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Issues-centred global citizenship education in Asia: Curricular challenges and possibilities in nation-centric and neoliberal times

Theresa Alviar-Martin and Mark C. Baidon

THE UNITED NATIONS Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines global citizenship education (GCE) 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” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 9). Although GCE’s meaning and purpose remain contested due to traditional notions of citizenship as a status anchored to the nation-state (Heater, 2002), scholars agree that GCE plays a crucial role in preparing young people to confront the challenges of an interdependent world community. Today, the rise of fundamentalist-inspired terrorism; xenophobic responses to immigration; divisive and racially-charged rhetoric surrounding political campaigns in Britain, France and the United States; and the worldwide backlash against corporatism during the 2010 Occupy movement underline the need for GCE aimed at “understanding and resolving global issues in their social, political, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 9).

Research on GCE in Asian societies attests to recognition of the importance of issues-centred pedagogy (Cogan, 1997; Kennedy, Lee & Grossman, 2010; Lee, 2009). Yet, scholars contend that ideological discourses and educational policies that subsume global citizenship within neoliberal and nation-centric reform frameworks hamper efforts towards issues-centred GCE (Gaudelli, 2009; Myers, 2016). In this article, we review empirical studies from Asia to illustrate how issues-centred GCE unfolds and is influenced by these dominant discourses; in many ways resulting in a type of civic education that disenfranchises and alienates young citizens.

This paper is organised into four sections. First, we discuss theories of curriculum as discursive practice (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006) and highlight implications of global discourses on classroom-based

study of global issues (Gaudelli, 2009). Second, we sketch the context of GCE in Asia by drawing on comparative studies and scholarly analysis of citizenship education in the region. We then survey case studies from selected Asian societies to illustrate that—rather than addressing public issues and promoting social justice—nationalist and neoliberal discourses work together to forward unsustainable growth that further polarises societies based on social class, power and privilege (Mitchell, 2003). Finally, we recommend future directions in GCE research and practice. By illuminating empirically grounded studies from Asia and by reconciling these examples with theories of curriculum as discourse, our aim is to contribute to efforts in promoting GCE as a means towards humanistic transformation (UNESCO, 2014) in nation-centric and neoliberal times (Nussbaum, 2010; Torres, 2009).

Discourses of GCE and the issues-centred global curriculum

Discourses are ways of constituting knowledge; the language and beliefs that serve as frameworks and ideologies to help orient people’s understanding and actions in the world (Foucault, 1980). Abowitz and Harnish (2006) illustrated the ways that curriculum is a discursive practice reflective of “terminology, values, rhetorical styles, habits, and truths” (p. 655) that spring from historical and social conditions. They argue that stated intentions in the civic curriculum—found in official documents articulating appropriate modes of civic engagement or political directives that define civic identity—comprise expressions of beliefs about citizenship, privileging specific ideological perspectives over others. In light of transnational exchanges of ideas that are informing curriculum policies across societies (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010), Gaudelli (2009) identified cosmopolitanism, nationalism and neoliberalism as global ideological discourses surrounding GCE.

Each ideology differentially shapes civic curriculum outcomes and implicates the manner in which teachers and learners approach the study of global issues.

GCE as defined by UNESCO (2014) echoes the cosmopolitan perspective, in that it recognises “the moral obligations owed to all human beings based solely on (their) humanity alone, without reference to race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, culture, religion, political affiliation, state citizenship, or other communal particularities” (Brown & Held, 2010, p. 1). Cosmopolitanism acknowledges individuals’ capacities to form overlapping affiliations, attachments and consciousness (Banks, 2008) that underpin an ability to approach ideas from multiple perspectives (Hanvey, 1976). Given the richness and multiplicity of individuals’ identities, cosmopolitan GCE considers learners as contributors of knowledge. The Octagon model of the International Association of Educational Achievement’s Civic Education Study mirrors theories of learning within the cosmopolitan perspective; capturing the ways in which school, community, national, and transnational discourses influence the civic curriculum while emphasising students’ agency to construct personal meanings of citizenship within these intersecting communities of discourse and practice (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald & Shulz, 2001).

Appiah (2008) further positions the idea of “fallibility” as a foundation of the cosmopolitan perspective. Fallibility posits that individuals are charged with ultimate responsibility for their own lives, but insists that each person reflects on whether or not he or she is doing his or her fair share to “make sure everyone has the chance at the dignified human existence that we are all entitled to” (p. 95). Ultimately, the goal of cosmopolitan GCE is the transformation of the individual as well as society based on principles of equality, social justice and human rights (Hicks, 2003; Osler & Starkey, 2005; UNESCO, 2014). Thus, the consideration of societal problems through systemic and political frameworks is central to the GCE curriculum (UNESCO, 2014). This entails cultivating in students the skills of reflection, criticality, collaboration and problem solving as they examine the ways that “political issues and actors shape the local, familiar world around them” (Myers, 2016, p. 4).

Cosmopolitanism remains at the periphery of the GCE ideological landscape (Oxley & Morris,

2013). Rather, GCE is dominated by discourses of nationalism and neoliberalism (Gaudelli, 2009; Myers, 2016). Traditionally, theorists posit curriculum as a form of “institutionalized learning” whose structure, sequence, and outcomes are strongly associated with discourses of development particular to nation-states (Reid, 2003). The national perspective of GCE builds on Western liberal and republican political traditions in positing civic identity as primarily a matter of social contract between the state and the individual (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). It aims towards a shared national identity among diverse populations, and employs logics of national security and anti-terrorism (Parker, 2011) as means to strengthen the nation’s standing in a highly competitive, unequal and politically volatile world. Because nationalist discourses reflect hierarchies entrenched in states’ political and social systems, powerful sectors of society decide the knowledge, skills and capacities that are worth learning (Apple, 1990). The nation’s dominant identities and economic priorities, therefore, frame students’ learning about the world (Spring, 2004), and the study of global issues follows a path towards “pre-determined, conventionally-conceived cultural and social spaces” (Zong, Wilson & Quashiga, 2008, p. 203).

Neoliberal ideology on the other hand, contends that national governments and institutions have “reinvented themselves as global entities in order to survive in a global economy” (Gaudelli, 2009, p. 71). People are reconfigured to become conversant in the homogenisation and hybridity brought by globalisation, and their participation in capital, either as investor, consumer or entrepreneur, constitutes an act of citizenship. Applied to education, neoliberalism is evident in standards-based reforms, high-stake examinations and ranking, international comparisons and discourses focused on excellence (Davies & Bansel, 2007; Gaudelli, 2009). Thus, similar to the nationalist perspective, neoliberalism limits classroom-based exploration of societal issues, because it implies knowledge that is scientifically-based, transferrable, measurable and objective (Eisner, 2002; Gaudelli, 2010). The skills of innovation, criticality, or problem solving that are fundamental to an issues-centred pedagogy may be evident in the neoliberal curriculum; however, these are couched within rationalisations such as preparation for work or addressing demands in the global economy.

The context of GCE in Asia: Policy, curriculum, and pedagogy

Cosmopolitan principles are evident in cultural and religious traditions of Asian societies (Sen, 2010). As scholars have noted, across Islam, Confucianism and Buddhism are provisions to educate young people to care for the fate of human beings inside and outside their own societies, to value cultural diversity, and to develop skills for dialogue across differences (Appiah, 2006; Nussbaum, 2012). Research likewise notes the presence of cosmopolitan principles in educational reform intentions across Asia. For example, Lee (2009), in a survey of studies conducted by the Comparative Education Research Center, described official intentions for citizenship education in the region as tending to “emphasise democratic values, and advocate that citizenship teaching should be ... characterised by dialogue and critical thinking” (p. 18).

While cosmopolitan perspectives of GCE are affirmed in education policies across Asia, neoliberal and nationalist discourses remain the most prominent. A case in point is a report on transversal education (UNESCO, 2013) that focused on global citizenship and three other key dimensions (critical and innovative thinking, inter-personal skills, and intra-personal skills). The study involved nine Asian jurisdictions (China [Shanghai], Hong Kong, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines and Thailand). The researchers reported the predominance of critical and innovative thinking relative to the other key dimensions. They also noted the influence of “social and humanistic discourses” in fostering national identity while cultivating attributes reflective of cosmopolitan principles, such as respect for diversity, tolerance, and empathy. Yet, “economic discourses”, embodied in rationales such as “boosting economic development and increasing international competitiveness” and addressing “the changing demands of the workplace”, posed “the most powerful driver” of education reform (UNESCO, 2013, p. 6).

Global citizenship education curriculum in Asia is likewise shaped by emphasis on moral virtues and personal values (Kennedy & Fairbrother, 2004) that reinforce the convergence of moral and civic education. Unlike civic education in the West that pertains to knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for individuals to function as members of the polity, moral education is concerned primarily with the cultivation of virtues towards ethical behaviour

(Kennedy & Fairbrother, 2004). Many Asian citizenship curricula, however, merge moral and civic education into one subject, based on the premise that cultivating ethics and values is fundamental in the preparation of good citizens (Lee, 2006). Thus, learning about the world is framed by depoliticised constructions of citizenship. For example, research involving 12 Asian jurisdictions (Bhutan, Brunei, China [Shanghai], Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Mongolia) found that formal education initiatives in the region interpreted GCE as a moral rather than political endeavour (UNESCO, 2014).

Aside from the predominantly depoliticised approach to civic education, the tenacity of nationalist discourses shapes the regional contours of GCE in Asia. Ong (1999) argues that depoliticised forms of moral/civic education reinforce neoliberal and nationalist policies that place economic productivity and the order and stability desired by the nation-state above the protection of human rights or social justice. She further contends that government leaders in Asia have employed stereotypical “Orientalist essentialisms” (p. 81) and a “Confucian cultural triumphalism” (Ong, 2006, p. 135) as sources of instrumental rationality. The “Asian values” of meritocracy, hard work, respect for authority and social harmony have been used to create a disciplined labour force that appeals to global capital in the service of the nation-state (Ong, 2006).

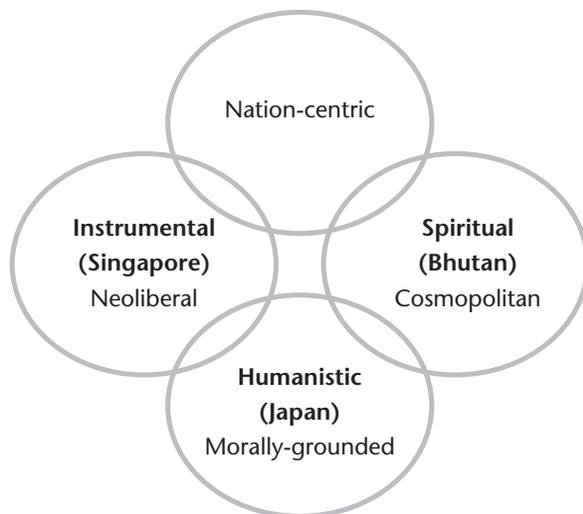
Lee’s (2009) survey of citizenship education in Asia points to how the nationalistic ideology’s spheres of influence extend beyond policies and curricular intentions to the ways that teachers enact the curriculum. Stressing that teachers do not blindly follow the intended curriculum, but choose pedagogies that “best fit a combination of contextual factors and learning situations,” Lee (2009) identified three orientations that combine to create “hybridized” forms of civic education pedagogies. *Globally-oriented and personally-oriented pedagogies* reflect cosmopolitan principles, in that the former promotes democracy and critical thinking, and is progressive, dialogic, and rationalistic; whereas the latter “attends to the development of citizenship values and attributes from within the person” through experiential learning, reflection and connections to daily life (Lee, 2009, p. 20). In contrast, *nation-oriented pedagogies* are “didactic, inculcating, persuasive, expository, content-based, exam-oriented, and conservative” (p. 21).

Although these orientations intersect in teachers' pedagogies, nation-centric orientations tend to prevail, creating a repertoire of practices that Lee (2009) describes as politically neutral or depoliticised, encouraging community service, stressing respect for family and government leaders, and oriented towards building national identity.

Scenarios of issues-centred GCE in Asian societies

Given the complex interplay of global discourses at the policy, curriculum and pedagogical levels, we sought to gain a situated understanding of issues-centred GCE by reviewing empirical studies from selected Asian societies. In the following section, we discuss the cases of Singapore, Bhutan and Japan to highlight the collision of discourses and implications for an issues-centred GCE. Our aim was not to generalise the nature of GCE in the region. Rather, by examining the three cases, we sought to illuminate different national responses to perceived problems wrought by globalisation. Our review of studies was guided by the following questions: a) What issues does the official curriculum identify as important? b) What discourses are employed to rationalise these issues? c) How are these issues taught? Figure 1 illustrates the discursive influences on the intended curriculum in the three societies. Similar to Lee's (2009) observations, Figure 1 depicts the prevalence of nation-centric and morally-grounded discourses in policy and curricular intentions; however, in each society we noted differing responses to neoliberal and cosmopolitan discourses.

Figure 1. Discursive scenarios of GCE



Singapore: Instrumental GCE

The case of Singapore captures an instrumental type of GCE that builds on depoliticised and nationalistic forms of civic identity while drawing on neoliberal discourses in constructing citizens as adaptable workers. The 2000 *Report of the Committee on Compulsory Education in Singapore* (MOE, 2000) encapsulates the intersection of these three discourses noting that the curriculum aims to develop a common core of knowledge and skills to “build national identity and social cohesion” and “prepare students for the global economy” (p. 2). Towards these ends, civic education forwards a narrative of national vulnerability and the need to inoculate the nation from perceived threats brought by globalisation (Gopinathan, 2007).

Policies and curricular documents convey a sense of vulnerability as central to national history by citing social unrest brought about by struggles against communists and labour unions in the early years of national independence. More recently, official discourses have emphasised Singapore's exposure to external shocks, such as the Asian financial crisis of 1997, pandemic diseases, intense global competition, and foreign values and lifestyles (Daipi, 2002). Thus, although civic education subjects (i.e. Social Studies and National Education) feature the study of global issues, many highlight the need to “learn from other countries' experiences to build and sustain a politically viable, socially cohesive and economically vibrant Singapore” (MOE, 2008) while reiterating how globalisation and the changing global economy might “strain the loyalties and attachments of young Singaporeans” (Gopinathan, 2007, p. 61). For example, the 2008 *GCE Ordinary Level Social Studies* syllabus for secondary students is organised around two core ideas: “Being Rooted” and “Living Globally”. Three themes develop the idea of living globally. Managing International Relations and Sustaining Economic Development use Singapore as an example to describe “the defence and security of nations and how friendships are cultivated among nations ... to build a politically stable and economically vibrant community” (p. 8). The final theme, Facing Challenges and Change, examines the rise and fall of medieval Venice to illustrate how nations overcome challenges in order to survive.

Singapore's instrumental approach limits the enactment of issues-centred GCE in several ways. For one, skills that are foundational to the study of

global issues—such as critical thinking or problem solving—are constructed primarily as marketable skills necessary to compete in the workforce (Alviar-Martin & Baidon, 2016). Second, the government provides “out-of-bound markers” to signal sensitive topics that might undermine social cohesion, and studies show that teachers have practised self-censorship or avoided sensitive issues such as sexuality, abortion or political controversies (Ho, Alviar-Martin & Leviste, 2014). Research further illustrates how students differentially experience GCE based on academic tracking within a stratified system of schooling (Ho, Alviar-Martin, Sim & Yap, 2011). Founded on a paternalistic political culture where government leadership is drawn from an elite intelligentsia (Baidon, Sim & Paculdar, 2014), Singapore employs systems of meritocracy to identify high-achieving learners capable of leading the nation through global challenges. Academic tracking extends to types of global knowledge and competencies, where high achievers are prepared through a globally-focused civic education that develops higher-order thinking and leadership skills, whereas the lowest achievers experience a locally-focused, technical skills-based curriculum (Ho, 2012). Such a system provides a pre-sorted workforce with increasing disparities between upper and lower income-earners, and a diminishing middle class (Sassen, 2014).

The focus on instrumentalist skills development that characterises neoliberal and nation-centric GCE prepares young people to work productively in stratified national and global economies, but fails to acknowledge fully other forms of identity, agency, affiliation or aspirations available to young people in Singapore. It will not prepare students—especially students in lower academic tracks—to think critically about complex issues central to living in a diverse global society, such as issues pertaining to human rights, climate change, or social justice; since they do not have opportunities to deliberate these in the official curriculum. Students may have difficulty seeing themselves aligned with the interests of those who are different than themselves in terms of nationality or even with their fellow citizens sorted along socio-economic lines in the workforce. Young citizens may not fully develop the capacities necessary to recognise their shared humanity with those who are different than themselves or address issues that cross national boundaries (or even those of social class, race or gender) in ways that are just and ethical.

Bhutan: Spiritual GCE

The second scenario of GCE combines morally-grounded, nation-centric and cosmopolitan discourses to emphasise the need for spiritual development, and is captured by the policy of Gross National Happiness (GNH) and Values Education in Bhutan. Spiritual global citizenship constructs the world as an interdependent system, where individual and societal wellbeing are dependent upon responsible economic development that considers spiritual enrichment and harmonious co-existence with nature (Lokamitra, 2004). As opposed to the instrumental orientation, Bhutan’s spirituality-based GCE critiques traditional measures of gross domestic production as flawed in that these “promote limitless growth in a world that is finite” (United Nations News Center, 2012), and points to the excesses of economic competition as sources of self-centredness, materialism and social disharmony (Wangyal, 2001).

Bhutan’s GNH policy reflects the nation’s Mahayana Buddhist heritage and agricultural-based economy. It seeks a “holistic, inclusive, equitable and sustainable” type of progress, where “political and spiritual matters [are] in balance” (Tshering, 2010). The Vision 2020 policy expresses values central to education as a critical driver of GNH. The policy aims to “ensure the realization of the innate potential of every child; instill an awareness of the nation’s unique cultural heritage, and values, both traditional and universal; prepare young people for the world of work, instilling in them the dignity of labour; and create an awareness of the potential and importance of agriculture as an occupation” (Zam, 2008, p. 5). Thus, the pursuit of GNH through values education fosters the Bhutanese national identity (Royal Government of Bhutan, 2011).

The emphasis on GNH requires citizens to consider economic development as a “moral space that includes all human interaction, and to treat the other members of society not as opponents in a bargaining contest but as co-citizens of a shared *res publica* and as moral subjects which are to be respected in exercising one’s own freedom” (Hirata, 2004, p. 724). Aside from this anti-neoliberal slant, Bhutan’s civic education framework reflects cosmopolitan principles in advocating a shared civic morality in terms of compassion, non-violence and harmony with nature and others (Wangyal, 2001). The consideration of issues such as “how to protect the planet”, “international charities”, and “local democracy” appears beginning in Grades 4–6 of the

Values Education curriculum, alongside a unit on “Stories in newspapers: Facts, opinions, and different versions” (Sakurai, 2011, p. 181).

Yet, GNH policies working in tandem with Values Education curricula likewise impede the exploration of contentious issues and forward a type of learning that is depoliticised and lacking in critical thinking. For example, in order for their school to be recognised as an official GNH school, teachers must abide by 17 “attitudinal cautions” such as being “morally, culturally, and politically correct in language/speech”, and “not talk(ing) ill about others” (Sakurai, 2011, p. 182). The organising paradigm of happiness—coupled with narrow delineations of teaching and learning—call into question the transformative potential of GCE in Bhutan. As Sakurai (2011) observed, Bhutan seems to be “legitimizing GNH-infused education in order to fortify national identity as a more cohesive nation-state ... whereby the government tries to strengthen its power over the people” (p. 183).

Japan: Humanistic GCE

The third scenario, humanistic GCE, is positioned at the intersection of morally-grounded, nation-centric, neoliberal and cosmopolitan discourses. Humanistic GCE acknowledges the need for national participation in the global economy; however, its constructions of ‘the global’ recognise threats posed by globalisation on human relations.

Citing the deterioration of social relationships, the loss of identity and rising global terrorism, humanistic GCE calls for the cultivation of values, increased recognition of social and cultural rights, and a renewed civic purpose within societies. It is exemplified by recent civic education reform efforts in Japan.

Historically, Japan has straddled two opposing conceptions of citizenship. The term, ‘kohmin’ represents the official definition of citizenship, and is used by government textbooks in referring to an authorised or legal status of a member of the state. On the other hand, ‘shimin’ is commonly used in media and society. It connotes a membership in civil society and emphasises participation in non-government organisations, human rights issues or matters of social justice (Otsu, 2008). Citizenship education has consisted traditionally of two courses (Social Studies and Moral Education) that, for many years, faced criticism as being disjointed and predominated by ‘kohmin’ as a framing paradigm. However, a series

of policy initiatives brought attention to problems confronting Japanese society that paved the way for civic education reform, and arguably, reconciled the two notions of citizenship.

The *Report of the Central Council for Education* (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [MEXT], 2003), *The Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education* (MEXT, 2008), and *The Second Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education* (MEXT, 2013a) laid the basis of education reform. Collectively, these documents cite over 20 years of economic stagnation; an ageing population; anomie and youth alienation; and “weakened educational functions of families and local communities and the tendency for people to feel difficulty in finding a sense of purpose or motivation” (MEXT, 2013a). Based on these challenges, MEXT called for holistic reform towards an “education-based society” necessary to develop social competencies for survival and “individuals who create change and new values”. Accompanying this overarching vision was the *Revisions of the Courses of Study* (MEXT, 2006) with the primary aim of developing character and civic-mindedness by emphasising “soft power”—such as rediscovering Japanese traditions and culture and by highlighting “a zest for life”—so that citizens could actively participate in state and community affairs and help develop a more democratic and peaceful society (MEXT, 2013b).

Under these reforms, two of the three civic education subjects (Social Studies, Moral Education, and the newly-introduced Integrated Studies) were adjusted to include more opportunities for students to investigate issues confronting society. Recognising the importance of students’ connections to their local communities, MEXT allowed schools to create their own Integrated Studies curricula. Among guidelines given to teachers were to design interdisciplinary themes that a) children were interested in; b) corresponded to particular characteristics of the school community; and c) spanned the environment, international relations, welfare and technology. Teachers were encouraged to attempt problem-solving activities, experiments, visits to the local community and collaborative endeavors that engaged children of different ages (Otsu, 2009). The Social Studies curriculum similarly includes the study of societal problems and controversial issues (Yoshimura, 2011), and states that students will be “interested in society...consider events from various perspectives based on data...(and) deepen

understanding and love for their nation and history (Otsu, 2009). In contrast to these two subjects, Moral Education has retained a more didactic pedagogical approach towards several aims, such as helping students: a) cultivate respect for human beings; b) nurture a richness of the heart; and c) succeed in developing traditional culture and a rich culture. Although taught for only one hour a week, it functions as a subject that consolidates and outweighs learnings from other subjects (Sakurai, 2011).

Scholars have voiced concern regarding reforms to the three civic education subjects. On the one hand, Integrated Studies and Social Studies have faced criticism for difficulties encountered by teachers in creating meaningful activities that encourage critical thinking, the acquisition of complex social knowledge, and well-considered social judgement in solving problems in society (Yoshimura, 2011). Moral Education has been decried for its patriotic construction of values, disallowing students to think critically about what defines the nation and its tendency to substitute “psychological issues for critical issues in society” (Otsu, 2009, p. 83).

Discussion: Enacting cosmopolitan ideals as practices of transformative GCE

The cases of Singapore, Bhutan and Japan demonstrate three different educational responses taken by nations in the face of globalisation: instrumentalist, spiritual and humanistic approaches to GCE. The extent to which official discourses and curriculum policies in all three nations support GCE, however, merits closer scrutiny.

The focus on instrumentalist skills development that characterises Singapore’s neoliberal and nation-centric GCE aims to prepare young people to work productively in stratified national and global economies. Although the nation-state in Singapore has recently taken on more redistributionist social policies to shield citizens from the vagaries of globalisation and to maintain political stability, the narrow view of students and citizens as human capital fails to acknowledge other forms of identity, agency, affiliation and aspirations that Singaporeans may have. Singapore’s students—especially those in lower academic tracks—have few opportunities in the official curriculum to deliberate about complex issues central to living in a diverse global society, such as human rights and social justice issues. Situated in the context of preparing students for

achievement on high-stakes exams and global economic competitiveness, an instrumental GCE designed to develop productive citizens wedded to the nation-state does not acknowledge the political dimensions of GCE (Myers, 2016).

In the case of Bhutan, the nation-state has rejected the neoliberal goals fervently pursued by Singapore. Instead, the emphasis on GNH, spirituality and values education seems to mark a very different vision of GCE. However, upon closer analysis, GCE discourse and practice in Bhutan remains nation-centric and depoliticised. It is a national response to globalisation that is morally grounded and attempts to promote values education as a form of national ballast against globalising forces that threaten Bhutanese culture. Although it offers a more balanced and holistic approach to citizenship development grounded in Bhutan’s cultural heritage and traditional values, the dignity of labour, sustainable progress, spirituality and respect for nature, it too fails to fully prepare students for the political dimensions of GCE. It reveals a different type of depoliticised GCE that may fail to adequately prepare students to understand and address the complex economic and political dimensions of global issues.

Sakurai (2011) compares Bhutan’s GNH-infused education with the educational reforms initiated by Japan’s 2006 “Fundamental Law” by noting that they were both initiatives of new political regimes to “fortify national identity as a more cohesive nation-state” (p. 183). Like Singapore and Bhutan, education policy in Japan is designed to manage threats posed by globalisation, especially in the realm of social relationships and wellbeing. While officials in Japan are deeply concerned about anomie and youth alienation, they are also concerned about lingering economic stagnation and the need to revitalise Japanese identity and society by a return to traditional culture and values. The two distinct definitions of citizenship that operate in Japan—one articulating legal membership and identity to the state and the other emphasising social relations—provide the impetus for new citizenship education efforts that focus more on humanistic goals. These include more student-centred pedagogical approaches, the study of societal problems and controversial issues, and greater respect for traditional culture and diversity. Similar to Bhutan, the inward embrace of traditional culture and values constitute efforts to strengthen national identity and unity in uncertain

global contexts (Sakurai, 2011) but do little to empower young people to work across national contexts to take action on the shared problems that face humanity.

If we return to Appiah's (2008) notion of fallibility as central to cosmopolitanism and GCE, we begin with the premise that our knowledge (individually and collectively) is necessarily limited, that we are likely to be mistaken about a great many things. This is true for citizens, including government officials, policy makers, and curriculum designers. This means as citizens and educators we benefit from contact with diverse others who can help us become more aware of the limitations in our own views and knowledge, and that we have a great deal to learn from diverse others. As Appiah (2008) puts it, "we can borrow good ideas from all over the world, not just from within our own society. It's worth listening to others because they may have something to teach us; it's worth their listening to us, because they may have something to learn" (p. 86). Engaging with others, being respectful of difference, and being willing to participate in dialogue and conversation to learn with and from others are key principles. These guiding principles, fundamental to both education and citizenship, can guide a re-envisioning of GCE within different national contexts.

The lens of fallibility helps us see that nation-centric discourses and approaches, although well-intentioned by national officials concerned about the fate of the nation-state and their citizens in challenging global contexts, will always be limited in their vision and scope of GCE. A growing body of research points to the dominance (and limits) of nationalist and neoliberal discourses with critical and cosmopolitan discourses at the periphery in the ways GCE is conceptualised and enacted (e.g. Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Alviar-Martin & Baidon, 2016; Davies & Bansel, 2007; Gaudelli, 2009). Increasing social polarisation, the marginalisation of alternative perspectives, and a sense of political disenfranchisement among certain segments of society, including youth, means that a range of views and forms of knowledge and participation are being left out of the equation of education policy and curriculum formulation.

Policy makers and curriculum designers can start by inviting stakeholders with different views and orientations to engage in policy and curriculum deliberation. Educators can create more spaces in curriculum and classrooms for students to share

and construct their own meanings about their roles as citizens in a globalised world (Alviar-Martin & Baidon, 2016). Policy deliberation, curriculum design and classroom practice, then, can operate from these cosmopolitan principles to "raise basic questions about identity (who we are as citizens), membership (who belongs, and the location of the boundaries), and agency (how we might best enact citizenship)" (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006, p. 657). The cases presented in this article suggest that educators in different contexts also have much to learn from each other in envisioning different models of GCE.

Myers (2016) argues for GCE as a transformative practice that can provide opportunities for policy makers, educators and students to articulate and understand new types of relationships between the nation and its citizens as well as change our consciousness about the ways the world is experienced and interpreted. We argue that an issues-based GCE can be conceptualised as transformative practice by focusing on cosmopolitan ideals. Appiah (2008) refers to cosmopolitanism as a "double-stranded tradition" of "universality plus difference" (p. 92). He argues that it is best "when people live by ideals they themselves believe in" instead of those ideals being imposed by others, but that we must remain open to different views and ways of doing things—we have to accept the idea that "our knowledge is imperfect, provisional, subject to revision in the face of new evidence" (p. 96). It also entails recognising that "everybody matters" and that we have "obligations to every other" (p. 96). This makes matters of social justice central to GCE (e.g. the treatment of people, care for a shared environment, equity and equality, human rights and responsibilities, matters of governance, etc.).

Students must be given opportunities to investigate the moral, economic, psychological and political dimensions of societal problems in order to develop key civic competencies (critical thought, public deliberation, perspective taking, reflection, social action, etc.). Addressing these issues can be done at the local level, where the issues are most directly experienced in some form or another by local communities and students, but their study must directly confront issues of racism, classism, sexism, materialism and militarism that are likely at their core. This requires that we "care about the fate of all our fellow human beings, not just the ones in our own political community" (p. 86). This is a political and epistemological stance that involves

an ethics of care, concern and connection (Martin, 1994) and certain moral competencies (Noddings, 2005).

These are not just principles for classroom practice; they constitute principles for policy makers and curriculum designers. A broader, more inclusive approach is necessary; one that will integrate political, civic, aesthetic, environmental, relational, ethical and spiritual aspects of human experience. It is an approach that is aware of, and works with, different discourses, knowledge and forms of social practice. As Gaudelli and Heilman (2009) note, "Understanding ourselves and our society, particularly in an increasingly global era in which localities are linked and fragmented through complex global ties, requires interdisciplinarity, spirituality, and criticality so that key Western, modernist, and market ways of understanding can be refined and improved" (p. 2672).

GCE as transformative practice also requires the exercise of imagination, an openness to things *otherwise*. As the late activist Grace Lee Boggs (1998) argues, "All over the world today we are obviously living in that in-between period of historical time when great numbers of people are aware that they cannot continue in the same old way but are immobilized because they cannot imagine an alternative" (p. 254). She highlights that imagining alternatives and bringing about real change will require people to "not only struggle against existing institutions. They must make a philosophical/spiritual leap and become more *human* human beings" (p. 153). We believe the principles of cosmopolitan GCE that we outline, grounded in local, community-based issues and forms of civic agency yet linked to broader issues and in solidarity with others who are different than ourselves, is a necessary step in this direction.

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