition of Global thinking grows out of eighteenth century tradition, but it was laced with ancient Greek and Roman Stoicism ideas. For instances, the idea of “kosmou politês” or world citizen that emerged from Roman Stoicism. One main task of a world citizen is to draw the circles of humanity towards the center, making all human beings more like our “fellow city dwellers”⁷. Stoic cosmopolitans believed that deliberations regarding the problems common to all humans should be regarded first, not out of local or national identity because it “confines and limits our moral aspirations”.

In the early eighteenth century, the difference between local diversity and global unity became more clearly understood, as during the previous centuries, communities moved outside their “local spheres” and into an interaction of “larger spheres” of “competing peoples, cultures, and experiences”⁸.

Although the concepts of universalism and Global thinking have longed been examined together, “Globalization of thinking” and “Global thinking” have grown into something new, while still holding onto the founding principles based on the common good of humanity and global morality. This change is most apparent in our postmodern world with citizens of the world being allowed to prosper with the ever-growing world of

⁵ M. Binney, *The Cosmopolitan Evolution: Travel, travel narratives, and the revolution of the eighteenth century European consciousness*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2006.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ J. Bohman and M. Lutz-Bachmann, eds. *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant’s cosmopolitan ideal*. Cambridge, (MA): The MIT Press, 1997.

⁸ Ibid.

communication technologies. Overall, Global thinking considers the community of all human beings as the primary ethical group and each person is equal, regardless of sex, race, religion, nationality, or citizenship⁹.

As national boundaries become less and less important and our world becomes increasingly interdependent, the “cosmopolitans” are the well traveled, the open-minded, the worldly, and sophisticated. A “cosmopolitan” is the model liberal citizen and “clear-headed, cool subject who knows when to set aside individual and sectarian preferences in search of the greater good”¹⁰.

With a more clear idea about our main concept, it is time to turn to a discussion of the instrument of measuring the level of Global thinking among Russian IPE certificate program student and compare the result with that of UCF students who completed the same courses with the same or similar lesson plans. It is important to note that during the UCF-USU grant program period (2000-2003), we paired UCF faculty with USU instructors to develop and teach the six IPE certificate program courses. For training the USU Russian faculty, each term (six times total) during the grant program UCF hosted groups of Russian instructors for a period of one month to work with their UCF counterparts and develop the courses along with similar lesson plans and materials, as those at UCF.

Moreover, each year the UCF political science faculty made regular annual visits to USU to observe the progress of the new courses and the overall program in Russia¹¹. In fact, as the academic coordinator of the grant, Houman Sadri spent an entire academic semester (spring 2001) at USU to monitor the program, assist the Russian instructors via team teaching the courses at USU, and evaluate the progress of each step.

II. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to anonymously collect information about the effectiveness of the program, an extensive questionnaire was developed, consisting of two major parts: First, a list of fifteen background questions, and second a series of twenty one behavioral questions. The questionnaire was administrated among those Russian students who had completed the IPE certificate program courses at USU.

Moreover, the same questionnaire was also administrated among the UCF students, who had taken the same courses. The rational for conducting the same survey at UCF was to utilize the UCF students as the control group for comparing the result of the UCF-USU teaching program.

The background questions contained a variety of topics. They began with typical background questions about age, gender, education, income, nationality, religion, residency, and so on. However, the questionnaire also

⁹ R. Tinnevelt, and G. Verschraegen, eds. *Between Cosmopolitan Ideals and State Sovereignty: Studies in global justice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

¹⁰ T. Miller, *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitanism, Consumerism, and Television in a Neoliberal Age*. Philadelphia (PA): Temple University Press, 2007.

¹¹ The UCF Political Science faculty directly involved in this program included Aubrey Jewett, Robert Bledsoe, Roger Handberg, Dwight Kiel, and Houman Sadri.

entailed questions regarding the students' habits, such as exposure to both domestic and foreign media, frequency of overseas trips, technical competency, encountering foreign products, and so on¹².

The twenty one attitudinal and behavioral questions provided data regarding 21 indicators representing 7 major variables: Cultural Values, Family Values, Political Values, Social Values, Religious Values, Technical Competence, and Educational Values. Finally, these seven variables were combined to create our main dependent variable: Level of Global thinking.

The answers to behavioral questions were organized on a 4-point scale in order to avoid respondents who find comfort in reply to most questions by choosing the middle value or option. Thus, the answers were organized from strongly disagreeing to strongly agreeing, and coded accordingly for each indicator of each variable. A list of indicators in association with each variable is available below.

Table 1: Variables & Indicators

VARIABLES	INDICATORS
Cultural Values	1. Our culture is being invaded by foreign values. 2. Adapting to a foreign culture is not a problem. 3. I am afraid of Westernization of my culture.
Family Values	1. Children must obey their parents with no objection. 2. Husband and wife must share in household works.
Political Values	1. I feel free to question my boss. 2. No censorship of the Internet and satellite access. 3. An individual is as more important as a group. 4. People should be free to think, speak, and act. 5. Individuals must be judge by on their merits, not families.
Social Values	1. Class/group differences are important in this country. 2. Women should have the right to vote. 3. University education is more important for males. 4. A man has more right to a job than a woman.
Religious Values	1. Religion must be learned only at home. 2. Religion must be taught from primary school to university.

¹² With the assistance of the Russians partners, these survey questions were translated to Russian, tested at USU, and conducted among the participating students in order to minimize typical research errors. For a copy of this questionnaire, please contact Houman Sadri at: sadri@mail.ucf.edu.

	3. There must be a separation between government & religion.
Technical Competence & Function	1. I feel comfortable using mobile phone, computer, & Internet. 2. The Internet should be used for work & recreational reasons.
Educational Values	1. I lose confidence in a teacher who says "I do not know." 2. Our schools are better than their Western counterparts.

III. DATA ORGANIZATION & PATTERNS

First of all, it is necessary to emphasize that the data for this research has been collected after the first generation of USU students completed all requirements of the IPE certificate program. The rationale has been that the students have the appropriate knowledge of domestic and international topics and are equipped with the right level of skills for the modern work environment.

In the Udmurt Republic, securing a career was a major issue after the demise of the USSR, when many of the old factories and companies were not able to absorb all new graduates. Thus, one major goal of the IPE certificate program was to provide the necessary modern know-how and skills for the new and more competitive work force. Of course, the other major goal has been to provide a sense of world citizenship, as explained earlier.

A. Data Description

Following data collection, the information was checked, and coded appropriately for further processing. Using SPSS, we first produced numerous frequency tables and graphs. Then, we regressed all 14 independent variables with our eight dependent variables. In addition to regression line, the SPSS program also produced a number of useful statistical tools, which we have used for reporting the major findings from phases one & two of this study.

For this report, however, we mainly focus on reporting the significance, frequency, and strength of the relationship between several independent variables in explaining the variation of our dependent variables. Moreover, we concentrate on the impact that the independent variables have on the “Global thinking Variable”, which combines the result of all our seven dependent variables.

B. Ranking Factors Affecting Cosmopolitanism

After identifying those paired relationships that are statistically significant, we produced a number of R value and R Squared tables. Then, we ranked independent variables based on their individual power to explain the variation in each dependent variable. Next, we began the data analysis with the UCF students’ data in order to establish the base line for future comparison. The following table is a list of the major independent variables along with their abbreviations.

Table 2: Variables & their Abbreviations

VARIABLE	ABBREVIATION
Hours Watching Domestic TV Program	D TV
Economic Status	EcoStat
Educational Level	Edu
Consumption of Foreign Food	F Food
Listening to Foreign Music	F Music
Hours Watching Foreign TV Program	F TV
Academic Major Field	Major
Local Residency (Village, Town, & City)	Residen
Participating in a Study Abroad Program	StudAb
Overseas (international) Trips	Trips

C. UCF Patterns

We paired each of our 14 independent variables with each of our 8 dependent variables. After examining relationships of each pair, we first identified the significance level of the relationship, and then observed the strength of that particular relationship. Finally, we omitted those pairs whose relationship was either not statistically significant, or the strength of the relationship was simply too weak to be important. Finally, we ranked the independent variables based on their significance of explanatory power. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the final result for UCF and USU students respectively.

Table 3: UCF Students Data Results

RANK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
VARIABLE							
Culture	Internet	EcoStat	Age	FMusic	StudAb	D TV	Gender
Family	Internet	Stud Ab	EcoStat	Trips	FMusic	Work	Edu
Political	StudAb	Internet	EcoStat	Gender	Major	F. Food	F TV
Social	Work	Internet	D TV	Major	F.Food	Trips	StudAb
Religious	Internet	Edu	Gender	Work	StudAb	EcoStat	Major
Technical	StudAb	Trips	Work	F TV	FMusic	D TV	Internet
Education	Trips	EcoStat	Major	Gender	F.Food	Age	Edu
Global thinking	Internet	StudAb	Gender	Major	Edu	FMusic	FTV/DTV

As Table 3 shows, the “Internet” and “Study Abroad” were by far the most important factors in shaping and explaining the attitudes and positive behavior of typical UCF students toward “Global thinking”. This finding was expected, but the strength of this outcome was rather surprising, simply because we had assumed that “Education”, “Major”, and “Residency” would play the main role in the open-mindedness level of our students toward “world citizenship”. Our expectation was based on the fact that a major percentage of UCF students are the first representative of their modest-income families at college. Rationally, we had assumed that UCF curriculum and academic mission would be the main channel for developing our students’ open-mindedness toward abstract notions like “Global thinking”. In this regard, we had certainly underestimated the power of the “Internet” and our relatively small “Study Abroad” program.

In explaining our dependent variables, other important variables are: “Major”, “Economic Status”, “Work”, and “Trips”, all of which were fully expected. Nevertheless, among these second rated factors (mostly in columns 3 and 4), “Gender” was a rather surprise. We knew that “Gender” is an important factory among our student body, especially since our females students enjoy a higher GPA (Grade Point Average) than male students. But we did not know that “Gender” also is a significant factor in determining the level of “Global thinking”.

Finally, we certainly expected that factors such as, “DTV”, “FTV”, “F. Food”, “F. Music”, and “Age” would rank low (columns 4-6) among the top factors explaining the “Global thinking” level of a typical UCF student.

D. USU Patterns

Table 4 clearly illustrates the result of our analysis for the USU students who had completed the International Political Economy certificate. This time it was less surprising that “Internet” ranked high (twice) among the top two columns. In fact, we were anticipating that “Internet” would make a big difference in breaking the traditional geographic isolation of the Udmurt Republic, especially the city of Izhevsk, which used to be one of the Soviet “closed” cities (only a few years before our grant program started), due to its significance for the Soviet military-Industrial Complex. Based on such expectation, we had spent a great deal of the grant funds to establish a major Internet Center (IC) for the Institute of Social Communications (ISC) of USU. The IC had a powerful computer server in addition to many quality personal computers along with other necessary equipments to make them work well and connect the ISC of USU with reliable lines to the rest of the world.

Our original expectation was that independent variables such as “Education”, “Major”, “Internet”, and “Study Abroad” would rank among the top factors. This expectation was based on the fact that these four factors were (either directly or indirectly) supported by our certificate program. However, we were even more surprised to discover that factors such as “Gender” and “EconStat” (both of which were out of our control) were very powerful in explaining our dependent variables.

Table 4: USU Students Data Results

RANK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
VARIABLE							
Culture	Residen	Internet	StudyAb	Gender	Major	Trips	D TV
Family	Gender	F. Food	FMusic	Age	Work	Major	Edu
Political	Major	Edu	D TV	Residen	Trips	F TV	StudAb
Social	Gender	Major	F. Food	EcoStat	Residen	Edu	D TV
Religious	Gender	Internet	FMusic	EcoStat	Residen	Work	Edu
Technical	Work	EcoStat	F. Food	FMusic	Gender	Internet	Trips
Education	F. TV	Gender	D TV	EcoStat	Edu	Work	Trips
Global thinking	Gender	EcoStat	Work	D TV	F TV	Residen	F. Food

For Russians, another important factor was residency, which indicated the original place of students' residency. Here, the expectation was that the students from larger cities would be more open-minded and therefore enjoy a higher level of "Global thinking." Our expectation was supported by the USU data pattern, which illustrated "Residency" 5 times among the top 7 columns. For explaining students' "Global thinking", geography obviously made more difference in Russia than in the US.

Although "Internet" was a significant factor, we were caught off-guard that "Internet" was not as important, as it was in the US. We understood that a typical Russian citizen would not have the same luxury of Internet connection at home, but we expected that university student would consider it more important, as the main gateway to the outside world, especially since we had established the UCF-ISC/USU Internet Center.

Understandably, another important factor missing among the top variables was "Study Abroad", which often requires individual student's funds for travel and tuition overseas. Typical Russian students are not wealthy, so higher education is still mostly free for many Russians. Thus, mainly for economic reasons, it was understandable that "Study Abroad" would rank low in Russia, especially in comparison to its position in the USA.

Finally, another observation is that at USU the mid-range factors (columns 3 & 4) were mainly consisted of variables, such as "Foreign Food", and "Foreign Music", and "DTV", which were more locally attainable than "Overseas Trips" and "Foreign TV".

IV. CONCLUSION

At this stage, we would like to first make some comparison of the result of the survey at both schools. As indicated earlier, the most important finding was that the attitude and behavior of the Russian students toward global issues had not been as affected by the "Internet" and "Study Abroad" as was the case for the UCF students. For us, the limited impact of "Study Abroad" in Russia was clear due to its high cost for modest-income Russians.

However, it was particularly interesting that “Internet” role was also limited, despite the fact that it is a relatively cheap and effective way of virtual global travel, independent source of modern world challenges, and indirect promoter of world citizenship.

Another major difference between the Russian and American student was about the impact of geography on their attitudes and behavior toward global issues. While for UCF students, geography was not a factor at all, “Residency” showed as a top determinant of attitudes and behavior for USU students 5 times. Thus, in Russia, it makes a significant difference in the level of “Global thinking”, if a student originally comes from a village, town, or large city.

From an academic perspective, both Russian and American students show similar results about the impact of “Education” and “Major”, both of which showed up about 5 times among the top 7 variables. As academicians, however, we had originally expected that these two factors would play a dominant role for both Russian and American students. Thus, we were rather surprised by this result.

Now, the question rises, what should be done for the next step of this SoTL project. Here, we have several options. First, we would like to increase the number of indicators for those dependent variables (such as “Education” and “Technical Competence”) that have been relying on only 2 indicators. We believe that this change would increase the accuracy level of such factors in explaining the variation of our main dependent variable – Global thinking.

Second, we were rather surprised that “Gender” ranked top two factors (see columns 1 & 2) five times for the Russians, while it showed up only 4 times in secondary (columns 3 & 4) for American students. Thus, for future study, one research question that we may address could be: What explains such an important difference?

Finally, it would also be useful to discover, why factors such as “Foreign Food”, “Foreign Music”, and “Foreign TV”, ranked higher for the Russians (in columns 1, 3 & 4) than for Americans (in columns 3, 4, & 5). Doesn’t this observation support the notion that we Americans have a tendency for isolationism and parochialism? After all, these are factors which have historically resisted the growth of “Global thinking” in America.