From Global Competition to Intercultural Competence: What Teacher-Training Students with Cross-Cultural Teaching Experience Should be Learning

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how cross-cultural practicums can facilitate intercultural learning in Norwegian teacher education. The qualitative research reported here studies teacher-training students carrying out a teaching practicum in Tanzania. The findings indicate that there are several positive intercultural outcomes for these students. However, by analysing their narratives discursively, the study also finds that many students overestimate their progress towards intercultural competence. This is particularly the case when the students experience significant "cultural clashes", which tend to result in them expressing stronger stereotypes about the cultural "other". It is argued that this is due to how the students have received largely monocultural socialisation. Consequently, this study calls for greater scrutiny of the ideologies that underpin globalisation. Thus, in an attempt to shift the focus away from globalisation's drive towards cultural competition, this study argues for the need to infuse critical and comprehensive approaches to internationalisation into teacher education.

Introduction

In recent decades, the globalisation of political, economic, and public realms has led to more international collaboration, cultural pluralism, and a higher degree of social interconnectedness across the globe (Beck, 2012). The growing focus on global integration and interaction is particularly vivid in the domain of higher education, as efforts to enhance international dimensions, or "internationalisation", have surely come of age. Here understood as the integration of "international, intercultural or global dimensions into the purposes, functions or deliveries of post-secondary education", to rely on Jane Knight's (2004, p. 11) novel scholarship, internationalisation has gradually evolved from being a marginal component to becoming a key factor in much of higher education (Bennett, 2009).

The internationalisation of higher education is unfolding amidst a rapid range of developments that connect local, national, and global dimensions more closely together. The terms "globalisation" and "internationalisation" are sometimes conflated or even used interchangeably, which might be a result of how internationalisation is seen both as a catalyst and as a consequence of globalisation. As noted by Siqueria (2017), it is not necessary to engage in heated debates in order to reach the conclusion that globalisation has provoked many changes, both positive and negative, in contemporary social life. However, it is difficult to understand

internationalisation without attending to the broader global transformations that characterise our modern world (Larsen, 2016).

Naturally, there are diverging views on what drives internationalisation and globalisation processes, respectively, including what ideologies they sustain, what values they create, what politics they are promoted by, and what their constitutive effects on social life are. However, by most standards, globalisation is associated with a marketisation of public services and a standardisation of economic activities (Baylis et al., 2011), while internationalisation of higher education is more inclined towards the integration of global and intercultural dimensions into teaching and scholarship (Knight, 2004). Moreover, globalisation often implies Western cultural hegemony, while internationalisation is based on respect for cultural diversity (Siqueria, 2017). Thus, any uncritical pursuit of internationalisation can result in a reproduction of a hegemonic Western discourse on globalisation, which does not support the integration of international dimensions into higher education (Beck, 2012).

Zeleza (2012) writes that internationalisation initiatives have conventionally been structured around the notion of student mobility, which has more recently been augmented by neoliberal policies aimed at standardising higher education. A plethora of terms are used in descriptions of student mobility, including "study abroad", "cross-cultural study", "international field experience", and "exchange stay", which are all terms used for learners who work or study abroad as part of their degree programme. While studying abroad is surely motivated by a host of academic, political, economic, and cultural considerations, the academic literature reveals an ambition mobility programmes have to enhance intercultural competencies among learners (Gregersen-Hermans, 2015).

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this study is to explore how intercultural teaching experiences can assist students in their professional and personal developments. The research also considers how international student mobility can facilitate the integration of intercultural dimensions into teacher education. This should be a key component in professional studies, as prospective teachers are in need of intercultural competencies that can prepare them for work in diverse cultural settings. Leaning on a now classical interpretation, "intercultural competence" is understood as behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations (Deardorff, 2006).

The case study (Yin, 2003) reported here grew out of a research project involving the design, implementation, and evaluation of a short-term student mobility programme. More specifically, the project concerned Norwegian teacher-training students carrying out a four-week teaching practicum in Tanzania, and the empirical corpus is based on in-depth interviews and participant observation. Intercultural practicums are popular, yet limited attention has been paid to studying their outcomes, especially when it comes to students travelling to vastly different cultures (Maynes et al., 2012).

This case study draw on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its theoretical and methodological engine. A critical discursive approach should be welcome on this topic as it may allow for shedding light on what is missing, taken for granted, or undesirable in the internationalisation of higher education (Wihlborg & Robson, 2018). The prevalent understanding from a CDA point of view is that discourses figure as forms of social practice, and by studying language, scholars can make claims about how discourses constitute and are constituted by social practices. Leaning on Norman Fairclough's (1992) work, CDA is used to analyse how language and discourse on a societal microlevel connects to power and ideology on a societal macrolevel.

In what follows, the literary background will investigate internationalisation and the concept of intercultural competence, which leads into a discussion about cross-cultural teaching practicums. Following this, the article deliberates on the study's theoretical and methodological framework, before the findings are presented, discussed, and summarised.

Interculturality as a Foundation for the Internationalisation Imperative

An analysis of the literature shows that there are numerous ways to understand and conceptualise internationalisation in higher education. Nevertheless, a sensible place to start is with reference to Jane Knight's scholarship, which has greatly influenced this field. Among Knight's many key contributions is her definition of "internationalisation", mentioned above, as the "process of integrating international, intercultural or global dimensions into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (2004, p. 11). Although it does not specify positive and negative consequences of internationalisation, nor does it outline its rationales and activities, this definition conceptualises internationalisation as a process and not an end goal, and is sufficiently broad to encompass most higher education activities (Beelen & Jones, 2015).

At the same time, many express the need for more comprehensive commitments to internationalisation. According to Hudzik (2011), staff and students touched by international activities usually have only little familiarity with its concepts, objectives, or methods, and those who have experience with internationalisation tend to be familiar with specific activities only. Research supports this, as there are considerable variations in internationalisation between educational systems and institutions (De Wit et al., 2015). One concern is how internationalisation has become corporate, where the international commitment is directed at educational activities that are easily quantifiable. This is linked with the normalisation of a performance culture in which neoliberal policies are reducing education to a commodity that can be globally sold to those with adequate resources (Giroux, 2002).

Thus, a paradigmatic shift has been suggested to the effect that internationalisation is to be understood more in terms of a global ethos that connects all aspects of teaching and scholarship together. Consequently, a great deal of attention has been paid to how education can approach internationalisation more comprehensively by diversifying campuses (Garson et al., 2016; Robson et al., 2018), infusing critical and intercultural pedagogies into teachings (Trede et al., 2013), decolonising curricula (Alemu, 2019), strengthening cultural awareness among staff (Almeida et al., 2016; Messelink et al., 2015), and increasing international research collaboration (Wihlborg & Robson, 2018).

These issues are of course not new, but the growth in scale, complexity, and demands for a global education is also justified by a wide range of local and global human concerns, including ending poverty, civil strife, migrant crises, climate change, and terrorism (Coulby, 2011). Unsurprisingly, a globally committed education has not been able to stop neither global climate change nor terrorism, and there are diverging views regarding the ability of education to perform functions such as the cultivation of social solidarity, tolerance, and democracy. This is not, however, to suggest that adding an international dimension cannot aid education in performing other development functions, but rather that little is known about the effects and outcomes of student mobility programmes.

Nevertheless, the connections between internationalisation and intercultural competence have been widely commented on in the literature on internationalisation of education. As noted by Zotzmann (2015), much seems to be taken for granted in terms of "interculturality", an unstable concept denoting an unpredictable phenomenon that is difficult both to measure and to assess. Across different frameworks, a range of terms are used when speaking about interculturality, including "intercultural communication", "intercultural sensitivity", and "cultural intelligence" (Trede et al., 2013). Most conceptualisations share the idea of learners enacting sensitive behaviours when placed in new cultural contexts (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Using this basic assumption as a point of departure, Bennett (2009, p. 2) writes that intercultural competence is linked to increased awareness of subjective cultural contexts, including one's own, and being able to interact effectively between these contexts.

Interculturalism as a field has grown through theory into practice (Bennett, 2009). For Zotzmann (2015), the field is loosely structured around the idea that tolerance, open-mindedness,

and self-reflectivity in education can be powerful and effective antidotes to stereotyping, prejudices, and ethnocentrism. Self-awareness is of particular importance, as being interculturally competent requires that people can compare, contrast, and criticise their own as well as others' cultures. Hammer et al. (2003) argue that a problem for individuals who have received largely monocultural socialisation is that they may have access to only their own cultural worldview – so much so that they may struggle to understand the differences between their own perceptions of the world and those of people who are different from themselves. Extending from this, individuals who are unable to grasp cultural differences tend to exhibit stronger ethnocentrist attitudes and apprehension with regard to interacting with social and cultural outgroups (Jackson, 2008).

In contrast to an ethnocentrist perspective, an "ethnorelative" or "culturally relative" perspective suggests that individuals can also experience their own cultures through the lens of others. Understanding people who are culturally different from oneself and recognising one's own cultural norms through an ethnorelative experience is central to developing intercultural competence. Hence, being interculturally competent is a process that often occurs when people's experience of cultural difference becomes more sophisticated (Hammer et al., 2003). Yet it is important to note that "intercultural competence" is not something that people *are* or *have* but something they *do*, which makes it appropriate to see "culture" as a verb (Zotzmann, 2015).

The Globally Competent Teacher

Regarding the context under discussion, *being interculturally competent* can be seen as having the ability to identify and experience relevant cultural differences so as to live and work effectively among people from different cultures (Deardorff, 2006). This places schools in a prominent position, as teachers today must engage with pupils from increasingly diverse backgrounds. Naturally, the demand on prospective teachers to develop intercultural competencies means that teacher education has a great responsibility to respond to the increasingly complex world (Maynes et al., 2012).

Historically, student mobility was only for the privileged, but in conjunction with the massification of higher education, intensifying the global consciousness of the world as a whole gained gradual footing from the post-war period (Bennett, 2009). This consciousness was brought about by a view of student life as being ideal for helping prospective teachers become intercultural, a recognition that Wilson describes as follows:

> If we are concerned about a future for the world, global education must be a priority in schools. If we are serious about global education happening in schools, cross-cultural experimental learning should be a component of every teacher education program (Wilson, 1982, p. 519)

Hence, if intercultural encounters, as they were intended by the massifying education environment, became one of the primary devices for developing interculturally competent teachers, we should also begin to see the performative outcomes of intercultural learning. As mentioned, intercultural learning does not lend itself easily to assessment, and research on these matters lacks consistency. Nevertheless, some studies suggest that intercultural teaching experiences have been found to increase tolerance, cultural awareness, self-reflectivity, and intercultural sensitivity (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Dwyer, 2004; Holmes et al., 2015; Maynes et al., 2012). Still, different studies show different results (Willard-Holt, 2001), and some empirical research suggests that not all students benefit to the same degree (Leutwyler & Meierhans, 2016) or that outcomes may depend on personal and contextual factors (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012), and there are even studies that report negative intercultural outcomes (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008).

Importantly for this study, there are also indications that short-term mobilities can help students move from ethnocentrist to ethnorelative positions (Holmes et al., 2015). However, the literature suggests that this effect is dependent on students experiencing what Wilson (1982) calls "real exchange"; that is, opportunities for students to immerse themselves in new cultural environment based on genuine interactions with their host communities. Practicing one's future profession in

unfamiliar contexts is often more challenging than expected, however, particularly when students travel to vastly different cultural areas (Steen, 2009).

Theoretical and Methodological Approach

A case study approach was used to gain a richer understanding of intercultural encounters between Norwegian teacher-training students and the Tanzanian host culture. Here, consideration is given to Yin's (2003) conceptualisation of case study research as qualitative investigations of contextualised phenomena within specified boundaries. A case study is characterised by focusing on a small number of cases to gain insight into a causal relationship across a larger population of cases. The boundaries around time and place define the case in each study, and this kind of research is defined as a single and longitudinal case study (Yin, 2003).

The study was also carried out using Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA) as both the theoretical and methodological engine. All qualitative research methods can be used in CDA, which offers a framework for studying how discourse reproduces society and culture, as well as being reproduced by them (Fairclough, 1992). CDA sets out to explain how society legitimises, reinforces and reproduces ideological power by studying the connections between discourse and broader social and cultural structures.

Fairclough's (1992) classical framework, which has been eclectically applied in this study, is divided into three levels: (1) *text*: any verbal and non-verbal linguistic features, (2) *discursive practice*: the production and consumption of texts in which language is interpreted and given discursive meaning, and (3) *social practice*: ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse participates in social life. Here, the entry point of CDA is to focus on how interculturalism in education is prone to social change by the influence of Western cultural hegemony. This brings attention to recontextualisation that may appear when a Western neoliberal discourse on globalisation merges with interculturalism in education.

The Intercultural Case

The study reported here consists of the design, implementation, and evaluation of a short-term student mobility programme. More specifically, the mobility programme involved intercultural encounters occurring when Norwegian teacher-training students conducted a four-week teaching practicum in Tanzania. Short-term practice-oriented mobility is placed somewhat on the "outskirts" of internationalisation activities in Norwegian education, as it is not considered "mobility" in the same vein as formal exchange programmes. Consequently, practice-oriented mobility is currently not covered in specific Norwegian educational policies or legislative frameworks. However, the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education provides various incentives for short-term mobility programmes (DIKU no year).

The corpus constituting the data in the analysis was participant observation and in-depth interviews carried out with a group of teacher-training students in 2016. There were 16 teacher-training students (ten females, six males) participating in this mobility programme in Tanzania. These were second- and third-year students in a four-year teacher education programme – teacher education programmes have since become five-year master-level programmes in accordance with the harmonisation of European education. The students in this case study had an average age of 22 years and were specialising in a range of different teaching subjects.

Interviews were administered with the teacher-training students to learn how they made sense of their experiences and how they perceived cultural differences. A total of 13 in-depth interviews were carried out in two different stages. Initially, nine students (six females, three males) were interviewed one month after their intercultural experience, and four of these students (three females, one male) received a follow-up interview six months after their intercultural experience. Due to availability, the study was not able to provide follow-up interviews with all nine students (see

Table A1 in the appendices for an overview of the research participants). The students were sampled through a non-probability strategy and all the interviews were audiotaped. An interview guide was used, but the students were given an opportunity to discuss other, related issues, and all the interviews lasted from 30 to 60 min. Ethical approval was obtained from the Norwegian Research Council and discussed with each participant before the interview.

Considering the discrepancy between attitudes and behaviours, the study utilised methods triangulation by including participant observation of the students during their intercultural practicum. Participant observation was selected for its potential to study human behaviours, which is how intercultural competence is primarily externalised. This method is also suited to explore social practices from a "participant perspective", and field notes were collected (Yin, 2003). These notes were analysed by devising codes to reflect different intercultural encounters, including how the students reacted with either willingness or apprehension when it came to communicating and interacting with their host Tanzanian community. Zotzmann (2015) asks the timely question "who is entitled to classify learners as either interculturally competent or incompetent"? Any classification is surely a subjective and normative practice, and this study relied on the basic principle described by Hammer et al.'s (2003, p. 426) that, while an ethnocentric person tends to avoid cultural differences, an ethnorelative person will actively seek them out.

Despite the use of methods triangulation, the priority of the study was to analyse the interview data discursively, and the three-levelled analysis started by probing how the students made sense of their intercultural experience. Although CDA is associated with detailed linguistic analysis, the focus here was on analysing discursive processes that are situated above the semiotic analysis of words and sentences. Following the tradition of CDA, the second level consisted of analysing the interview data for its discursive practices, which means analysing the texts in relation to the wider cultural context in which they are situated. Here, the analysis was focused on whether different "ethnocentric" and "ethnorelative" expressions were normalised by the language use. The third level of analysis focused on the articulation of different discourses within and between different discursive practices, which can be articulations of discursive and social change through the process of "recontextualisation" (Fairclough, 1992).

Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussion section is presented in accordance with CDA's order of data processing. Attention is first given to the manifest textual content through which the students made sense of their intercultural experience and how they described enacting behaviours in accordance with these understandings. Thereafter follows the analysis of the discursive practice relevant to the students' statements in an attempt to discover the structure of and relation between the text, the discursive practice, and, to some extent, the broader social practice of internationalisation of Norwegian teacher education.

Discerning the Elusive Nature of Intercultural Competence

The students were first asked about their intercultural experience in Tanzania and whether they thought it had enhanced their intercultural competence. Consideration was also given to how the term "intercultural competence" was understood by the participants. While it emerged clearly that there were diverging views on these issues, the transcript data show that a transformative change in the participants' reasoning could be identified through the interviews. In particular, the dominant understanding of intercultural competence was by many initially described in terms of having knowledge of others, which Trede et al. (2013) describe as "passive" intercultural skills.

> For me, intercultural competence is to have substantial knowledge of the world. For instance, enhanced knowledge of other people and their cultures, or geographical knowledge about other countries is also important for someone to be interculturally competent. (Student number 6, female)

> It depends a bit on the circumstances, but for a teacher, I think that being interculturally competent is being 'worldly'. I usually envision an experienced teacher who have in-depth knowledge of different groups, their history, and their cultural backgrounds. (Student number 1, female)

The above excerpts are examples of how the students associated intercultural competence with having cultural knowledge. Yet, for Trede et al. (2013, p. 444), acting interculturally competent is probably more closely related to "active" personal qualities such as showing sympathy, curiosity, and tolerance. Bennett (2009, p. 4) refers to passive skills simply as "culture learning", which he states may help individuals behave appropriately in foreign cultures but which should not be equated with being interculturally competent. Moreover, knowing about other people does not necessarily have a major effect on reducing ethnocentrist attitudes (Hammer et al., 2003).

As the interviews progressed, several of the students went on to explain that intercultural competence involved a form of willingness to understand other people more than merely acquiring knowledge about them, something that represents the transformative change in these conversations. In particular, a female student who had initially described intercultural competence in terms of being "worldly" would later expand upon her view by explaining that:

> To be interculturally competent is a state of mind where you recognise that people live different types of lives, and that you want to understand more about how and why they do so. We tend to think that our way of living is the 'ordinary' way, but then you slowly come to understand that for other people, how we live our lives is probably very unusual for them. I therefore think that it [intercultural competence] is showing respect for other people who are different from you. (Student number 1, female)

Her quote reveals a higher degree of self-awareness concerning intercultural competence as being sensitive to cultural differences, and the above excerpt may capture some of the elusive nature of intercultural competence as a frame of mind rather than a body of knowledge. Such a transitional change was identified in many transcripts, perhaps due to how the interviews had shifted attention from an initial focus on defining "intercultural competence", to later also reflecting upon how intercultural competence could be enacted as a set of behaviours. Nevertheless, this self-awareness could also be a matter of how many students recognised the complex nature of "intercultural competence" when they were asked to reflect on their own intercultural experience.

> I found communicating with local Tanzanians more difficult than anticipated. As a fluent speaker of English, I was surprised by how much of the communication that was misunderstood. It was particularly difficult to get my point across in school, and the language skills among [Tanzanian] pupils and teachers were very poor. Hence, for me, being interculturally competent involves the ability to communicate in such a way that you are actually understood the way that you want to be understood by other people. (Student number 8, male)

> This trip has really made me rethink how one can become sufficiently skilled at behaving in new cultures. I remember that our [Norwegian] teachers talked about how intercultural communication could be quite difficult before we travelled to Tanzania, and that it would be hard to prepare properly for the many emotions that we might experience during our trip. Even simple communicative points can and will be misunderstood. This makes a lot more sense now, and I also realise that an academic course might not really prepare you for the many challenges you are faced with when communicating with people from another culture. (Student number 4, female)

These narratives display an appreciation for the complexity of communicating across cultures, beyond language proficiency. After all, it is possible for students to be advanced multilingual speakers, yet minimally aware of communication styles that differ from their own (Jackson, 2008). An interesting finding here was that this self-reflective tendency was more pronounced in the four follow-up interviews carried out six months after the intercultural experience, perhaps suggesting that having sufficient time to reflect on her experience is important for the intercultural learner (Bennett, 2009).

> I think that the word 'intercultural learning' has a completely different meaning to me now. Above all, this experience made me reflect more on myself than on others, but I needed some physical and psychological distance from the trip before I could come to that realisation. I remember spending a lot of time being frustrated with [local practice school] during my stay, because I could not always make sense of what the local teachers wanted from me, or how to motivate my pupils for learning activities. Now I know that my frustration was largely a result of me being on the outside of what was actually going on in that school; I was the foreigner. This made me think about the importance of inclusion in school, and being interculturally competent is seeing these nuances. (Student number 2, female)

This student accentuates how a geographical movement from Norway to Tanzania could be understood as a change in the course of a larger timespan (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012). In addition to the openness of experiencing personal growth, she also describes how to use this experience as an opportunity to construe and experience cultural differences, which has ultimately led her to see the importance of schools when it comes to performing the function of cultivating social and cultural inclusion for all pupils.

Intercultural Outcomes for the Student and for the Prospective Teacher

Prior to their intercultural experience, none of the students interviewed had travelled outside of Europe. Although Messelink et al. (2015) write that travelling abroad for the first time can be a stressful experience, all but one of the nine students interviewed reported positive intercultural outcomes. The interviews also reveal that they had been motivated by a host of personal, social, and academic factors when they decided to take part in this mobility programme, different factors that also played a role when they had to reflect about their outcomes. Nevertheless, a common narrative emerged on how the intercultural encounters had affected their intercultural competence.

> I discovered that I am much more curious about people from other cultures than before our trip to Tanzania. I also try to be less judgemental and to recognise the individual human being instead of assuming that certain groups behave in specific ways. We should always ask ourselves what we can learn from other groups. (Student number 9, female)

> The biggest impact for me is how I try to see things through a much wider perspective. I remember how we [fellow students] were talking about how laidback and slow-paced everything was in Tanzania. We even talked about how lazy people seemed to be. It did not take long before we understood that the 'lazy people' who were standing around were just trying to conserve energy, especially during the hottest time of day. It is not easy to carry out your teaching when it is 35 degrees outside, and you can only imagine how hard it is to get up early to do manual labour. Then their actions become much more understandable. An important lesson for me has been that just because something does not make immediate sense to you does not mean that is not reasonable from another's point of view. (Student number 3, male)

The narrative was maintained in the four interviews carried out six months after the international practice, but another reoccurring theme also emerged in these conversations concerning how the students acknowledged the importance of evaluating their experience over time.

> I had so many impressions to process, and it was really helpful to have the evaluation course when we were back in Norway again. Although it was interesting to compare the expectations that I had written before travelling to Tanzania with my impression of these experiences after returning to Norway, I found the highest rewards in our shared conversations as a group. (Student number 4, female)

Many students described having not been in a position to do much reflection during their intercultural stay because they were experiencing a sensory overload of information. Hartwell and Ounoughi (2019) claim that the international experience can place the students outside of their "comfort zone", as they are separated from family and friends in new cultural environments characterised by unfamiliar social structures and language. Moreover, students might initially find understanding of self and other less relevant, which does not mean their perceptions cannot change or that their understandings will not be enhanced at a later stage (Messelink et al., 2015).

As for the one student who described not having any positive outcomes, he went on to explain that he was not mentally prepared for his trip to Tanzania, nor convinced that there was much to learn from travelling there. Trede et al. (2013) state that experiencing new cultures is not on its own an assurance of intercultural learning, and Bennett (2009) argues that the "success" of studying abroad does not always speak for itself, since the student must also commit to the intercultural experience. Hence, negative experiences are not uncommon, and they can be exacerbated if the student has not been sufficiently prepared before his or her travels (Pence & Macgillivray, 2008).

For those students who described positive outcomes from their intercultural experience, all spoke about how it had a transformative effect primarily on a personal level, and there were significantly diverging views on whether the experience could inform their professional knowledge and pedagogical practice.

> For me, the effect was on a personal level, and I am not so sure that the teaching methods that I used in [local practice school] can be transferred into a Norwegian school. (Student number 7, female)

It has long been suggested that self-reported outcomes are predominantly of a social and personal nature (Willard-Holt, 2001) – unsurprisingly, as the effects of studying abroad is foremostly to learn about oneself (Bennett, 2009, p. 4). However, there are also good reasons to believe that the personal and the professional are interrelated, as any development on the former level should be beneficial for the latter level and vice versa (Leutwyler & Meierhans, 2016). These personal and professional developments might also be enhanced if the student receives institutional support through preparation and follow-up evaluations.

The observational data support the students' narrative of having improved skills for enacting culturally sensitive feelings into appropriate and effective behaviours. Naturally, there were variations between students, and, as noted in other research, the duration of the stay seemed to be of importance with regard to developing the skills needed to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately in new cultural contexts (Dwyer, 2004). Open-mindedness, self-reflectivity, and curiosity appeared to be important qualities for those students who showed the most willingness to interact with locals, which is emphasised in other research (Steen, 2009). However, on one issue the observational data contrast with the self-reported narratives, as students described that the intercultural learning was predominantly of a social and personal nature. The observations can be used to partially question this assertion, as most students were at least to some extent able to adjust any pedagogical practice to accommodate the Tanzanian education context within only few days, while their externalised willingness to leave their "comfort zones" and engage with local Tanzanians in non-schooling situations would often take weeks.

Progressing Worldviews Towards Ethnorelative Orientations

The textual analysis reveal that the majority of students who were interviewed described their intercultural experience as having resulted in them experiencing higher awareness of subjective cultural backgrounds, which had further led them towards understanding that they were better equipped to communicate and behave appropriately across different cultural contexts. This is obviously encouraging for the students as subjects, for their future professional role as teachers, and for the international imperative of teacher education in Norway. However, when moving beyond these self-reported narratives to analyse the connections between discursive practices and the broader social structures (Fairclough, 2003), a more nuanced picture seems to emerge in the interviews. In particular, there is a tendency for students to overestimate their move towards intercultural competence, and this section will therefore scrutinise ethnocentric features of the discursive practices the students employ when talking about their experience.

Considering the politically committed objective of CDA research, social critique should aim to uncover the role of ethnocentrism in the maintenance of discourses about "the other". A reoccurring discourse found in the interviews was a tendency to view culture in a static way, as something

that people are or have, as opposed to something they do. This was particularly evident when they spoke about significant "cultural clashes", for instance their experience of cultural individualism versus cultural collectivism, and the common misunderstandings of time and place (the Tanzanian view of time as an abstract entity or the Western view of time as a linear phenomenon) (Steen, 2009; Wilson, 1993).

> They [local teachers] are not very reliable when you have agreed on a teaching lesson or teaching theme. Without any notice, they will change the agreement and then you have to do an unprepared teaching lesson. (Student number 12, female)

Situations characterised by cultural misunderstandings were associated with a tendency to express stereotypes about the "other", typically illustrated through statements about Tanzanians like "they behave like this", "they think like this", and "they are like this". This tendency was more pronounced when the students spoke of sensitive issues, for instance the emotive topic of school corporal punishment.

> The use of physical punishment of children is appalling. I am surprised how dedicated Tanzanian teachers are about the use of physical violence on their pupils and also their expectations that we participate in these practices. Do they [local teachers] not know that it will do more harm than good for the pupils in the end? Some of them [teachers] are quite horrible people. (Student number 6, female)

According to Brock-Utne (2002), the Tanzanian education system is based on behaviouristic principles and the use of corporal punishment is not uncommon. Naturally, the aversion that these students express towards physical punishment is both expected and uplifting, yet many expressed a discursive practice that equates violent teachers with a specific Tanzanian cultural practice. This reveals ahistoricity and acontextuality, as education systems in most African countries are "colonial", and thus Western by origin (Alemu, 2019). The Tanzanian education system itself is of British colonial descent, and when students describe a violent Tanzanian school culture, they are in many ways also narrating the legacy of Western imperialism that was forcefully inflicted on Tanzanian culture. In addition, denouncing the Tanzanian school system for its "authoritarian" ways simultaneously serve to overlook how most of the Western education was historically practiced. Naturally, simply knowing that corporal punishment was frequently practiced in Norwegian schools historically does not remove any antipathy towards this harmful practice today; however, this historic outlook can certainly help question the notion of physical punishment in schools as a particular Tanzanian cultural phenomenon.

Similar ethnocentrist expressions were normalised when the students talked about the poor English proficiency among Tanzanian pupils and teachers (see the excerpt from student number 8). As Brock-Utne (2002) explains, while English is recognised as an official language in Tanzania, it is not much used in daily life. She appropriately asks whether we would expect any other country besides those on the African continent to master a foreign language in school when it is very little practiced in social life. Originating from an education system in which English is introduced in first grade, the Norwegian students' expectation that Tanzanians should speak English fluently may appear natural on their behalf. However, this discursive practice perpetuates an ethnocentric sentiment that maintains the hegemonic position of English language in non-English societies (Wihlborg & Robson, 2018). Furthermore, these views also neglect the critical function of local language to serve key emancipatory functions in African sociocultural development (Brock-Utne, 2002).

Although these findings support the assumption that the teacher-training students had acquired higher levels of intercultural sensitivity that was externalised as increased intercultural competence, it was also discovered that, in general, when faced with ethical cultural dilemmas, these students expressed stronger ethnocentrist sentiments, which may become a barrier for communication and behaving appropriately among people from different cultures. This might be a result of how the students have received monocultural socialisation and are unable to construe the differences between their own perceptions of the world from those of people who are different from themselves

(Bennett, 2009). Being unable to construe cultural differences tend to be linked with ethnocentrist attitudes, and, while a certain degree of ethnocentrism is necessary for society to develop, if it exceeds certain levels it will become a barrier for democratic and social well-being.

These findings do not indicate that the students are particularly prone to prejudicial attitudes but it could indicate that the attitudes are part of the social heritage of Norwegian society. These attitudes may also demonstrate the students' implicit attitudes that operate unintentionally and outside of their awareness (Devine & Sharp, 2009). More knowledge about other cultures will likely not be sufficient to change this; in fact, the students in this study had much knowledge about the colonial history and the failure of Tanzanian language policies in schools. Rather, the issue is how to create intercultural situations conducive for learners to experience their own culture through that of others. Consequently, comprehensive approaches to internationalisation may serve to identify and change the structures at work that seem to lead to these ethnocentrist sentiments, for instance through the use of critical and intercultural pedagogies and diversity in curricula and on campuses (Hudzik, 2011). As argued by Almeida et al. (2016), if the point of cross-cultural exchange is to address the "whole student", then education must also explore ways to approach genuine interculturalism.

Cultural Hegemony: A Neoliberal Critique

The interview data reveal that through a possible process of recontextualisation (Fairclough, 1992), certain ethnocentrist expressions can be found in the teacher-training students' narratives, as many describe Western culture as more advanced compared to non-Western culture. Such narratives can further a cultural hegemony in which Western ideals and values are seen as superior. Unsurprisingly, as it does under the ideological facade of globalisation, Western neoliberalism shapes and reshapes educational policy, theory, and practice (Coulby, 2011). The clearest effect of this is that education is further drawn in the direction of the cultural hegemony under the parole of globalisation (Siqueria, 2017). Radical critics, the author included, argue that this "othering" is part of a dominant imaginary of Western culture with colonial roots (Alemu, 2019). For obvious reasons, there is little ground for this or similar studies to conclude that the cultural hegemony that is embedded in the dominant discourse on globalisation is the cause of the students' ethnocentrist expressions, but it is perhaps reasonable to assume that it may reinforce it. To repeat the words of Beck (2012), the connections between colonisation and globalisation should not go unnoticed, and any uncritical pursuit of internationalisation can result in a reproduction of Western neoliberal and cultural hegemony.

One of the problems for teacher education is that the hegemonic position of Western culture is not often accompanied by making explicit the ideological assumptions that underpin it. This assumption can be briefly summarised as follows: while the international imperative caters to the need for global interconnectedness, it may in fact be said to represent Western cultural homogenisation. In other words, internationalisation in education might be linked to the ideals of cultural interconnectedness; yet, it seems more likely that it facilitates economic and cultural competition. Here, analysing discourses has helped to highlight that what makes the social world can partially be found discursively, and that discursive attention is suited to show how some ethnocentrist sentiments that may seem natural are determined by historical, political, and cultural aspects. This study argues that the hegemonic position of Western culture is causing tensions for teacher education internationalisation. Consequently, we might be witnessing a recontextualisation of internationalisation under the banner of neoliberalism, which can result in a further reproduction of Western values, conditions, and ideology. In accordance with the notion of critical CDA research, these findings should be used to argue how these practices do not serve teacher education well (Fairclough, 1992).

The understanding of the "other" is vital for the international imperative in Norwegian teacher education. Therefore, it should be of utmost importance that the intercultural practicums are

centred on how students experience genuine cultural exchange and interaction, in which they are able to immerse themselves in their new cultural environment alongside their host environments (Wilson, 1982). Above all, students must be helped to identify differences between cultures and to use these in the process of developing intercultural sensitive pedagogical approaches that enable them to recognise and reflect on cultural differences. This, however, would require that teacher-training students travel abroad with the expectation of learning from other cultures, as opposed to travelling abroad with the aim of teaching other cultures. This is where the dominant discourse on globalisation falls short with the regard to the international imperative of teacher education, thus indicating the need to infuse intercultural pedagogies into practice-oriented mobility programmes.

Concluding Thoughts

This study has sought to achieve two goals: to show how cross-cultural teaching practicums can facilitate intercultural competence among students, and to show how short-term student mobility can contribute to the internationalisation imperative of Norwegian teacher education. The findings suggest that cross-cultural practicums, although placed on the sideline of the traditional and research-oriented conceptualisation of internationalisation, can facilitate the integration of international dimensions into teacher education. Thus, the study provides both encouraging and convincing evidence on cross-cultural practicums.

Yet the study also argues that interculturalism is at risk of being marginalised in educational internationalisation. The hegemonic power of Western culture seems to limit intercultural practice by positioning Western neoliberal values at the top of a hierarchy, which can prevent rather than facilitate the development of intercultural professionalism among future teachers. If so, there is a risk that critical and subjective judgement is being replaced with cultural homogenisation and economic competition, something that undermines rather than enhances opportunities for genuine interculturalism.

Obviously, intercultural learning is challenging, yet this study confirms previous assertions that genuine interculturality is dependent on comprehensive educational approaches by which students are introduced to critical and intercultural pedagogies before, during, and after their studies abroad. Still, intercultural competence is not an automatic outcome of studying abroad.

While this study reports interesting and important findings, the nature of the study restricts the impact of these findings and their generalisability. Nevertheless, this case study provides important insight into the experiences, attitudes and behaviours of teacher-training students with cross-cultural practicums. Moreover, these findings form part of an emerging trend in the literature criticising the Western cultural hegemonic position in the dominant discourse on globalisation, a hegemonic position that may impair the process of integrating genuine intercultural dimensions into teaching and scholarship.

Disclosure Statement

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Appendix

Table A1. Overview of participating teacher-training students.

Participant	Gender	Age	Interview I	Interview II
Student 1	Female	24	Yes	Yes
Student 2	Female	22	Yes	Yes
Student 3	Male	22	Yes	Yes
Student 4	Female	21	Yes	Yes
Student 5	Male	23	Yes	No
Student 6	Female	21	Yes	No
Student 7	Female	20	Yes	No
Student 8	Male	21	Yes	No
Student 9	Female	24	Yes	No
Student 10	Male	22	No	No
Student 11	Female	26	No	No
Student 12	Female	21	No	No
Student 13	Female	20	No	No
Student 14	Male	21	No	No
Student 15	Male	21	No	No
Student 16	Female	23	No	No