Imagining a Post-COVID-19 Global Citizenship Education

Imaginando uma Educação para a Cidadania Global pós-Covid-19

Imaginando una Educación para la Ciudadanía Global después del Covid-19

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented conditions in all areas of social life and as the suspension of schooling became "the new normal," numerous experts and opinion-makers rushed to voice their recommendations to governments and educational organizations for normalizing schooling operations. In light of this worldwide crisis, we re-evaluate proposals to expand the model of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) that have received increasing attention and support from both international organizations, governments, and scholars. In this article, we argue that the predominately redemptive nature of GCE models and proposals since the mid-1990s cannot handle global problems associated with the current pandemic such as the restriction of citizen's privacy rights or the strengthening of exclusionary nationalistic messaging. Instead, more realistic models of GCE are needed. This paper concludes with new questions to strengthen the debate and alternatives for imagining a non-redemptive and more realistic GCE.
Keywords: Global Citizenship Education. COVID-19 pandemic. Redemptive pedagogies.

Resumo: A pandemia da Covid-19 criou condições sem precedentes em todas as áreas da vida social e, quando a suspensão da escola se tornou "o novo normal", vários especialistas e formadores de opinião apressaram-se em expressar suas recomendações aos governos e às organizações educacionais para normalizar as operações escolares. À luz dessa crise mundial, reavaliamos propostas para expandir o modelo de Educação para a Cidadania Global (ECG), que recebeu crescente atenção e apoio de organizações internacionais, governos e estudiosos. Neste artigo, argumentamos que a natureza predominantemente redentora dos modelos e das propostas de ECG desde meados dos anos de 1990 não pode lidar com problemas globais associados à pandemia atual, como a restrição dos direitos de privacidade do cidadão ou o fortalecimento de mensagens nacionalistas excludentes. Em vez disso, são necessários modelos mais realistas de ECG. Este artigo conclui com novas perguntas para fortalecer o debate e as alternativas para imaginar uma ECG não redentora e mais realista.
Palavras-chave: Educação para a Cidadania Global. Pandemia da Covid-19. Pedagogia redentora.

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Resumen: La pandemia del Covid-19 ha creado condiciones sin precedentes en todas las áreas de la vida y, cuando la suspensión de las actividades escolares se ha convertido en "la nueva normalidad", varios especialistas y formadores de opinión se han apresurado a expresar sus recomendaciones a los gobiernos y a las organizaciones educativas para normalizar las operaciones escolares. En este contexto de crise mundial, analizamos nuevamente propuestas para expandir el modelo de Educación para la Ciudadanía Global (ECG) que recibo creciente atención y apoyo de organizaciones internacionales, gobiernos y estudiosos. En este artículo, argumentamos que la naturaleza predominantemente redentora de los modelos y de las propuestas de ECG desde mediados de los años 1990 no puede lidiar con problemas globais asociados a la pandemia actual, como la restricción de derechos de privacidad del ciudadano o el fortalecimiento de mensajes nacionalistas excluyentes. En cambio, son necesarios modelos más realistas de ECG. Este artículo concluye con nuevas preguntas para fortalecer el debate y las alternativas para imaginar una ECG no redentora y más realista.

Palabras clave: Educación para la Ciudadanía Global. Pandemia de Covid-19. Pedagogía redentora.

Introduction

The unprecedented nature and scale of the COVID-19 crisis is making it extremely difficult –perhaps impossible– to develop a comprehensive view of all the sociopolitical processes generated and accelerated by this pandemic. This endeavor becomes even more problematic in the middle of the crisis when things are happening fast, and as we are all part of social experiments with unclear consequences. Yet, as educational researchers, it is our responsibility to keep working on identifying pedagogical problems, developing better explanations and encouraging reflections that expand our possibilities for action. Among the first global organizations articulating a COVID-19 related educational response, UNESCO and the OECD released reports analyzing challenges and recommendations for Ministries of Education.[1] While we agree with these organizations' assessment that the COVID-19 crisis is also a global pedagogical crisis enormously challenging for educators and policymakers, we differ with them in terms of their focus on school closures and the uncritical normalization of clearly inadequate systems of online assisted teaching. Their subsequent suggestions have been mainly geared towards minimizing the problems derived from the lockdowns (see UNESCO, 2020a, 2020b). While the desire to go back to "normal" times is understandable, it may not be desirable for the great majority of schools: "We can't return to normal, because the normal that we had was precisely the problem." (Anonymous graffiti in a Hong Kong subway station).

In pedagogical terms, the COVID-19 pandemic makes evident a collective failure of civic education systems to promote empathy and to encourage creative and democratic forms of engagement and collaboration among citizens and governments from other regions of the world. For those organizations and educators concerned with issues of global citizenship education (GCE), the COVID-19 pandemic implies much more than a disruption that needs to be addressed with digital learning models; it is also an opportunity to confirm the relevance of their cosmopolitan pedagogical model.[2]

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[1] See, for example, the documents *Distance learning strategies in response to COVID-19 school closures* and *Framework for reopening schools* released by UNESCO (2020a, 2020b) and *A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020* published by the OECD (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

[2] As Rizvi and Beech (2017) note, cosmopolitan ideals cannot be separated from a global ambition: "The idea of cosmopolitanism has traditionally been linked to notions of social solidarity, cohesion and a global sense of belonging (Nussbaum, 2002). What cosmopolitanism challenges is the spatial reference for social solidarity. So if communitarianism is based on the idea of solidarity across a given community (Etzioni, 2004), and nationalism implies developing a sense of belonging to a nation (Smith, 2010), cosmopolitanism appeals to solidarity and belonging along the whole cosmos or the universe" (p. 127).

GCE is a pedagogical movement that has received increasing attention and support from both international organizations, such as UNESCO, OECD, and Oxfam. UNESCO (2014) has very broadly defined it as "a framing paradigm which encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable" (p. 9). GCE has been frequently promoted as one of the most comprehensive pedagogical models that incorporates all the positive goals and practices from previous efforts related to both globalization and citizenship issues: citizenship education, global education, human rights education, multicultural education, environmental education, peace education and so forth (see, for example, Davies, 2006; Davies, Evans, & Reid, 2005; Hahn, 2005; Mannion et al., 2011). Apart from providing the illusion of a mere sum of harmonious contributions,[3] this reifying pedagogical frame has considered GCE as nationally located educational solution able to address non-educational global problems (Fischman & Estelles, 2020).

We remain, however, very skeptical about the transformational power of romanticized and redemptive GCE discourses and proposals (see Estelles & Fischman, 2020; Fischman & Estelles, 2020), especially in such an unprecedented situation like COVID-19. The complex and controversial nature of the global challenges triggered by the pandemic leaves no room for the lofty and universal ideals embedded in most GCE discourses.

In this article, we argue that the redemptive framing GCE discourses and proposals cannot effectively address the pedagogical dimmensions of global problems such as the restriction of citizen's privacy rights or the strengthening of exclusionary nationalistic messaging. Instead, more effective and feasible models of non-redemptive GCE are needed. To contribute to the development of more effective GCE models, we also explore possible alternatives for overcoming the prototype of the romantic global citizen embedded in redemptive frames and its emphasis on the individual.

Can GCE provide an adequate response to the post-COVID-19 educational urgencies?

In the last few decades, GCE, although steered by very diverse ideologies and understandings of the global,[4] has been usually presented by both international organizations and scholars as means to respond to the challenges derived from globalization (Estelles & Fischman, 2020; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014; Suárez-Orozco, 2007). Particularly, GCE has often been identified as part of the solution to world problems such as respect of human rights, knowledge of global interconnectedness, knowledge of other cultures, development of global responsibility, environmental awareness, economic growth, and/or social justice. As UNESCO (2014) stated, GCE "is expected to facilitate international cooperation and promote social transformation in an innovative way towards a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world" (p. 11). It would not be surprising if various researchers in the broad field of global education soon

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[3] Far from being a sum of harmonious contributions, GCE is a disputed pedagogical terrain with conflicting visions and the concept has not been exempt of criticism. Indeed, numerous scholars have critiqued the implicit Western cultural biases (Andreotti & Souza, 2012; Dill, 2015; Handler, 2013; Hartman & Kiely, 2014; Jeffress, 2012; Wang & Hoffman, 2016) and that GCE becomes a form of elitism under the accountability regime (DiCicco, 2016; Weenink, 2008; Zemach-Bersin, 2012).

[4] In fact, debates about the definition of GCE have been prolific and typologies abound. To mention a few examples, scholars have distinguished between soft and critical global citizenship education (Andreotti, 2006); neoliberal, radical and transformational approaches (Shultz, 2007); open, moral and social-political global citizenship (Veugelers, 2011); technical-economic and social justice approaches (Marshall, 2011); and cosmopolitan and advocacy types of global citizenship (Oxley & Morris, 2013).

start to demand more GCE to address the pedagogical shortcomings revealed by the COVID-19 crisis. Indeed, some have already started (see, for example, Rapoport, 2020). We said that it would not be a surprise because this crisis has clearly impacted two of the main areas of interest within GCE models: *citizenship* and the *global*. In this regard, we embrace renowned historian and public intellectual Yuval Harari's (2020) reflection when he states that "in this time of crisis, we face two particularly important choices. The first is between totalitarian surveillance and citizen empowerment. The second is between nationalist isolation and global solidarity".

We agree with Harari about the relevance of reflecting and selecting between these two choices. The first is related to the attempts against citizen's civil rights amid the pursuit of safety all over the world. The second has to do with the lack of international cooperation and the parallel strengthening of exclusionary nationalistic feelings. These global phenomena are demanding pedagogical responses that the designers of educational models concerned with citizens' empowerment –regardless of their nationality– can no longer ignore. Yet, we wonder: can GCE provide an adequate response to these challenges?

In our previous works, we have strongly criticized the romanticized and idealistic trend of most GCE discourses and proposals (see Estelles & Fischman, 2020; Fischman & Estelles, 2019). Our main arguments at that time, still relevant today, were the following. Firstly, that the notion of GCE as the solution to the most pressing global problems does not necessarily contribute to the promotion of politically engaged pedagogical models. Secondly, that by embracing the idea that GCE "aims to empower learners to engage and assume active roles, both locally and globally, to face and resolve global challenges" (UNESCO, 2014, p. 15), it is implicitly assumed that the responsibility for solving those global problems lies exclusively with individuals, not a shared responsibility with governments or international institutions (Fischman & Estelles, 2020). The current pandemic provides strong evidence that globally crucial processes and decisions are mostly focused on financial and economic concerns led by agents with little or no democratic legitimacy (Held, 2016). In order to tackle the serious human problems flowing accross national borders (including the COVID-19 pandemic), a more legitimate and democratic global governance is urgently needed, and this democratization process necessarily requires the reformation of existing international organizations and the creation of new institutions (Archibugi & Held, 2011; Held, 2010, 2016). Yet, idealistic GCE discourses overlook the issue of reforming institutions and exclusively focus on "equipping learners with competences [...] to act collaboratively and responsibly to find global solutions for global challenges" (UNESCO, 2014, p. 9). Thereby, with the redemptive idealization of GCE as an educational solution to non-educational global problems, the neo-liberal perspective of minimizing the public sphere and governments' obligations towards their citizens is reinforced (Estelles & Fischman, 2020; Romero & Estelles, 2019). As formulated by other scholars, the traditional discourse of GCE promotes an 'entrepreneurial self' able to respond to the neoliberal rational, with each individual responsible for themselves and the future for all as a means of solving global problems (Arnold, 2014; Hartung, 2017).

In a crisis like the one triggered by the Covid-19, the problem is not only that individuals are not able to imagine and carry out forms of cooperation with other citizens around the world, but also –and perhaps more importantly– that they do not demand these measures from their governments. In these critical moments, it becomes obvious how deeply we have internalized the idea that governments must defend the interests of their nations and this assumption operates even for those of us who hate to hear that slogan of 'my country first' from our political opponents.[5]

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[5] In a time of crisis, we continue to feel more refugeed in our national borders, even though many protectionist measures may eventually have detrimental effects on us (Han, 2020). This is the case, for example, of border closures. Despite the fact that travel bans have traditionally had limited effectiveness in preventing transmission (Errett, Sauer, & Rutkow, 2020) and violate International Health Regulations (Habibi et al., 2020), some of the most affected countries

The individualization of the global civic challenge that underlies most GCE discourses does not help to overcome this assumption.

Another example of the indifference of GCE towards the actions of governments and institutions is the scarce attention paid by the literature to the recent rise of national populisms worldwide (Mårdh & Tryggvason, 2017, p. 1). However, whether we like it or not, this phenomenon has largely determined the course of the COVID-19 crisis (Bieber, 2020). This pandemic has favored strengthening exclusionary nationalistic feelings in a soil already fertilized by what Norris and Inglehart (2019) call *authoritarian populisms*: the calls to 'return home' from all countries, to stay at home to 'save the country', the constant reference to the 'heroes/soldiers' of the nation, etc. and the most extreme examples: Trump's bid to buy an exclusive vaccine for U.S. citizens, or Chinese salvationist propaganda. From the renaming of the COVID-19 as the 'Chinese virus' to the spread of xenophobic conspiracy speculations, this crisis has been a breeding ground for the reinforcement of chauvinistic attitudes, which have been promoted, to a large extent, by populist leaders (Markus, 2020, p. 132). It is surprising that these issues are not included in the last reports published by UNESCO (2020a, 2020b) an organization that has traditionally undertaken the purpose of "encouraging the development of international understanding among children" (UNESCO, 1953, p. 7; see also UNESCO, 1974, 2014), and when numerous researchers have deeply analyzed and denounced the effect of schooling on chauvinism, ethnic prejudice, and hostility toward immigrants (e.g., Coenders & Scheepers, 2003; Jenssen & Engesbak, 1994; Meeusen, Vroome, & Hooghe, 2013; Wagner & Zick, 1995).

The recent wave of national populisms (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018) has not been thoroughly examined by educational researchers (Mårdh & Tryggvason, 2017, p. 1; Petrie, McGregor, & Crowther, 2019, p. 488). Therefore, it is still unclear to what extent the idealized narratives about the rise of nations[6] are used to reinforce exclusionary visions of 'our country or region first' and the 'othering' of supposedly 'non-natives', limiting the development of notions of global solidarity and the much-needed empathic critical skills. The phenomenon of populism, which has paradoxically happened in tandem with the expansion of GCE discourses, has not even piqued the interest of those scholars who have dedicated considerable effort to reflect upon the tensions between nationalism and GCE (e.g., Bamber et al., 2018; Starkey, 2018).

Yet, those designing GCE models tendency to individualize the global civic challenge is not the only explanation for GCE literature's inattention to national populisms. The conflicting and controversial nature of this phenomenon (Sant et al., 2017) inevitably clashes with the lofty ideals and redemptive frames embedded in GCE discourses.[7] As Mårdh and Tryggvason (2017) suggest, "the somewhat tarnished reputation of the concept [populism] could account for its obscurity in educational thought" (p. 1). The idealism of GCE discourses tend to exalt idealistic virtues and potentialities, instead of paying attention to the difficulties –including the socio-political– that teachers face when implementing its lofty goals (Estelles & Fischman, 2020, p. 9). Addressing issues of national populism can be a serious challenge for educators, especially in times

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have applied this measure and suffered the consequences. European countries, for instance, have experienced supply chain constraints and delays, including the transportation of medical equipment, due to their border restrictions.

[6] It is well-established that globally civic education programs systematically promoted romanticized and idealized nationalistic narratives (see, for instance, Cuesta, 1997; Schissler & Soysal, 2005).

[7] *Narratives of redemption* work when an individual educator or student challenges all the systemic failures, the structural dynamcis of oppression, and through the sheer force of his or her consciousenss and heroic actions overcomes all the limitations. When others follow the lead of the redeemer a class, a school or a larger system is redeemed. This process follows the biblical tradition of sin-crisis-failure-trauma and finalizes with archetypal myths of redemption-absolution-success-recovery. What's involved in this redemptive model is the recognition that your pre-redemption identity, was wrong, and subjects need to be made aware of their previous limitations.

of intense political polarization (Zembylas, 2019), when even teachers and students highly value authoritarianism (Quaynor, 2011, p. 46). However, traditional GCE models downplay this conflicting issue, despite the clear challenge that national populism poses to purposes *par excellence* of GCE such as understanding global interdependence and fostering global engagement.

Something similar happens with the cross-national issue of digital surveillance. Literature reviews done in the field of GCE do not report studies dealing with this topic (Estelles & Fischman, 2020; Goren & Yemini, 2017; Yemini, Tibbitts, & Goren, 2019), or even those considering the analysis of digital media content or other related IT matters. Right now, however, this topic becomes one of the major challenges for democracies and the protection of civil rights (Bieber, 2020; Preciado, 2020). Given that digital surveillance has proven to be extremely effective in containing the virus in several Asian countries, this solution has been rapidly exported to other places on the planet. Indeed, several European and North American countries are developing ways to track their citizens' movements using smartphone data and Google and Apple have already presented their 'personalized' solution to the COVID-19 crisis. The debate over the right to data protection and the privacy of citizenship is so sidelined that even China has proudly displayed the superiority of its police system (Han, 2020). Due to the shock caused by the pandemic, citizens' tolerance towards state and corporate cyber control seems to be greater than ever.

Certainly, the deterioration of democracy and civil rights may be transitory given the circumstances. But, similar to concerns voiced by many public intellectuals and opinion makers,[8] educational scholar Rapoport (2020) states, "I am concerned that, here and there, we see public figures who use the current situation to call for a halt to democratic processes and promote the idea of temporary authoritarian measures; temporary has a tendency to become permanent" (p. 1). Can GCE effectively contribute to this civic challenge?

Questions for a Post-COVID-19 Global Citizenship Education

The COVID-19 pandemic is coupled with previously global civic problems like the deepening of inequalities, the rise of authoritarian populism, and widespread of digital surveillance among other complex dynamics that have become more severe than ever before. Right now, it is worth asking whether in the coming years educational researchers and policy makers will continue to behave as if none of this had happened or if, on the contrary, the catastrophe will press them to rethink certain pedagogical models. We argue that if we want to move forward, we need to reject redemptive GCE frames and, in particular, the prototype of the global citizen and the exclusive emphasis on the individualistic dimensions embedded in redemptive frames.

Overcoming the prototype of the romantic global citizen

Redemptive GCE promises a harmonious process through which the child becomes the cosmopolitan citizen who, liberated from the barriers of provincialism/nationalism, will act according to rational and humanitarian values. This idea of the political subject, although apparently inoffensive and benign, is highly problematic. The prototype of the romantic globally educated cosmopolitan citizen, while embodying the emancipatory principles of equity, multiculturalism, social justice and so forth, simultaneously defines what is intended to be excluded (Popkewitz, 2009). The optimism embedded in cosmopolitan language involves both a hope of

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[8] See the perspectives of Harvey, Agamben, Žižek, Butler, Badiou, Han, among others, in the edited book *Sopa de Wuhan*.

progress and inclusion and a fear of all those that constitute a threat to that progress (Popkewitz, 2009). For Andreotti's (2015), this global imaginary divides humanity:

> …between those who perceive themselves as knowledge holders, hard workers, world-problem solvers, rights dispensers, global leaders; and those who are perceived to be (and often perceive their cultures as) lacking knowledge, laid back, problem creators, aid dependent and global followers in their journey towards the undisputed goal of development (p. 3).

This division/exclusion explains why, with the propitiatory conditions (increasing economic inequalities, feelings of deprivation, etc.), national populist leaders have included, among their enemies, cosmopolitan liberals who 'despise' the nation (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p. 107). Even with the apparently normalization of the language of cosmopolitanism and GCE, fears about the destruction of national cultures and identities are still present[9] and have considerably fueled recent populisms (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018, p. 14-15). However, the question should not be *how do we integrate the 'other' in GCE?* But *how do we do so if the 'other', as Todorov (2012) would say, is also 'within' us?*

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how deeply embedded national identities are within us and the difficulties of imagining alternatives that go beyond the binary us/them (Bieber, 2020; Farage, 2020). It is not only a matter of fostering 'global awareness'. We have never been so aware of the dense bonds that connect us to each other globally (Rapoport, 2020, p. 1), but we still seem unable to both imagine and desire alternative ways to cooperatively overcome global crisis. During this crisis, most governments –regardless of their orientation– did not begin to act until the COVID-19 threat was within their frontiers, even though measures such as sharing reliable information among countries, coordinating global production of medical equipment or creating an economic safety net could have considerably minimized the impact of the spread of the virus (Schwarzer & Vallée, 2020).

The development of global solidarity at the individual level is rather uncertain, but there is no doubt that if we want to confront global phenomena, it is necessary and urgent. What makes us reluctant to cooperate with humans from other regions of the world? What motivates us to do it? Proponents of GCE have usually taken for granted that altruistic beliefs and seemingly purely Cartesian rational thoughts are the main drivers of global citizens' behaviors (Estelles & Fischman, 2020). However, emotions and non-altruistic behaviors are also an intrinsic part of our human nature.[10]

Emotions and affect are always involved in political decision making, and especially in times of crisis. In fact, one of the essential characteristics of the coronavirus pandemic has been the proliferation of fear (Bieber, 2020, p. 11). Fear of the spread of the disease is probably the main reason for citizens' tolerance toward digital surveillance. In addition, authoritarian populist leaders have widely used fear as a political weapon to blame minorities, migrants and/or other 'outsiders' for the spread of the disease (Bieber, 2020). Offering simple answers by constructing clear enemies constitutes their modus operandi (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p. 18; Wodak, 2015, p. 4). Trump and

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[9] According to the World Values Survey (2014), more than 80% of the people in the US and Europe recognize feeling strongly attached to their nation and being willing to fight for it.

[10] This is not the place to point to the limitations of pedagogical models that explain "rationality" in terms of conscious and self-regulated mind exercises (Choi, 2016; Fischman & Haas, 2012; Myers, 2016), but it is important highlighting that, by assuming a model of disembodied rationality, GCE diminishes the importance of emotions in human decision making, and prevents to develop more effective pedagogical approaches.

Bolsonaro's accusations that China created the virus are probably the best examples of simplistic constructions of monstrous external enemies.

Ignoring the power of fear is not only naïve, but also extremely impractical for any current civic education proposal that aims to go beyond good intentions. Instead, it would be more realistic to start thinking how GCE can respond to the fear that is currently motivating support for authoritarianism or how it can provide teachers and students with opportunities to critically reflect about the emotional modes through which authoritarian populisms are articulated (Zembylas, 2019).

Beyond the individualization of the global civic challenge

The scarce international cooperation shown during the COVID-19 crisis was not only indicative of personal deficiencies (lack of global awareness/identity/engagement), but also deficiencies of governments and international organizations. The fact that pedagogical interventions operate at an individual level does not necessarily mean that they have to point the subject as the main responsible for the resolution of global social problems. This, however, occurs with the individualization of the global civic challenge that underlies redemptive GCE discourses. In educational research, this individualization has been applied to the teacher, who becomes the most important agent in the implementation of GCE programs (see, for example, Appleyard & McLean, 2011; Guo, 2014; Zhao, 2010). It is usually neglected that GCE, although relatively popular among international organizations and educational scholars, remains peripheral in national school curricula (Myers, 2016). Yet, governments and policy makers are rarely identified as responsible of this marginal position. We wonder, with such laudable and ambitious aspirations, why has GCE remained as a movement on the fringes of general schooling? Why has the education of the global political subject rarely been associated with a global rethinking of the whole function of national schooling? Why has it usually been presented as a proposal to include in (often extracurricular) programs or, at best, in social studies courses?

In this regard, it cannot be forgotten that the official discourse of GCE has largely been shaped and expanded by neoliberal policies (Andreotti & Souza, 2012; Arnold, 2014; DiCicco, 2016; Myers, 2016) and, therefore, that the disconnection between GCE and the state/public schooling can be another legacy of the neoliberal regime. This pandemic, however, has also shown simultaneous process of revalorization of the public responsibility of the state. After decades of hegemonic presence of austerity models following the neoliberal credo, the COVID-19 pandemic provides indisputable evidence that the states and their citizens are the only ones that have the capacity to save lives and attend to the emergencies and needs of the population. A distant and absent state cannot provide an effective response to a crisis of the magnitude of COVID-19 nor to the sustainability crisis. Nonetheless, strengthening the structure and legitimacy of 'national states' has as its correlate the insufficient development of a transnational institutional architecture capable of giving a common, rapid, and effective response to phenomena such as this. The COVID-19 crisis has shown that, without taking into account the relevance of civic institutions at both national and international level to address global problems, GCE cannot deliver on its lofty promises.

In sum, although the redemptive orientation embedded in traditional GCE models was also prevalent in previous civic education discourses (e.g., Castro & Knowles, 2017; Fischman & Haas, 2012; Knowles & Clark, 2018; McCowan, 2009), the need of overcoming these romantized frames becomes more urgent now that we have witnessed both the strong connections that bring us together and the terrible consequences of not articulating a global response. Now it is time for GCE to be more than a buzzword.

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