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Interfaces of critical global citizenship education in research about secondary schools in 'global North' contexts

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ABSTRACT
This article extends and expands a nuanced unpacking of conceptualisations of critical global citizenship education (GCE) in typologies of GCE (Pashby, K., M. da Costa, S. Stein, and V. Andreotti. [2020]. "A meta-review of typologies of global citizenship education." *Comparative Education* 56 (2): 144–164.). It finds approaches to critical GCE can be described in broad terms that conflate quite distinct agendas; critiqued as unpragmatic, idealistic, and morally-relativistic; and fail to engage substantively with their complicity within the systems they seek to transform. It then explores what a selection of empirical research on secondary schools in 'global North' contexts that draws on critical GCE analyses contributes to illustrating the possibilities and tensions of critical GCE in practice.

Introduction

Andreotti's (2006) germinal article,[1] 'Soft versus Critical Global Citizenship Education' marked a key touchstone in discussions of Global Citizenship Education (GCE). Research into global approaches to citizenship education had intensified at the turn of the twenty-first century, particularly in English-speaking 'global North'[2] contexts (e.g. Davies, Evans, and Reid 2005; Gaudelli and Fernekes 2004). Taking the 2005 Make Poverty History campaign as an example of opportunities available for young people in 'global North' contexts to engage with issues in the 'global South', Andreotti (2006) identified a tendency towards soft approaches wherein global learning projects 'Northern/Western values and interests as global and universal which naturalises the myth of Western supremacy in the rest of the world' (25). Her critical literacy tool centred questions of complicity through critical GCE while raising the implications of basic assumptions in mainstream approaches or soft GCE. In this article, we offer a closer look into the overlaps and distinctions within subsequent discussions about critical GCE in typologies of GCE and in recent empirical research about secondary schools in 'global North' contexts. We consider what edges of debates have continued or emerged within discussions about the need for critical GCE in 'global North' contexts.

In 2011, Andreotti edited a special issue on GCE in *Globalisation, Societies and Education* demonstrating a growing momentum of work engaging with critical questions concerned with the political economy of education – particularly the increasing dominance of neoliberal perspectives (e.g. Camicia and Franklin 2011; Marshall 2011), and the complicity of global learning initiatives within a perpetuating modern/colonial imaginary (e.g. Andreotti 2011; Pashby 2011). A

proliferation of typologies began mapping the divergent, overlapping, and even contradictory sets of aims and approaches to GCE (e.g. Andreotti 2014; Oxley and Morris 2013). Pashby et al. (2020) mapped 9 typologies of GCE generated by scholars largely speaking from and to GCE in 'global North' contexts. While there are wider conversations about how GCE is taken-up from non-Western perspectives (see e.g. Swanson 2015; Sharma 2020), a significant focus has been the need to challenge the reproduction of a 'north'/ 'south' binary via Westerncentrism, and this will be a focus of this article.

In the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goal 4.7 (which includes GCE), there has been increased attention to GCE in empirical research. Goren and Yemini (2017) reviewed 435 articles published between 2005 and 2015 related to empirical research about GCE in primary and secondary education, identifying a gap between calls for more critical GCE in theoretical research (e.g. Andreotti 2006; Schattle 2008) and 'the continuing lack of critical discussions in empirical studies' (180). In this article, we aim to speak to the main edges of debate within discussions of critical GCE in 'global North' contexts by reviewing and expanding on Pashby et al.'s (2020) mapping of critical and post-critical GCE across typologies and then examining their findings in relation to empirical research about critical GCE in secondary schools in 'global North' contexts (Costa 2021). We aim to shed light on methodological, epistemological, and ontological moves within recent research on critical GCE.

Interfaces of critical GCE in typologies

The meta-review of typologies of GCE (Pashby et al. 2020) applied a heuristic developed to map discursive configurations relevant to existing discussions of GCE. As explained elsewhere (e.g. Andreotti et al. 2016; Stein and Andreotti 2015), the discursive configurations shaping the heuristic are framed and thus limited within the modern/colonial imaginary which naturalises a Western/ European standpoint, and corresponding set of colonial and capitalist social relations, and projects a local (Western/European) perspective as a global design (Coulthard 2014; Mignolo 2000; Quijano 2000; Silva 2007). The heuristic identifies three major discursive orientations: neoliberal (e.g. market imperative, commercialisation, commodification), liberal (e.g. academic rigour, individual development, research for the public good), and critical (e.g. social justice, interrogating and changing the status quo) (Pashby et al. 2020). As these discursive orientations are neither exhaustive, internally intact, nor perfectly distinct, and the discursive landscape of GCE is often marked by co-existing, overlapping, and contradicting discourses; the heuristic also maps interfaces: neoliberal-liberal, liberal-critical, neoliberal-critical, and all four. Pashby et al. (2020) added neoconservative-neoliberal and critical-post critical. These interfaces recognise spaces of ambivalences between discursive orientations where signifiers are deployed with multiple meanings, and also signal underlying commonalities across two or more approaches. In this section, we review and expand on their mapping of critical GCE and its interfaces.

Pashby et al. (2020) found critical GCE approaches are commonly presented in the sample of typologies they studied as being 'in opposition' to those mapped onto neoliberal and liberal discursive orientations. Focused descriptions of neoliberal GCE were consistent across typologies, but authors described several 'types' of GCE within a liberal orientation, and critical GCE tended to be used quite broadly. Critical referred to approaches that problematise the status quo; yet, the nature of that problematisation led to quite distinct approaches being somewhat conflated. They also found that many critical approaches described by typologies in ways that interface with liberal orientations either explicitly or implicitly, including with neoliberal-liberal interfaces. This reflects the wider sets of competing discursive orientations framing theory, policy, and practice in GCE.

As an example of a broad and oppositional categorisation of critical GCE, Camicia and Franklin (2011) distinguished critical democratic cosmopolitan GCE from an overly human-capital focused neoliberal GCE, the former involving communicative action based on 'a deep commitment to multiculturalism, critical awareness of global power asymmetries, emancipation and social justice'

(314). While the most detailed, Oxley and Morris's (2013) typology similarly draws on an opposi- tional definition of critical GCE. They write, 'Critical GC' is a type of 'Advocacy GC' that directly opposes cosmopolitan forms, critiquing them for 'aligning … to western exploitation and imperi- alism as part of a "civilising mission"' (25). Oxley and Morris identify some critical approaches as compatible with 'Moral' and 'Political GC' (Cosmopolitan forms) via attention to human rights and promoting a universalist cosmopolitan framework, indicating a liberal-critical interface. Approaches focused more on 'Advocacy' from a 'Social' perspective are described as more prag- matic whereas 'Critical' GC approaches drawing on post-traditions, including post-colonial and post-development, are largely theoretical and set up an idealistic 'localised and morally relativist stance' (313). Oxley and Morris's (2013) discussion of 'Critical GC' as a category and its overlap with and/or opposition to other forms of liberal-oriented GC articulates an assumption within wider GCE scholarship: those approaches interfacing with liberal approaches are pragmatic, while those that are more theoretical and oppositional are idealistic and possibly counter-pro- ductive in supporting a morally relativistic approach. In this way, critical GCE can appear as stuck; however, other typologies pick up and extend this debate, and empirical research highlights some practical examples of critical GCE.

Pashby et al. (2020) thus located a key edge of debate within a range of typologies of GCE regard- ing what counts as critical GCE and what critical GCE approaches enable or foreclose in interfacing with liberal approaches. Andreotti (2014) names and critiques a clear liberal-critical interface, criti- cal humanism, which expands human progress to include the rights of those historically margin- alised rather than substantively challenging the status quo nor the modern-colonial imaginary (Andreotti 2014, 44). Pashby et al. (2020) found certain typologies are more specific in their critical orientation. The Marxist approach identified by Gaudelli (2009) among some US teachers and the radical approach identified by Shultz (2007) in the Canadian context name a clear concern with inequality within the status quo and are particularly concerned with the political economy of global citizenship. However, in focusing so closely on how structures determine the conditions of the world, Shultz (2007) argues, there is no space in Radical GC for imagining 'authentic change or relationships from developing' (257).

Pashby et al.'s (2020) observation about the limitations of Marxist and radical GC and the impli- cations of broad, oppositional definitions of critical GCE is echoed in Stein's (2015) description and critique of the anti-oppressive position on GCE. Offering a pointed challenge to Eurocentric cos- mopolitanism, anti-oppressive GCE problematises 'how colonial, racialised, and gendered flows of power and knowledge operate to the advantage of the Global North' (247). While there is internal diversity within this position, responses include advocacy for 'more equitable distribution of resources, cognitive justice, and more horizontal forms of governance, and aspires to radical trans- formation of existing structures, up to and including their dismantling' (Stein 2015, 246). Expand- ing on an oppositional description, the stance offers steadfast questioning of and speaking back to the neoliberal and liberal humanist scripts of GCE to 'create important opportunities for discussion, systemic analysis, and self-reflexivity' (247). Stein (2015) highlights a key tension within critical GCE in her critique of the anti-oppressive position where a move to innocence or heroism can step over a meaningful recognition of one's complicity in the systems targeted. While reflexive in its critique, the anti-oppressive position often seeks change through rational policy and a sense of moral agency rooted in notions of exceptionalism and exaltedness. As a result, in some applications, the anti-oppressive position can 'overlook the possibility that it, too, maintains some Eurocentric assumptions' (247).

An important edge of debate has emerged in these on-going discussions of critical GCE in 'global North' contexts regarding what status quo is interrogated and what ethical and onto-epistemic rela- tionalities are mobilised or constrained. Shultz (2007) argues globalisation is more than another form of capitalist imperialism (radical GC stance) or a single market economy (neoliberal GC stance). Rather, in transformationalist approaches, the negotiation between local and global actions and agendas requires new ways of 'resolving conflict, and acting in solidarity' (Shultz 2007, 255). A

transformationalist global citizen is reflexive in understanding themselves as intricately connected to people and issues across different scalar boundaries. Yet, Stein (2015) points out an on-going risk towards inadvertently reproducing coercive relations when retaining Eurocentric assumptions. Pashby et al. (2020) note an additional interface, critical-post critical, in Stein's (2015) description of the 'Incommensurable Position', which arguably extends and nuances a transformationalist approach. Drawing on post and de-colonial approaches, incommensurable GCE is forged through 'radical co-presence' by resisting 'normative commitments and prescriptive futures' (Povinelli 2013, as cited in Stein 2015, 248). The 'post' in post-critical here signals a mode of 'questioning' rather than post as 'after' (Andreotti 2009). It interrogates the prescriptive and teleological approaches to GCE that tend to dominate across many orientations, including critical ones. The 'incommensurable position' extends the commitment to reflexivity underpinning critical GCE. Resisting adding a 'new' or 'best' GCE approach, it pushes the edge of the debate about complicity further to recognise what options are absent from these discussions.

These critical-post-critical GCE conversations are occurring at the edges of the broader discussions of GCE research in 'global North' contexts. According to Pashby et al.'s (2020) mapping of nine typologies in which one included a post-critical interface, GCE discussions appear to be framed by a limited range of possibilities mainly interfacing with liberal orientations and caught in certain circular positions which limits possibilities for imagining viable alternatives. Most approaches remain within a shared modern ontology based on a single form of rationality (Cartesian, teleological, logocentric, allochronic) wherein knowledge defines existence and separates humans and nature. Any ways of knowing, being or relating outside these codified categories are unintelligible and thus non-existent (Pashby et al. 2020, drawing on Sousa Santos 2007, 159). Meanwhile, opportunities to engage learners, educators, and educational systems with critical reflexivity may importantly find spaces to highlight these limits. Ultimately, as concerns about critical GCE being idealistic and not pragmatic result in interfaces with more widely acceptable liberal approaches, there is a constant risk that approaches aiming at what is possible beyond the modern/colonial imaginary will be misread and instrumentalised 'in a way that betrays [their] gifts by grafting it onto a modern/colonial ontology' (Ahenakew 2016; as cited in Pashby et al. 2020, 159).

Pashby et al. (2020) offer three distinct layers of analysis and intervention to help to think through the conflations and distinctions within approaches to GCE found in their mapping: methodological (doing), epistemological (thinking), and ontological (being). Neoliberal and liberal orientations tend to uphold a methodological focus on achieving a 'particular end, without necessarily rethinking the end itself' (158), raising questions of what activities help students to connect with and solve global problems and how can GCE be systematically incorporated into curriculum. Epistemological level interventions focus on the dominance of certain worldviews and coinciding reproduction of material inequalities. These seek to change individuals' convictions towards behaviour change and convincing others, and they work to redefine and repurpose the concept of GC 'to advocate for more inclusive forms of representation, and the redistribution of resources' (159). Pashby et al. (2020) point out that epistemological interventions in critical GCE have helped to de-neutralise a universalising vision of GCE that inherits structural exclusions. Yet, critical approaches have incited negative responses and indictments of moral relativism and coercion when different stances on GCE coincide at a neoliberal-liberal-critical interface causing a deadlock within a neoliberal agenda that rests on measurable and seemingly objective competency models and nation-centric rationalities.

The critical-post-critical interface, on the other hand, speaks to the opening of ontological layers of analysis and intervention and indicates a shift of the edges of debate within critical GCE. Stein (2015) describes the incommensurable position wherein 'existing scripts for thought and action are not outright rejected, but their limitations are illuminated through encounters with and across difference' (247). This position focuses on epistemological engagement, recognising the violence (symbolic and material) of a type of western universalism inherent in many critical GCE approaches in a critical-post-critical interface. Yet, rather aiming to improve existing structures, expanding on

Shultz's (2007) transformational GC, the incommensurable position gestures towards the possibilities of different ways of engaging with the existing ordering of the world and relations within. In this way, it points to the practical and ethical limits of presuming the universality and continuity of a modern/colonial way of being (ontology). This critical-post-critical interface reflects a growing area of discussion reflexively challenging those of us who have been engaged in critical GCE praxis in 'global North' contexts and pushing a new 'edge' of available critiques: how can there be methodological and epistemological engagements to ensure GCE is mobilised in formal education while also recognising this may become instrumentalised? Where are/ are there possibilities for ontological levels of analysis and engagements? How can we work to ensure that these possibilities are not simply 'grafted' back into the same modern/colonial ontology, thereby short-circuiting possibilities for not just doing and knowing otherwise, but also being otherwise? Questions from ontological layers of interventions help reveal possible openings and reckon with the circular ways methodological and epistemological approaches can reproduce the systems they are in and aim to transform. They do not offer a predetermined alternative for other ways of being in the world, but indicate that these other ways are indeed possible. Post-critical orientations are not evident in most of the GCE typologies as they are likely not intelligible from within a modern/colonial imaginary in which most educational initiatives are based; yet, the questions they raise help to identify and foster a shifting set of debates with critical GCE.

Critical GCE in empirical research about secondary schools in 'Global North' contexts

In line with Goren and Yemini's (2017) call for a focus on critical GCE in empirical research, we build from the above expanded review of conflations and distinctions within critical approaches described in a sample of GCE typologies to consider the extent to which similar discussions are evident in empirical studies focused on secondary school education in 'global North' contexts. We draw on literature identified as part of a wider research review commissioned as part of a Swedish Research Council funded project looking at ethical global issues pedagogy in secondary schools. It aimed to provide an overview of critical research focusing on GCE and environmental and sustainability education (ESE) in journal articles published between 2014 and 2020. Twenty three empirical articles were identified via online repository searches and key journals in both fields. Articles were selected that explicitly take up a postcolonial, decolonial or Eurocentric critique of (Western) modernity. The empirical articles selected were related to secondary education, comprising students aged 11–18 years old (for full details of scope and method, see Costa forthcoming), and the review is thus limited in scope to this age group and to formal education contexts. This article considers to what extent this sample of empirical research echoes the conversations in 'global North' contexts about critical GCE identified in Pashby et al.'s (2020) meta-review of typologies of GCE. Therefore, we focus on the 9 GCE-related articles referring to contexts including Europe, North America, South Korea[3] and international schools in China. These studies all include a critical GCE orientation in their framing of the practical context and share a concern that GCE risks reinforcing western concepts of modernity, especially by creating a 'developed' 'us' and an 'undeveloped' 'them'. Further research could examine more closely the important relevance of these different contexts; here we consider in what ways their discussions of critical GCE reflect the debates identified across the typologies.

The review indicates strong evidence of liberal-critical interface and both a conflation of and distinction between anti-oppressive and transformational approaches. Not surprisingly, as formal education is itself a key institution of modernity where systemic structures are both reproduced and challenged, the main concern of the research is situated in methodological and epistemological levels of intervention and analysis. However, as with the typologies of GCE, there is evidence of some responses to critical-post-critical theoretical discussions through openings towards ontological level analyses if not interventions. We first discuss the research in relation to curriculum and

resources then teachers' and students' perspectives of GCE. We then discuss the articles in relation to the mapping of typologies discussed above.

GCE curriculum and resources

Truong-White and McLean (2015) studied a curriculum of an international digital story-telling programme, Bridges to Understanding, and two digital stories produced by students taking the programme that showcased an issue affecting their communities (one group from the USA and another from India). The authors 'highlight the transformative and actionable dimensions of critical pedagogy' (5). Applying an epistemological level analysis, they note a lack of support provided by the curriculum regarding acknowledging of complicity in global issues. However, the reflection-based activities enabled political engagements with the content, and the digital story activity enabled inclusion of marginalised perspectives. Truong-White and McLean (2015) highlight an engagement with and negotiation of different views that led the students to reach consensus. They praise the emphasis on action in the curriculum but critique the focus on individual, rather than collective, responsibility. They conclude by reinforcing the focus on reflexive praxis and the need to support both teachers and students to build inclusive spaces for a critical and ethical engagement with different perspectives on global issues. The analysis notes the importance of a transformative approach grounded in notions of complexity and complicity. In practice, there is the beginning of an epistemological layer of analysis that spins back to methodological interventions based on individual practices and consensus approaches.

Karsgaard (2019) was also concerned with the possibilities for critical engagements with GCE, in lesson-plans developed by the Me to We organisation for English lessons in schools across Canada. Analysing a unit about the *Free the Children* (1999) memoir by Craig Kielburger (a Me to We' founder), she applies a critical GCE analysis. Ultimately, she finds critical engagements with the content are foreclosed through a liberal humanitarian frame that emphasises superficial analysis, quick fixes, and personal development while stepping over issues of complicity, recognition and participation. Karsgaard (2019, drawing on Andreotti and da Souza 2008) recommends GCE approaches that are informed by reflexive practice, to overcome restrictive engagements with global issues based on solution-finding and empathy development. She also recommends a conceptualisation of unhappiness as a means to promote meaningful engagements that move past fun, self-centred GCE activities (Karsgaard 2019, drawing on Jefferess 2012). Her work locates GCE practice in schools in a liberal-neoliberal interface and engages critical GCE to identify the methodological limitations and future possibilities through an epistemologically-based critique.

Pashby (2015) explores the assumptions about and tensions between multicultural and GC education in the Alberta Secondary Social Studies curriculum and lesson plans (10) from two different teaching websites. Her critical discourse analysis found tensions embedded in GCE and multiculturalism are glossed over and positioned as solved by the acquisition of more knowledge on the topic. She argues the liberal discourses that inform education resources can work as a jumping-off point for critical engagements if they centre (rather than step over) 'tensions and contestations of rights, recognition and redistribution'. Evoking an anti-oppressive stance, Pashby (2015) argues this could 'open up critical possibilities for understanding interconnections among global and local systems of inequalities' (361). There are thus possibilities for epistemological level engagements pedagogically.

Wang and Hoffman (2016) explored western conceptions of selfhood in 10 different GCE subject-related topics in secondary school programmes in the US. They conceptualise GC as a meaning-making space framed by western concepts that carry legacies of European colonialism. The curricula reinforce western approaches to GCE, constructing the global citizen as having the power to decide what are the global issues and what solutions are available. Wang and Hoffman (2016) argue the curricula's centring of a universal 'we' steps over core cultural differences and denies the 'other' the right to define their own problems and solutions. They maintain GCE

curricula provide both a tool for empowerment (of those who are situated within the 'we') and oppression (for those who are not). Similarly to Karsgaard (2019), Wang and Hoffman, discuss the emphasis on self-improvement in the curricula commodifying issues of social justice. Echoing a transformationalist GC approach, they argue GCE should open spaces for critical reflection about the self, and the local and global structures that construct 'our' identity as universal and marginalise *other(s)*.

Also concerned with the dominance of western perspectives in GCE, Kim (2020) analysed the South Korean secondary geography curriculum policy and three geography textbooks. She argues neoliberal and cosmopolitan approaches to GCE are implicated in a western ideology that universalises knowledge and marginalises *other* perspectives. Echoing the neoliberal-liberal interface, key themes related to the concept of development within textbooks include an emphasis on a 'common humanity' that assumes western universality and an 'economic rationality' which enables a neoliberal logic. Kim also encountered different discursive strategies that reinforce western dominance by employing a rhetoric of modernity, maintaining hierarchical binaries and discrimination while depoliticising the content. She acknowledges students actively engage with the curriculum, raising the potential for epistemological level analysis; yet, Kim also maintains discursive strategies working at an unconscious level will have consequences for the ways students construct their attitude towards the *other* in 'developing countries'.

The critical approach taken by these empirical studies of curriculum and resources all include a critique of the modern/colonial imaginary in GCE. They show curricula are framed by dominant western discourses (Wang and Hoffman 2016; Kim 2020) while marginalising other perspectives (Truong-White and McLean 2015). The studies reveal mechanisms in formal education that perpetuate a hierarchical division between 'us' in the Global North and 'them' in the Global South (Wang and Hoffman 2016; Kim 2020). The neutral positioning of neoliberal-liberal interfaces disregards issues of complicity, recognition, participation in local issues of difference and diversity (Pashby 2015; Karsgaard 2019). The studies of curriculum and resources also show how in practice, GCE functions at a methodological level of interventions, concerned with finding solutions (Karsgaard 2019), individual action (Truong-White and McLean 2015) and enabling self-improvement (Wang and Hoffman 2016; Karsgaard 2019).

Truong-White and McLean's (2015) study appears to take an approach in line with Shultz's (2007) Transformational GCE, emphasising complexities of being related at different global and local levels, and the importance of curricular approaches that provide opportunities for students to consider their complicity in harming the environment and critically reflecting on their positionality via engagement with and negotiation of different views. However, as a key concern of the article is what practice can be done within current structures, it is also framed by liberal principles of universal human rights, and consensual dialogue geared towards pre-existing actions. Their study demonstrates an example of an interface of critical and liberal orientations where methodological concerns rest in a liberal frame with epistemological pushes from critical literacy.

Pashby's (2015) and Karsgaard's (2019) studies explicitly take up an epistemological engagement with liberalism in the curriculum by centring tensions and complexities embedded in global relations. Like Turong-White and McLean, they point to critical reflexivity as a way to engage with such tensions at an epistemological intervention level. However, this engagement is not necessarily based on the promise of reaching a consensus, solution nor plans for action. The authors' concern with difficult processes of staying with the tensions relates to Stein's (2015) anti-oppressive position, particularly through the emphasis on problematising the western liberal grounding of GCE. This interruption of solution-based approaches is a direct critique of the liberal-neoliberal methodological level of intervention and initially signals an epistemological opening that is concerned with disrupting the reproduction of the same processes of knowledge production that have produced and sustained current global forms of violence and oppression.

Wang and Hoffman's (2016) and Kim (2020)'s work also reflects Stein's (2015) anti-oppressive position as the authors explicitly take issue with universal Eurocentric knowledge and recognise

consequences of universalising dominant identities for those who do not belong to the western, developed 'we'. These two studies explicitly take up the modern/colonial imaginary and the importance of targeting constructions of the self (Wang and Hoffman 2016), knowledge production, and unconscious investments in western modernity (Kim 2020). All articles aligned with the anti-oppressive position, engaging at an epistemological level of analysis and to varying extents critique methodological levels of intervention to push for including reflexivity in GCE within formal education. There are gestures towards ontological limitations through an epistemological commitment to recognising and seeking to disrupt western-centrism, but methodologically, perhaps not surprisingly given that the subjects of the study are formal education curriculum and resources, the analyses focus on the possibilities and limits of methodological approaches rather than on openings for ontological interventions.

Teachers' and students' perspectives of GCE

Reilly and Niens (2014) explored teacher, school and student approaches to GCE in post-conflict Northern Ireland, working with teachers across subjects, and including both primary students and (lower) secondary (8–9 and 12–13 year olds). The authors carried out nine focus groups with teachers, interviewed 17 teachers and surveyed 401 pupils in 22 different schools. Applying a critical GCE framework, researchers conceptualise GCE through an emphasis on critical reflection, dialogue and action. Teachers understand GCE mainly as awareness-raising and openness to others, failing to acknowledge the inter-relatedness between local and global. Teachers access a wide amount of resources that provide superficial engagements with global issues thereby influencing their apolitical approach. Aiming to address the conflicts and tensions while recognising the importance of emotional engagements in transformative learning, Reilly and Niens (2014) suggest teachers require a more political understanding of the issues and time for critical reflection.

Related to apolitical treatment, Kim (2019) explored secondary school Social Studies teachers' (n = 30) experiences of teaching GCE in South Korea. The author critiques neoliberalism and eurocentrism/colonialism in education and suggests instead that GCE ought to emphasise historical and structural causes of current unequal power relations and include marginalised perspectives. An epistemological level of analysis signals to Stein's (2015) anti-oppressive approach by emphasising the importance of context in knowledge production. Kim (2019) calls for a grassroots resistance to colonial and neoliberal discourses in GCE praxis, a focus on placing teachers at the centre of GCE resource design and developing a reflexive practice through professional development.

Woods and Kong (2020) examined how liberal humanist GCE gets subverted in three international secondary schools of mostly expatriate students, in southern and eastern China, through 76 interviews with administrative staff, students, teachers and parents across the three schools. Echoing radical GC (Shultz 2007), their critical approach conceptualises GCE as an 'homogenising abstraction' that eradicates differences and builds on neoliberal and neocolonial principles. Woods and Kong (2020) argue the inclusion-focused approach to which the schools are committed resembles an assimilation into western cultural identity. Although the 'official' school strategy strongly emphasises commonalities, informal spaces are marked by difference. Students mainly gather in groups based on ethnic identities. In 'non-school' spaces there are strong tensions between the schools' ethos and parents' opinions about how the school should run. Reflecting a methodological layer of concern and a critical-liberal-neoliberal interface that marks daily realities in schools, Woods and Kong (2020) call for a more effective dialogue between the school and its community, so that international schools can serve 'global markets and local communities' alike (146).

Bringing together ESE and critical GCE, Pashby and Sund (2020) explored the possibilities for deep ethical engagements with global issues in secondary school classrooms. Aiming to bridge theory and praxis, they engaged teachers in England, Finland, and Sweden (n = 26) (who taught ages ranging from 14 to 18) with Andreotti's (2012, as cited in Pashby and Sund 2020) HEADSUP[4] tool that makes visible patterns of oppression reproduced in global learning. Teachers applied

HEADSUP in practice to support students engaging critically with class content and led nuanced discussions that both identified and challenged dominant perspectives. However, evidencing the interfaces of GCE at work in school-based approaches, some raised a concern that a HEADSUP analysis may compromise supporting students to find solutions and take concrete actions. Their findings thus highlight a common perception of anti-oppressive positions as described by Stein (2015) where critiques of coloniality can be read as counter-pragmatic. Promoting deeper layers of epistemological analyses and interventions, they suggest a decentring of 'solutions as outcome in favour of engaging with complexity towards an ethic of ambiguity that could open decolonial possibilities' (Stein 2015, 80).

Supporting findings from the curriculum and resources studies, research about teachers' and students' perspectives demonstrates GCE is often delivered through universal western liberal values that may evoke discourses of inclusion but serve to assimilate other perspectives (Kim 2019; Woods and Kong 2020). Reilly and Niens (2014) support an epistemological layer of analysis and intervention, echoing Shultz (2007) transformational approach as they conceive GCE through critical reflection and dialogue. Like Truong-White and McLean (2015), the authors centre tensions and conflict in GCE. Likely influenced by the methodological imperatives of formal education, the studies appear to respond to and operate from a liberal-critical interface via an underlying assumption of a linear approach to addressing these solutions, based on acquiring more knowledge on the topic and providing teachers with the skills to address them. Illustrating multiple discourses operating simultaneously, Woods and Kong (2020) critique the western liberal frames of inclusion, ultimately rooted in exclusion, and they seek a strategic engagement with neoliberal focuses of global markets and liberal understanding of community dialogue, indicating evidence of a critical-liberal-neoliberal interface.

Aligning with the anti-oppressive approach, Kim (2019) targets knowledge production in education as a mechanism that frames the possibilities for critical engagements with GCE. Pashby and Sund (2020) build on Kim's (2019) work by showing how a pedagogical tool for classroom use can scaffold critical and ethical engagements with global issues. Moving from a more methodological to an epistemological emphasis, Pashby and Sund (2020) align with a transformational (Shultz 2007) approach while pushing to raise decolonial questions that arguably could open spaces for ontological layers of analysis. They target the modern/colonial imaginary in the way it frames knowledge production in the classroom and that starting point decentres a liberal pluralist approach towards a pluriversal praxis (Mignolo and Walshe 2018). Still, working in school contexts that are highly embedded in liberal structures and neoliberal-liberal methodological expectations, the pedagogical tool only took the teachers and students so far in their critical engagements. Signalling the contributions and limitations of an anti-oppressive position and constraints to aiming at critical-post critical intersection, the authors identify solutionism as a methodological pivot back into neoliberal-liberal interfaces.

Discussion

Pashby et al.'s (2020) mapping of a selection of typologies of GCE provides a starting point for engagements with GCE that target the tensions, conflations and contradictions of debates in the field in discussions speaking from and to 'global North' contexts. Unpacking and distinguishing between approaches categorised as critical, they identified a key edge of discussion around how to engage critical reflexivity in regard to how global issues are framed in a modern/colonial imaginary while being mindful of the risk of an instrumentalist imperative to apply critical GCE in practice. Critical GCE thus faces tensions on both sides. As some typologies indicate, it is assumed to be idealistic and to promote relativism and inaction. Yet, where it engages in epistemological layers of intervention, it can also get caught in a circularity of reproduction of the modern/colonial imaginary, despite making contributions towards widening the reflexive possibilities for GCE. Our review of identified empirical work illustrates how critical engagements with GCE provide possibilities to

decentre the modern/colonial imaginary and uncover knowledge-making processes that marginalise non-western perspectives, separate 'us' and 'them', and perpetuate western dominance. Closely reading these studies in relation to Pashby et al.'s (2020) mappings, we find critical engagements with GCE in empirical research are framed primarily through a methodological approach and retain an assumption of linear progress where more knowledge and training can lead to identifiable solutions and action. Approaches that centre epistemological concerns, complexify conversations, and are less invested in certainties and answers, having the potential to foster wider conversations about what GCE can be in practice. However, these opportunities are constrained by the context of schools and formal education structures. At a methodological level, practice in GCE in secondary schools in 'global North' contexts appears to remain caught in neoliberal-liberal interfaces where individual responsibility and human capital competencies are addressed alongside well-intended rhetoric about finding solutions and being more inclusive. The practice of GCE, as evidenced in the findings of these studies, remains largely apolitical and even assimilationist. However, the empirical research we reviewed shows a healthy move within empirical research to apply critical GCE in framing and analysing research into GCE resources, policy, practices and perspectives in school-settings. This assists in highlighting both the constraints of and possibilities for epistemological moves. And, there are examples of working directly with teachers to take-up and apply these very tensions in their practice.

The studies also reflect another implication of the anti-oppressive stance where local issues of diversity intersect with global issues. Building on the study reviewed above (Pashby and Sund 2020), Pashby, Costa, and Sund (2020) explore conversations about colonialism in northern Europe secondary school global issues lessons, and the challenges that teachers encounter when they seek to engage with anti-racist pedagogies in a diverse classroom. Whilst acknowledging the constraints of working within formal education and the need to shift theoretical positionings to meet these contexts, the authors reinforce the importance of pedagogical tools that support and guide teachers in these complex engagements with difference within the local context. Otherwise

> students raising critical perspectives – particularly those related to anti-racism and challenging Europe's complicity with colonial systems of oppression, and particularly when expressed by students of colour—may be further patronised rather than supported as providing an entry point for diversity. (57)

In this article, we have focused specifically on critical GCE scholarship in 'global North' contexts to consider how and if the edges of debates have shifted since Andreotti's (2006) touchstone contribution that problematised an over-emphasis of 'soft' approaches. We also focused on empirical research specifically related to secondary education. However, alongside the growing attention to GCE in the UN SDGs, it will be important to consider what orientations will emerge from research and practice in various non-Western and 'global South' contexts (e.g. Ghana [Angyagre and Quainoo 2019]; Pakistan [Kadiwal and Durrani 2018] and South Sudan [Skårås, Carisillo, and Breidlid 2020]). These studies indicate wider implications of the inadequacy of universal approaches to teaching about global issues in general (heightened through initiatives around SDG 4.7), and western notions of (global) citizenship education in particular. As Khoo and Jørgensen (2021) note in their contribution to this special issue, the context of SDG 4.7 has also begun to bridge discussions between GCE and Environmental and Sustainability Education, highlighting how both fields struggle 'a lot but separately, with questions of 'criticality''(473), while sharing a 'critical edge that speaks to the need for decolonisation and diversification at the epistemological and ontological levels' (6). In ESE this includes ontological engagements with posthuman and new-materialist discussions about how to move beyond the modern divide of human and non-human, as well as engagements with Indigenous knowledges that have never been organised according to this divide but rather emphasise relationality and inter-species interdependence. Much like critiques of critical GCE from within critical-post-critical interfaces, this emerging critical edge within ESE scholarship and practice open-up further questions about what possibilities for relating 'otherwise' exist in the

midst of and beyond reforming an increasingly unsustainable and unsupportable modern/colonial imaginary.

This mobilisation towards decolonial engagement raises another important tension for work in 'global North' contexts. The Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures collective has sought to offer pedagogical frameworks for educators working with decolonial aims (see Stein et al. 2021):

> The Indigenous practices and analyses that inform and inspire our work indicate that our current global problems are not caused by a lack of knowledge, but by an inherently violent mode of existence that is at the core of how we relate to the world around us and how we perceive and sense our role in it. (Suša et al. 2021, 3)

They call for continued critically reflexive conversations about what GCE can and cannot do while making more visible the limitations, contradictions and continued absences in this work: 'better information and critical thinking do not suffice to produce the deep personal and collective transformation that is necessary to address the unprecedented global crises of our time' (3). The pedagogical tools they offer invite educators to grapple with sets of denials and appeals to innocence that can accompany critical GCE work, orienting the conversation from critical GCE as radical reform towards a post-critical interface with GCE *otherwise*. Implications for methodological interventions in formal education remain fraught. Yet, despite significant limitations and on-going risks, over a decade and a half of work in critical GCE indicates that the raising of questions at the ontological and epistemological levels can intersect with methodological realities in classrooms and feedback into these wider reflexive conversations (Khoo and Jørgensen 2021; Pashby and Sund 2020).

Fifteen years on from Andreotti's (2006) 'Soft versus Critical GCE', a central edge of debate in regards to critical GCE in 'global North' contexts remains evident in discussions of complicity, a concept that, according to Pashby et al.'s (2020) mapping has been both somewhat lost in a broad definition of GCE and also nuanced, expanded, and critiqued through critical-post-critical GCE discussions. Empirical research about secondary schools in 'global North' contexts shows a strong attention to the limits of a modern-colonial imaginary at an analytical level with some openings at practical levels. We argue there are opportunities to engage productively with the tensions inherent to the field of critical GCE in theory and practice and appreciate the continued conceptual and empirical research contributing to highlighting and engaging with the absence of analyses and interventions at an ontological level (see Ahenakew 2016). It is important, Pashby et al. (2020) argue, to make these absences noticeable, for the absences are themselves pedagogical:

> What kinds of experiences can enable students to see and sense how they can be simultaneously part of global problems, and part of global solutions? Is it even possible to imagine a definition of global citizenship not premised on conditional forms of inclusion, or shared values? (160)

In taking-up these questions, we argue it is essential that educators working in the 'global North' and who remain committed to attending to the constrained realities of classrooms, where young people continue to spend significant spans of life, maintain a reflexive praxis towards identifying and challenging the universalising western frames which unconsciously continuously promote paternalistic and ethnocentric dispositions and orientations. Critical GCE approaches have opened important conversations in formal education contexts while continuing to risk reinforcing western binaries as evident in empirical research including our own (Pashby, Costa, and Sund 2020). We therefore end with a question that emerged from our meta-review of GCE typologies and direct it specifically to those of us working within critical GCE in formal education contexts: How might we use critical GCE 'in strategic ways, while remaining conscious of its significant limitations, potential harms, and the partiality of any particular approach?' (Pashby et al. 2020, 160).

Notes

1. When we last checked via google scholar on 07.03.2021, it had 942 citations.
2. The concepts of 'global North' and 'global South' are contested and imperfect terms signalling the concentration of political, economic, epistemological and political privilege in countries located mostly in the

northern hemisphere (Mignolo 2011). The terms can distract from the power-imbalances within so-called 'North' and 'South' contexts. We use them with single quotations here in line with the bulk of the literature on GCE to indicate the current imbalanced geopolitical configuration of geopolitical power while recognising their limitations. The distinction speaks directly to a constructed imaginary of the 'us' who solve the problems of a 'them' who have the problems constructed through a long-standing imbalance of power while the distinction also risks reinscribing this binary.

3. We include South Korea within 'global North' contexts given the studies indicating GCE is taken up in a broadly Western/capitalist frame (see for example Cho and Mosselson 2018; J. Kim 2019; G. Kim 2020).

4. HEADSUP (Andreotti 2012) is a pedagogical tool that provides support for complex and ethical engagements with representations of global issues in global north-south interventions. It centres seven problematic tendencies that contribute to the reproduction of unequal and harmful forms of relation, through the creation of an 'us' (in the global North) and a 'them' (in the global South): Hegemony, Ethnocentrism, Ahistoricism, Depoliticisation, Salvationism, Uncomplicated Solutions and Paternalism.

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Disclosure statement

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