

Author: Elkorghli

**A quest for theorizing a critical global citizenship education in Norway: Conversations with teacher educators**

Your full name: Essam Abdelrasul Bubaker Elkorghli

Affiliated authors with institutions: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Affiliation: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (College of Education)

Current position: PhD student

Title of your paper: A quest for theorizing a critical global citizenship education in Norway: Conversations with teacher educators

**Abstract** (300 words)

In light of the recent changes in Norway's teacher education and the visions it aspires to achieve in the future on the one hand, and Norway's perceived global positionality as a champion of human rights and equality on the other, this exploratory study had two pursuits. Introduce a theoretical framework that premises the politicized nature of education which is predicated on the understanding that education is always for and against certain values. This framework is used to conceptualize a heuristic for critical/neoliberal Global Citizenship Education (GCE) using a semiotic square (Greimas, 1987) to inform how critical values can sometimes be unintentionally conflated with neoliberalism, and vice versa. The second pursuit, based on the theoretical framework established, I engaged in conversations with professors of teacher education who have published on global- and citizenship education-related topics, inquiring how GCE is viewed and instructionally enacted by them, and what tensions/possibilities exist in the processes of teaching and implementing GCE. By using the semiotic square as an analytical approach to the teaching and understanding of GCE, I reached the following key and tentative findings: The conversations highlighted that there is a lot of freedom to incorporate global dimensions in their teaching, which results in it becoming an individual issue, as opposed to mandated. Some professors provided critiques of textbooks and citizenship education to be reproducing state branding and hostile nationalism. Lastly, some professors conflate cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) with global citizenship. Central implications of this exploratory study are that teacher education for global citizenship is missing understandings of political economy, rendering teachers unable to teach about global capitalist crises and their reverberations. And that the teaching of GCE would greatly benefit from critical and post-colonial theories in how they address issues of inequality via imperialism, racism, colonialism, economic exclusion, and neoliberalism.

Works cited

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson, *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.

Greimas, A. J. (1987). *On meaning: Selected writings in semiotic theory*. University of Minnesota Press.

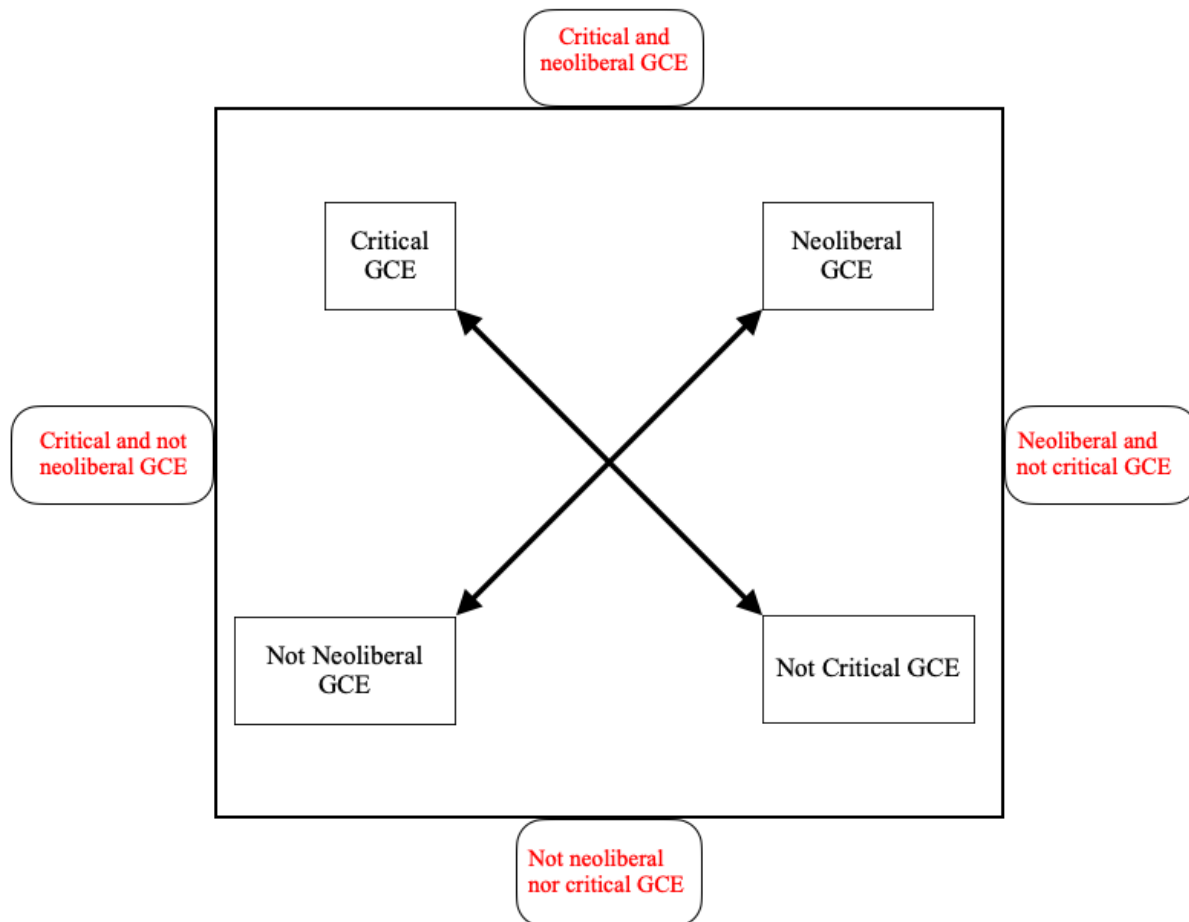
**Extended summary** (1000 words, excluding reference list) introduction, theoretical background, methods, preliminary findings/findings, results, reference list.

There are different forms of citizenships: voting and knowing legal rights and obligations, using privileges and rights in rectifying social order, and being social justice oriented that is geared towards promoting equality and demanding structural changes in the system for its betterment (Parker, 1994; Sætra & Stray, 2019; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). These can be made more complex when thinking of how our local actions have transnational consequences (e.g., consumption, wars, environment). Global Citizenship Education (GCE) invites us to think beyond the nation state. While it is important

to note that education is responsible for instilling these forms of citizenships as they are institutions of social and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), this exploratory study attempts to answer: How GCE is understood and implemented by professors of teacher education in Norway?

The theoretical framework is girded in the understanding that education is political, and it centers Freire’s dictum, “We teach on behalf of somebody and against somebody, on behalf of some values, against some values” (as cited in Torres, 2013a, p. 78). Of equal importance, Stuart Hall (1981) brought to attention a key issue that he calls, “the process of articulation” where the same words uttered by different people can have different meanings and implications. GCE needs to address questions of *realpolitik* (Torres, 2017, p. 11).

In the following double-axis semiotic square (Greimas, 1987), I analyze the relationship between these different terms across multiple intersections. In our semiotic square, the terms given on the upper horizontal (neoliberal and critical) are contraries. Their opposites (also referred to as negatives or contradictions) are diagonally located on the lower horizontal (not neoliberal, not critical). Additionally, there are hybrids which are located outside of the square on the four sides by combining the four possibilities inside the square.



- Critical GCE: Emancipatory and liberatory, tackles issues in a collective manner.
- Neoliberal GCE: Global economic challenges require citizenship education that meets the demands of the global market (Parker, 2011), focusing on individualistic approach for upward

social mobility (Carnoy, 2001a; 2001b). Education is standardized, borrowed from business managerialism efficiency models (Torres, 2009)

- Not critical GCE: This conceptualization promotes a rudimentary and apolitical conception of global humanity, one that erases race, gender, class, and citizenship. Examples of such a stance include statements like, “We are all humans,” or “We live in a borderless world” or “We must be colorblind”; an imagined global community (Anderson, 2006)
- Not Neoliberal GCE: This stance acknowledges the micro- and macro-level structures that lead to unequal distribution of resources, moving away from simply presenting efficiency models and standardization of globalized knowledge. It recognizes alternative, undocumented and Indigenous knowledge as legitimate forms of inquiry and research, and acknowledges meritocracy as an insufficiently nuanced way to approach economic justice (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. xi; Lauder, 2012)
- Critical and neoliberal GCE: In this relationship, we can see a centrist democracy described as a *third way* (Giddens, 1994; 1998; Mouffe, 2000, p. 109). Global issues are approached from an instrumentalist and efficiency-driven perspective. “Pink capitalism” is another example of this conceptualization (Johansson & Mølsted, 2019)
- Neoliberal and not critical GCE: Emphasizes the need for all students to acquire as much standardized knowledge as possible. Citizens become “more global” (and more “cosmopolitan”) based on the level of knowledge they have about global phenomena; citizenship is only about “knowing and watching the world” (Børhaug, 2019)
- Not neoliberal or critical GCE: Is a broad hybrid conceptualization that excludes both neoliberal and critical conceptions. It is ultimately a platonic definition devoid of all nuance
- Critical and not neoliberal GCE: Landing on the space I hope to promote, this conceptualization implies an emancipatory, liberatory democracy which prospers on antagonistic politics, and actively seeks ways to address societal-ecological issues. It questions the validity of standardized assessments, and its success is predicated on the idea that much of our collective and individual knowledge cannot be distilled and presented in simple tables and numbers (Gorur, 2015; 2016; Hansen & Vestegaard, 2018).

Through the application of our semiotic square, we noted how utterances that seem to be critical may also be neoliberal. For instance, traveling and seeing the world can be seen as one pathway to enhancing criticality and international understanding - however, if this is divorced from learning about societal structures and the causes that have led to global power and economic imbalances, it simply proliferates the use of a neoliberal gaze at these issues (Klein & Wikan, 2019; Wikan & Klein, 2017). A second utilization relates to included exclusion and re-presentation of issues related to international intervention, which falls under the not critical and not neoliberal sphere (though it can also be understood as neoliberal GCE - see Hudson, 2015). Ahmed (2012) noted that much of the inclusion that occurs is actually an “included exclusion” - that is, those who are celebrated for their existence into the dominant order are institutionally silenced given that their expected and perceived role (to represent the dominant order as ‘inclusive’) has been fulfilled.

There is absence of teaching about political economy. It is clear that the political spectrum in Norway has been slightly shifting to the right, both in economic terms and education policy (Blossing et al., 2014; Elkorghli, 2021; Wiborg, 2013). As one informant stated, “Teacher training is very, very

poor at dealing with economics... If students ask [their teachers] what is the financial crisis, then the teachers cannot explain it." Failing to openly discuss economics with students can be detrimental to maintaining the welfare state and continuing to promote the full potential of citizenship (Marshall, 1950).

While Norway's current approaches to GCE span across our proposed semiotic square, the potential for cultivating a robust curriculum and citizenry is clear and present. Lastly, the teacher education framework (lærerutdanning rammeplan) grants a lot of freedom (according to our informants) to teach what the teacher educators value in social studies education. That is they are granted agency, but with that freedom comes the responsibility to take control of delimiting what global citizenship education means and to how is it to be included in their instruction. The abundance of freedom to teach what they aspire can be seen both as a form of accountability and agency (Apple, 2016), which oftentimes go hand in hand, and that means the burden lays on the teacher educators to engage in global citizenship education and/or incorporate global dimensions into their curriculum (Hickes & Holden, 2007).

*(1057 words)*

- Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Duke University Press.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/9780822395324>
- Anderson, B. R. O. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Rev. ed.). Verso. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.01609>
- Apple, M. W. (2016). *Power, policy, and the realities of curriculum and teaching*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcPvOPk7Uqs&t=3866s>
- Blossing, U., Imsen, G., & Moos, L. (2014). *The Nordic education model: "A School for All" encounters neo-liberal policy*. Springer.
- Børhaug, K. (2019). Watching, assessing, participating. *Nordidactica: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1, 17–35.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society, and culture* (1990 ed). Sage in association with Theory, Culture & Society, Dept. of Administrative and Social Studies, Teesside Polytechnic.
- Carnoy, M. (2001a). El impacto de la mundialización en las estrategias de reforma educativa. *Revista de Educación, Extraordinario*, 101–110.
- Carnoy, M. (2001b). La articulación de las reformas educativas en la economía mundial. *Revista de Educación, Extraordinario*, 111–120.
- Elkorghli, E. (2021). The impact of neoliberal globalisation on (global) citizenship teacher education in Norway. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2021.1872369>
- Giddens, A. (1994). *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics*. Stanford University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1998). *The Third Way*. Wiley.
- Gorur, R. (2015). Producing calculable worlds: Education at a glance. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 36(4), 578–595. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2015.974942>
- Gorur, R. (2016). Seeing like PISA: A cautionary tale about the performativity of international assessments. *European Educational Research Journal*, 15(5), 598–616.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904116658299>
- Greimas, A. J. (1987). *On meaning: Selected writings in semiotic theory*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Hall, S. (1981). Notes on deconstructing "the popular." In R. Samuel, *People's history and socialist theory* (pp. 227–240). Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Hansen, H. K., & Vestergaard, A. (2018). On the Contest of Lists and Their Governing Capacities: How "Tax Havens" Became "Secrecy Jurisdictions." In S. Lindblad, D. Pettersson, & T. S. Popkewitz (Eds.), *Education by the numbers and the making of society: The expertise of international assessments* (pp. 35–52).
- Hicks, D., & Holden, C. (2007). *Teaching the Global Dimension: Key Principles and Effective Practice*. Routledge.

Hudson, M. (2015). *Finance as Warfare*. College Publications.

Johansson, U.-A., & Mølsted, C. E. (2019). School Certification: Marketing Schools by Appearance. In C. E. Mølsted & D. Pettersson (Eds.), *New practices of comparison, quantification and expertise in education: Conducting empirically based research* (pp. 230–239). Routledge.

Klein, J., & Wikan, G. (2019). Teacher education and international practice programmes: Reflections on transformative learning and global citizenship. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 79*, 93–100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.12.003>

Lauder, H. (2012). *Educating for the knowledge economy?: Critical perspectives*. Routledge.

Marshall, T. H. (1950). *Citizenship and social class, and other essays*. University Press.

Parker, W. C. (1994). Toward a Pluralist Conception of Citizenship Education. *Teachers College Record, 98*, 104–125.

Parker, W. C. (2011). “International Education” in US Public Schools. *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 9*(3–4), 487–501.

Sætra, E., & Stray, J. H. (2019). Hva slags medborger? *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education (NJCIE), 3*(1), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.7577/njcie.244>

Torres, C. A. (2009). *Education and Neoliberal Globalization*. Taylor and Francis.

Torres, C. A. (2013). *Political Sociology of Adult Education* (Vol. 12). SensePublishers.

Torres, C. A. (2017). *Theoretical and empirical foundations of critical global citizenship education*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy. *American Educational Research Journal, 41*(2), 237–269. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312041002237>

Wiborg, S. (2013). Neo-liberalism and universal state education: The cases of Denmark, Norway and Sweden 1980–2011. *Comparative Education, 49*(4), 407–423. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2012.700436>

Wikan, G., & Klein, J. (2017). Can International Practicum Foster Intercultural Competence Among Student Teachers? *Journal of the European Teacher Education Network, 12*(0), 95–104.

Author: Elkorghli

**A quest for theorizing a critical global citizenship education in Norway: Conversations with teacher educators**