A Transcultural Global Systems Perspective: In Search of Blue Marble Evaluators

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Abstract: Ten dimensions of a core culture of evaluative inquiry are identified as themes that emerge from and cut across the diverse articles in this volume. Cross-cultural evaluation emerges as involving mixed methods; integrated epistemologies; politically and institutionally supporting indigenous peoples and cultures; framing cross-cultural intersections, interactions, and integration through an understanding and appreciation of complex ecologies; personal, relational, and institutional reflexivity; and transparent praxis at every level and throughout every aspect of evaluation. Enhancing the capacity of evaluators outside the industrialized world has been important, appropriate, and effective despite major challenges and resource limitations. However, evaluation capacity-building has focused at the nation-state level. Such a focus is important and necessary but inadequate to deal with global issues. The major problems the world faces today and into the future are global in nature. Building on the impressive developments in international and cross-cultural evaluation documented in this special issue of CJPE, the next step and the way forward is to treat the global system as the evaluandum and to develop evaluators capable of undertaking transcultural global systems change evaluations. The implications of this new focus are discussed.

Keywords: Blue marble, global, systems, transcultural

Résumé : Dix thèmes fondamentaux se dégagent des articles de ce numéro concernant la conception et l'importance de la culture dans l'évaluation du développement international. Il en ressort que l'évaluation transculturelle suppose une méthodologie mixte; des épistémologies intégrées; une défense des cultures et populations indigènes au niveau politique et institutionnel; une anticipation des intersections, des interactions et de l'intégration transculturelles grâce à une sensibilité à la complexité des écosystèmes; une réflexivité personnelle, relationnelle et institutionnelle; et, enfin, une pratique transparente à tous les niveaux et dans tous les aspects de l'évaluation.

L'évaluation s'est développée de façon marquée en dehors du monde industrialisé malgré des difficultés majeures et des ressources limitées. Ce développement s'est toutefois principalement fait au niveau de l'État-nation. Les interventions à ce niveau sont importantes et nécessaires, mais insuffisantes si l'on veut s'attaquer

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THE CORE CULTURE OF INQUIRY HEREin MANIFEST

Below are 10 dimensions of a core culture of evaluative inquiry that strike me as the cross-cutting themes of this issue.

1. Culture is embedded in, informs, undergirds, guides, and shapes all human perceptions, thinking, actions, and interactions, sometimes explicitly and overtly, but often implicitly and covertly. Culture includes language and concepts, and language matters (Hopson, 2000).

2. Culture is a dynamic concept that shifts and changes shape, manifesting varied nuances of meaning over time and in diverse contexts.

3. Different groups operate from different cultural perspectives; groups also vary in their access to resources and exercise of power; therefore, cross-group interactions are inevitably and intrinsically cross-cultural interactions affected by power and resource imbalances. Cross-group as cross-cultural interactions include any and all interactions between evaluators and stakeholders as well as between and among evaluators from different parts of the world, different disciplines, varying approaches, and diverse institutions.

4. The cross-cultural encounters manifest in colonialism and imperialism have historically led to the domination of Western cultural perspectives and practices (the perspectives and practices of the colonizers), and
undercut, threatened, and damaged (even eliminated) alternative indigenous cultural perspectives and practices.

5. Culturally defined values, beliefs, perspectives, and practices frame any and every evaluation.

6. Embedded in much international development evaluation are dominant perspectives and practices, including methodological approaches and evaluation models, shaped by colonization and imperialism.

7. Decolonizing evaluation requires understanding and addressing multiple cultural dimensions and their effects on evaluative practice: epistemological, ecological, methodological, political, personal, relational, and institutional.

8. Cultural and contextual sensitivity are intertwined and mutually reinforcing; both honouring and valuing contextual and cultural diversity provide a way of understanding layers and levels of cultural and contextual analysis (concentric circles embedded in one another depicting both micro- and macro-contextual levels) that can inform and enhance cross-cultural dialogue.

9. Because colonization and imperialism created huge imbalances between the more powerful and less powerful, between the richer and poorer, between the privileged and the disadvantaged, and between the oppressors and the oppressed, the legacies of which remain formidable to this day, decolonizing evaluation requires addressing directly and seriously issues of equity and social justice.

10. Decolonizing evaluation requires culturally responsive and contextually sensitive evaluation that is authentically and committedly dialogic, inclusive, reflexive, empowering, capacity-enhancing, mutually respectful, complexity-aware, and transformative. Such evaluations are not currently the norm in international development evaluation, but this issue offers examples, even exemplars, of such evaluation approaches from around the world.

DECOLONIZING EVALUATION CROSS-CULTURALLY AND THE GROWTH OF EVALUATION INTERNATIONALLY

The articles in this special CJPE issue treat culture as the focus of inquiry, thereby essentially making culture the unit of analysis (the evaluandum). Cross-cultural evaluation emerges as involving mixed methods; integrated epistemologies; politically and institutionally supporting indigenous peoples and cultures; framing cross-cultural intersections, interactions, and integration through an understanding and appreciation of complex ecologies (contextual sensitivity); personal, relational, and institutional reflexivity (especially cultural reflexivity that involves knowing how personal, relational, and institutional culture affects perceptions, approaches, actions, and understandings); and transparent praxis (acknowledging and addressing power and resource imbalances and inequities) at every level and throughout every aspect of evaluation.

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Appreciation for the importance of cross-cultural understandings has increased as evaluation has become more international. This issue reflects and extends the international and cross-cultural intersection with case exemplars from Africa, Aotearoa New Zealand, India, Turkey, and United Nations' and international development agencies. It is worth noting that evaluation as a profession has been international in orientation and membership from its formal association beginnings in the mid 1970s when the Australasian Evaluation Society (AES), the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES), and AEA predecessors (the Evaluation Network and the Evaluation Research Society) were all formed. The European Evaluation Society (EES) was founded in 1992 and the African Evaluation Association (AfReA) in 1999. The past 15 years have seen exponential international growth and development culminating in 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation. Exhibit 1 lists examples of 21st-century developmental milestones for evaluation internationally. This list is far from exhaustive. I include it here to illustrate the growth and development of evaluation cross-culturally and internationally, a trend to which this special issue of CJPE contributes.

**Exhibit 1** A Selection of 21st-Century Developmental Milestones for Evaluation Cross-Culturally and Internationally


2002: The International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) was inaugurated in September 2002 to help fill a gap in the international evaluation architecture.

2003: Inaugural assembly of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) was held in Lima, Peru.

2004: The first issue of the *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation* was published with a commitment to move toward some coverage of significant evaluation happenings in countries outside North America. We will gradually develop this, as we extend our network of correspondents overseas and from overseas, and we will try to provide some periodic overviews of major meetings, movements, and publications that occur in languages other than English. (Scriven, 2004, pp. 2–3)

The journal provided “immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge” (italics added).

2005: AEA/CES joint international conference in Toronto: Crossing Borders, Crossing Boundaries. General Romeo Dallaire, head of the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Rwanda before and during the genocide, was given the first (and only) International Speaking Truth to Power Prize.

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THE STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL EVALUATION AS IT HAS DEVELOPED

The focus of most international evaluation development has been reaching out to and including evaluators and countries outside the industrialized world. This has been important, appropriate, and effective despite major challenges and resource limitations. Examining evaluation capacity-building approaches internationally shows that "international" means multiple nations and cultures. The fundamental focus and unit of analysis for international evaluation development has been the nation-state. Consider the four examples below.

- **EvalPartners** has as its mission developing national evaluation capacity. All of its goals focus on national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems:
  - To share experiences, challenges, and solutions from program countries with national M&E systems, including countries that may be considering creating one;

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• To identify lessons and challenges in implementing national M&E systems and the use of evaluation;
• To identify supply and demand for technical assistance in strengthening institutional capacity for national M&E systems under the umbrella of South-South and triangular cooperation.

• The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, endorsed in 2005 by over 100 countries and international agencies, is based on the principle that national ownership and leadership are overarching factors for ensuring good development outcomes. "The implication for the evaluation function is fundamental. The principle of ownership means that partner countries should own and lead their own country-led evaluation systems, while donors and international organizations should support sustainable national evaluation capacity development" (EvalPartners, http://www.mymande.org/evalpartners/strengthen-civil-society).

• The Evaluation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was based on 22 national case studies conducted by national evaluation teams (Wood, Betts, Etta, Gayfer, Kabell, Ngwira, & Samarawayake, 2011).

• The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were based on national goals and national reports of goal attainment. (UNDP, 2015; United Nations, 2014; World Bank, 2015)

THE EVOLUTION OF THE EVALUAND

Evaluation began with a project, program, policy, or product as the evaluand—the profession's jargon for the thing evaluated, the unit of analysis and focus of evaluation. Over the past 40 years since the breakthrough publication of the first two-volume Handbook of Evaluation Research (Guttentag & Struening, 1975), we have become quite sophisticated and adept at evaluating these traditional units of analysis. In recent years, new evaluands have emerged as reflected in New Directions for Evaluation issues on

• Evaluating Social Networks (#107, 2006)
• Program Evaluation of a Complex Organizational System (#120, 2009)
• Evaluating Strategy (#128, 2011)

The last section noted that international evaluations such as the Millenium Development Goals and the Paris Declaration on International Aid tend to treat the nation-state as the unit of analysis, as the evaluand. This emphasis continues as evidenced by the latest EvalPartners newsletter celebrating the new Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For the international evaluation community, what is particularly exciting is that “evaluation” was integrated in this new agenda, in the Follow-up and Review section. It indicates that the follow-up and review processes of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda will be informed by country-led evaluations and data (paragraph 74G). It also calls for strengthening national evaluation capacity (paragraph 74H).

We are proud to say that EvalPartners and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), with support from our partners, played a critical role in advocating for the importance of evaluation during the intergovernmental negotiations. This is another important milestone for UNEG and the international evaluation community, following the stand-alone United Nations General Assembly Resolution, "Capacity Building for the Evaluation of Development Activities at the Country Level," which was adopted in December 2014. In this context it is important that evaluation culture is promoted at the country level. (EvalPartners Newsletter #17, August 2015: http://evalpartners.createsend1.com/t/ViewEmail/d/7935A9293E2A4F96)

WHAT IS MISSING?

Promoting evaluation culture at the country level is important and necessary but inadequate to deal with global issues. The major problems the world faces today and into the future are global in nature. Building on the impressive developments in international and cross-cultural evaluation documented above and throughout this special issue of CIPE, it seems to me that the next step and the way forward is to treat the global system as the evaluand and to develop evaluators capable of undertaking transcultural global systems change evaluations. The remainder of this article examines the implications of treating global systems as the evaluand.

TRANSCULTURAL GLOBAL SYSTEMS EVALUATION

Making culture the unit of analysis and focus of inquiry directs attention to cross-cultural dynamics and, especially, cross-cultural conflicts whether manifest in opposing epistemologies (Western science versus indigenous ways of knowing), power dynamics (development done to people instead of with them), opposing agendas (international agency mandates and plans versus local people’s real needs and self-determined interests), different levels of outcomes (individual outcomes versus shared community impacts), and conflicting evaluation purposes (accountability versus learning).

Decolonizing evaluation as presented in this issue means reaffirming the importance, value, and rights of precolonial and preimperialist cultures, or what is left of them or can be recreated. That's a worthy vision, the value of which is well articulated and thoroughly justified by the contributors to this issue. What is generally missing in evaluation discussions of cultural and cross-cultural framing is a transcultural perspective, one that is genuinely global and makes the Earth and the whole human family the unit of analysis.

Globalization, when brought into discussions of decolonizing evaluation, is treated as a threat to cultural diversity and sustainability, with concerns about
global homogenization, global cultures permeating and overwhelming local ones, and emergent cultural hybrids that attempt to integrate opposing top-down and bottom-up change processes, but are more likely than not to impose colonial legacies implicitly or inadvertently, sometimes overtly but more often covertly. International development and aid initiatives can be and often are undertaken with the best of motives and well-meaning intent (alleviating poverty and sickness, higher quality of life, meeting development goals) but with devastating consequences—increasing disparities, destroying the environment, and undercutting indigenous culture, including but not limited to loss of traditional languages under the momentum of universal and standardized education.

As a way forward, I want to offer an alternative global perspective, one that treats the Earth as a global village and therefore the focus of inquiry, the unit of analysis (the evaluand), and a transcultural evaluation specialization.

**GLOBAL SYSTEMS AS THE EVALUAND**

Global challenges require global interventions, which need global systems change evaluation conducted by globally competent evaluators. Albert Einstein observed, “We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them.”

Global problems transcend national and agency boundaries. It is beyond the scope of this article to document the nature and extent of the global issues humanity now faces—and experts disagree about the severity, scope, and urgency of global challenges, but the essentially global essence of these problems is not in doubt:

- Climate change, including effects on gender equity because climate change affects women in poorer countries more than men (Diep, 2015)
- Global economic interdependence and turbulence (for example, the 2008 global economic crisis)
- Virulent infectious diseases and evolving super-viruses (Epidemiologists talk not of whether there will be a new global pandemic but when and how extensive it will be)
- Dying oceans
- Global terrorism
- International drug cartels
- Global human trafficking
- Global arms merchants
- Poverty and inequality interconnected globally
- Refugees (50 million refugees worldwide, more displaced people in the world today than at any time since World War II)
- Feeding the world—a growing challenge
- Technological changes, which are global in impact
- Cyber terrorism and threats to the World Wide Web
• Multinational corporation influences and global capitalism
• Accelerating species extinctions:

The Holocene extinction, sometimes called the Sixth Extinction, describes the current & ongoing loss of species during the present epoch mainly due to human activity—spanning numerous families of plants and animals—including mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and arthropods.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources estimates the present rate of extinction may be up to 140,000 species per year. (Kolbert, 2014)

Global issues are being addressed in international think tanks, through global philanthropic initiatives, at global conferences, and through international cooperative agreements. For evaluation to play its appropriate role in these initiatives and through these diverse platforms, for evaluation to be invited to the table where global initiatives are the focus and make a contribution to solving global problems, we need evaluators knowledgeable about and competent in global systems analysis.

WORLD SAVVY AND GLOBAL COMPETENCY

World Savvy is a national education nonprofit that works with educators, schools, and districts to integrate the highest quality of global competence teaching and learning into K-12 classrooms. World Savvy has been working on global competency for more than a decade.

Global competence refers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to navigate and succeed in today's interconnected world. Globally competent individuals are life-long learners, have an appreciation for cultural differences, an ability to understand and consider multiple perspectives, critical and comparative thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, comfort with ambiguity and change, and understand globally significant issues.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills—an advocacy coalition of educators and business, community, and government leaders—has identified global awareness as one of the six core skills that all students need to acquire. The OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)—the benchmarking standard for measuring student performance around the world—will for the first time in 2018 include global competence in its measurements, signalling yet again how critical it is for graduates to thrive in the 21st century. For our society to collectively confront challenges that are global in scope, all sectors require globally literate and culturally competent employees, citizens, and leaders (World Savvy, http://www.worldsavvy.org/global-competence/).

World Savvy has generated and is engaged with a network of educators and education leaders conceptualizing and implementing global competence training.
EVALUATOR GLOBAL COMPETENCE

Identifying and developing evaluator competencies has been a major thrust in the evaluation profession over the last decade. Jean King and her colleagues (King, Stevahn, Ghere, & Minnema, 2001) pioneered an evaluator Essential Competencies framework that prescribes competence in (a) professional practice, (b) systematic inquiry, (c) situational analysis, (d) project management, (e) interpersonal competence, and (f) reflective practice. This framework is being used as a basis for voluntary certification of evaluators in Canada and Japan (King & Podems, 2014). In addition, as noted in Exhibit 1, the American Evaluation Association Statement On Cultural Competence in Evaluation was adopted by the AEA membership in 2011. The way forward is to develop a new Evaluator Global Competency to build the capacity of specialized evaluators to engage in transcultural global systems change evaluations. In essence, I am arguing that engaging knowledgeably and skillfully as a global systems change evaluator requires specialized competence. The next section suggests what the dimensions of global evaluation competence might include. These are meant to be suggestive, not definitive.

FOUR POTENTIAL DIMENSIONS OF GLOBAL EVALUATION COMPETENCE

1. Global Perspective: The Blue Marble Lens
2. World Systems knowledge
3. Global systems analysis skills
4. Global systems change network connections

1. Global Perspective: The Blue Marble Lens

You can't see the Earth as a globe unless you get at least 20 thousand miles away from it. Only 24 humans ever went that far into outer space—the three-person crews of the nine Apollo missions that travelled to the moon between 1968 and 1972. But only the three in the last Apollo mission saw a full Earth and took the first complete photo of Earth. On December 7, 1972, the first photograph was taken of the whole round Earth ever snapped by a human being (in contrast to computer-directed). That photo became known as the “Blue Marble Shot” (Figure 1).

The Blue Marble perspective means thinking globally, holistically, and systematically; in essence, thinking of the world and its peoples as the evaluand. This means thinking beyond a world of national-states. Blue Marble Evaluators would not ignore nation-states, indigenous cultures, or cross-cultural and international relationships, but would add a truly global perspective.

2. World System Knowledge

There is a large and growing literature focused on the world system and global issues. This constitutes a specialized knowledge base for global evaluators. Consider World Systems Analysis (Wallerstein, 2004):

Figure 1. Blue Marble Shot, NASA, December 7, 1972

- Emphasis on world-systems rather than nation-states
- Considers historical processes as they unfold over long periods
- Combines within a single analytical framework bodies of knowledge usually viewed as distinct from one another—such as history, political science, economics, and sociology
- Treats the world-system as a social reality comprising interconnected nations, corporations, households, classes, and identity groups of all kinds.

A substantial literature is emerging on global health, the interconnected global economic system, global security issues, global food systems, global poverty, global climate change, global institutions, global capitalism, the globalization of inequality, and global technology, to name but a few examples, and, of course, the interconnections among these global systems. We need global systems change evaluation approaches to inform these analyses and intervention strategies.

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3. Global Systems Evaluation Inquiry Skills

A major confusion at the global level is to equate evaluation with simply monitoring indicators. Global indicators are available in several arenas. Data sets are available on the web for sociodemographic trends (e.g., population size, growth, age and urban distribution, infant mortality rate, education); economic patterns (trade levels, growth rates, debt levels, inflation); technological change (e.g., electricity consumption, telephone mainlines); political developments (e.g., political rights, freedom, armed conflict); the environment (greenhouse gas emissions, endangered species, ocean health indicators); and communication (social media data, and radio, newspaper, Internet, and television coverage).

Global indicators are one resource for global evaluation, but far from the whole picture. An evaluation approach to global systems change will need to incorporate and apply different purposes and approaches to evaluation; generation and application of innovative rubrics; criteria for making judgements of merit, worth, and significance; and evaluative thinking throughout. Indeed, one of the contributions of a global evaluation approach would be to use multiple and mixed methods, appropriate designs, and innovative complex systems inquiry alternatives to map, understand, interpret, and evaluate global systems change.

4. Global Network of Transcultural Global Systems Change Evaluators

A fourth and final dimension of global evaluation is the creation of a global network of globally competent evaluators. A transdisciplinary approach is critical for global evaluation, so the network must include evaluators from diverse disciplines and professions, from around the world, and with varied institutional affiliations and work assignments. Hopefully, a global evaluation network focused on global issues and the Earth as evaluation would function more cohesively than the current world disorder. Here's our current baseline situation as articulated by George Soros, a global citizen and global activist. He reviews failures to reach agreement on and take collective action on climate change, world trade, stopping genocide, fighting poverty, refugees, intellectual property ... the list goes on and on. He concludes:

International cooperation is in decline both in the political and financial spheres. The UN has failed to address any of the major conflicts since the end of the cold war ... In the political sphere local conflicts fester and multiply. Taken individually these conflicts could possibly be solved but they tend to be interconnected and the losers in one conflict tend to become the spoilers in others ...

In all areas, national, sectarian, business, and other special interests take precedence over the common interest. This trend has now reached a point where instead of a global order we have to speak of global disorder. (Soros, 2015, p. 4)

An example of the kind of person who can contribute to such a network is Paula Caballero, Senior Director, Environment and Natural Resources Global Practice, The World Bank. In a blog she recently wrote:

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This is a year in which the health of the planet is finally understood to be of central concern to the future of people. A year in which the management of natural resources— from fish stocks and fresh water, to fertile soil, forest habitats and the carbon in the atmosphere—is understood to have significant national, international and inter-generational consequences.

Climate change, water shortages and other environmental crises are bringing home the message loud and clear: we need to connect the dots between human actions across the landscape and seascape, or the earth will cease to care for us. It will cease to grow food, to store water, to host fish and pollinators, to provide energy, medicine and timber. Changing temperatures will stress systems already overwhelmed by unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, while a growing middle class will further strain planetary boundaries.

Many of the solutions, however, will require breaking down the walls of specific sectors—forestry, agriculture, energy, transport, health—and working with a variety of stakeholders across landscapes, seascales and cities to achieve multiple goals at once. There simply isn’t enough time or money to pursue isolated and contradictory solutions.

The world is getting smaller—more constrained and interconnected. We have an opportunity to apply system-wide thinking and leverage data to solve the challenges of our time. (Caballero, 2015)

This statement represents the perspective that needs to be articulated and communicated through a network of global systems change evaluators, what I’ve come to call Blue Marble Evaluators.

**TRANSCULTURAL GLOBAL SYSTEMS CHANGE EVALUATION AS A CONCEPTUAL EVOLUTION IN EVALUATION**

Scriven’s influential analysis of evaluation’s evolution and development as a trans-discipline positions evaluation as the alpha discipline, or more accurately, the alpha transdiscipline: “It is the discipline that develops and validates admission into the admissions requirements for membership in the club of disciplines” (Scriven, 2012, p. 174). “Evaluation is the alpha discipline because its domain includes the methodology of the task of validation of any discipline’s claim to legitimacy as a discipline” (p. 175).

The evolution to transcultural global systems evaluation is necessary to complete the alpha discipline claim. The paradigm shift from nation-state-based international evaluation to global systems change beyond national borders and boundaries is parallel, it seems to me, to the paradigm shift to understanding and applying evaluation as the alpha transdiscipline.

Moreover, at a global level, the practice of evaluation, such as it is, is mired in the mistakes Scriven has identified as necessary to overcome if evaluation’s potential contributions are to be fully realized. For example, the focus on attainment
of management goals rather than meeting consumer needs is rife internationally. International evaluation is dominated by measuring attainment of politically negotiated and management-asserted goals, from the Millennium Development Goals to the targets set by international agencies, multinational corporations, and international philanthropic foundations. Global Systems Change Evaluation will necessarily, both methodologically and ethically, emphasize meeting genuine needs, not politically and administratively generated targets on readily available indicators.

DECOLONIZING INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION THROUGH A GENUINELY GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

International evaluation capacity-building has been focused on building national evaluation capacity. That is important and worthy, and both will and should continue. But let’s also acknowledge that artificial national boundaries and imposed cultural identities are among the worst and most enduring legacies of colonialism and imperialism. The Blue Marble—the Earth—has no nation-states. Nation-state boundaries are the result of war, colonialism, imperialism, enslavement, exploitation, genocide, oppression, greed, politics, religious persecution, dominant cultural hegemony, and indigenous cultural suppression. I can think of no exceptions. Decolonizing evaluation, from a global perspective, could well include transcending national boundaries instead of reifying them and treating them as real and sacrosanct.

In a similar vein, decolonizing evaluation, from a transcultural perspective, could well include honouring, valuing, and appreciating indigenous and local cultures, while including advocacy of and operating from a globally based (Blue Marble) transcultural framework that includes the following kinds of understandings:

- *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration of the Rights of the Child* constitute a global transcultural set of values, norms, practices, and commitments.

- Race and ethnicity are social constructions that are, like nation-states (a political construction), the legacy of war, colonialism, imperialism, enslavement, exploitation, genocide, oppression, greed, politics, religious persecution, and indigenous cultural suppression. Genetic scholarship makes it clear that all human beings are descended from common ancestors over the last 200,000 to 500,000 years. We all share a common family of origin.

- A transcultural perspective does not have to mean either global homogenization or devaluing cultural diversity. Rather, it means finding ways to come together to address global challenges collectively by integration of diverse strengths, perspectives, and capacities. This means asking what in complexity theory is called a wicked question: How can we be both a smoothie and a fruit salad? How can we honour our diversity within our global village?

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CAUTIONS, DOUBTS, AND QUESTIONS

Kate McKegg, a founder and convenor of the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association, is one of evaluation's thought leaders on decolonizing evaluation. In 2015 she made major plenary presentations on “Unpacking the invisible knapsack: Power, privilege and professionalization” at the Australasian Evaluation Society and the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association. She is also coeditor of Developmental Evaluation Exemplars: Principles in Practice (Patton, McKegg, & Wehipeihana, 2016). She is skeptical that a transcultural perspective does not have to mean either global homogenization or devaluing cultural diversity.

In my view, treatment of globalization as a threat is done so with fairly substantial justification. I think the skepticism about globalization expressed by those in the CJPE articles is probably more experientially, historically and empirically grounded than your optimism and hope that evaluation can contribute to global cohesion, sad as that conclusion is.

It is my feeling that a global agenda or perspective cannot succeed unless we are able to recognize the decolonization work we still need to do to achieve this. Recognition (in thought and action), revitalization, preservation, healing, etc., are vital to truly transformative collective action in my view.

I am deeply skeptical about the ability of international aid and evaluation—as it is currently bounded and structured—with nation states as the containers of change, to be able to transform anything much. My fears are that if we continue with the models we have—we will simply perpetuate inequality, disparities, environmental degradation, etc.

I can see a value in a transcultural, global perspective—particularly given the planetary threats that abound. However, rather than viewing this as missing, I would feel more comfortable if you were to frame your argument along the lines of how we might balance the very real need to preserve and revitalize our cultural diversity (as a key component of our overall long-term resilience and sustainability) with the very real need to act globally. Your argument as it stands doesn't strike this balance to me—it reads as if you are a bit too dismissive of the cultural revitalization and preservation that contributors to this volume are arguing for in the quest for a global perspective.

You propose that “decolonizing evaluation, from a transcultural perspective, could well include honouring, valuing, and appreciating indigenous and local cultures, while including advocacy of and operating from a globally based (Blue Marble) transcultural framework.” How so? This is the Achilles heel of your argument, in my view, for decolonization is a process that those of us in positions of power and privilege need to grapple with for ourselves—if we are really going to realize this kind of “valuing and honoring” of other cultures. We haven't shown we are capable of doing this (on a global scale)—and I'm skeptical about this—as I know most of the world's indigenous people are too.

I don’t think you have managed to allay the concerns I feel many will have about homogenization and the domination of Western perspectives in the scenarios you paint. Whilst it may not have to mean homogenization (and most probably homogenization
CONCLUSION

As Kate McKegg’s thoughtful and insightful cautions and concerns make clear, a pathway forward toward a transcultural global systems change evaluation specialization is treacherous and could have the opposite of the intended effect, possibly reinforcing and deepening the colonial ways of thinking and acting. Western white privilege, and evaluation methods that are currently dominant. With those cautions in mind, the challenge remains, it seems to me, that global issues, global problems, and global change interventions and initiatives require global systems change evaluation.

Ironically, perhaps, it has been the International Year of Evaluation with its constant emphasis on building national evaluation capacity that led me to the realization that enhancing national evaluation capacity will do little, if anything, to address global issues. The future of the planet and the human family is at stake. Our divisions, the ultimate legacy of colonialism and imperialism, undermine collective action. Yet only collective action can save us. Evaluation can and should contribute to that collective action.

The challenge looking forward then is where will we get and how will we train...

- transcultural evaluation practitioners sensitive to and inclusive of cultural diversity
- evaluators knowledgeable about but operating beyond nation-state and international agency borders, boundaries, and blinders
- World Systems Thinkers as evaluators
- Global Systems evaluators
- Blue Marble evaluators.

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ARTICLES

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