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Additional Information: This is an Open Access article which appeared in Globalisation, Societies and Education, published by Taylor and Francis.

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Published online: 08 Aug 2023.

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Global citizenship as taken-for-grantedness: reflecting on Swedish students' trip to Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Swedish students regularly take part in school partnership trips to Tanzania. Yet, little research looks at the extent to which these trips support global learning. This paper is interested in the discourses that enable and constrain ethical relationality in these educative encounters. It considers existing research on global citizenship education and school partnerships in relation to decolonial engagements then analyses interview data with four students who participated in an entrepreneurship themed trip to identify discourses available to them. Students articulated an overarching discourse of taken-for-grantedness. Several sub-discourses could enable but tend to constrain an ethical relationality in these educative encounters.

Introduction

The imbalance between areas of the world most responsible for and most impacted by today's global issues is deeply tied to embedded systems of injustices. Ethical global issues pedagogy aims to make visible inherited relations of power that are baked into today's complex issues but are often stepped over (Sund and Pashby 2020). The extent to which ethical imperatives are engaged in global issues education is an important area for research given that we are in the last decade of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG Target 4.7 includes providing quality education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship (GCE). At the same time, young people across northern Europe participate in trips to 'global South'[1] contexts via school partnerships which are connected to goals of ESD and GCE. How are global 'North-South' relations framed in these partnerships, and what can student descriptions of their experiences tell us about ethical global issues pedagogy?

This article draws on interview data from a recent research project, *Teaching global equity and justice issues through a critical lens* (Swedish Research Council 2018–2021). It sought to capture how ethical global issues are taken up in two upper secondary schools in Sweden. There is a long-standing tradition in Sweden for schools to have a partnership with development organisations and schools in countries in the 'global South', and these include Swedish teachers and students taking trips and sometimes reciprocal visits to Sweden. As we were conducting observations and interviews at one of the schools, we found they had such a partnership with a school in Tanzania, and a group of students were selected to go and facilitate entrepreneurship workshops for schools

and a woman's organisation. We spoke with four of the students before the trip, and three of the same students after the trip. In this paper, we examine the existing literature on school partnerships and present our reading of the interview transcripts through decolonial discourse analysis. We are interested in the discourses that enable and constrain an ethical relationality in these educative encounters.

We begin with an overview of the main discursive configurations in the field of global citizenship education (GCE) research to consider the possibilities and foreclosures of spaces for critically reflexive approaches. Specifically, we look at how discourses of entrepreneurship and taken-for-grantedness are recognisable orientations within GCE and can be understood in a neoliberal-liberal humanist interface that can foreclose the potential for reflexivity (Machado de Oliveira 2021). Next, we review literature on global 'North-South' school links that emphasise the way such partnerships and trips are embedded in colonial systems of power. We then outline our methodological approach of decolonial discourse analysis and present key findings regarding how the students' descriptions of their experiences echo or challenge mainstream discourses of global citizenship education. We end by raising implications of this small study for ethical global issues pedagogy.

Interfaces of discursive orientations to global citizenship education

Drawing on Foucauldian (1971) analysis of social history and contemporary culture, we understand discourses construct positions and subjects in social contexts. Discourses describe, diagnose, and normalise truths, becoming taken-for-granted categories that frame understandings of selves and relations to others (Pashby 2013). In short, discourses provide the basis of material and symbolic power, (re)producing subjects and objects of knowledge (Stein 2018). Our reading of the wider context of GCE in which this school's partnership occurs draws on a heuristic of discursive orientations of internationalisation in education created by Andreotti et al. (2016) and applied to GCE research by Pashby et al. (2020).

Andreotti et al. (2016) note that the heuristic itself and the discourses it maps sit within and are limited by a modern/colonial imaginary that naturalises a Western/European standpoint associated with a set of colonial and capitalist social relations applied through education (Coulthard 2014; Mignolo 2000; Quijano 2000; Silva 2007). The heuristic identifies three major discursive orientations framing contemporary internationalisation and education: neoliberal (e.g. market imperative, commercialisation, development through capitalism), liberal (e.g. individual rights, development, and personal enlightenment), and critical (e.g. interrogating and changing the status quo) (Pashby et al. 2020). Importantly, the heuristic draws explicit attention to the internally contested and often indistinct boundaries between orientations by including interfaces to recognise spaces of ambivalence: neoliberal-liberal, liberal-critical, neoliberal-critical, and all three.

Research by Pashby et al. (2020) mapped nine typologies of GCE from nine different journal articles using the heuristic. They found neoliberal GCE was the most consistently identified, analysed, and criticised. Particularly relevant for reading this case of school partnership, Stein (2015) identified the *entrepreneurial position* of GCE as tied to the rationale for students to develop economic activity. This position, she argues, is underpinned by an acceptance of a knowledge economy where knowledge is neutrally treated as a universalised 'deterritorial capital' (Stein 2015; 244 drawing on Gibb and Walker 2011). It tends to dismiss power relations between social groups:

> Although stratified structures of class, race, (national) citizenship, and gender make entrepreneurial global citizenship differentially available, this position nonetheless scripts all individuals as equally morally obliged to make economically savvy and rational choices in all areas of their lives. Scripts of the entrepreneurial position can only maintain that the market is indifferent to these structures by ignoring their impact on the unequal distribution of life chances. (244)

Stein (2015) notes how activities projected into 'global South' contexts under this version of GCE evoke a concern for 'the Other' that is reduced to a right to be included in the global free market

system while disregarding the structural disadvantages. As Khader (2019) points out, an entrepreneurship discourse can invisiblise systemic oppressions and create new forms of gender injustice when applied to women in 'global South' contexts. The entrepreneurship position can be oriented within a neoliberal-liberal interface in approaches that adhere to a moralistic and individual framework applied to very differently situated contexts where economic development is posed as a solution rather than engaging with structural factors shaping immobilities based on class, race, and gender (Stein 2015; cf Oxley and Morris 2013).

Critical discursive orientations to GCE take up systemic inequalities and consider how all are both (differently) part of the problem and (differently) part of the solution (Pashby et al. 2020; cf Andreotti 2006). While some authors of typologies describe critical approaches as tending to be idealistic and not as evident in practice (e.g. Oxley and Morris 2013), there is a growing body of empirical studies pointing to secondary school research in 'global North' contexts centring critical GCE as an analytical and practical frame (Costa 2021). Research in critical GCE (e.g. Pashby 2012; Shultz and Pillay 2018) has raised concerns about the tendency for global learning in global 'North' contexts to unintentionally reinforce paternalistic narratives, reifying colonial systems of power by creating an 'us' who learns about and helps a 'them' who has the problems.

An example of a tendency to reproduce colonial systems of power is the 'taken-for-granted' discourse. It was identified in Pashby's (2013) study of GCE discourses in Alberta's Secondary Social Studies curriculum and lesson plans where students are led to learn about 'lower' quality of life in so-called 'developing countries' to appreciate their own 'higher' standard of life. Drawing on a critical notion of 'framing' (Fraser 2005), Pashby (2013) found while the taken-for-granted discourse can create openings for critical discussions around why there are different experiences of quality of life globally and locally, in lesson plans, it tended to pivot back into a 'soft', liberal humanist discourse that looks to economic development as a solution and therefore works with not against neoliberal agendas. Yet, Pashby (2013) found a stronger opportunity for pedagogical encounters that open space for criticality when taken-for-grantedness interfaced with a discourse of 'global consciousness' and aligned with a critical GCE orientation via attention to complexity and complicity.

In their mapping of GCE typologies, Pashby et al. (2020) also identified a new discursive interface with critical GCE that is important to consider in working towards ethical global issues pedagogy. A post-critical discursive orientation to GCE builds from the systemic critiques evident in critical approaches and includes a recognition of the limits of those critiques for enabling change (Stein 2021). For example, Stein (2015) identifies the incommensurable position on GCE which resists prescriptions for best practices and draws on post/de/anti-colonial theoretical resources to deeply centre questions of complicity. However, Pashby and da Costa (2021) found that while critical approaches are evident in a growing amount of research in 'global North' contexts, and while they evidence the importance of epistemological layers of analysis in GCE research and practice, post-critical GCE is currently difficult to find or to make intelligible within contexts of formal education. Thus, they argue for centring critical approaches while retaining a hyper-self-reflexivity. This could enhance an on-going ethical relation to the ways schools revise and/or reproduce colonial systems of power in how students are led to engage with their relation to others in global learning.

Seeking to examine how decolonial resources might intervene and support a more ethically engaged approach, particularly in the continued trend of school trips from northern Europe to 'global South' contexts, this paper considers: how/are the 'entrepreneurship' and 'taken-for-granted' discourses evident in the context of Swedish students' expressions of learning from school-visits? What frames students' engagement with deep differences and ethical relations and to what extent do they have access to narratives that open-up and/or foreclose opportunities for ethical global issues pedagogy?

Research on 'global North-South' school partnerships:

Despite the popularity of school partnerships between schools in Sweden and schools in 'global South' contexts and particularly Tanzania, there is very little research available about what kinds

of global learning are enabled in these partnerships. Empirical research about sustainable development content in primary and lower-secondary textbooks in Sweden (Ideland and Malmberg 2014) and with primary school students and teachers in Norway (Eriksen 2018) suggest decolonial approaches are particularly required to address Nordic exceptionalism and problematise the approaches and materials that reproducing stereotypes and deficit-thinking.

Research on similar types of partnerships in the UK use the term school linking though some distinguish between linking and partnerships where the latter are more deeply embedded across curriculum and school activities and communities and include reciprocity of decisions making (Leonard 2008). As Bourn (2014) notes, school linking aims to support global learning 'as a "real world" and practical manifestation of learning about a school somewhere else' (10), 'providing opportunities for learners to hear directly from voices from the Global South' (11). Bourn's (2014) review found a lack of evidence of a 'causal relationship' between 'school linking and broader global learning' (11). Martin (2007) notes that school linking has generally been considered as a 'good thing' and without controversy but requires vigorous critically reflexive consideration due to its tendency to reinforce colonial relations of power (drawing on Disney 2004) via reproducing stereotypes of Africa and reinforcing charitable approaches.

Some research suggests possibilities for such trips to draw attention to 'global North' students' sense of privilege (e.g. Harper 2018). Pipitone (2018) (referring to Doerr 2012) suggests engaging students with a critical pedagogy of place and decentreing the Western perspective to support reflection upon students' own cultural identities as a possible a way to the resist 'the reproduction of a colonial gaze and the exotified cultural "other" in study abroad' (67). Hoult (2020) analysed a group of UK student teachers' reflections about a study visit to India. He found in-depth learning took place when participants reflected on power inequalities whereas shallow comparisons with home limited opportunities for deeper learning. The most reflexive responses were expressed by those who could simultaneously hold uncertainty and conflicting ideas. Martin's (2007) inquiry with educators in England about the challenges and opportunities of school linking pointed to the importance of exposing students' stereotypes in a supportive but challenging way whereby issues like poverty are presented with problems and solutions existing on both sides. She found simplistic understandings emerge from over-focus on similarities where negative stereotypes are replaced with positive ones. Martin (2007) concluded that there are no straight forward answers to the dilemmas around how to handle the highly diverse environmental, cultural, historical, political, economic, and educational differences encounter in school partnerships. However, she maintained that these challenges can be taken up in a productive way through reflexive and critical global citizenship approaches. While we did not find research specifically on experiences of secondary school students in Nordic contexts in such trips, there is a small but growing body of literature about trips in teacher training. Research in Norway reinforces the importance of pre, during, and post trip support and space for deep reflections on privilege, oppression, and racism (Bergersen and Bruno Massao 2022; Bergersen, Klein, and Larsen 2022) and raises critically reflexive implications for supporting decolonial approaches in teacher training more broadly (Klein & Wikan 2019).

Critical reflexivity in the nordic context: an imperative and opportunity

School trips to 'global South' contexts have a strong history in Sweden and occur today within a context of a dominant entrepreneurship discourse. Generally speaking, and as our Swedish co-authors attest, there is a broad understanding that such trips help students gain real world experiences and exposure to new perspectives from those in the global 'South'. While not all school trips focus specifically on entrepreneurship as this one did, it is indeed a strong focus across the education system.

Given how Stein (2015) argues entrepreneurship in GCE can function to reproduce colonial systems of power, it is particularly important to consider how this discourse functions within Swedish

school partnerships due to its importance in Swedish schools. In the 1990s the Swedish school system opened to private competition from independent for-profit and non-profit schools and has since then had a liberal market design where entrepreneurial initiatives and the idea of free choice and commercial actors become taken for granted (Ideland, Jobér, and Axelsson 2021). When the former curriculum was revised in 2009, entrepreneurship was emphasised as a theme running through the education system. The school in this case is an independent upper secondary school that is privately owned by a corporation/school company but publicly funded and with a specific focus on youth entrepreneurship and business education. This school, like many schools in Sweden, cooperates with a non-profit organisation called Young Entrepreneurship whose training programmes are designed to stimulate creativity and to raise awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship. A cornerstone of the organisation is that entrepreneurship can be taught. As stated by Dahlstedt and Hertzberg (2012), 'in the vision of the entrepreneurial school, it becomes logical and natural to emphasize the value education has for the economic system' (242). There is indeed a wide field of research tracing entrepreneurship education to its current popularity in international development and education policy of, for example, the European Union and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (see Amiel, Yemini, and Kolleck 2022).

At the same time, Sweden and the Nordic nations have begun to consider the ways in which the Nordic region has contributed to and benefitted from colonial histories. As discussed by Höglund and Andersson Burnett (2019), this is probably because these nations have imagined themselves (and were also perceived externally) as untainted by the practice of colonialism and lacking a direct link to a colonial past. As Ipsen and Fur (2009) have noted, this helped feed a self-image of the Nordic nations as champions of global equality and as mediators of minority rights: 'In the light of this self-image, the Nordic nations' pursuit of colonial dominion, and *their* contribution to the colonial efforts of other nations, were routinely written out of the national histories of the Nordic countries' (Höglund and Andersson Burnett 2019, 1). Further, as Loftsdóttir and Jensen (2012) show, the Nordic countries not only took part in the epistemic construction that was a product of colonialism but also benefitted from it economically. There is strong potential for this recent work to support ethical global issues pedagogy.

Theoretical and methodological framing: decolonial discourse analysis

Building from research defining a tendency for school linking to reinforce colonial relations of power and indicating the importance of resourcing teachers with critical approaches, we recognise how school trips and links operate within historical and enduring colonial relations of power. As Diprose (2012) notes, engagements with geographical and cultural others are highlighted as educative experiences but raise key questions: how are they accomplished, for whom/whose benefit, with what purpose, and to what effect? We argue it important to highlight this potential reification of coloniality by centring theoretical resources that help to make visible the ways unequal relationality can be unintentionally maintained.

It is outside the scope of this paper to explain in depth the lack of a single lineage of decolonial thought (via post-colonial, anti-colonial, Indigenous, Black, abolitionist studies, various social movements) (see Stein 2018). Further, simply centring decolonial conceptual resources does not solve the problems of on-going coloniality (Stein 2015). As Walsh (2018) notes, modernity is the central organising system of our contemporary contexts, particularly writing from northern Europe; thus, neither we as 'global North' researchers located in Sweden and the UK nor the school involved in our study are outside modernity. Yet, the shine of modernity depends on the shadow, as Mignolo (2018) suggests. The colonial matrix of power helps to conceptualise rather than ignore the unequally experienced realities of the shadow of coloniality. We thus centre the concept of decoloniality as a means of making intelligible the colonial matrix of power: 'a set of creative processes leading to decolonial narratives legitimising decolonial ways of doing and living' (Mignolo 2018, 146). Recognising the colonial matrix of power can support ethical pedagogical framings (Sund

and Pashby 2020). The challenge is to think and learn from where we are located and look for inno-
vations and ruptures that outline new strategies of action and solidarity (Walsh 2018, 27). Specifi-
cally, we apply the shine and shadow of modernity and coloniality to try to pluralise possibilities
relevant to what students learn or unlearn through these experiences in school trips rather than
impose a pre-determined order of thinking and relating (Bruce 2018). Such an analysis is urgent
and over-due considering the long durée of these types of 'North to South' trips in Nordic contexts
and the lack of research about them. Ethically, we argue, it is essential to make visible how such trips
may be entwined in notions of aid, responsibility, and poverty alleviation that depend on an already
known to be 'Other' who, quite possibly, rather than be provided agency through a complex and
situated understanding of lived experience is ultimately an 'object of benevolence' (Jefferess
2008, 28).

Building from the context we outlined above of Pashby et al.'s (2020) mapping of discursive
orientations of GCE in 'global North' contexts and their interfaces, critical discourse analysis is a
way to consider what frames are available to students in anticipating and then describing their glo-
bal learning in a trip to Tanzania. Discourse analysis challenges the assumed neutrality and trans-
parency of language, and in any given context there are various contending ideologies being
produced, iterated, regulated, institutionalised, and resisted (Pashby 2013). As explored by Pashby
et al. (2020) in their mapping, those narratives that become taken as given and neutral can also
include conflicting positions. According to Goldberg (1993), discourses name and make compre-
hensible the social condition, and dominant discourses are 'those that in the social relations of
power at a given moment come to assume authority and confer status – reflect the material relations
that render them dominant' (194). In colonial discourse analysis that builds from the Foucauldian
tradition via Said (1978), there is a dual function of a productive force that reproduces 'sedimented
social relations while at the same time providing opportunities for their disruption and significa-
tion' (Stein 2018, 466). Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine what discourses appear to
be available to a group of students in their descriptions of the global learning inherent to the
trip to Tanzania as a way to consider what resources animated by ethical global issues pedagogy
might offer ways to signify otherwise from reproducing colonial hierarchies. As Stein, Andreotti,
and Suša (2019) drawing on Gildersleeve et al. (2010) point out, analysing discourses can help to
identify and explore the content (what), process (how), and implications of what is said and
what is not said.

Data collection and analysis

Our wider project examined how Swedish upper secondary teachers take up the most pressing sus-
tainability problems facing the world today in their classrooms. We observed and recorded class-
room activities in 19 lessons (23 h) and interviewed four teachers (10 h) and five student groups
(6 h) in two upper secondary schools in two middle-sized towns in Sweden over the course of
one school year. One of the schools, Frilund School (pseudonym), had an ongoing partnership
with a Tanzanian education centre supporting cooperation and exchange in the field of language,
culture, and entrepreneurship. Seven year 12 students participated in a visit to Tanzania during the
year of our project, in spring 2019. These students ran workshops in Tanzania, offering students
and a women's group there training aimed at evolving their creativity and skills of entrepreneur-
ship. The trip was not part of any specific course at the school nor linked directly to any specific
curriculum, so can be considered an 'extra-curricular' activity. These students did not have any
specific training before or after the trip around critical approaches to GCE. However, given the
Swedish curriculum for upper secondary schools, all students should have some general knowledge
about international co-operation and global relations. Hearing about the trip during the wider pro-
ject, we contacted one of the teachers involved and asked if she was interested in participating in a
research interview about the trip. Through the teacher, we got in contact with four students who
volunteered to be interviewed.

In this paper, we draw on three sets of interviews: one with a group of four students before their trip to Tanzania, one with three of the same students after their return, and one with the teacher of the students after the trip. We analyse the student interviews in this paper and use the teacher interview to provide context. The empirical data gathered from the interviews allow us to explore the discourses available to the students when describing the complex learnings arising from their experiences. The researcher who conducted the interviews, a co-author of this article, had himself participated in a similar trip two decades previous and found that this helped him have some context and familiarity to support the interview. The other two authors (one Sweden-based and one UK-based) have not participated in such trips but are educators and active researchers in critically reflexive approaches to global issues teaching and have worked with upper/secondary school teachers in the UK, Finland, and Sweden to support resourcing of reflexive approaches (see Pashby, Sund, and Corcoran 2019). The interviews followed the ethical guidelines provided by the Swedish Research Council (2017). Before the interviews the participants were informed verbally and in writing about the focus of the research, that it was voluntary to participate and possible to withdraw, and how the recordings would be stored. All consented. We made clear what they said during the interview would not affect their school grades, and the trip itself was extra-curricular. It was important that they felt free to express their experiences of the trip and free from any pressure of providing the 'right' answers. The pre- and post-trip interviews followed an interview guide with questions about their trip Tanzania and their expectations and learnings about the relations between Sweden and Tanzania. The interviews were semi-structured and allowed follow-up questions from the researcher.

The analysis involved describing the main content of the interviews and then considering what patterns of discourses were evident or not in students' explanations of aims and experiences of the visit to Tanzania. We focused on claims put forward, choices of rhetoric, promotion of moral and political values, and descriptions of the context to identify key discourses (Knight Abowitz and Harnish 2006). These key discourses were analysed in relation to the wider discursive framing evident in wider research (Pashby et al. 2020) – neoliberal, liberal, critical, post-critical orientations to global citizenship education and their interfaces – broadly and the interfacing entrepreneurship (neoliberal) and taken-for-grantedness (liberal) specifically. We then analysed the extent to which the discourses evident and thus available to students support critical reflexivity given the way school visits are implicated in colonial systems of power.

Context: the school and the partnership

According to the teacher, the partnership has been going on since 2015 with the first group of teachers and principals visiting Tanzania in 2016. From the beginning, the emphasis was on youth entrepreneurship because of the Swedish school's focus on business education and its cooperation with *Young Entrepreneurship* (as mentioned). Since 2015, the Frilund school has been 'cooperating with' three different high schools in Tanzania: one mixed school, one girls' school, and one boys' school. As the teacher described, the boys' school is 'considered the best boys' school in the country, […] sort of an elite school […], while the other two are more regular'. Swedish students first visited in 2017. While we did not observe the content of entrepreneurship training and activities at the school, we know that *Young Entrepreneurship* is a member of the *Junior Achievement (JA)* worldwide group. Their curriculum is classroom based, designed for different grade level and provides secondary students the ability to 'start and run a business during an academic year' (JA n.d.). On the initial trip in 2017, building from this existing focus in the school, a mix of Swedish and Tanzanian students worked together to come up with business ideas as led by Swedish teachers. Since then, Tanzanian students have visited the Swedish school, but activities tend to be cultural (the students described typical Swedish activities such as the ball game rounders and 'Swedish fika', a coffee break), and there was no indication of Tanzanian students conducting workshops in Sweden. For the 2019 trip to Tanzania on which our participants went, the Swedish teacher

described 'the interest in entrepreneurship [from the Tanzanian partners] was so huge', 'so we decided to search for funding to go there and offer entrepreneurship workshops' which this time was led by the students.

During the ten-day trip, seven year 12 students (18–19-year-olds) from the Swedish school went to Tanzania with the purpose of themselves leading workshops on entrepreneurship to the schools and to a woman's group. The students had both shown interest and gone through a selection process of 'good grades and low absence' and then interviews to demonstrate 'strong commitment'. The teacher and students in our case study are White, and the school is a rather ordinary upper secondary school in Sweden (i.e. middle class and largely White). We did not have access to perspectives from the Tanzanian partners (neither teachers nor students), and we are thus not offering a thorough nor balanced perspective on the experience. However, we felt that the data provided some important insights worthy of exploration.

Findings: taken-for-grantedness before and after

Our analysis of the students' pre- and post-trip interviews point to a discourse of taken-for-grantedness that structures the students' experiences. This discourse enables the students to establish a rather coherent meaning around their expectations of a life changing experience from the trip. They have taken much for granted in their everyday lives (such as consumption, education, food, etcetera), and with the experiences from Tanzania, they have gained a new insight concerning what they used to over-look. Interestingly, this taken-for-grantedness discourse was already in motion before the trip. Before the trip, the students expressed that they expected to gain insight on what they take for granted, and after the trip, this expectancy was fulfilled and accentuated. In a wider perspective, we found the students' discourse of taken-for-grantedness can be situated within the neoliberal-liberal orientation identified by Pashby et al. (2020) and blends with the entrepreneurship position on global citizenship identified by Stein (2015) and Machado de Oliveira (2021). There was no strong evidence of critical discursive orientations even if some discursive openings and potentially productive ambivalences were present. The taken-for-grantedness discourse was expressed and constituted through four sub-discourses: same but different, individual enlightenment, entrepreneurship as expertise and helping, and responsibility as awareness-raising. Even if the four sub-discourses organised and emphasised different aspects of the students' experiences, they co-constructed the main discourse of taken-for-grantedness. In the following four subsections, we describe each sub-discourses and give examples from the student interviews.

Same-but-different

The sub-discourse 'same but different' organises the students' experiences around similarities and differences between Tanzanians and Swedes. A characteristic of this sub-discourse is the students' difficulties in reconciling deep differences with similarities. The students [pseudonyms used] anticipated dramatic difference in capabilities and opportunities between themselves and the Tanzanian workshop participants as will be discussed further below. However, ahead of their trip students also thought there are major similarities:

> Bella: You know, I think people will always be the same. Although for sure there are some differences, we are still human beings. And that's something that our teachers have also emphasised, that there are so many similarities between us, perhaps more than you might think.
>
> Rickard: We are all human beings and want to get to know each other. And somehow, you will find that connection. I mean it's sort of difficult to understand. I hardly know myself what I'm saying, but I mean we are all human beings and we are all quite curious of each other; regarding culture, regarding how we learn, and things like that.

The anticipation of, yet difficulty to fully understand differences, suggests the complexity inherent to making sense of relating through deep differences. The students tend to have most handy

discourses to describe *cultural* differences. Bella took an opportunity to critically reflect on Swedish culture which she noted can be 'quite stand-offish and self-contained … you keep quite a distance when waiting for the bus'. She has heard that in Tanzania they are 'more open and a bit more intrusive'. This expectation was reinforced in the post-trip interview where Bella elaborated on the more communal, 'taking care of everybody' culture there versus the 'offish and reserved' culture in Sweden.

> Bella: I mean I had pictured us Swedes as being very offish and reserved, and that has become even more obvious now that we're back. We can't even sit next to each other on the bus. We can't like even ask each other for some help in the grocery store.

When asked about similarities after the trip, Rickard was stumped: 'I really find it very hard to come up with true similarities because they are like two totally different worlds'. When he asked to elaborate, he spoke about how the postal system in Tanzania is unreliable whereas in Sweden 'there's no doubt … you just expect it to be delivered, on time'. Building from his comment, Bella noted the 'real social gaps between Sweden and Tanzania', but it is 'hard to see true similarities, beside that fact that they are apparently two different countries'. Consistent with the pre-trip interview, students appeared to lack discourses to help explain the deep difference after their trip.

The researcher probed how the relationship between Sweden and Tanzania is possible given the significant difference in living standards between the two countries and how such a bond could be an equal relation. The students struggled to articulate a response to this question. One attempted to describe a common ground but interpreted it as a question about individuals relating to one other:

> Rickard: I mean it was really fundamental human factors that made us come together and somehow unite, and that you simply want a better future for the children and so on. And in particular this incredible human touch and encounters that we have had with all the different people, that was truly special.

Their post-trip interview echoed strongly what they had expected but with a stronger and nuanced discourse of taken-for-grantedness. This finding suggests they would benefit from some resourcing around critical reflexivity to unpack the tensions they experienced.

Individual enlightenment

The second sub-discourse organised the students' experiences of enlightenment and learning which is closely related to the same-but-different discourse. In the pre-trip interview Timmy anticipated 'growing a lot as a person by getting the opportunity to do this kind of journey, and really see the differences and the similarities; both at the schools, but also the countries; purely cultural' to which the other students agree 'yep, yep'. Specifically, the students anticipated gaining a lot of enlightenment through witnessing hardship:

> Amanda: 'basically everyone in Sweden knows what it's like in Africa and similar countries … But you can't quite understand it unless you are there and see it for yourself. We have seen pictures and we sort of know some things based on the knowledge we have, but to get to experience it and see it for yourself will probably be a totally different thing'.

Bella had anticipated the trip would 'change our way of thinking a lot' by gaining insights that she will not forget. Throughout both sets of interviews, the students expressed a liberal humanist notion of personal enlightenment that becomes a paradox: they expressed a life changing impression of differences that they had in fact anticipated. Despite the fact that in the pre-trip interview, the students expected to be moved by seeing poverty first hand, in the post-trip interview Bella described this as a new revelation:

> It has raised our awareness about issues that we didn't know existed for real [… .] Like what extreme poverty really looks like.[…] Because lots of students might assume that they know what extreme poverty looks like and how people live with it and how they do. But you really don't have a clue unless you are there and see it for yourself.

In this way, the individual enlightenment has a double function. It both confirms what they already expected in terms being able to see what they have taken for granted and enables the students to position themselves as more knowledgeable compared to those who have not seen real poverty.

The new knowledge gained after seeing extreme poverty also contains openings for critical reflection when the individual enlightenment links to a societal perspective, suggesting a liberal-critical possibility of the taken-for-granted discourse. The researcher prompted the students to critically reflect on how and if their image of Sweden had shifted after the trip. Rickard focused on wealth and consumerism: 'When we returned, I frankly almost wanted to throw up when I'd see a Gucci-store or an H&M-store'. After expressing that he is disgusted by the luxury consumption in Sweden, Rickard continued, 'On the other hand, I feel proud of Sweden that somehow offers a home to so many refugees fleeing from wars and other terrible things going on, while other countries choose not to'. The emotional ambivalence expressed here, between disgust and pride, and the relation between individual enlightenment and societal structures, can be seen as an emerging fissure in the discourse. These experiences of ambivalence reflect but are not fully structured by the neoliberal-liberal orientation interface of the taken-for-grantedness discourse. Importantly, these mark pedagogical possibilities to open for a critical reflexivity that exceeds the dominant taken-for-grantedness discourse. As we see it, it is in these moments of ambivalence, and in the connections between the individual experience and societal structures, that deeper transformations are possible.

Entrepreneurship as expertise and helping

While entrepreneurship features strongly in the wider context of education in Sweden and therefore is likely a defining discourse in framing the school partnership more broadly, it was not an overarching discourse drawn on by the students. We identified it as a sub-discourse accentuating how these Swedish students, through their knowledge about entrepreneurship, can help others in the 'global South'. When asked about the main aims of the trip, the students indicated their municipality had funded them to 'be in charge' of a project supporting entrepreneurship. They express a discourse of entrepreneurship as a solution for surviving through poverty. They were both excited to help – an expression of a liberal humanist discourse – and found a general notion of entrepreneurial skills as a neutral way to support human capital capacity through a deficit view. The Swedish students positioned themselves as 'experts'. Timmy described how they have been running their own individual businesses at school and know 'what it's like to come up with your own ideas, what it's like to corporate, and all that stuff'. Bella expanded, 'now [our economics teachers] have put us in a teacher's perspective a bit and taught us the basics behind that'.

Some examples of how the students described the aims ahead of their trip indicate a degree of paternal benevolence and focus on differences in their available discourse:

> Timmy: And we [..] go there to introduce entrepreneurship and specifically to this task of setting them on a path. […] It's crucial for us to share this knowledge to really find a way for them to survive and pursue a business idea.

In relation to Timmy's explanation, Rickard expressed a belief that the workshops will be much more time-consuming in Tanzania 'since they have much more different methods teaching'. Amanda follows up on this:

> it's somehow understandable, because in Sweden we have come quite far considering the knowledge of entrepreneurship […] women in Tanzania or Africa in general don't have the faith in themselves to take care of things.

After the trip, when asked how the entrepreneurship workshops led by the students went, the students were pleasantly surprised. While their teachers had suggested the students and adults in Tanzania would take a longer time to go through the processes, that was not the case. Bella said the girls

their age 'started immediately to come up with good ideas' as did the group of women who were 'a bit sharper than the schoolgirls'. Timmy added the attendees of their workshop in Tanzania had a 'bigger picture' approach 'that there is a society, and we need to take care of it and preserve this society'. He 'was not expecting them to think that way as their first thought'. The students touched on some complex ethical considerations about difference and how their relationship with the people in the workshops was framed. This opening up appears to be foreclosed by an idea of individual development that does not disrupt the entrepreneur expertise and helping discourses. Yet, the strength of the community members' skills was one of the only unanticipated learnings.

A sub-discourse, in which entrepreneurship is about helping also organises the students' line of reasoning concerning Tanzania's colonial history. The researcher prompted the students to consider the Human Development Index and asked why Tanzania has a quite low score compared to Sweden, why is there that difference, and what it depends on. Rickard drew on a narrative of coloniality and philanthropy to answer:

> Well, I think essentially it's about … I mean the Europeans have been there for years and taken control over large parts of Africa since long time, basically looted anything good of a commercial value and things like that, and sort of left the inhabitants unskilled, untaught, unknowing, and brought back knowledge and so on. And I also believe that one of the reasons that we are going is that somehow we want to give them a fishing rod instead of fish.

Here the narrative of 'colonialism is in the past' offers a view of the Tanzanians they will teach as deserving, elaborating on the deficit view expressed earlier and indicating a strong liberal humanist discursive orientation. The student's answer pivoted to a discourse of helping framed by entrepreneurship as paternal benevolence through the notion of 'helping them help themselves'. Bella concurred that it 'essentially, it's about … about wars in the past and the previous colonization. Africa was affected particularly hard by being colonized', offering an explanation rooted in the past not implicated in global relations of the present.

Responsibility as awareness-raising

The sub-discourse of 'responsibility as awareness-raising' organises the students' ideas of what to do with their new knowledge gained from the trip. During the post-trip interview the students expressed how they have taken the consumer culture in Sweden for granted. When asked what kind of responsibility they feel they have given this learning, the students pivoted to raise-awareness and support of the current project rather than considering implicatedness or unpacking their taken-for-grantedness.

> Rickard: We've been there, we do have a responsibility to inform as much as we can, about the things that we've seen and experienced, and to make sure that this project continues. […] So we need to work on that. In other words, constantly keep up some kind of spark that indeed explains some kind of commitment to these extreme social issues
> Timmy: Yes.

The researcher probed them, asking 'Do you believe that people in Sweden who have not been there have a responsibility in this case?'. Rickard responded that 'people should be humble towards what is going on around the world'. He explained that 'Many people often choose not to listen. But it depends on what fundamental principles you have when it comes to whether you really care about this issue or not'. This suggests an opening for a critically reflexive approach.

Bella expanded further,

> In the society that we live in, people tend to close their eyes about issues that they find uncomfortable and not to look, because they can. I mean we have … We have internet and phones. We are constantly connected. That's how it is. You can clearly choose what you want to see or not to see, and who you want to hear or not hear. [… .] everybody has a responsibility to keep their doors open […] to try to understand and like listen to the information that others spread around.

Here the discomfort of those who are not interested in the school linking project is attributed as a failure to 'find out' or to 'know'. And the responsibility is to be informed; however, the nature of the information is left neutral, and the students who 'know' gained this through a trip that involved a selection process. Interestingly, many of the differences were anticipated by the students in the pre-trip interview which prompts the question: about what exactly do the other Swedish students require awareness raising?

When the researcher asked what responsibilities the people in Tanzania have to people in Sweden, the notions of rights and equality emerged. Rickard said, 'basically, exactly the same rights as us'. Timmy agreed, 'Yeah. We're all human beings and we all share the same planet. I can't see why a few people should have the right to ninety percent of the resources'. Interestingly, here, he seemed to be referring to the inequalities in Tanzania and the responsibilities of those in the world who control the resources but did not connect it to his taken-for-grantedness realisation despite the discursive link. The possibilities for the students to critically reflect on their own implicatedness were here hindered by the sub-discourse of awareness-raising, as this sub-discourse structured their experiences in relation to the lack of knowledge in others who have not visited Tanzania. First-hand experience stands in for knowledge. The impact of the sub-discourse is also reinforced by the *Young entrepreneurship* programmes designed to raise awareness in-line with a neoliberal logic (of market imperative and commercialisation) which also might prevent critical reflexivity on implicatedness. Thus, this sub-discourse closes the educational openings and possibilities of critical reflection by establishing a sharp difference within the 'global North' 'us' between those who know (from experience), and the 'others' who do not know, and this is despite a lack of significant change in the students' perceptions of Tanzania after their trip. The educational task becomes about awareness-raising of others rather than critical self-reflexivity and advocacy for more structural changes.

Summary of findings

The four sub-discourses illustrated above co-constitute the dominant discourse of taken-for-grantedness. Even if the sub-discourses structure different aspects of the students' experiences and raise some possibilities for critical reflection, they construct an overall neoliberal-liberal discursive orientation where the experiences from the trip were mostly about what is taken for granted in Sweden. As mentioned above, interesting to note is that this discourse was already in motion to structure the students' experiences before the trip. However, the taken-for-grantedness discourse does not structure all of the students' experiences and is therefore not fully totalising. Some moments of ambivalence can be seen in the post-trip interviews. These moments and discursive fissures, we argue, can hold educational potential in being vantage points for critical reflexivity that challenges the status quo and aims for new ways of relating through deep differences. A crucial task for educators would then be to enable, deepen, and explore experiences like these that are not fully structured by the dominant discourse. As illustrated above, some discursive openings are also being foreclosed when a sub-discourse steps in, such as the sub-discourse 'responsibility as awareness-raising'. The potentials for the students to critically reflect on their own implicatedness was apparently foreclosed by this sub-discourse of responsibility as awareness-raising. In other words, the students' apparently new knowledge (which they had in fact anticipated), and the responsibility to use it to raise the awareness of others, hinders critical reflection of their implicatedness and the role of wider historical and contemporary structural factors.

Discussion

The discussions with the students confirm a key theme emerging from the wider study around a lack of recognising historical and current power imbalances and equity more generally when engaging with ethical global issues in the classroom. While students acquired new direct experiential

knowledge, from a decolonial praxis position that supports ethical global issues pedagogy, educators must think more radically about what shape pedagogical responses to the world's most pressing problem should take (Sund and Pashby 2020). The taken-for-grantedness discourse was available strongly to the students who found a meaningful appreciation for their standard of living. Yet, it also appears to stand in for deeper ethical engagement, indicating while there is an openness to exploring multiple perspectives and moments where students sense ethical dilemmas around difference and power, there is a tendency towards a particular type of knowledge and practice that *recenters* paternalistic Eurocentrism and steps over of issues of racism and coloniality. The sub-discourse of entrepreneurship functions as both a rationale for the project and as a place holder for a neutral notion of 'helping'. It makes sense that a school that focuses on business development as its core identity would support students to become leaders and share their knowledge of entrepreneurship. Further research could look more deeply at the intersections of the wider agenda towards entrepreneurship at the school and how it emerged as something of 'huge interest' to the partners in Tanzania. However, our research suggests this neutral notion of young people from the 'global North' as experts in entrepreneurship seems also to hide some problematic complexities around knowledge sharing. The students visiting in the position of helper and teacher (to both students their own age and adult women) defined the Swedish students as the active global citizens, and the people they encounter in Tanzania the object of their educative enlightenment. As Jefferess (2008) argues, 'such a framework for conceiving of global inter-relationships and responsibility is ahistorical in that it elides the history of imperial politics that has shaped the current world system' (30).

Our findings suggest the need for further research into the relationship between, on the one hand, entrepreneurship as an educational imperative (through *Young Entrepreneurship)* and key principle of the organisation of Swedish schooling and, on the other hand, humanitarian intentions within the framing of global citizenship and sustainable development. As taken-for-grantedness appeared to be an easily available discourse in both pre and post interviews for articulating students' experiences of deep difference, does the entrepreneurship discourse emerge as a solution that conflates into a discourse of helping and is unquestioned in a particular way in the Swedish context? In other words, does entrepreneurship become a form of solutionism (Pashby and da Costa 2021) that reinforces neoliberalism and neocolonialism? Our analysis of two conversations with four (and then three) students is not generalisable. However, it indicates further resourcing is required to support teachers to work to mobilise more decolonial praxis in the framing of and pedagogical treatment of global issues and encounters with difference. Contributing to pedagogical implications of critical approaches to GCE that take up decolonial theoretical resources, Taylor (2012) calls for a decentred position 'within a multicentric rather than Eurocentric worldview', one demanding 'forms of agency that are neither heroic nor despairing' (180). Taylor (2012) argues for a pedagogy that moves beyond colonial tropes of noblesse oblige and a neoliberal version of 'civilizing mission refashioned as global responsibility' (180). She recognises the 'challenges involved in students' adopting perspectives that radically shift (neo)imperial relations of power/knowledge, that decentre and implicate them in relation to the planetary South' (179). This approach takes up rather than steps over what is in fact an epistemological and ontological crisis of encounter. The global 'others' are

> not who we thought they were, are not the image we have constructed of them, are not who we want them to be or hate them to be or need them to be so that we can continue to be who we think *we* are. (Ellsworth 2005, 89 in Taylor 2012, 180)

She thus argues for a global justice education that 'demands that students learn *from* rather than *about* the relations of injustice, inequity and exploitation in which we participate' (Taylor 2012, 190). This would be reflected in students recognising the wider implicatedness of their experiences in power relations as well as the individual enlightenment of experiencing a first-hand look at poverty in a 'global South' setting (see also Bryan 2022). In this way, Taylor (2012) argues, global citizenship education might serve as an 'antechamber within which learners might pause before seeking the consolation of hegemonic and habitual forms of knowledge' (196).

In the context of school linking trips, such a pedagogical framing is consistent with calls from Gallwey and Wilgus (2014) for a relational approach wherein spaces are opened for plural knowledges to relate dialogically. It 'also implies an epistemology that is socially constructed, understood as provisional and emergent as each moment of relation with difference will bring the possibility of new understandings' (Martin and Pirbhai-Illich 2016, 361). Martin and Griffiths (2012) argue that if teachers are offered critical theories as a basis for unpacking Western ways of seeing and knowing, school linking initiatives can lead to a deeper understanding of global and sustainability issues (cf. Sund 2016). They suggest a transformative pedagogy with explicit focus on relational forms of knowledge about culture and identity, self and other: 'there is a need to change the narrative of the study visit itself, from one that emphasises "getting experiences" to one that includes "relating to and learning from" the interactions that are central to such experiences' (Martin and Griffiths 2012, 956). Relatedly, a significant limitation of our research as with much of the research on school partnerships is the sole emphasis on perspectives of the partners from the 'global North' (see Leonard 2008 and Reid 2022 for examples of focusing on the needs and expertise of 'global South' partners).

Our findings of the spaces where there are possible critical openings in the students' descriptions also supports Tallon and McGregor's (2014) findings from a study in New Zealand that while young people are often bombarded with humanitarian and charity-based discourses of development, they are interested in new ways of relating that work beyond 'us' and 'them' dichotomies. Previous research in Sweden demonstrates that a more critically reflexive approach is possible. Pashby and Sund (2019) highlighted a classroom observation of an upper secondary school in a major city in a year 12 Social Science class where students worked on a presentation related to a recent fieldwork trip to India. The teacher began the class with some reminders to the students about taking a critical approach and being mindful of binary and hierarchical concepts. She encouraged them to challenge one dimensional views of development and to and use a multidimensional view when preparing their presentations. The students in the class were able to refer to and reflect critically on 'Western views of development'. They also engaged with some key tensions by reflecting on their understanding of the concept of poverty and concluded that 'being poor' is highly contextual and that their view on poverty was quite one-dimensional, expressing a more reflexive and complex version of the taken-for-grantedness discourse. Thus, it is both important and possible to raise deep issues around Westerncentrism and power imbalances. However, such approaches will require on-going reflexivity as there is always the danger of taking a critical thinking approach that ends up with circular thinking where the criticality stands in for implicated ethics (see Stein 2015). Yet, it is absolutely essential that school partnerships and trips provide pedagogical opportunities to engage students with more complex and reflexive discourses, and further research about these popular trips in Sweden and the Nordic countries more broadly is greatly needed.

Given the movements towards more eco-conscious travel, our research raises further questions around the rationales for, ethics of, and sustainability of such trips. Should they continue? Research has looked at internationalisation at home as a trend in higher education (Nilsson 2003) but less so in secondary schools (Tallon and McGregor 2014). Our study did not fully account for what specific messages and resources students engaged with around international development (e.g. Tallon and Milligan 2018) before the trip nor what the wider school population experienced. Regardless of whether the students take a trip or not, they need ethical global issues pedagogy to widen their discursive repertoire. This could support them to relate to and position themselves to their knowledge of people and places deeply different from themselves and their context as well as to consider their role in a more sustainable and ethical future. This can include inquiries into the students' own epistemic, ethical, and political positions in relation to this knowledge (see for example, Sund and Öhman 2023). Thus, we feel there is a call both for a critical review of the purposes and intended and unintended impacts of such trips, particularly in Nordic contexts, and for stronger attention to critically reflexive approaches to global issues more broadly.

Note

1. Our use of 'global North' and 'global South' refers to geopolitical areas at attempts to indicate how knowledge, economy and politics in the 'North' have been privileged, naturalized and projected. While imperfect and risking reinforcing a binary (hence our use of single quotations), the distinction aims to challenge to the dominance of Western ways of perceiving the world (see Levander & Mignolo, 2011).

Acknowledgements

Disclosure statement

Funding

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