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# From Direct to Deferred Reciprocity: Service- versus Community-Based Learning in International Anthropology Training

**Sarah Hautzinger**[1]

## Abstract

*This essay shares reflections about teaching an international service learning course in Brazil for the first time in 2006 and compares these reflections to subsequent efforts to adjust the course to enhance learning outcomes in 2008. From the 2006 pilot experience, in which the course was based on a service learning model (SL), it was apparent that with a relatively short time in the field and students' limited language skills, cultural competency, and personal relationships, the SL model did not offer students the opportunity to gain a highly contextualized understanding of difference that is a core commitment of anthropology. In 2008, we redesigned the course strongly in the direction of community-based learning (hereafter CBL), and away from a pure service model. Where the SL model flirts with presumption and unrealistic expectations in the face of students' cultural competence, I suggest, the CBL model can swing too far in the direction of social tourism and superficiality. What remains the same, regardless of SL or CBL methodology, is the overall commitment to various considerations of reciprocity with those with whom we enter into relationships as a result of academic experiences that are civically engaged and problem-based (applied) in their orientation to the discipline of anthropology.* [reciprocity, service learning, community-based learning, international field courses, Brazil, Latin America]

## Introduction

Strictly speaking, of course, "international service-learning" is not an oxymoron. We all know students, after all, with experience rolling up their sleeves and building a school, vaccinating at risk populations, installing latrines, or improving water systems for rural villages. That said, my own first intensive encounter teaching in an international service learning (hereafter SL) model, I would submit, was to encounter it at its most oxymoronic.

As a professor at a small liberal arts college, teaching mostly in anthropology, I was recruited to alternate with a colleague in sociology offering South American SL courses, mine in Brazil and his in Bolivia and/or Peru. This essay shares reflections about the first run of the course in 2006, titled, "Building Citizenship in New Democracies: Work Placements in Bahia, Brazil," and compares these to our subsequent efforts to adjust the course to enhance learning outcomes in 2008. The 2006, service-based version of the course raised sobering questions, mostly surrounding whether students could be "of service" in places where they don't speak the languages, have individual relationships, or understand the rudiments of deep or recent histories. How much could students, in fact, learn when cut loose to "work" in communities where they are outsiders of *de facto* cultural infancy? Timely rhetoric about global citizenship aside, how much can – or should – students be "civically engaged" in countries where they are not, in fact, citizens? If such questions persist about contemporary SL programs, in part it is because we seem unable to avoid reproducing and reinforcing an order of post-colonialism, how far have we moved beyond an international service model excoriated in 1968 by Ivan Illich? He called late-60s Peace Corps an exercise in "hypocrisy," and leveled that "sentimental concern for newly-discovered poverty south of the border combined with total blindness to much worse poverty at home justified such benevolent excursions" (1994 [1968]:1). All of these questions, in large part, can be understood as challenges anthropology – the discipline most firmly committed to highly contextualized understanding of difference – places before increasingly visible and high-profile emphases on civic engagement and international study experiences.

In response to these questions and for reasons I detail, we designed the 2008 version of

the course strongly in the direction of community-based learning (hereafter CBL), and away from a pure service model. Here I recount our tinkering with the recipe – seeking the winning mixture for good applied anthropological, international education – with all humility, acknowledging the difficulty of perfecting the mix. As those committed to CBL and SL know, too, the process depends on so many factors beyond one's control that the historical moment and student chemistry in a course can take the same recipe to different final products. Where the SL model flirts with presumption and unrealistic expectations in the face of students' cultural competence, I suggest, the CBL model can swing too far in the direction of social tourism and superficiality. Neither is immune, moreover, from liberal pretensions about the fortunate rescuing the downtrodden, or from reinforcing post-colonial structuring of roles by nationality, class, gender and so on; these problems have to be confronted case-by-case, inductively. What remains the same, regardless of SL or CBL methodology, is the overall commitment to various considerations of reciprocity with those with whom we enter into relationships as a result of academic experiences that are civically engaged and problem-based (applied) in their orientation to the discipline of anthropology.

## Service Learning, Community-Based Learning, and Anthropology

The single-most formative piece of guidance I received in my early path toward incorporating service- and community-based learning into my teaching came from Karri Heffernan, associate director of the Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown University, during a workshop on the topic. Heffernan argued that despite service-learning/community-based-learning/civic-engagement (SL/CBL/CE, varying emphases sharing a similar core idea) having become an area in higher education with its own journals, conferences and institutional formations, it was best to understand the thrust as nothing new. Rather, she urged us, we should view it as simply applied aspects of one's own discipline; in her case her background in Women's Studies was immanently complemented by the SL/CBL/CE thrust. Anthropologists should take note that, in the case of so many SL/CBL/CE programs, we are disproportionately well represented, for understandable reasons in view of our inductive, field-based, and ethnographic epistemologies.

Heffernan's admonition is useful, particularly for those who know they've long been doing SL/CBL/CE work, as anthropologists, and see the partnership across disciplines, departments and programs as trendy interloping. Moreover, doing applied anthropology in the context of international education may be particularly challenging – and potentially problematic – for anthropologists. Why? First, studies about when transformational learning occurs in its most significant forms emphasize such factors as student empathy and caring in which "students would identity themselves and residents ... as members of the same community" (Kellogg 1999:64). As anthropologists are well aware, we often introduce students – in classroom and field experiences alike – to settings decidedly foreign to them, in which attaining understanding of the historical, sociocultural, and structural aspects of social problems is a life-long endeavor, beginning with basic issues of linguistic and cultural competence. It can be just as important to impress upon students what they do *not* understand or have in common with distant communities as what they do. Unproblematized presumptions about students as global citizens who automatically share interests with community members can be as counterproductive as they are productive; particularly where service is most active, it can easily overflow into inappropriate or useless interventions, as well as deepening processes of cultural imperialism and hegemony.

Second, as Kiely (2004) points out, often we presume that the kind of dissonance students experience between intensive international service-learning study and their previous understandings of the causes of global inequality, injustice, human rights violations and so on produce an unmitigated positive effect. Without effective contextualization for what they glean from such an experience, however, some effects can be negative, such as alienation, defensiveness, feeling misunderstood

by, and disillusioned about, family and friends for divergent views and engagement with global disparities in living standards. As professional border crossers and cross-cultural interlocutors, anthropologists might be especially attuned to the negative effects that incomplete or inadequate guidance through these processes might produce.

## The 2006 Course: Embedded Participant Observers

The site for both courses was the city Salvador da Bahia, situated in northeast Brazil and serving as the longstanding colonial capital during most of Portuguese rule. Bahia had been the context of my own ethnographic fieldwork for nearly two decades. In 2006, my spouse and Education Department colleague Tim Ferguson and I brought a small group of seven students from Colorado College to spend a month in Salvador. I sketch the array of models and techniques that we attempted to incorporate into realistic, constructive course design, as well as those we specifically eschewed as incompatible with our purposes or practical constraints. In frankly assessing the successes and shortcomings of the experience, and sharing how we rethought the course for the summer of 2008, I stress that students arriving at transformative "ahas!" (Albert 1996:185) is contingent upon numerous factors, including effective partnerships and compelling, inspirational local visions for social transformation.

As a Brazilianist ethnographer, I had long puzzled over how to effectively share perspectives of Brazilian grassroots struggles for gender, racial, and class equity with groups of predominantly North American students, all within the context of anthropological study. On the one hand, an anthropological framework was compatible with an immersion-based, service learning course in that both emphasize taking direction from local concerns and analyses, emphasizing immersion and participant-observation, and the productive triangulation and tension between emic and etic perspectives. On the other hand were limitations: of language and cultural competence, of the at-times contradictory postures between education (to discipline) and activism (to liberate, sometimes to disrupt), and of student expectations that they would enter scenes with something to offer.

Time presented our most basic constraint, as we would have four and a half weeks for the program, with just three of those spent in Brazil. The first week and a half of the course was spent on campus in the United States, with intensive Portuguese lessons in the morning, afternoons devoted to seminar meetings on Brazilian history, culture, and society, with focal days on social issues and movements, as well film nights.

In response to our concerns about our students' limited linguistic and cultural competency, we elected to enter into partnership with an international volunteer organization, which offered ready work placements for our students in service-providing organizations. From the outset, we recognized that working with this organization would raise a variety of issues, some of which I detail below, but mostly because their voluntarism model was distinct from, and potentially in tension with, our service learning, participant observation model.

Our partner organization moved from what we believed to be a commendable philosophy, explicitly stating that it "defers to the needs and goals of the local community," that they "recognize that local people know what is valuable and appropriate for their own community," and that they "are committed to providing volunteer work that helps [local organizations] carry out their own set of objectives, rather than imposing another one."[2] The in-country staff members were required to be exclusively Brazilian, and they worked exclusively with local, pre-existing programs.

At the same time, we were aware of the fact that many Latin American activists disapprove of voluntarism as a model for social change. They argue that because it creates dependency on the leisured classes, who in turn may have feelings of beneficence reinforced, volunteer-driven organizations were at worst unsustainable and at best hegemonic in influence. Our partner organization had dozens of placements they ran volunteers through, mostly young and English-speaking.

We attempted to prepare our students for possible dissonance between their multiple roles by referring to them (albeit not without irony) as

"embedded."[3] They were, first off, participant-observer anthropologists and service-learner college students embedded in, second, "units" of mostly-American, international volunteers. All of this sharpened students' awareness that they were not merely learning about "Brazilians," or "Bahians," or even the subsets of those groups that were the target population for the service organizations with whom we worked. Rather, their focus included awareness of the international point of contact between local populations and organizations and the international volunteers and students.

We chose our partnership mainly because of the access it provided to established, tested work placements. Because most of the partner organization's volunteers had considerably less preparation than our still-novice students, the placements tended to be in institutions where their volunteers could be of use with virtually no Portuguese or other background study or training. After assessing individual interests and preferences, our students were placed in a Mother Theresa (Madre Teresa) school and orphanage, several small schools in underserved, impoverished neighborhoods, and a home/ hospice (depending upon residents' levels of health) for children and adults who were HIV positive or who suffered from AIDS.

In most of these settings, our students worked with children, performing functions that did not require language such as playing, holding and cuddling, and helping change clothing or diapers, toilet, or feed children. While it somewhat concerned us that these roles were overwhelmingly tied to charitable services and generally limited to broader institutional orientations that were largely palliative (versus transformative), we reasoned that so long as we encouraged critical reflection about these issues, the advantages of ensured, face-to-face contact in working environments would still ensure the ultimate educational value of students' experience.

To further specify for students what was intended by "participant-observer anthropologists" for the purposes of the course, we drew on Quetzil Casteñeda's notion of experimental ethnography, and Brenda Ueland's "Tell Me More: On the Fine Art of Listening."[4] This approach tries to break down the subject-object relationship of traditional ethnography, instead viewing all actors as ethnographers, mutually learning about one another. Rather than emphasizing an external end-product such as a written account or policy recommendation, we invited our students to view the interactive process itself as both the purpose and product of our work. We also stressed that their presence could serve as a means of helping communities recirculate and rediscover their own knowledge about themselves, through the process of representing themselves to outsiders.

The course assignments reflected this general approach and included: 1) journaling, at least three times a week, organized around the four Rs: reporting, reacting, reflecting, and relating; 2) two reciprocal assignments, where students would perform an immaterial gift exchange of some aspect of music, e.g., teaching "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" and learning to sing something Brazilian, e.g., "*Parabens*" (Happy Birthday) in return. We also asked them to gift a visual culture offering to their organizations, i.e., making a collage of photos taken or sketches drawn there. Finally, we required 3) an organizational report for the work placement, which examined structure, goals and beliefs, resources, leadership, strategy for social change, and challenges and obstacles.

### Successes and Snags

To a person, every student found the course to have been a worthwhile learning experience; while one of the seven students reported that her expectations were left somewhat unfulfilled, the other six stated that the experience exceeded their expectations. Their work through the course promoted future involvement and research in Brazil: two of the students stayed on after the course to work on related projects, and two others planned to return in the future. By the end, six of the seven had attained at least a low level of fluency in Portuguese. Moreover, the experience promoted extensive critical thinking, especially about the voluntarism and charitable models and their limitations for producing significant social change.

Many of the aspects that sharpened our students' critical cutlery, however, arose from

problematic issues related to our partnership; in the end, we felt that associated costs outweighed benefits. The first of these involved the placements themselves. Many of the regular staffers working in the organizations were so accustomed to the volunteers who knew no Portuguese and nothing to speak of about Brazil that they displayed what I called "volunteer fatigue"; they learned to invest little in attempting to communicate with the foreigners, and to minimize the ways in which they would involve volunteers/students in new projects, presumably because they had learned this was often more trouble than it was worth. As a result, the volunteers/students came to feel less-than-useful and bored at best, and alienated at worst.

Because our partner organization had prioritized finding settings that emphasized practical work to which their volunteers could contribute, there was a strong leaning in the direction of charitable, stop-gap organizations, many of which lacked far-reaching social analyses for the root causes of the social ills to which they attended or clear visions of social transformation. The Mother Theresa school and orphanage was the best example of this. It provided preschool aged children with a day program, but used the word *"orfanato"* (orphanage) for the program for babies and toddlers. Upon inquiring, we learned that these youngest charges were not, technically, orphans. Rather, they had been identified as severely malnourished during visits into surrounding neighborhoods by the nuns, who then approached the parents and asked permission to take the children into their care. The nuns told us that all of the parents appeared to be drug-addicted, presumably to crack. Because the nuns did not wish to contribute to permanently severing the children from their families, however, the following program was devised: The children spent Monday through Friday with the nuns. On Friday afternoon, the families would come and pick up their babies or toddlers, who were sent home with clean clothing and diapers, and sufficient food or formula to last through the weekend. On Monday morning, the children were returned.

The first time our two students placed in this setting witnessed a Monday morning transition, they returned visibly traumatized. More than one of the babies and toddlers, they reported, were brought back to the "orphanage" in the same clothes they had worn on the previous Friday, now caked in filth, with the changes of clothes no where in evidence. Worse, several of them were near fainting from what appeared to be hunger; they guessed that they hadn't eaten all weekend. When the students (with our facilitation) later interviewed the nuns for their organizational report assignments, they posed the inevitable question: was this program not complicit with facilitating the parents' continued drug use and exposing the young children to indefensible, repeated trauma? The nuns did not disagree, but pointed out that they tried to counsel the parents to *"diminuir"* (diminish) their drug use, usually to no avail; we read this as bespeaking the nuns' lack of familiarity with addiction and appropriate intervention. Though an extreme example, this placement exemplified a concern that became generalized: if the preponderance of what our students were learning rested in their own, largely negative critiques, for enterprises that their service led to them feeling complicit with, we owed them better. Straw-man examples pose too many limitations to student learning.

A parallel problem emerged between our students on the one hand, and their volunteer counterparts and our partner organization's staff on the other. The volunteers, alongside whom our students were housed (we took out an apartment a block away), were (like our own students) overwhelmingly American, white and female, with the occasional male, English or South African, and person of color thrown into the mix. The most typical profile appeared to be adolescents or young adults from well-to-do, progressive families, who could afford to send their children to South America for a vacation, but who wanted it to be a valuable learning experience as well. Embedding Colorado College students, in a demanding course for credit, amid these volunteers proved to the most uncomfortable part for our students, as they chaffed at being associated with the most objectionable of their compatriots, the "ugly-American-meets-valley-girls," as one of them put it. The organization's volunteers weren't reading

about Brazil or studying Portuguese beyond the optional and rudimentary instruction through the program, and they grew bored and went on shopping sprees or flew to Rio for long weekends with striking regularity. Their sense of impotence in their placements led, in our view, to them falling back on stereotypes about "these people" who could not partner in better health care or schooling for their own communities' benefit — these were the very stereotypes their experiences were supposed to contradict. We attempted to acknowledge this difference for our students' sake, and let them vent when needed. Parallel to their work placements, we convened reflection and seminar sessions twice weekly at our apartment a block away, and students prepared a gift for their organization (usually an activity or a display), as well as presenting organizational analyses about histories, philosophy and mission, structure and policies, funding and leadership, along with assessments of effectiveness and critiques.

The lesson I took from the 2006 pilot experience was one of cost benefit: if one has four and one-half weeks for an educational experience, the students could have seen more, and gotten much more intensive content than the service-intensive model offered them, particularly in the context of our partnership.

### The 2008 Course — The Pendulum Swings toward CBL

Two years later, we took the opportunity to completely rework a course design for a student group in Bahia. In the interim, I heard a story from a new colleague specifically trained in community-based education.

A group of Miami University of Ohio students travelled on a service-learning to Miami tribal community members in Oklahoma.[5] The elders greeted students by thanking them sincerely for taking the time to visit, and assuring them repeatedly that they couldn't imagine how grateful they were for the *service* students would perform. "Now, what we would like you to do for us while you're here," the leaders continued, "is nothing. Nothing short of watching, listening and — most importantly — learning." Through such a process, the elders explained, the students might begin to become familiar enough with *who* the Miami community were, how *they* understood their assets and challenges, and how best to *eventually* become true allies in Miami pursuits. To attempt to "do" more so early in their mutual acquaintance, the elders felt, would simply exacerbate misunderstanding, potentially creating more problems than it could resolve.

We found this Miami understanding of service-learning (which in practical terms may appear more as CBL) based in long-term, deferred reciprocity to be a good fit for students new to Brazil and to Portuguese. We titled our 2008 course "Visions of Social Transformation: Progressive Change in Brazil." The course was designed in collaboration with two in-country co-instructors,[6] both of whom worked with social development models grounded in social entrepreneur, assets-based and multiplier models (Bornstein 2004; Attanasio and Székely eds. 2001).

We began our stay with a four-day retreat to a small village on the island just opposite the bay of Tudos os Santos (All Saints) from the city. There we convened intensive, seminar-style study of Brazilian history, society and culture, alongside "start-up" Portuguese lessons. After this introduction, organizational visits based in the capital city comprised the greater part of the course, shaped around four focal themes: 1) educational equality; 2) gender equality; 3) racial equality; and 4) poverty alleviation and social development. The emphasis on equality rather than inequality was intended to highlight Brazilian visions, solutions to problems, and long-term goals. We typically spent a half-day, but in one case (Arte Cidadã), five consecutive days, with a project. Of the fifteen organizations we visited, those with arts-based programs for empowering youth represented over a third. Whether emphasizing dance, theatre, music, poetry, the projects shared anti-individualistic (as performance-based occupational cultures go, that is), how-can-your-voice-serve-your-community messages. They included several folk-preservation projects (such as CRIA's "reclamation of childhood" efforts, which collect and recirculate children's games, songs, rhymes); one of the world's longest standing and most renowned organization working with street

children (Projeto Axé); and a group that helps disadvantaged youth break into high-tech music performance and production (Eletrocooperativa). The strong leaning toward these arts-based programs was not a premeditated part of our course design; in part it reflected our co-instructors' connections, and in part the singular vitality of the arts in Bahian culture, and its salience as cultural, social, and political capital, and indeed as the repository of historical memory and identity.

The other groups we studied varied widely in orientation, but shared the necessary criterion of holding an analysis of social inequality and a strategy with which to confront it. For the gender unit we spoke to activists at the domestic workers union Sindoméstico; NGO activists working to prevent sexual trafficking and exploitation of women at Projeto Chame; and policewomen and social workers facing gender-based violence at the local women's police station (the DEAM,[7] see Hautzinger 2007). In our social development unit we visited an MST (Landless Movement) settlement, the trash-sorters' cooperative Catadores de Lixo, as well as the university-based CIAGS, which brings together unemployed textile workers, designs by professional designers, and progressive-elite markets that can meet the prices the products command. Projeto Tamar, which works to preserve not only sea turtles but the cultural patrimony and human capital of the fishing-village/tourist attraction where it's located, shared with us its school and tourist-guide training programs in a one-day side trip. Our study of race relations and education were both served with our visits to the Instituto Cultural Steve Biko, which "promotes the insertion of qualified black youth" for educational, social and political opportunities. To complement the educational unit, we visited a series of schools private and public, elite and poor in each category, and brought teachers and professors to dine with us and discuss their experiences. Brazil's incipient race-and-class quotas for public university systems were much on everyone's minds, and two students carried on a six-week investigation of the topic after the class disbanded.

In this breathless itinerary[8] we kept alive the idea of reciprocal exchange, and the possibility of "service," though in expressly modest senses. Several times we had activities set up to share with groups of children, only to find they were accomplished adolescent or young adult performers, which caught our group in awkward positions. For example, once we'd set up a series of hand games ("Oh Playmate," etc.) to show a group involved with preserving childhood traditions, only to find no children present and a crowd of older adolescents and young adults with multiple choreographed numbers to share with us that they'd been rehearsing for the approaching São João (St. John's'day) festival. At the same visit, we had also prepared a chemistry demonstration, including pouring Mentos mints into a carbonated two-liter bottle to trigger a geyser, only to realize the probable cultural inappropriateness of wasting soda and candy in a setting where these were likely luxuries for special occasions. We did have novel craft projects for kids at Projeto Axé, lively interchange with the English class at Steven Biko, and various spontaneous sessions of *capoiera*[9], and break-, hip-hop, and other dancing in the round, The latter, though, were trying for many students, in part because our class was majority white (European-American, with two Latinas) and one African-American. This sole black student, in a black-majority city, happened to also be the only accomplished dancer for the kinds of throw-down rounds that broke out. Many students ruminated in their journals on how our exchanges, while joyful, moving and beautiful, also at times seemed to reinforce stereotypes, simultaneously making them self-conscious and unable to subvert the "fictions of race" that felt nonetheless over-determined in many of our interactions.

For the last of four total side-trips from the city we visited Arte Cidadã (Citizen Art), a youth-in-the-arts project in a town six hours inland from the capital city. Our visit to Boa Vista de Tupim came at the end of our month in Bahia, timed to correspond with São João, the Saint John's day festival that celebrates the corn harvest, *caipira* (country hick) traditions and stereotypes, and jumping over bonfires for São João to become *compadres* and *comadres*, all fueled by an astonishing variety of fruit liqueurs. Boa

Vista de Tupim in Bahia rests between arid *sertão*, or drought-ridden interior, and the foothills for the Chapada Diamantina mountain range, where the French mined the industrial diamonds that dug the Panama Canal. Unlike previous São Joãos that I'd spent in the capital, where people dot freckles on their faces and blacken teeth with make-up and tie rough rope around their jeans for belts, the students from Arte Cidadã were the children and often the great-great-great grandchildren as well, of the backland ranching culture that the rest of Brazil caricatured. As part of my story of Boa Vista de Tupim below shows, they needed not makeup to burlesque the *caipira* images of their own region: they knew them intimately already.

Our group arrived before midnight on a Thursday, looking forward to some quiet time with our hosts before the festival got going that weekend. As the commercial bus rumbled into the town square, most of the students slept, and when they heard a live band playing, assumed it must be unrelated to their arrival."[10] Gradually someone figured out this was wrong – the people playing were wearing Arte Cidadã tee shirts, and waiting for our group to climb off the bus. For the next two to three hours, after dancing and chanting their way to the project's center, the two groups frolicked and mingled according to the celebratory tone our hosts were setting. Sometime after 1 p.m., we were invited to a dinner at a nearby buffet restaurant, one of many for which they refused to let us pay.

This was how our five-night, four-day visit began. Students and the instructors' family were distributed for home-stays with families from the project's students. We stressed that what we called home-stays in English our Bahian hosts called *hospedagem solidária*– solidary housing, and that rather than understand this as an institutional and business arrangement as in most immersion-based programs emphasizing language training, here the arrangement should be understood in the context of mutual gifting in recognition of shared interests and goals. In most cases, their home-stays provided an agreeable reprieve from the institutional focus of our community-based experiences to date. In one case, two students were sharing a twin mattress while one suffered from a terrible, hacking cough, something we instructors would have tried to remedy had we known, but for the most part our stays were gratifying windows into daily life we'd not yet known.

Our first day there, we were invited – though I don't think refusal was an option – to judge two streets that had been decorated in a competition for São João. Displays would include choreographed dance numbers of children, huge cacti cut in the *sertão* and replanted in the streets, exhibitions of natural wonders discovered in the region, and shacks where the treats of São João were to be tasted and tested by the judges, as the residents waited respectfully, though with visible hunger. We felt obligated to choose a winner and did so on what we found to be defensible grounds, but still feeling awkward and mystified at being cast in the visiting dignitary roles.

That night, I translated Weldon Bitencourt's (the artistic director's) invitation to some event early the next morning that "we're trying to turn into an annual tradition," assuring our students it was optional and no one should feel obligated to attend; not surprisingly, therefore, I was the only North American that gathered with them in front of the center at 5 a.m. the next day. I had no idea what to expect, but somehow imagined we'd be ascending the hill close by, where the Easter processions went, and where some students had already invited me to go early some morning. A mule-drawn cart approached, with a vat of a corn porridge drink. The students, gifted thespians that they were, were completely in character as their grandparents, mouthing hilariously authentic-sounding *caipira* greetings and sporting mismatched socks, baggy pants and old-fashioned shawls. At some point someone said, "There's the *trio elétrico*," or a semi-truck mounted with load speakers for *carnaval;* I looked over and saw a small, aged pharmacy truck, presumably making its morning delivery, and assumed they were kidding. But then, at second glance, I saw the speakers piled in the truck's bed. Just then, director Weldon turned on the microphone and started a chant that would continue for the next three hours as we paraded and danced up and down every street in the town: "WAKE UP, Boa Vista de TUMIM! Wake up! Wake up! São João begins early around

here!" House after house's windows cracked open by sleepy eyes within, soon to be cajoled to accept a cup of porridge or a swig of *licor*, all while the speaker's drawl and the *forró* music blasted through the early morning air. No one, except a number of North Americans from our group, found this outrageous enough to merit complaint.

That evening, we again were invited to jury the annual dance contest between *quadrilha* – a *forró*-based square dance – groups. Trying to be level-headed about this but growing increasingly exhausted and uncomfortable with our status as privileged, and somehow powerful, guests we agreed to place two judges, so long as the majority on the panel would be locals. To this they agreed, except two of the three Bahian judges did not show up, so two out of the three judges were North American. The rest of the group enjoyed the performance from atop the lit stage, looking down on the dancers; many of us felt ill at ease with this spatial arrangement. The next night, the American group was invited atop the full-sized, semi *trio elétrico* to dance next to the band. Meanwhile, the Bahians – conditioned as they are to expect the non-stop revelry that is São João – were often staying up much of consecutive nights and still energized by day – were puzzled at the fatigue at the North American group, whose members, they ventured, seemed to sleep an inordinate amount of the time.

We shared many poetry readings, radio broadcasts, dance rehearsals and sessions, and conversations with our hosts; fast friendships resulted, and yet our students expressed frustration that they felt helpless to meet expectations of keeping pace with their indefatigable hosts. They were cowed by the level of generosity to which they were treated, but also with the fact that the ways we were asked to participate and/or reciprocate afforded us influence we found undue and undeserved. In sum, this final visit encompassed contradictions that were at once productive and problematic: Even as we humbly learned alongside cutting-edge, progressive educational and activist work, we were also being deployed as symbols of foreign status and relative enlightenment in ways that legitimated their projects. Students expressed mixed feelings about their symbolic casting; even if they supported the ends served, the means seemed to reinforce and reproduce problematic dichotomies, associating developed-country origins with power and status that felt extraneous to the Brazilian context. At the same time, we were well satisfied that this model exposed our students to substantive local analyses and strategies in a way far superior to our 2006 pilot model and served notions of deferred reciprocity and creating globally aware, critical-thinking citizens.

## Middle Ground: Between Illich and *Ayni*

That anthropologists would call for broadening our notions of how long-term, deferred reciprocity fits into international education fits into SL/CBL/CE approaches is not surprising. Theoretical approaches in economic anthropology and feminist anthropology, in particular, have usefully contrasted short-term, "productive" models of organizing effort and work with longer-term, "reproductive" approaches. In economic terms, these may be the kinds of efforts not registered through waged labor markets; feminists note how often efforts that reproduce relationships, traditions and expressions of value remain unsung and frequently unremunerated forms of cultural reproduction. The "Miami model" indicated by elders with a preference for deferred reciprocity can be likened to a vote for valuing education that instructs students toward competence in performing long-term, culturally reproductive work over an intensive experience emphasizing "service" – some immediate return on students' presence – which can be considered to be both more short-term and more "productive."

Albert argues that the intensiveness of a student service-learning experience is directly proportionate to "more profound and complex... possible outcomes" (1996: 184). A comparison between the 2006 and 2008 summers in Bahia, however, requires that the relationship between "service" and "intensive learning" be qualified. In the 2006 course, I submit, the direct-service component was so intensive that it dramatically undercut the intensity and rigor of student learning. In 2008, by contrast, the elements of direct service were severely scaled back, where the

intensity of learning, broadly cast in the SL/CBL/CE spirit, was dramatically multiplied. While it is technically most correct to classify the 2008 version as primarily CBL with modest elements of SL, the deferred-reciprocity, long-term Miami model – with its stress on cultural understanding and mutual respect – offers us a way to understand CBL as still broadly faithful to the spirit of mutual exchange emphasized in service-learning programs grounded in social justice. In the latter case, we move decisively away from a charitable model of unidirectional giving from the privileged to the downtrodden, and successfully toward models of reciprocity so broadly imagined that they are faithful reflections of our ever-deepening awareness of global connectedness and interdependency.

When our students recoiled, in their first reading assignment in the course literature, from Ivan Illich's vituperative to-hell-with-your-good-intentions message, we asked them how they would account for themselves, in 2006 or 2008, on a SL/CBL/CE in Brazil. Their answers range from noting that our respective societies are all, already mutually intertwined and that North Americans are already grossly overrepresented in these relationships by evangelicals and other Christians on mission trips, business people, international volunteers, immersion-based language programs, and so on, such that the small addition their own participation added to the intercultural discourses, based as it was in a level of rigor, substance and critical thought that quality higher education does best, could hardly be considered a net negative. They also pointed to the many community partners in Latin American and other settings – Miami of Oklahoma included – who not only welcome but crave dialogue, contact with, and recognition from international student counterparts, and not only from students originating from places perceived as more powerful or economically advantaged that could serve instrumental interests.

Porter and Monard (2001) offer a different kind of salve for students' Illich-induced disquietudes. They draw on the indigenous Andean concept of *ayni* to ground notions of reciprocity in their Bolivia service-learning course geared to shape global citizenship. Because theirs was based more upon direct service than our CBL-based version of the Brazil course, some of their emphases were different than ours: for example, they concentrated on projects – in this case, for continuing adult education – responding to needs identified by the local communities in immediate ways, as well as "lending a hand, not just writing a check" (2001:9, 11). Other aspects of the *ayni* model, however, fit well into our adaptation of the Miami model to Brazil, namely helping to "grow... networks of stakeholders shar[ing] ownership of the project" (ibid.:10), and "Giving ... joyfully and wholeheartedly" (ibid.:12). Most salient for my purposes here, Porter and Monard stipulate that "preconceptions about time need to be checked at the door." They guided their students to move away from senses of "giving up" their spring breaks, "donating" or "sacrificing" their time, toward longer-term "'investment' both in themselves and in their friends in Bolivia" (ibid.:13).

Our work shared Porter and Monard's long-term goals of creating student and community-member awareness of being "legitimate members of a global family" (ibid.:15). We tipped our work strongly in the direction of a CBL-based, deferred-reciprocity model – which I've been calling the Miami model here, and which attempts honesty about their neophyte status in Brazilian culture while maintaining high expectations for their learning – while nonetheless sustaining the emphasis on reciprocity and the spirit of SL/CBL/CE education as a whole. In our case, this shift required our community partners to also consciously embrace deferred reciprocity as a model, to invest in the exchange as effective for creating global citizenship in their own organizations, but also in the individual students who had come from so far away, at considerable personal and institutional expense, to learn together.

## Conclusion

The two courses upheld for scrutiny and reflection here have many idiosyncratic aspects: the particularities of our partnership with the international volunteer organization in 2006, or of the issues created with the preponderance of

arts-based programs in 2008, need not be understood as bearing directly on the broader strengths of service-learning versus community-based learning as methodological tactics. Instead, I have invoked the shared spirit of SL/CBL/CE as encapsulated in a commitment to reciprocity and acknowledged interdependency, and considered the best recipe for students who are cultural and linguistic neophytes. As my account here makes clear, neither experience nor model was immune from reinforcing problematic, neocolonialist dichotomies or stereotypes. However, the fact that the 2008 CBL-based experience provided the students with considerably more of the best-quality grist for their reflective mills – grist of the most sophisticated and progressive sort Bahian activists had to offer – supported our assessment that this was a more apt model for students new to Brazilian culture and the Portuguese language. ❍

## Notes

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2. I omit the name of the organization here because although some of what I report is not complimentary, I believe this may have resulted from specific players involved – volunteers, staff and placement programs alike – rather than problems that are necessarily endemic across the organization.

3. This was year three of the United States' invasion of Iraq, and a time when journalists, anthropologists and others were referred to as "embedded" with military units in Iraq and Afghanistan.

4. An elaboration of this version of experimental ethnography can be found at the Open School for Ethnography and Anthropology - Community Institute for Transcultural Exchange (OSEA–CITE) website, http://www.osea-cite.org/history/exp_ethnography.php. Ueland, B. 1992 Utne Reader, Nov./Dec.:19-24.

5. I am grateful to Kira Pasquesi, Outreach Programs Coordinator in the Colorado College Partnership for Civic Engagement, for sharing this anecdote.

6. Eduardo Santos (of AVINA) and Faezeh Shaikhzadah Santos (then of Projeto Cria) served as invaluable collaborators, counselors and friends.

7. DEAM stand for *Delegacia Especializada em Atentimento à Mulher,* or Specialized Police Station for Women.

8. One of our students called the course "the block plan on crack," citing Colorado College's already concentrated, modular program at an even greater intensity. It was, without a doubt, demanding for all concerned, and appropriately so considering the resources involved with creating the opportunity. Were we to teach it similarly again, however, we could better prepare students for the more formidable challenges.

9. Capoeira is a Brazilian martial art/game/dance form, originating on slave plantations in the 19th Century.

10. Those present will remember that I was not present for this part; for simplicity I leave that story out of this one.

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