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# Conceptualising a case, casing a concept? Two faces of global citizenship

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## ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates the insights to be gained through a comparison of the use of a politically constitutive concept that delineates unlike but connected ‘cases’ of a concept-in-use. Global Citizenship is a concept with increasing currency. This paper compares two different but connected ways in which the concept is being put to work by two different groups to achieve political aims. One is an educational reform movement, the other is a corporate lobby group. Both claim a progressive political platform under the banner of Global Citizenship. Both are trying to entreat people to see themselves as Global Citizens and in so doing change the world through the ‘transformation’ of the self. The Global Citizen created by this education and elite-led mobilisation will ostensibly solve the world’s problems through their knowledge of it and make the world ‘a better place’. What methodological issues arise when these two ‘cases’ are compared?

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## Introduction

In yet another slick, high-production value Instagram post for the Global Citizen Forum, Haitian American Hip Hop artist Wyclef Jean turns to the camera and says: ‘What is global citizenship? It’s knowledge’. The Global Citizen Forum (hereafter GCF) is one of several high profile non-governmental actors mobilising under the concept of ‘Global Citizenship’.<sup>1</sup> Global Citizenship is a concept with increasing currency, used by several different types of actors. This is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it is a case of governmental and non-governmental actors trying to effect political change through the use of a concept. Political Science has expended time and space on the role of concepts in research (Sartori 1970; Schaffer 2016), but only Interpretivist Political Science is attentive to the politically constitutive implications of such a change in meaning. Secondly, much time and space have been devoted in Citizenship Studies to the consequences of macrostructural change for the institution of citizenship and political belonging (Armstrong 2018; Baubock 2018). Very little attention has been paid to the concrete efforts of different political actors working in different sites and targeting different constituencies to *change the meaning* of citizenship and political belonging.

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The use of the concept is also backed by literatures in political science, political theory, history and education, which marshal the concept as a solution to political problems (Carter 2010; Heater 1996; Paehlke 2014; Tully 2014). These scholars regard Global Citizenship as something expressed through political activism that emerges when transnational ties created by trade, migration and capital render the topic and targets of citizen struggles increasingly global (Appiah 2007; Armstrong 2006). When national citizens engage politically in ways that show concern for global problems and distant others, they are engaging, whether they know it or not, in Global Citizenship. The two groups under investigation in this study, are trying to entreat their audiences to engage in this kind of activism and change how they see themselves in doing so. Thus, Global Citizenship (hereafter GC) is a conceptual double. It is an 'experience-distant' concept used by scholars and philosophers to describe a particular type of political activism, but it is also an experience-near concept used by political actors to change meaning in a way that they think will effect political change.

This paper illustrates what can be gained through an interpretive approach to concepts in use as the basis for case study comparison. I do so by engaging with recent scholarship in Political Science advocating for the value of non-controlled comparison (Simmons and Smith 2021). Joe Soss advocates for the value of 'casing' a study, an abductive process in which the researcher puzzles through different theoretical frameworks applied to the phenomenon under study as a way of generating different kinds of knowledge and allowing the researcher to put her study 'into dialogue with a different set of the empirical phenomenon, creating new standpoints for interpretation; new paths for generalisation; and new terms for relational, processual or comparative analysis' (Soss 2021, 89). Casing a study, rather than studying a case, requires the researcher to continually pose the question: what is this phenomenon a case of? as opposed to assuming that all phenomena will neatly fit into concepts which describe discrete classes of political action. Soss distinguishes this nominal method of case study research from the realist approach which treats cases as 'found objects'. The nominal approach recognises that cases are created through researcher efforts to theorise phenomena and insodng we place our objects into a pre-existing schema of understanding. Interpretivist case study research can be realist in the sense that meaning-making or concepts can be the class of action that delineates a 'case' in question.

Thea Riofrancos' contribution in the same volume goes further to point out that case study research makes assumptions about classes of processes and events or geographically bounded entities. Doing so ignores the ways that 'any one event, institution or process may belong to more than one category of political life' and that 'any one locale is crosscut by, and co-constitutes, dynamics that exceed its geographic boundaries' (Riofrancos 2021, 107). She advocates instead for 'siting' as an alternative approach to case study comparison. Noting the constitutive relationship between the ontological assumptions of case study research and imperial science, siting and re-siting, by contrast, prompts the researcher to consider questions of temporal trajectory, spatial conjuncture and the connections to broader processes connecting multiple sites. Siting research 'rejects the boundedness that the term 'case' assumes' (Riofrancos 2021, 116).

This paper combines elements of both approaches by treating the uses of the concept 'Global Citizenship' as two discrete cases in the realist sense: first, the educational reform movement called Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and second, the elite led lobby group the Global Citizen Forum (GCF), but that in doing so each case is revealed as multiply

and interconnecting sites in Riofrancos' sense. Each case study has been generated through a combined methodology of Virtual Ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough method) (Fairclough 1992; Hine 2017). Each approach being attentive in different ways to the affordances of communications technology. Comparing my two cases of the concept-in-use traced through the use in each case of communications technology, my two cases unfold as complex, multi-sited and boundless processes of connection through multiple sites in space and time. These two 'cases' of the concept-in-use have been chosen for the disparate-ness of their constituencies and the similarities in their understanding. This research has delineated its 'cases' by following the concept-in-use across different sites and in doing so illustrates the methodological problems for the conventional practice of 'controlled comparison'. Not only are these not 'like' cases, but they don't correspond to the ontological presuppositions of comparative political science by not being succinct and bounded. Moreover, building on Soss and Riofrancos, they beg the question of political change.

I'll proceed first by describing each case of the concept-in-use and the multiple spatial and temporal sites that are delineated in doing so. Following GC in use brings into view diverse and networked state and non-state actors, intergovernmental institutions and platforms of academics and policy makers. The purpose of my description is to demonstrate the multiple and interconnected sites of the use of the concept in practice. I present the first case of global citizen-in-use as a multi-sited temporal trajectory from the inter-war period. The second, more recent iteration begs the question of a spatial conjuncture. I'll conclude by specifying the problems that my two multi-sited cases pose for the ontological assumptions embedded in conventional case study research and demonstrate following Soss, that each case can be multiply 'cased' and brought into conversation with several different theoretical and disciplinary framings in Political Science and International Relations. I'll build on Soss and Riofrancos by adding another methodological consideration to the alternatives of casing and siting by pointing out that while multiple casings are possible and provide for a rich inter-disciplinary dialogue, each of my cases of the concept-in-use exceeds explanation from existing frameworks. That is because the use of politically constitutive concepts like Global Citizenship and the affordances of communications technology in each case show how social life *can be changed* by political actors seeking to do so through their use of language, meaning and communications technology. Therefore, what the abductive process of casing enables is not only attention to the insights to be gained through multiple possible theoretical frameworks, but also the possibility that the practices of meaning-making and collective action afforded by communications technology might necessitate the building of new or composite theories. My comparison demonstrates that this possibility of the need for a new theory would be invisible if I didn't take the 'meaning-making' political actors seriously, and if I were methodologically limited to controlled comparison.

## ***Two faces of global citizenship?***

### ***Global citizenship education***

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is commonly understood as the umbrella term for the variety of 'adjectival' educations that arose, usually in advanced economies after World War II. 'Adjectival' educations is the name denoted by education comparativists to educations that serve political and not economic purposes. Other ways of referring to

GCE include Global Education (in the European Union) or Global Competence (by the OECD). Scholars in the field of Global Education Governance note that since the inter-war period, education has been a site for configuring political identity and effecting change in world order (Mundy 1998). GCE can be traced longitudinally to the Council for Education on World Citizenship (CEWC) established in 1939. The CEWC is connected to a cohort of Oxford-trained liberal imperialists who sought to use the new League of Nations to solve the problems of the British Empire (Morefield 2005). GCE is also traceable to pre and post-war Euro-Atlantic networks mobilising in favour of the world federation (Odijie 2018). Currently, GCE is articulated through multi-lateral institutions, transnational advocates and activist scholars desiring that education does political work to solve contemporary political problems from poverty to security. The practice of educating for political change therefore has historical roots and multiple connected sites.

The CEWC was set up to be an independent body of the Education Committee of the League of Nations Union (LNU) at a time when the League of Nations was suffering a crisis of legitimacy (Heater 1984). The LNU was a composite organisation first established to draft plans and lobby politically for the work of the League of Nations (LoN) in the post-WWI settlement. Its education committee, headed by Oxford-trained liberal imperialist Gilbert Murray, aimed to mobilise through education a public mandate for the work of the LoN (Brin 1981). The LNU education committee operated in ways similar to contemporary development advocacy work conducted by contemporary NGOs, with clear elite connections and funding from state bodies, political campaigns to effect change (such as the Peace ballot), campaigns to garner funds from the public. The LNU Education Committee recreated itself in modular form through the creation of chapters in towns and regions, and worked closely with schools and retained a school membership (Brin 1981). Established in 1939, with Murray at its head but with involvement from other liberal imperialists like Alfred Zimmern and Jan Smuts, the CEWC was intended to be a separate autonomous body from the LNU but continued to receive financial and support in kind (such as the use of offices and staff). It carried on the work of the LNU Education Committee by creating educational materials and working with schools to educate British students about global problems and new international institutions. It had a hand in the meetings, lobbying and drafting documents for the creation of a new international educational governing body which eventually became UNESCO.

After the war, it continued to receive funding and support from UNESCO in ways that also raised the question of its autonomy. From the 1960s the CEWC adapted its work. It ceased to be the lead agency helping schools celebrate 'empire day' and promote knowledge of the UN among primary and secondary school students. It shifted its focus and built upon Education for International Understanding to include education for international development. It executed two UNESCO projects which connected British school children with school children in the global south (the Associated Schools Project and Co-Action) and it became a source of distribution for education materials produced by Non-Governmental Development Organizations such as Oxfam and Save the Children.

The CEWC was established and led initially by some of the key inter-war protagonists who were active in networks seeking to revitalize the British empire as a federation as a commonwealth. Gilbert Murray was director of the CEWC until 1953 (he died in 1957). Murray was also a founding member of Oxfam in 1941. Oxfam has been advocating

actively for Global Citizenship Education since 1997. Alfred Zimmern, friend and protégé of Murray was also at the initial meeting to establish the CEWC. Zimmern was also active in the interwar organisations that were a pre-cursor to UNESCO (such as the Institute for International Understanding based in Paris), he worked for the Foreign Office and had a hand drafting the document that served as the British delegation's proposal for the new League of Nations. He held the first chair in International Relations at the University of Aberystwyth in 1919 and was the first chair of UNESCO before being replaced by Julian Huxley (Toye and Toye 2020).

Both Murray and Zimmern were part of a generation of classicists who along with other imperial administrators like Jan Smuts, hoped that the new international organisations would reconfigure and prolong the life of the British Empire (Mazower 2008). The imperial origins of GCE are acknowledged by contemporary practitioners (Bourn 2024), but GCE is thought to have parted ways from this genealogy in the 1970s, when -post-imperial Britain sought a new global role for itself through multilateral development and 'apolitical active Citizenship' (Bocking-Welsh, 2018). The actors taking a lead role in this agenda, Civil Society organisations like Save the Children, were at least partially staffed by returning colonial administrators. In the 1970s, a new body of scholarship and practice was established as 'World Studies', a project funded by the One World Trust, a cross-parliamentary body which began in 1947 as the British version of the World Federation movement. The World Studies project worked in partnership with NGOs like Oxfam and the 'Development Education' that they promoted. According its only historian – Derek Heater – the CEWC was outcompeted by the new Development Education Centres and ceased operations in the 1980s (Heater 1984).

Development Education Centres (DECs) were partnerships between development NGOs (and NGO platforms) and educators which sprang up across the United Kingdom, Europe and other former White Settler colonies in the early 1980s. DECs housed and archived educational materials produced by NGOs, like Oxfam and Save the Children, to provide educational support for activist educators wanting to introduce into their curriculum material that would contribute to solving poverty and inequality. Dubbed Development Education, it was a type of political education advocated by NGOs in the Global North from the 1970s onward once they recognised that their advocacy efforts needed to be supported by the creation of a public mandate for support of foreign aid spending (Rugendyke 2007). Like the CEWC before it, DE is an educational practice aimed at creating a public mandate for elite-devised solutions to problems created by capitalism and that occurred in collaboration with transnational actors drawing multiple sites into the consciousness of its recipients. DE was developed by European and British NGOs, intersected and overlapped with the CEWC and the World Studies Project and by the mid-1990s came to be called Global Education or Global Citizenship Education.

By the 1990s education Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) were pushing for recognition that education is integral to overcoming poverty and inequality in the Global South. Two major conferences brought education TANs together with multilateral institutions in 1990 in Jomtien and in 2000 in Dakar. The outcome of these two conferences was a greater emphasis on education in multilateral development policy through access but also increasingly through the content of education. The content of education is emphasised as a means of changing the prejudices which contribute to and perpetuate inequality. Education became a more central feature of the global Development

compact through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000–2015). As a result of the advocacy of education TANs and certain state actors, notably the UK government under two different Labour administrations, Development Education became Global Education in Europe in 2000 and was folded into GCE which became a core feature of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4.7) in 2015.

Institutionalised within the SDGs, GCE is regarded as an amalgamation of all the different ‘adjectival’ or political educations that proliferated in the post-war period (such as civics education, education for intercultural understanding, education for peace, anti-racist education, development education etc.). The aim for its advocates is that GCE will prompt reform of national education systems for the making ‘globally minded’, ‘globally competent’ and ‘active’ citizens as the solution to ‘global problems’ like poverty, inequality, human rights abuses, environmental sustainability, security and development. Just like the CEWC and DECs before it, the UNESCO GCE website hosts a ‘clearing house’ of educational materials for use in schools, policy guidance and research for use by education ministers and pedagogical materials for use by teachers. The spatial sites and practices of the CEWC and DECs have been transformed into a virtual site accessed by a range of geographically dispersed actors.

GCE is a policy and a practice endorsed by a global network of institutions, researchers and practitioners. Drivers of the agenda include IOs (such as UNESCO and the OECD), education ministers (such as Global Education Network Europe), NGOs (such as the Centre for Global Education in Ireland), and researchers and universities training teachers (such as the Development Education Research Centre, University College London), as well as a global community of academics with their own journals and professional organisations (such as the Academic Network for Global Education and Learning (ANGEL) and the International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning (IJDEGL)). Among its protagonists are critical and activist educator scholars who see it as a space to decolonise education, alongside others who see in it a means of producing a globally oriented citizenry with knowledge of global institutions and the capability to solve the problems in ways already delineated by those same institutions.

Despite this variation in what GCE is meant to achieve, GCE is about producing knowledge endowed politically active subjects. It is a practice, a content, a pedagogy and a policy that traverses multilateral organisations, national education systems, NGOs, educators and academics in multiple sites both physically and virtually. It aims to normalise and circumscribe political activism. It aims to shift a sense of belonging from local to global. It is a way of using the concept to effect political change through a transformation of political subjectivity. GCE has a temporal element which can be traced to the hopes of interwar actors to rebuild the British Empire through multilateral institutions. While it is articulated by multiple actors in multiple sites, it is a type of education that brings multiple actors and processes into the localised practice of state education. It is a type of education that does its own *siting*, by trying to change the relationship between the local and the global through a change in knowledge, political practice, meaning and belonging.

### **Global citizen forum**

The Global Citizen Forum (GCF) was established by Armenian refugee and Canadian investment fund manager Armand Arton as an elite-led lobby group and self-styled

‘social action platform’. It lobbies primarily for Citizenship by Investment (CBIs) programmes and greater transnational mobility for High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI). The GCF is a more recent iteration of the concept-in-use and it has a spatial conjuncture which, like GCE, is both offline and virtual. With its focus on migration, ‘mobility’ and the development of ‘citizenship portfolios’ for HNWIs, the GCF is also simultaneously multi-sited and *multi-siting*.

Unlike GCE, the GCF is the project of a single figure – Armand Arton, born in Eastern Europe and educated in North Africa, France and Canada. Arton set up Arton Capital early in his career. Arton Capital is a Global Financial advisory firm which offers advice and services to HNWIs and their families so that they may take advantage of Citizenship by Investment (CBIs) programs. Arton Capital operates in a market of services supplied to elites wanting to protect their assets by holding multiple citizenships, particularly when their country of birth is a ‘high risk’ setting. Arton Capital also produces a yearly report indexing the strength of different passports and the accessibility of different states.<sup>2</sup> He has previous experience at Hampton Securities as Vice President of the Immigrant Investor Program. In addition to the GCF, Arton is a chief partner in Global Citizen Foundation (‘investing in children and young people’), Concordia (a platform that drives public-private partnerships) and the World Government Summit (a platform for policy exchange-centred on Middle Eastern States and elite actors including Elon Musk).

The GCF’s first meeting of celebrities, CEOs and politicians was held in Dubai (2013), Toronto (2014), Monaco (2015), and Sveti Stefan (2017). It moved online in 2020, producing a series of YouTube videos featuring politicians and social entrepreneurs and began meeting again in person in 2021, 2022 and 2023 in Ras Al Khaimah, UAE. The GCF styles itself as a ‘Canadian non-profit organisation driven by a community of leaders and catalysers unlocking the potential of global citizenship’ but is actually a paid membership organisation (membership costs \$3000) which provides members access to GCF’s elite networks. Membership also provides access to several yearly events such as its Annual Summit and Gala in Ras al Khaimah UAE. The GCF advocates for Global Citizenship and lobbies for CBI at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the UN General Assembly and the World Government Summit.

The GCF website contains three tabs called: ‘involve’, ‘evolve’ and ‘empower’ and claims that its platform ‘looks at global challenges through the prism of five adaptive pillars: mobility, sustainability, technology, governance and culture.’ The website advertises its activities, which include philanthropic initiatives targeting the environment, ‘women’s empowerment’, refugees and education. Its various meetings and events are described as ‘experiences’. They are effectively talking shops, networking events and opportunities to create promotional material for the Internet. It has a large catalogue of YouTube videos many of which are simply advertisements. More recent summits have featured self-help gurus and personal transformational activities like meditation. It dubbed its 2022 annual summit ‘Human Metamorphosis’<sup>3</sup>, its 2021 summit ‘The Future in Motion’<sup>4</sup> and its website is full of stories of ‘transformation’ and repeated emphasis on ‘mobility’. Its upcoming 2024 forum, titled ‘The Future of Wealth: Family Office Global Citizen Forum’, denotes a slight change in tack away from philanthro-capitalism and more directly targeting its prime constituency. While Arton Capital clears the way for HNWIs to exercise their ‘global mobility’ through the purchase of

multiple citizenships, the GCF conducts a bit of ‘reputational laundering’<sup>5</sup> by dressing up its activities in the language of social activism and philanthrocapitalism.

Thus, around a single figure – Armand Arton – are ostensibly four organisations/platforms: Arton Capital, Concordia, Global Citizen Forum, and the World Government Summit, each of which is delineated only by websites, branding and differences in activities. Close attention to the websites and YouTube videos reveals substantive overlaps in the cast of characters operating across each site on the boards of directors and extended networks. Where GCE is an educational reform movement spanning several IOs, countries, policymakers, and professional organisations that is growing, the GCF appears to be one organisation with several different faces.

It’s difficult to obtain information about Armand Arton, such as what his parents and grandparents did for a living in Armenia, but his few online bio’s attribute his multinational upbringing as the reason for his advocacy of Global Citizenship. In one YouTube video, he describes how his Grandfather fled the Armenian genocide in Turkey and settled in neighbouring Bulgaria. Arton describes his frustration at growing up in a communist society. His family emigrated to Canada in the 1990s and he describes the ‘humiliation’ of travelling with a Bulgarian passport in the 1980s. In Canada, Arton was educated in the International Baccalaureate (IB) from the College Jean de Brebeuf in Montreal, one of the most prestigious schools in Quebec which has produced the most Canadian prime Ministers in the country, including Pierre and Justin Trudeau. The IB is a non-profit foundation head-quartered in Geneva Switzerland, founded in 1968. It was founded by an educator specifically focused on ‘educational techniques for peace’ (like the CEWC) and its objective is to offer an internationally acceptable university admissions qualification suitable to the growing mobile population of young people whose parents are part of the world of diplomacy, international and multinational organisations.

In his videos, Arton says that these biographical details inform his mission to ensure that one’s place of birth ‘will not dictate who we are, where we can go or what we can become.’<sup>6</sup> He is the embodiment of the type of political change he wants to achieve through his lobbying. He has availed himself of the CBI programmes of Dominica and Antigua, possessing himself a ‘portfolio’ of citizenships. He frames migration through an economic development lens, citing migration as yielding high investment returns because of the high representation of migrants in Fortune 500 and Shanghai Index companies, but he also connects this economic framing to a social justice framing by emphasising the sources of migration in climate change and political instability. In addition, he advocates for a Global Citizen Tax in which a percentage of the investments of wealthy migrants around the world applying for a second residence or citizenship would go towards the most urgent needs of settling less well-off refugees.<sup>7</sup> The purchase of citizenship itself through CBIs is a form of Foreign Direct Investment ostensibly used by governments for social and development programmes, although many of these have recently come under fire for corruption.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Casing a concept, conceptualising a case?***

Delineated on the basis of following a concept in use across multiple sites, on the face of it these two ‘cases’ are not comparable. They comprise different sets of actors at different

levels of governance with different kinds of activities targeting different constituencies. GCE is a disparate, multi-institutional education reform movement with no single actor driving the agenda in a field where IOs often compete for leadership (Mundy 2007). The GCF is the pet project of a single elite actor with multiple affiliations who is the founder of interconnected organisations and it is questionable whether these constitute discrete entities rather than variations on the same group of actors. Where GCE is educating for norms and action-oriented towards the global without a global state to confer juridical citizenship, the GCF is working with the legal systems of states and lobbying IOs for greater freedom of movement for HNWI and reputation laundering that activity through the GCF. Neither 'case' seems very aware of the other and each seems to operate in isolation despite their common connections to the SDGs and the UN. There are differences in the way social issues are framed and the solutions on offer. GCE tackles a wider range of issues and makes use of social movement and civil society knowledge whereas GCF is narrower, focusing mostly on migration, 'women's empowerment' and economic development. Thus, comparison cannot be controlled.

Despite these differences, each case is using the concept in roughly the same way. Just as for GCE, Arton's version of GC is about knowledge and activism. Moreover, his ostensible motivation for becoming a 'global citizen' are his experiences as a refugee. So, Arton's biography is implicated in the kind of political problem (social exclusion, political displacement) that GCE is meant to be addressing by educating young people about these issues. In effect, Arton is the type of person that GCE is meant to help by educating away prejudices and ignorance, except that he is an elite and he is using his platform to help other HNWI, dressed up in a veneer of 'social action' and philanthropy. Arton is also a graduate of the IB. The connection may seem tenuous except that the GCE literature often sites the IB as a programme that reflects the principles of Global Citizenship Education (Gardner-McTaggart 2016). Thus, in multiple ways, the 'cases' intersect.

Like many other concepts in political science, Global Citizenship is a conceptual double. That is, it is a concept which organises inquiry in social science research with many scholars coding as Global Citizenship the many acts of transnational citizen activism that have emerged in the age of digital communications; and, it is a concept which is politically constitutive in its use, users aim to effect political change. The scholarship which codes cases of transnational activism as cases of 'global citizenship' (referenced in the introduction), don't address the use of the concept as a category of practice on the part of actors actively entreating wide constituencies of people to see themselves as such. This illustrates the shortcomings of considering global citizenship as a class of action independent of the advocacy efforts of the groups under consideration here. It suggests that in framing global citizenship as a class of already existing political activity these scholars participate in the very practice they imagine they are independently observing. Universities are another site in which advocacy for Global Citizenship is occurring, particularly where universities are committed to the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>9</sup> The use of the concept demonstrates the constitutive causality of language, and moreover each group in their use of the concept, tacitly understands this and is using the language of Global Citizenship explicitly to effect change. The actors in each of my sites of investigation are themselves self-aware conceptualisers, they devote time to it in their activities, and a good portion of their activities are organised around conveying the meaning of the concept and getting others to change their sense of self through self classification.

Each case is an example of the multiple and constitutive siting proposed by Riofrancos, where the cases are not geographically bounded and in fact, through the use of communications technology, their activities are expanding. Neither case belongs to a single category of political life and they are each cross-cut by more than one location and class of actors. They are each encompassed by changes in the developmental architecture of International Organisations which increasingly draw diverse and internationally networked actors into the same governmental orbit. The actors in each 'case' are engaged themselves in siting, and through their activities and extended networks, changing geographies of scale. As each multiply-sited constituency crosses multiple scales and layers of governance and transnational action, they are 'unbounded', in situ and virtual, open-ended and expansive. As I trace their activities through multiple sites, it reveals complex assemblages of actors whose interactions in the end cannot be observed in toto. I can only make them visible to my audience through description. Each case needs to be conceptualised.

Finally, because each case belongs to more than one category of political life, they each invite conversations with multiple different disciplinary framings and bodies of theory as suggested by Soss. For example, my historical account of GCE connects several new areas of scholarship, such as new revisionist scholarship of the interwar period (Pedersen 2015), scholarship examining the life and thought of Murray and Zimmern (Morefield 2005), new disciplinary histories of political science and International Relations (Davis and Thakur 2017) and new comparative scholarship on empire (Burbank and Cooper 2010). Taken together, each case could be classed as political campaigning, political mobilisation, political communication, and global civil society and studied through the disciplinary lenses of Global Governance, Global Civil Society or Social Movements. Any of these would advance 'insight, understanding and explanation' but they would each also come up short because each multi-sited case has elite connections and each is attempting in its own way to work through official institutions such as education policy and migration laws to generate a narrowly circumscribed form of political activism. GCE is more likely characterised as the domestication of social movements via education systems and there are clear indications that for IOs, GCE and global competence comprise the human capital required for a resuscitation of capitalism. As a result, theoretical frameworks from Michel Foucault or Antonio Gramsci suggest themselves, such as Neoliberal Governmentality or Transformismo. These also come up a little short since each use of the concept is organised around solving the problems caused by neoliberal globalisation. They are not in and of themselves neoliberal in the strict Washington Consensus sense of the term. While there is a clear ambivalence in educating for political activism, in the case of GCE, there are clear connections with critical scholarship and educator activists who want to use GCE as a space to critique Capitalism by educating about its connections to colonialism. As theoretical frameworks, Foucault and Gramsci would have to be stretched to account for empire (Stoler 1995). GCE is linked to failed historical efforts to change imperial governance. Moreover, these efforts by liberal Imperialists to resuscitate the British empire in the Greek style of 'collectivist and more socially responsible liberalism' (Ceadel 2007) are not well captured by frameworks supplied by Marxist critiques of capitalism or neoliberal governmentality.

The GCF is clearly targeting elites co-opting the language of social movements but some of its main protagonists, Armand Arton and Wyclef Jean (originally from Haiti)

have direct experience of refugee dislocation. Arton's advocacy of CBI programmes signal the potentiality of a transnational citizenships for an international elite that is reminiscent of the Caracallen threshold of the Roman Empire (Munkler 2007). The possibility for a trans-historical comparative empire framework exists within the historical scholarship (Burbank and Cooper 2010), but its development as a theoretical framework would require some legwork. Thus, multiple casings are generative and fruitful for my two case studies, but I would also suggest that these are case studies which invite critical reflection back on the possible shortcomings of existing theories and disciplinary framings because the affordances of communications technology and meaning-making contain potentialities for unforeseen political change.

Case study research presupposes an unchanging class of actors, units and processes. My two case studies show actors trying to change politics through language use in ways that cut across multiple sites and are not circumscribed but, through the affordances of communications technology, ever-expanding. My comparison of two cases of the concept-in-use builds on the work of Soss and Riofrancos by demonstrating that researchers need to be aware of the possibility that we might need new theories to make sense of what we observe. These two 'cases' illustrate the ways that politics might change in ways that exceed the explanatory capabilities of existing theory. My comparison of two 'cases' of the concept in use is generative of this research puzzle, not its resolution. The puzzle would be invisible if I were methodologically limited to controlled comparison.

## Notes

1. Other examples include: former UN secretary Ban Ki Moon, who set up the Centre for Global Citizens and the Global Education First Initiative of the UN (2012–2015). An Indian based educational platform called Global Citizen Foundation. Formerly the Global Poverty Project, Global Citizen.org is a self-dubbed "action platform" set up by former Australian of the Year Hugh Evans who was also the founder of the Oaktree foundation (Australia's first youth run aid organisation) and co-ordinated the Make Poverty History simulcast from Australia (2006).
2. <https://www.artoncapital.com/passport-index/>. Accessed 22 April 2024.
3. <https://www.globalcitizenforum.org/ras-al-khaimah-2022/>. Accessed 22 April 2024.
4. <https://www.globalcitizenforum.org/ras-al-khaimah-2021/>. Accessed 22 April 2024.
5. <https://citationsneeded.libsyn.com/episode-146-bill-gates-bono-and-the-limits-of-world-bank-and-imf-approved-celebrity-activism>.
6. Armand Arton, Ted Talks, What it means to live in the era of Global Citizens. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJq1g8kvN04>. Accessed 13 April 2024.
7. Ibid.
8. See for example a lawsuit in Saint Lucia: <https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/world-news/20240527/govt-distances-itself-lawsuit-filed-movie-producer-over-st-kitts-cip>; and charges filed in Cyprus: <https://schengen.news/cyprus-to-file-charges-related-to-100-cases-of-golden-visas-granted-to-problematic-foreigners/#:~:text=Key%20Takeaways&text=Authorities%20in%20Cyprus%20are%20ready,CIP%20cases%20will%20be%20examined>.
9. See, for example, Central Queensland University, <https://www.cqu.edu.au/about-us/strategic-plan-2024-2028>.

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## Notes on contributor

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