Towards Global Citizenship Education

A comparative case study of primary school policy and practice between Greece and Sweden

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Abstract

Global citizenship education (GCE) has recently emerged as a dynamic approach to education capturing the interest of various stakeholders, including academics, educators and international organisations worldwide. In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, GCE is seen as a transformative pedagogy that can empower learners to resolve growing global challenges, building a more just and sustainable world. This study explores how GCE is “transferred, translated and transformed” (Cowen, 2009a; 2009b; 2006) into contemporary national education policy and practice, through a comparison of experience between Greece and Sweden. Based on a qualitative research approach, the study first examines the discourse of international organisations, such as UNESCO, the European Union and Oxfam, in order to better understand efforts to promote GCE and its implications for teaching and learning. National education curricula on citizenship-related subjects are then analysed to identify how they address GCE, while a third level of analysis involves exploring how primary school teachers and students perceive and implement the particular concept. To this end, document analysis, interviews and focus groups have been employed as methods to gather relevant data.

The findings of the study indicate that international organisations have developed a powerful GCE discourse, elements of which can be seen in national education policy and school practice, yet with different emphasis between countries as a result of diverse socio-economic, political and historical contexts. In Greece, the focus on ethnocentrism and Europeanism hinders the effective delivery of GCE, whereas in Sweden, the strong commitment to human rights and internationalism allows to integrate the concept in school practice. The predominant form of global citizenship promoted in both countries is moral cosmopolitan, while critical and postcolonial approaches to the concept do not appear to have been recognised or implemented in practice. Considering all three phases of shape-shifting educational ideas, as defined by Cowen (2006), the study concludes that although policy support for GCE is evident in international and national policy discourse, actual implementation in schools is weak.

Keywords

Global citizenship education, globalisation, global awareness, international discourse, policy shape-shifting, Greece, Sweden
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEPPS</td>
<td>Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework</td>
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<td>EDC</td>
<td>Education for Democratic Citizenship</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>EI</td>
<td>Education International</td>
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<td>ESD</td>
<td>Education for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>GCE</td>
<td>Global Citizenship Education</td>
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<td>GEFI</td>
<td>Global Education First Initiative</td>
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<td>GENE</td>
<td>Global Education Network Europe</td>
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<td>IBE</td>
<td>International Bureau of Education</td>
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<td>ICE</td>
<td>International and Comparative Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIEP</td>
<td>International Institute for Education Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>Programme for International Student Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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Acknowledgements

The idea for this thesis emerged after discussions on global citizenship education that took place during the lectures at the Institute of International Education. These discussions drove me to think about how national education systems perceive and implement the particular concept, a question upon which this thesis is based. At this point, I would like to acknowledge a number of people and organisations, who contributed to the successful implementation of this thesis.

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Chapter One
Background of the study

1.1. Introduction

In a world of instant communication and swift travel, we have become keenly aware of our interdependence. Many of us are now concerned about the welfare of human and nonhuman life, preservation of the Earth as home to the life, and the growing conflict between the appreciation of diversity and the longing for unity. We are concerned, too, that our technological capacity has ran far beyond our moral competence to manage it. We dream of peace in a world perpetually on the edge of war. One response to these concerns is the promotion of global citizenship. (Noddings, 2005, p.1)

As cited above, Noddings identifies the main concerns of humanity at the dawn of the 21st century. In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, modern western societies have become more pluralistic and there is greater individual diversity in lifestyles and values. Religion, language and geography do not divide people as much as they did in the past and there is today a common social experience provided by a “ubiquitous consumer and media culture” (Green, 2006, p. 196). According to Tawil (2013, p. 2), the traditional notion of national citizenship is changing under the influence of global processes that include the internationalisation of trade and finance, increased migration and cross-border mobility, greater access to information and knowledge disseminated through new digital media, environmental degradation related to global climate change, and the development of supranational bodies of global governance.

These multiple processes are associated with globalisation, a long existing phenomenon in the history of human cultures that has currently received an unprecedented pace and intensity in the way that capital, labour and technology expand (Torres, 2013). For many scholars (Green, 2006; Ikeda, 2005; Vale, 2004) there are two sides of globalisation: one positive and one negative. On one hand, it is argued that globalisation has not only provided new means for local cultures to identify themselves, but it has also made them more visible to other cultures, enhancing opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue. Former divides based on region, class, religion and language have considerably decreased leading to greater social uniformity, while democracy and awareness of human rights have spread worldwide. People across countries are in a sense more unite through economic interdependence, migration, tourism and the transcendence of group interests. On the other hand, globalisation has also been perceived as a threat to social cohesion and social solidarity, resulting in growing individualisation, inequality and social injustice, ethnic conflict, economic disparity, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and ecological catastrophe. It has further been argued that globalisation implies the end of the nation-state as the primary unit of political organisation and loyalty (Green, 2006).
In this ambiguous global context, education is called upon to reconstruct cultures of citizenship and nationhood in a way that reflects modern conditions and yet helps to a deepening of democracy and a strengthening of social solidarity (Green, 2006). One response to this dilemma, as Noddings (2005) suggests, could be the promotion of global citizenship education (GCE), a relatively new term that emerged from the 1990s onwards because of the need to recognise the changing nature of power blocks in the world and shifting models regarding identity (Bourn, 2015). Nowadays, GCE has developed as a common feature of school reforms in a number of countries, reflecting a shift from notions of citizenship focusing only on the national (Johnson, 2010). Educators worldwide have been encouraged “to bring the world into their classrooms” or “send students into the world” by addressing global issues in their teaching and allowing for new experiences, which may include school partnerships, study or volunteer abroad programmes and fundraising activities (Andreotti & Souza, 2012, p. 1).

Moreover, the run-up to the 2015 deadline for the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) finds the international community strongly advocating for GCE as an approach to education that could help resolve growing global challenges in the 21st century (UNESCO, 2014). GCE has recently received increasing prominence that is reflected in the initiatives led by major international policy actors, such as the launch of the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012 by the UN Secretary General, the latest Global EFA Meeting in 2014, and UNESCO’s proclamation of 2016 as international year of global understanding. Many researchers, particularly in Europe, have already identified the impact of this sound international discourse on national education policies (Jasikowska and Witkowski, 2012; Alasuutari, 2011; Bourn and Hunt, 2011), an impact that will become more prominent in the future as GCE has become the fifth target on the post-2015 development agenda (UNESCO, 2014). Yet, there have to date been no comparative studies looking at policies and practices on GCE in Europe.

This research study will explore and critically examine how the concept of GCE is “transferred, translated and transformed” (Cowen, 2009a; 2009b; 2006) into contemporary national education policy and practice, through a comparative case study of primary education between two European countries, Greece and Sweden. The study will first try to analyse international discourse on GCE, as reflected in transnational agreements and policy proposals developed by international organisations, such as UNESCO, the European Union (EU) and Oxfam, complemented by interviews with international policy officials, so as to understand efforts to promote the concept and its implications for education and learning. National education curricula will also be examined, to identify how they address the issue of global citizenship and what teaching and learning practices they suggest to develop students’ global awareness. A third level of analysis will involve exploring teachers’ and students’ perceptions and practices towards GCE, seeking to grasp how key players in learning have acquired knowledge of global issues in different educational contexts. Finally, possible similarities and discrepancies between international and national discourse will be identified.
1.2. Aim and objectives

The central focus of this study is a critical examination of how GCE is reflected in international, national and school unit discourse, through a comparison of primary school policy and practice between Greece and Sweden. The overall aim is to better understand how international organisations and national education systems work towards the idea of global citizenship. More specifically, international policy discourse, national education curricula, as well as teachers’ and students’ perceptions will be examined in relation to the main objectives and approaches to GCE that they propose. To this end, a theoretical framework for categorising GCE suggested by Johnson (2010) will be employed. At a time of unprecedented interest in themes such as global citizenship and developing global competencies in education, this study can provide an important contribution on how GCE could be more effectively included in school practice. Thus, the objectives of this study are to:

- Analyse international policy discourse developed by major international organisations, particularly UNESCO, the EU and Oxfam, in order to identify common goals and approaches to GCE;
- Examine how GCE is reflected in the primary school curricula of Greece and Sweden, particularly in the general curricular objectives and the objectives of citizenship-related subjects;
- Analyse how primary school teachers and students perceive and implement GCE, and what challenges they face; and,
- Discuss similarities and discrepancies between the above constructs and actors at international, national and school unit levels.

1.3. Limitations of the study

This thesis is being completed as part of a master programme in International and Comparative Education (ICE) at Stockholm University. The author situates his work within the ICE programme in that it probes the notion of internationalism and compares the Greek and Swedish context taking account of the current pressures of internationalisation and globalisation on education. As a university thesis, the analysis cannot be exhaustive due to restricted time and certain limitations need to be acknowledged.

First of all, the rich literature on the field of global citizenship makes it clear that no consensus on a definition of GCE has yet been achieved, since the term is quite ambiguous. Peters et al. (2008, p. 11) argue that “there can be no one dominant notion of global citizenship education as notions of “global”, “citizenship” and “education” are all contested and open to further argument and revision”. UNESCO (2014a, p. 10) also acknowledges the ongoing tensions that point to the question of “how to
promote universality, while respecting singularity”, but maintains that these challenges around the theory of GCE should not undermine its practice. While the ambiguity of the term has not prevented scholars and organisations from publishing materials and influencing the school practice, this ambiguity implies that we should be careful and critical when analysing the objectives of GCE, developed by different actors. As the concept currently serves very different agendas, from corporate interests to the work of charitable groups (Humes, 2008), it is reasonable to wonder which dimensions of GCE are promoted by international and national policy actors and what the theoretical origins of their discourse are.

Moreover, the present study focuses mainly on international policy documents developed by UNESCO, the EU and Oxfam, when examining international discourse on GCE. Although various intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), UNICEF and ActionAid, have also developed policy initiatives and educators’ guides promoting global citizenship, the documents selected for this study are the ones most commonly cited in GCE literature, reflecting a holistic view of the concept. Especially Oxfam’s 1997 “Curriculum for Global Citizenship” has set an example of good practice for academics and educators worldwide, while the UNESCO and the EU documents are chosen as potentially more influential in the cases of Greece and Sweden, which are both members in these organisations.

When it comes to the national and school unit level, the study narrows its analytical scope down to primary education, which is considered to include students aged 6-12. This limits our findings to the specific sector of education, implying that only primary school curricula, teachers and students are examined as part of this study. It could further be argued that students of this age may not have so advanced knowledge on citizenship-related subjects as students in secondary education do. However, UNESCO (2013, p. 4) argues that GCE should reach the learners in their early stages of development and contends that young people “must be regarded as an important stakeholder of GCE”.

Finally, the qualitative character of the research and the case study design imply that the findings cannot be generalised to the larger population, while the subjectivity of the researcher, who adopts a more critical perspective, may be evident when interpreting teachers’ and students’ emotions and personal experiences. Bryman (2012) argues that people who are interviewed in a qualitative study are not meant to represent the entire population. Instead, the findings of this study could be generalised to theory rather than to populations.

1.4. Significance of the study

According to Humes (2008), powerful discursive forms, such as global citizenship, deserve to be subjected to critical interrogation. Despite its complexity and evident contradiction as a term, global citizenship represents “the spirit of the age in a way that reflects the interests and concerns of many
different groups operating at local, national and international levels” (Humes, 2008, p. 51). Governments and policy-makers across Europe have continued to fund and support initiatives on themes such as global citizenship because they believed they would contribute to having more informed and engaged citizens and active supporters of the value of aid and international development (Bourn, 2015). Yet, there has to date been little academic research and evidence to address these assumptions to any degree of depth. What studies have been done have been commissioned by the policy-makers themselves (Bourn, 2015). The need for independent academic research is therefore most evident.

By analysing the different discourse levels on GCE, this study will help build a body of knowledge that can inform future practice and thinking. According to Blum et al. (as cited in Bourn and Hunt, 2009, p. 8), “research is a key need for building support and understanding about the teaching of global and development issues”. Taking into account existing frameworks for interpreting GCE (Veugelers, 2011; Johnson, 2010; Andreotti, 2006), the present study will employ one of them (Johnson, 2010) for first time in the analysis of GCE policy documents, in an attempt to deconstruct the various strands of GCE discourse for discovering interrelations. Different dimensions of global citizenship – political, moral, economic, cultural-aesthetic, critical, positional, environmental and spiritual – will therefore be considered to help interpret different policies, identify their connections and examine their implications for teaching and learning.

Moreover, the present study will explore the role of international organisations in the processes of knowledge production and transfer of educational ideas. Recognising the fact that international organisations are “active agents of global change” (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004, p. 156) and that “the transfer of educational ideas is currently considered to be one of the main roles of UNESCO, the World Bank and the OECD” (Beech, 2009, p. 345), this research will suggest that national ideals as to the desired citizen or polity can be influenced by the discourse of these organisations. In order to examine this issue, our research objectives also address the processes of translation and transformation of educational policies into actual school practice and by doing so contribute to comparative educational discourse, which has focused mainly on transfer (Cowen, 2009a). Beech (2009, p. 356) further argues for a need to understand how schools transform the “abstract recommendations of other actors into interactive and sustainable practices”. It is in schools that the practical effects of international GCE discourse can be seen.

Of important comparative value is also the fact that research on the curriculum, teaching and learning practice contributes to pedagogical discourse, which comparativists seem to have overlooked (Alexander, 2009). Broadfoot (as cited in Alexander, 2009, p. 923) argues that “future comparative studies of education should place much greater emphasis on the process of learning itself rather than, as at present, on the organization and provision of education”. Especially for global education, much more theoretical work has been produced in the last three to four decades than actual empirical research (Knutsson, 2011). In addition, Olmos and Torres (2009) contend that the implications of
internationalisation and globalisation for educational policies, textbooks and curricula are lacking empirical and theoretical research.

Last but not least, researching the implications of GCE for school practice in different countries can help better understand the challenges and potential for such a concept to be developed in diverse national education systems. Bourn (2011) suggests the need for more research on how global education ideas and practices respond to the needs and influences of policy-makers and practitioners. Therefore, teacher and student perspectives in this research are key to identifying how GCE objectives developed by policy-makers internationally and nationally are integrated into school practice and reflect the needs of those directly involved in the learning process. Teachers’ and students’ understanding of global citizenship as complementary or contradictory to national or European citizenship, and the level to which students have developed GCE competencies as the end result of the learning process, can indicate how GCE could be more effectively included in school practice. In this respect, the proposed research could be seen as a mapping exercise that explores how GCE is conceptualised and implemented in different national contexts.

1.5. Previous research on Global Citizenship Education (GCE)

Although an ambiguous term, a number of studies have tried to examine the idea of GCE in the educational context of individual countries. Pashby (2013) identifies the philosophical and ideological tensions inherent to both fields of multiculturalism and GCE and to the perceived relationship between them in the Canadian context. Her analysis of policy, curriculum and lesson plan documents in the province of Alberta demonstrates that a multicultural context can open critical spaces and possibilities for GCE through engagement with tensions and complexities.

Niens and Reilly (2012) examine the potentials of GCE to overcome the limitations of national citizenship in divided societies, researching young people’s views on and experiences of global citizenship in Northern Ireland. Their findings indicate that students’ conceptualisations of global citizenship included awareness of global issues, understandings of environmental interdependence and global responsibility, yet lacked critical perspectives on local cultural identities and Global North/South relationships. Teachers were not willing to address controversial issues, such as war and conflict, and thus local identities and attitudes to the conflict in Northern Ireland remained untouched topics. They conclude that schools currently do not implement GCE in ways that foster critical perspectives, maintaining “soft” approaches to the concept (Niens and Reilly, 2012, p. 115). In a next publication, the same researchers argue that teachers need to develop some sense of emotional engagement that would help them recognise and challenge existing structural and contextual limitations, in order to enable critical discourse amongst students and thus contribute to peace-building in society (Reilly and Niens, 2014).
Rapoport (2010) analyses conceptions of global citizenship held by high school teachers in the US Midwest and argues that there is a growing tendency to incorporate global and international perspectives into citizenship education. She concurs that teachers tend to conceptualise the unfamiliar term of global citizenship through more familiar concepts, and mentions that teachers need more rigorous assistance to teach such kind of emerging citizenship types. Similarly, Moon and Koo (2011) argue that global citizenship themes have dramatically increased, especially in the last two decades, in the national curricula and textbooks in South Korea. By analysing social studies and ethics textbooks, the researchers contend that while national citizenship themes remain central in school practice, their emphases have weakened. Marshall (2009, pp. 254-255) examines how post-national conceptions of citizenship are reflected in the national curriculum and educational initiatives in the UK, identifying two instrumentalist tensions within the European and global citizenship education curricula: (a) the “technical-economic instrumentalism” that implies a pragmatist and neoliberal understanding of legal structures, rights, and responsibilities; and (b) the “global social-justice instrumentalism” which requires an emotional and more active commitment to and understanding of economic, political, legal, or cultural injustice.

Several researchers have also examined the transformative learning potentials of GCE in study abroad programmes. Chaput et al. (2010, p. 41) have studied the experiences of Canadian students who visited Cuba for a short period and argue that even if students experience closely and personally an object of analysis, they can still remain intellectually separate from that object due to “their deeply held neoliberal convictions”. While these programmes can offer an opening in student thinking, there is a need for a critical mass of educators that will practice transformative pedagogies to a broad range of students, and not only to those having the chance to participate in study abroad programmes. Jorgenson (2010) came to similar conclusions when examined the neo-colonial implications of GCE programmes that send Canadian university students to volunteer in Thailand and proposed a shift in Western understandings of GCE towards an ethical concern for social justice and fostering equitable relationships, mutual exchange and reciprocity.

As can be seen so far, each of the above mentioned studies on GCE has focused on a national context or a specific curriculum initiative, while less mention is made of the discourse produced by international organisations, even if their role in fostering GCE and influencing national education systems remains unquestioned. In both of these respects, the present study will provide useful contribution examining how GCE is developed in international and national levels and comparing the findings.

1.6. Structure of the study

This study is organised in six chapters that complement each other in an attempt to critically examine and better understand how GCE is reflected in both international and national policy and practice.
Chapter Two demonstrates the theoretical framework of the study, first describing relevant concepts – such as globalisation, national and global citizenship and global citizenship education – followed by a presentation of the theoretical models that will guide our analysis of GCE in different contexts. Chapter Three describes the methodological foundations of this comparative case study and Chapter Four demonstrates and examines the data gathered through the content analysis of policy documents, interviews and focus groups. Chapter Five discusses the findings through a critical lens, comparing findings where relevant and possible, and identifies similarities and discrepancies between the different levels of analysis. Chapter Six concludes with a review of the findings and suggestions for future research.
Chapter Two
Theoretical framework of the study

2.1. Main concepts

2.1.1. Globalisation: A multifaceted phenomenon

In their analysis of education in the era of globalisation, Olmos and Torres (2009) argue that education in modern times has been placed within the nation-state and has been shaped by the state’s demand to prepare labour for participation in its economy and citizens for participation in society. The 20th century has been the century of education, marked by the expansion of educational opportunities worldwide and the decisive role of the state in promoting public education. However, at the dawn of the new millennium, globalisation processes have posed limits on state autonomy and national sovereignty, changing education especially in terms of its role in democracy.

For several researchers (Torres, 2013; Humes, 2008) globalisation has been perceived as a complex multifaceted and multidimensional phenomenon. Held (as cited in Olmos and Torres, 2009, p. 79) defined globalisation as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”, whereas Luke (as cited in Torres, 2013, p. 662) discussed the phenomenon as “a feature of late capitalism, or the condition of postmodernity, and, more important... the emergence of a world system driven in large part by a global capitalist economy”. Yet, Torres (2013) maintains that instead of many definitions of globalisation, we should be talking about many globalisations.

According to Torres (2013) there are four predominant forms of globalisation. “Globalisation from above” is framed as a model of neoliberal globalisation that has been promoted by international agencies, multilateral or bilateral institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the OECD and some agencies of the United Nations, including UNESCO. This form of globalisation calls for a “selective deregulation” of public services, fostering privatisation and decentralisation of public forms of education and emphasising educational standards, testing and accountability mechanisms (Torres, 2013, pp. 664-665). On the contrary, “globalisation from below” or “anti-globalisation” is represented by individuals, institutions and social movements, opposed to worldwide growing inequality and the dominance of financial sectors, that foster instead social justice and equity.

“Globalisation of human rights” is a third form of globalisation, focusing more on rights rather than markets. With the advancement of global human rights, plural citizenship and cosmopolitan democracies, which are central themes of this version of globalisation, the particular rights and practices of cultural and religious groups are now challenged or in some cases even outlawed. Advocates of global human rights promote mainly the universal rights to food, water and health care, while others suggest that the right to quality education or the right to participate in a society’s
governance structure should also be universal. The fourth model of globalisation, as described by Torres (2013, p. 668), is “globalisation of the international war against terrorism”, prompted by the terrorist attack of September 11th 2001, and the response of the United States (US) to this event. As a result of this change in the processes of globalisation, national governments gave an emphasis on security and control of borders, something that contradicts with the call for an opening of borders suggested by neoliberalism. In the education system of the US, this form of globalisation has led to mobility restrictions and to keep track of foreign students admitted in colleges and universities.

Similarly Humes (2008) argues about multiple dimensions of globalisation that overlap and interrelate in complex ways. His notion of “economic” and “political globalisation” aligns with Torres’s view of “globalisation from above”, implying the increasing power of transnational agencies to determine priorities for nation-states. An example is that of the EU, which exerts influence on national education policies through pressures for convergence between members. Other forms of globalisation according to Humes (2008, pp. 43-44) are “cultural”, “technological” and “environmental”. Cultural globalisation refers to a global standardisation of taste in things like fashion, popular culture, music, film and television, while technological globalisation emerges from the rapid developments in information and communication technologies (ICT). Finally, environmental globalisation raises concerns about the spread of consumerism, the sustainability of current modes of living and the future of the planet.

Taken together, all these different forms of globalisation have substantial implications for education and for our understanding of citizenship, leading us to rethink our personal and social responsibilities as citizens. Humes (2008) contends that all these concerns posed by globalisation help to explain why the citizenship agenda has currently received such international attraction. He further urges us to think of the following questions that arise when citizenship and citizenship education are considered within an increasingly globalised framework:

How can we ensure that an understanding of the processes of globalisation is reflected in the curriculum? How can we encourage young people to become engaged with the nature and scale of the challenge that globalisation represents, in ways that make a difference to the way they act? Is it necessary to redefine the role of the teacher, at local, national and international levels, in response to the pace and scale of change? How adequate are traditional forms of representative democracy, as practised in most developed Western societies, to carry the expectations of an active citizenry seeking to come to terms with global shifts? (p. 44)

2.1.2. Moving from national to global citizenship? A historical overview

Just as there are many possible globalisations, so there are many possible citizenship forms, some of which may sound more radical than others. The modern notion of citizenship has traditionally been bound to the nation-state, implying “the existence of a civil or political community, a set of rights and obligations ascribed to citizens by virtue of their membership in that community, and an ethic of
participation and solidarity needed to sustain it” (Peters, 2008, p. 54). This idea of citizenship dates back to the ideals of the Enlightenment movement and particularly the work of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, who described the “social contract” as a means by which order and civil society is maintained: “we agree to a social contract thereby gaining civil rights in return for subjecting ourselves to the law” (Peters et al., 2008, p. 2). For the Enlightenment philosophers people become citizens by accepting this legal and binding agreement that stipulates their rights and freedoms, implying also responsibilities and a moral commitment to a set of values and ethical norms.

According to Torres (2006), there are three main aspects of a theory of citizenship for the Enlightenment:

First, the Kantian proposal that sustains the hypothesis that socialization processes, especially as related to cognitive thinking, have a place within structures that preceded individuals becoming knowledgeable. Second, the Hegelian proposition that suggests the capacity to be socialized should be recognized as a civilizing technique – that is, as part of a process that largely depends on the circumstances that inhibit or facilitate progressive social change. Third, the Marxist contention that suggests that without access to the production and distribution of resources – the material benefits of the economy – it is impossible to sustain citizenship in political terms. (p. 539)

The Enlightenment movement suggested a historical and social construction of citizenship based on rational principles and accorded educational institutions a central role in the socialisation process described above. During the eighteenth century, these ideals were materialised in the construction of the nation that arose mainly in the Western world as a politically and culturally determined territory and in the formulation of the state that represented the dominant form of government of the nation’s affairs (Roth, 2007). Becoming a citizen required to be part of the majority culture, which inside the nation was transformed into national identity. From this point onwards, citizenship and nationality were considered synonymous terms and civic education, which was developed “hand in hand” with the creation of national citizenship, aimed to perpetuate this connection (Davies et al., 2005, p. 67). However, citizenship was not for all, since various groups (e.g. immigrants, national minorities, religious groups, guest workers, children, people with disabilities and individuals discriminated on the basis of gender and sexual orientation) were not and still in many countries are not perceived as full citizens, in the sense of enjoying the same rights within the nation’s majority culture, while their identities remain largely unrecognised (Roth, 2007, p. 11).

In the first half of the twentieth century, the groundbreaking work of T.H. Marshall advanced citizenship theory by linking the welfare state with the full expression of democratic citizenship. For Marshall (as cited in Torres, 2006, p. 539) citizenship, as developed in England over 250 years, included three dimensions: civil, political and social. Civil rights were obtained in the West in the eighteenth century, political rights in the nineteenth century and social rights in the twentieth century. Civil citizenship referred to all rights necessary for individual freedom (e.g. the right to own property,
freedom of speech and the right to justice), political citizenship included the rights related to the electoral process (e.g. the right to vote, to elect and be elected), and social citizenship was brought about by the welfare state and implied all rights necessary for individuals to live a secure and full life (e.g. access to the educational system and social services).

Yet, Marshall’s theory has been challenged by an increasing number of competing citizenship models conceptualised and interpreted through various theoretical discourses, such as feminism, postcolonialism, critical race theory and new social movements theory (Torres, 2006). As cited in Rapoport (2010, p. 2), Abowitz and Harnish identified seven citizenship models – civic republican, liberal, feminist, reconstructionist, cultural, queer and transnational – while Urry categorised the concept as cultural, minority, ecological, cosmopolitan, consumer and mobility. Moreover, the Crick Report (as cited in Humes, 2008, p. 45), which led to the introduction of citizenship education as a compulsory school subject in England and Wales, indicated three dimensions of citizenship: the development of social and moral responsibility, the promotion of political literacy and the encouragement of community involvement. Torres and Rhoads (as cited in Szelényi and Rhoads, 2007, p. 27) advanced the idea of a “democratic multicultural citizenship in which individuals develop the ability and disposition to work across social and cultural differences within a global context in a quest for solidarity”.

It is evident that contemporary scholars have criticised the strictly legalistic version of citizenship, focused mainly on civic-oriented rights and responsibilities within a nation-state, and gradually recognised the cultural, social, economic and environmental dimensions of the concept. As Armstrong contends (2006, p. 15): “political identity has become increasingly detached from its ‘monogamous’ association with a single nation-state, and replaced (at least for some [scholars]) with a system of fluid, multiple citizenship”. The Enlightenment view of a nation-state limited in its borders and sovereign can no longer account according to Rapoport (2010, p. 2), globalisation has infused the very notion of citizenship with “a more distinct global perspective”. In a context of global economy, mass migration, transnational identities and the collapse of a homogenous vision of the nation-state, several scholars have described what citizenship has meant and could mean in a globalising world (Reysen and Katzarska-Miller, 2013; Tully, 2008; Armstrong, 2006; Davies et al., 2005).

Tully (2008, p. 15) argues that when the two terms of “globalisation” and “citizenship” are combined, they not only bring with them their contested histories, but they also become a new complex field “that raises new questions and elicits new answers concerning the meaning of, and relationship between, global governance and global citizenship”. He distinguishes two broad types of global citizenship – one modern, one diverse – with the first one reflecting an imperial orientation and the second one urging for “glocal” citizenship practices that bring the imperial relationships under local negotiations. In order to better understand the nature of global citizenship, Heater (as cited in...
Davies et al., 2005, p. 71) describes four meanings that can be applied to the concept, placing them on a spectrum of which the opposite ends are “vague” and “precise”, as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1
The meanings of global citizenship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vague...........................................................................................................</th>
<th>Precise...........................................................................................................</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member of the human race</td>
<td>Responsible for the condition of the planet</td>
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</table>

*Source: Heater, as cited in Davies et al., 2005, p. 71*

According to Heater (as cited in Davies et al., 2005, pp. 71-72), the first and most vague category would include those people who feel linked to the whole of humanity and that sometimes feel responsible to act in the interests of the global community. Slightly less vague is the second category that describes a global citizen as the individual who feels responsible for the planet and its inhabitants, both human and non-human, an idea materialised in the work of international civil society organisations such as Greenpeace and Oxfam. Moving to a more precise category, the third one refers to the recognition that people are subjected to different forms of supra-national laws, for example natural law, international law (e.g. European Convention on Human Rights) and international criminal law (e.g. the Nuremberg trials). The last one and most precise category describes those people who see as necessary the existence of a supra-national political authority, discussed by some as cosmopolitan democracy, and involve themselves in activities towards this direction.

Examining global citizenship through a psychological lens, Reysen and Katzarska Miller (2013, p. 858) define the concept “as awareness, caring, and embracing cultural diversity while promoting social justice and sustainability, coupled with a sense of responsibility to act”. The results of their research show that global awareness, described as knowledge of one’s connection with others in the world, and an individual’s normative environment, a setting of friends and family that appreciate being a global citizen, predicted identification with global citizens, while global citizenship predicted prosocial values of intergroup empathy, valuing diversity, social justice, environmental sustainability, intergroup helping and a responsibility to act for improving the world.

Overall, it seems that the contemporary world is characterised by the coexistence between many different and sometimes contested forms of citizenship, and not so much by an absolute transition from national to global citizenship as such (Armstrong, 2006). For education, the main questions arising from this coexistence are “how to come to grips with the changing nature of citizenship in a globalising world” and “to what extent do current attempts to address these issues in the school curriculum (i.e., citizenship education and global education) recognise the shifts that are occurring?” (Davies et al., 2005, p. 72).
2.1.3. The emergence of GCE: Challenges and efforts to define the concept

Looking at the history of GCE, Bourn (2015) locates the emergence of the concept in the 1990s, at a similar time to the emergence of education for sustainable development (ESD), right after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. At this particular point of time, GCE emerged as a way to show commitment to learning about global and development issues, recognising the change of power blocks and implying the need to rethink citizenship in relation to the global domain. Over the last twenty-five years “a sudden wealth of literature” (Bourn, 2015, p. 22) took these debates further and while there have been many efforts to describe the nature of global citizenship, Bourn (2015, p. 22) argues that it is from the development education movement, and particularly the work of Oxfam in the United Kingdom (UK), that “the term global citizenship became a way of interpreting personal and social responsibility and engagement in global and development issues, with a nod to educational agendas around identity and political citizenship”.

According to Bourn (2015, p. 23), learning about global and development issues, and consequently GCE, moved from the margins to the mainstream, especially during the first decade of the 21st century, for a number of reasons, included: (a) the launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000; (b) the 2005 campaign Make Poverty History; and (c) the understanding from the Global North that the wider world and developing countries in particular were no longer so far away. The challenges posed by globalisation, the rapid expansion of instant communications and the support around campaigns for fair trade were only some of the reasons that made learning about global issues a part of everyday learning, while relevant themes were officially introduced within education in many industrialised countries. For example in Finland, Germany, Austria, England and Portugal, policy-makers launched several programs and strategies “under the label of development awareness, global learning or global education that were owned not only by ministries responsible for aid, but also those responsible for education, and with the engagement of civil society bodies” (Bourn, 2015, p. 23).

In addition, educational institutions were increasingly referring to the skills that learners need for living and working in a global society, while universities in North America, East Asia and Europe began to talk about preparing students to be global citizens.

Despite the growing interest on GCE, Rapoport (2010, pp. 3-6) argues that the terms “global citizenship education” or “education for global citizenship” are rarely being used inside the school classroom as such, providing four main reasons for this: (a) there is no commonly accepted meaning of global citizenship; (b) there is a lack of curriculum history on the specific field, which is often conceptualised within other existing frameworks such as international education, global education, multicultural education, peace education, human rights education or economic education; (c) citizenship education in schools is traditionally concentrated on national citizenship instead of a more global perspective; and (d) there is a fear that GCE undermines patriotism towards the state.

When examining the breadth of academic literature on GCE, we can see that there is indeed a lack on a commonly accepted definition, since the term is highly contested. Many researchers have
tried to interpret, conceptualise and categorise the concept, influenced by different, overlapping and sometimes competing discourses, ranging from more liberalist, cosmopolitan and humanist frameworks (Nussbaum, 2002; Noddings, 2005) to transformative learning (Chaput et al., 2010; Richardson; 2008) and to more critical and postcolonial frameworks (Bourn, 2015; Andreotti, 2011; Jorgenson, 2010).

Nussbaum (2002) argues that GCE should aim to the cultivation of humanity focusing on three capacities that are seen as necessary in today’s interrelated world. The first capacity is the critical examination of oneself and one’s tradition, and requires developing the ability to reason logically, according to the Socratic method of argument. The second capacity is to think as citizens of the world, as human beings bound to all other human beings, and not simply as citizens of some local region or group. The third one is the “narrative imagination”, meaning the ability to think how it would be like to be in another person’s position (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 289). Through the use of imagination students can decode and better understand the emotions, wishes and desires of other people.

From a transformative education perspective, the purpose of GCE is two-fold. On one hand, GCE should aim to develop students’ world-mindedness by urging them to question existing understandings and perspectives, and on the other hand GCE should empower students to become active participants in helping to resolve growing global challenges (Selby and Merryfield, as cited in Richardson, 2008, p. 124). According to Richardson (2008, p. 125), students “need to formulate an informed response to the impact globalisation is having on their lives, the lives of others, and on the planet in general”. This kind of informed response is the outcome of a transformative process in which students are encouraged to critically examine issues such as consumerism and free trade and based on this examination, they propose relevant actions to address these issues. Content knowledge is not enough and has to be complemented by a sense of agency and a disposition to act.

Through a post-colonial lens, Andreotti (2006) is distinguishing critical approaches to GCE from “soft” liberal approaches, arguing for “decoloniality and diversality” versus “neutral universal subjectivities” (Andreotti, 2011, p. 395). Thus, a decolonial approach towards GCE would include: (a) an emphasis on how knowledge is produced; (b) a focus on the development of “hyper-self-reflexivity”; (c) a pedagogical emphasis on “dissensus” that could help learners to deal with paradoxes and complexities; and (d) an effort to imagine GCE beyond dilemmas such as “ethnocentrism and absolute relativism” (Andreotti, 2011, p. 395). Such an approach would require educators to be “critically literate” (Andreotti, 2006, p. 49) and work “as cultural brokers” negotiating between different discourses (Andreotti, 2011, p. 395), in order to avoid reproducing stereotypes that could harm their students.

In sum, we can refer to Pashby’s (2013, pp. 114-116) identification of key themes in the scholarly literature on GCE, which could be outlined as follows: (a) GCE recognises that a number of troubling issues are global (e.g. poverty, global warming, AIDS, racism, wars etc.) and therefore, there is a “moral imperative” for extending our understanding of citizenship outside of national borders; (b)
students should gain “a sense of agency and action that goes beyond charity and includes structural critiques of social issues”; (c) schools are seen as “a strategic place for promoting a commitment to social justice and for developing a global sense of community”, while educational materials should resist in highlighting neoliberal values and being extremely Western-centric; (d) through GCE, schooling can engage with multiple and complex forms of citizenship and identity, as those described in the preceding section; and (e) a more critical view of GCE can “empower individuals to go beyond a benevolent discourse of helping”, promoting critical reflection of students’ own cultures and contexts, in order to raise ethical awareness and provide spaces for imagining different futures.

2.2. Theories

This section will present the theories that will help a critical reading of the study’s research data. First, Johnson’s framework for categorising GCE will be thoroughly described, taking account of the different types of theoretical discourse on global citizenship mentioned in the preceding sections. This is followed by a demonstration of Cowen’s theory of shape-shifting educational policies as they are transferred, translated and transformed between contexts.

2.2.1. A theoretical model for categorising GCE

Several researchers (Veugelers, 2011; Johnson, 2010; Andreotti, 2006) have provided models for categorising GCE. As discussed in the previous section, Andreotti (2006) describes two different GCE frameworks, one “soft” and one “critical”. In general terms, the first one reflects a humanitarian/moral framework for understanding our relationship to others, empowering individuals to act, raising awareness of global issues and promoting campaigns, while the latter focuses on social inequality and injustice, understanding global relations as political and ethical, and empowering individuals to reflect critically and engage with global issues.

Veugelers (2011) distinguishes three forms of GCE, based on his theoretical and empirical research in the Netherlands. The first form refers to an “open global citizenship” and recognises that the world has become smaller, that there is more interdependency and more possibilities for cultural diversity. The second one describes a “moral global citizenship” and refers to moral categories such as equality and human rights, while the third one is advocating for a “social-political global citizenship” that aims to change political power relations towards equality and cultural diversity (Veugelers, 2011, p. 476).

Yet, a third model is considered more appropriate for the analysis of this study’s research data. Johnson’s (2010) typology of GCE covers effectively most of the diverse and competing discourses related to the concept, as well as offers a systematic classification that can help deconstruct international and national GCE discourse. According to Johnson (2010), there are eight principal categories of global citizenship that can create a framework for the analysis of GCE: political, moral,
economic, cultural-aesthetic, critical, positional, environmental and spiritual. The first four refer to converging and conflicting forms of global cosmopolitan citizenship and relate to what was described above as “soft” forms of GCE, whereas the last four describe more critical, postmodern and alternative forms of global citizenship.

Starting from the cosmopolitan categories, we should mention here that the word “cosmopolitanism” refers to the Ancient Greek ideal of universalism, with *kosmos* meaning world and *polis* meaning city, thus the whole term implying that the world is one’s city. Political cosmopolitan global citizenship entails three different conceptions of global governance. The first and most radical conception advocates the idea of a world state through abolishing national boundaries, transferring sovereignty to a “democratic world polity” and establishing a world citizenship status for all human beings (Johnson, 2010, p. 4). The second one suggests the democratisation and strengthening of international organisations (e.g. UN, World Bank, World Trade Organisation), referring to the idea of cosmopolitan democracy. This conception is often criticised though as Western-centric and imperialistic. The third one can also be called “anarcho-cosmopolitanism” (Gabay, as cited in Johnson, 2010, p. 5) and implies the need for a global civil society to grow and govern through non-profit and volunteer networks and organisations.

Moral cosmopolitan global citizenship dates back to the ideas of Kant on a single moral community and it proves to be the foundation for dominant conceptions of global citizenship in both academic and policy discourses. This notion of global citizenship fosters the need for a global ethic and advocates universal human rights (e.g. the UN Declaration of Human Rights). On the contrary, economic cosmopolitan global citizenship refers to the neoliberal and corporate ideals of competition, free market and human capital. It favours economic growth, consumption and elitism, and describes the charitable actions of multinational corporations, often labelled as “corporate social responsibility” (Schattle, as cited in Johnson, 2010, p. 7). The last conception of cosmopolitan global citizenship is named aesthetic-cultural and refers to the openness in other people’s cultural practices, the development of cultural competence, an ethical positioning and access to a liberal multicultural society. This type of citizenship can also be related to the cultural globalisation of media and languages.

Moving now to the last four categories, we can see at first that a critical or postcolonial conception of global citizenship is closely linked to what Tully (2008, p. 29) names as “diverse” global citizenship, implying a world “reciprocally sustained by the civic freedom of its citizens”. This conception is also related to the deconstruction of oppressive global structures and the politics of social transformation. In addition, some scholars in this area show support for human rights, which are generally considered as a moral cosmopolitan standpoint. Positional global citizenship arises from many social discourses or positions and “constructs interrelations between capitalist, institutional, cosmopolitan universalism and rooted, localised, grass-roots post-colonial relativism”, founded in Habermas’s notion of “communicative rationality” (Johnson, 2010, p. 13). It is common to “anarcho-
cosmopolitanism” in that it supports the idea of global civil society organisations constructed on the basis of specific positions such as gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and class; yet without necessarily advocating universalism.

Environmental global citizenship comes in line with the more distinct field of education for sustainable development, transcending the focus from human rights to human responsibilities and ecological ideas. Such a conception prioritises ecological awareness on the basis of natural interconnection of all earthly things, from either an anthropocentric or ecocentric standpoint, and highlights the need for empathy and appreciation of diversity. Manifestations of this form of citizenship can lie within governments, global civil society and corporate organisations. Finally, spiritual global citizenship (also termed as “religious” or “faith-based”) derives from discourses of “love and caring” and it is seen as having the potential to “cultivate the good in humanity” and work towards “the betterment of society” (Golmohamad, as cited in Johnson, 2010, p. 19). This form of global citizenship refers to the ideas of empathy, altruism and charity to all humankind, as well as to global social justice. Conroy and Davis (as cited in Johnson, 2010, p. 18) mention that this conception generally promotes a sort of holism “in which “deeper” notions of the self and society connect and combine with “the energies of metaphysical commitment” to formulate an understanding of the world or universe beyond the rational, empiricist Enlightenment model: a form of transcendence”.

All these categories cover a range of philosophical theories ranging from relativism to universalism and from individualism to holism. Although many elements of these classifications may overlap each other, the broader typology offers a useful tool that can help us categorise and critically read the forms of global citizenship promoted by international and national policy documents, as well as the perceptions of individual teachers and students. Table 2 below provides an overall picture of Johnson’s categorisation of global citizenship.

Table 2
Johnson’s categorisation of global citizenship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Conceptual Types and Manifestations</th>
<th>Related to theories by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Cosmopolitan Global Citizenship</td>
<td>World-state / institutional cosmopolitanism &lt;br&gt;Cosmopolitan democracy &lt;br&gt;Anarcho-cosmopolitanism</td>
<td>Kant; Rawls; Held; McGrew; Linklater; Carter; Archibugi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Cosmopolitan Global Citizenship</td>
<td>“Strong” cosmopolitanism &lt;br&gt;Human Rights-based &lt;br&gt;“New” cosmopolitanism</td>
<td>Stoics; Kant; Nussbaum; Sen; Singer; Appiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Cosmopolitan Global Citizenship</td>
<td>Competitive / egocentric Corporate Social Responsibility / Philanthropic</td>
<td>Smith; Quesnay; Hayek; Friedman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Cultural-aesthetic Cosmopolitan Global Citizenship
- Identification with globalised forms of media and languages ("MTV / Internet generation")
- Identification with awareness of cultures and individuals
- Evaluation of cultural genres

| Nietzsche (übermensch) |

### Critical (post-colonial) Global Citizenship
- Post-development / post-colonial
- Post-Marxist

| Escobar; Said; Gramsci; Marx; Frankfurt School; Critical Pedagogy (e.g. Freire) |

### Positional Global Citizenship
- Sociological discourse-based (e.g. feminism; race theory)
- Pragmatic and relationship-based: global civil society

| Habermas (communicative rationality) |

### Environmental Global Citizenship
- Ecocentric
- Anthropocentric

| Dobson; Lovelock; enviro-scientific research |

### Spiritual Global Citizenship
- Spiritual / humanist
- Faith-based

| Noddings; Danesh; religious texts |

*Source: Johnson, 2010, pp. 19-20*

#### 2.2.2. The transfer, translation and transformation of educational ideas

Cowen (2006, p. 561) argues that comparative education studies must always deal with the intellectual problems that occur by the concepts of context ("the local, social embeddedness of educational phenomena") and transfer ("the movement of educational ideas, policies and practices from one place to another, normally across a national boundary"), and their relation. A great number of social phenomena move across borders and as they travel internationally, they are filtered and reshaped by diverse national contexts. This mobility process is perhaps best represented in Cowen’s (2009b, p. 315) famously quoted phrase “as it moves, it morphs”, which refers not only to the movement of people or conceptions of societies, but also to the mobilities of ideas.

According to Cowen (2009a), when educational ideas, principles, policies and practices are inserted in a social context other than the one where they were produced, there is a double-osmotic problem of their social integration in terms of transfer and translation. Later, when an educational phenomenon grows in a new social context, comes the moment of transformation. These stages address the issue of “shape-shifting” when examining policies trans-nationally and imply “the metamorphoses of the institutions and social processes, which are mobile” (Cowen, 2009b, p. 323). More specifically, Cowen (2006) suggests that:

1. Transfer is the movement of an educational idea or practice in supra-national or transnational or inter-national space: the ‘space-gate’ moment, with its politics of attraction and so on.
2. Translation is the shape-shifting of educational institutions or the re-interpretation of educational ideas which routinely occurs with the transfer in space: ‘the chameleon process’.
3. Transformations are the metamorphoses which the compression of social and economic power into education in the new context imposes on the initial
translation: that is, a range of transformations which cover both the indigenisation and the extinction of the translated form. (p. 566)

However, contemporary comparative education studies, focused until recently mainly towards the themes of “reforms”, “advice”, “urgent policy improvement” and “learning from others” (Cowen, 2009b, p. 319), have been epistemologically indifferent to issues of shape-shifting, a phenomenon which the present study is going to address. More specifically, the idea that moves across borders in this study is global citizenship and the focus is on GCE policies and practices, as the means to promote a specific conception of the phenomenon. An analysis of GCE policy documents and major initiatives by international organisations will describe the moment of transfer, helping us to better understand recent efforts to promote the concept. Besides, GCE is a concept initially developed internationally through the work of transnational agencies such as UNESCO and Oxfam (Bourn, 2015). Thus, an examination of international discourse should be the first step in any comparative analysis of GCE. The translation process will be explored by looking at the national curricula in Greece and Sweden, particularly the general and specific guidelines for citizenship-related subjects, in order to identify how national documents conceptualise global citizenship. Finally, the transformation will be examined based on the values, perspectives and practices of teachers and students, who either accept or resist the notion of global citizenship as complementary or contradictory to national or European citizenship. The research objectives in this study, as described in section 1.2, address all three interrelated processes.
Chapter Three
Methodology of the study

3.1. Research strategy and design

As the focus of this study lies in understanding how GCE is conceptualised at different contextual levels, a qualitative strategy was seen as the most appropriate orientation for this research. Qualitative studies emphasise words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data, while contextual understanding of social behaviour is considered essential (Bryman, 2012). Through these ideas, the researcher is set within an interpretivist and constructionist epistemology, where the main concern is to critically read the social world as interpreted and constructed by its participants. In this study, abductive reasoning characterises the relationship between theory and research, since by acknowledging the importance of GCE in international policy discourse, as indicated by various documents, the researcher presumes that educational institutions, at least in Europe, will have integrated relevant practice or adjusted their notions of citizenship to include a more global perspective.

Attempting a cross-national examination of policies and practices for educating global citizens implies that a comparative case study focusing on countries and including different schools that apply such practices is the most appropriate research design for this study. According to Bryman (2012), a comparative design in qualitative research frequently builds on a case study design, while more and more researchers have recently stressed the importance of using a case study involving more than one case, usually referred to as a “multiple-case (or multicase) study” (Bryman, 2012, p. 74). In the present research, the researcher’s expressed intention is to compare an educational concept in different socio-cultural settings, using the same instruments so as to conduct new empirical work and identify current educational trends. Thus, cross-cultural research can help to gain a deeper understanding of educational reality in different national contexts and reduce the risk of failing to realise that the findings of social sciences are culturally specific (Bryman, 2012).

There are several reasons that make a comparative case study design appropriate for this research. First of all, as Yin (2003) points out, case studies are more appropriate when a more holistic and in-depth study of the phenomenon is needed. Unlike statistics, case-oriented studies leave more space for interpretive analysis, and this study’s research objectives imply a need for interpretation and holistic understanding. Moreover, the researcher acknowledges the fact that specific socio-cultural conditions need to be taken into account, since the case and its subjects cannot be separated from their context, especially when examining the integration of global policies and practices into national contexts. This implies that the case is of interest in itself and not just as a bearer of a set of values. In few-country comparisons such as this, the comparativist has the advantage of studying the selected countries in depth and is closer to the data. This alleviates the problems of comparability and concept
stretching that occur in many-country comparisons, since more appropriate countries are chosen and less abstract concepts can be developed (Lor, 2011). Manzon (2007) also argues that country comparisons offer the advantage of providing a general framework for understanding and interpreting the relationships between education and society.

However, the findings of few-country comparisons cannot be generalised to explain phenomena in countries not studied, resulting in low external validity compared to many-country comparisons (Lor, 2011). Viewed also in terms of transferability, the empirical data in this research focus on a small group of people inside the two countries, which may question whether the findings can hold in other contexts (Bryman, 2012).

3.2. Sampling design and selection process

Based on the case study design of this research, two different levels of sampling need to be considered – “sampling of contexts and sampling of participants” (Bryman, 2012, p. 417).

In this research the sampling of context considers the country, used in comparative studies as a “synonym for the territorial and political state” (Manzon, 2007, p. 96). Greece and Sweden are relevant country cases which “have sufficient in common to make analysis of their differences meaningful” (Bray as cited in Manzon, p. 88). Both countries belong to the same sphere of educational influence under the UN and the EU, implying that international policy frameworks, such as the Maastricht Global Education Declaration, have an impact on their national educational systems. In addition, immigration to these countries has increased rapidly during the last twenty years, resulting in a rise of nationalist movements (Zachos, 2009; Rydgren, 2006), while both countries include courses in citizenship or civics, dealing with global issues, in their curricula. In geographical terms, Greece could be considered representative of Southern Europe and Sweden of Northern Europe, thus covering a broad spectrum of European education.

In Greece, education has traditionally highlighted issues related to democracy and citizenship in Ancient or Modern Greek polity mainly through the subjects of history and civics (Papadopoulou, 2007). Despite the fact that Greek education has often been criticised as conservative or ethnocentric (Zachos, 2009), recent education reforms have promoted a more international orientation in educational policy, probably as a result of the global economic forces that have influenced the country in recent years though still without sufficient evidence to prove this assumption. The latest curriculum guidelines recognise the implications of living in an interconnected world and raise the importance of multicultural education (Faas, 2011).

Sweden, the second national case under consideration, is a country with a major background in global education and one of the first to promote development education programmes (Bourn, 2012). According to Bourn (2015, p. 187), Sweden “has consciously tried to mainstream global themes”, while it is “well known for integrating global and sustainability themes within the life of its schools”.

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Initiatives such as the Global School, a programme aiming to stimulate school improvement and support pedagogical development work on learning about global issues focusing mainly on sustainable development (Knutsson, 2011), make Sweden one of the leading European countries in the broader field of global education. Moreover, the values of the Swedish curriculum are extensively characterised by an international perspective (Skolverket, 2011).

The sampling of participants in both Greece and Sweden involved primary school teachers and students. The participants were selected through a “generic purposive sample”, defined by Bryman (2012, p. 418) as a way to sample participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research objectives that have been posed. The teachers and students participating in this study were selected based on four criteria, ensuring that: (a) participating schools were public, so that the influences of national curricula could be more evident; (b) schools were located in urban areas; (c) teachers interviewed were teaching citizenship education, civics or subjects that could be related to global citizenship; and (d) students were 11-12 years old, the age group that corresponds to the 6th grade of primary school, in which students in both countries are taught citizenship-related subjects. These criteria were established for the sample to be consistent and reliable in both countries.

Given time and financial constraints, two public primary schools were selected from each country so that the research could be feasible. The schools in both countries were located in an urban area of approximately the same size, specifically in the municipality of Thessaloniki in Greece and in the municipality of Stockholm in Sweden. One school in each country had a more multicultural profile, while the second one was a mainstream school with a more homogenous school population. In each school three teachers were interviewed and a focus group discussion took place with five to seven students, who were selected by the teachers and represented a good mix of performance groups. In total, twelve teachers were interviewed and four focus groups were conducted, ensuring gender balance within each group. Table 3 below illustrates the number of participants in each country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Greece</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thessaloniki</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of teachers</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of students</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sampling of participants also involved international policy officials from international organisations promoting the objectives of GCE, specifically from UNESCO, the International Institute
for Education Planning (IIEP) and Education International (EI). Four international policy officials were interviewed in an effort to better understand how GCE has been developed internationally. The interviews were conducted during the researcher’s summer internship at the headquarters of Education International in Brussels, where he was given the chance to participate in the European conference on “Citizens for Global Education – Education for Global Citizenship” (24-25 June 2014) and meet policy officials working on GCE. After relevant contacts had been made, it was possible to interview two policy officials from UNESCO, one from IIEP and one from EI.

3.3. Data collection methods

Data were gathered using a multi-method approach corresponding to the qualitative character of this study. At first, document analysis was employed to collect relevant and reliable data from official policy documents, both at international and national level. International policy documents included transnational agreements, international curriculum guides and major international initiatives developed by UNESCO, the EU and Oxfam. The document analysis focused specifically on: (a) the Global Education First Initiative launched by the UN Secretary General in 2012, as well as UNESCO’s Guide on GCE (2014), produced as the outcome document of two technical consultation meetings; (b) the Maastricht Global Education Declaration (as cited in O’Loughlin and Wegimont, 2003, pp. 147-150), which constituted the European strategy framework for improving and increasing global education in Europe until 2015; and (c) Oxfam’s (2006) curriculum for global citizenship, first published in 1997.

Data gathered from international policy discourse aimed to show which conceptions and values of global citizenship are generally promoted by major international organisations, taking into consideration Johnson’s (2010) framework. Using the same framework, the national education curricula of Greece and Sweden were gathered and studied. The broader goals of the curricula and the particular goals of citizenship-related subjects were examined in order to see to what extent and in which direction they promote global awareness and GCE values and competences.

For examining the views of international policy officials, teachers and students, interviews and focus groups were employed (see Appendix A, B and C). More specifically, semi-structured interviews were conducted with policy officials and teachers, since the aim was to give greater emphasis to the interviewees’ own perspectives and allow them to steer the interview towards the issues that they considered most essential (Bryman, 2012). Interview guides included open-ended questions and the interview process was rather flexible, lasting a maximum of 30 minutes. Questions for international policy officials generally asked their views on how GCE has been developed in recent years, what the role of their organisation has been in promoting GCE, and what the potential implications of this process could be for nation-states, as well as individual teachers and students. For teachers in Greece and Sweden, the interviews were conducted in Greek and English; the questions aimed to elicit information on teachers’ understanding of global citizenship, the way they teach global
awareness, the challenges they face, as well as good practices that they have previously implemented in their classrooms or are aware of.

Focus groups with students aimed to show how GCE impacts the knowledge, perceptions and values of those most directly involved in the learning process. According to Bryman (2012), the main idea for the focus group is that people who are known to have a common experience can be interviewed in a relatively unstructured way about that experience, while the interest for the focus group practitioner lies on how individuals discuss a certain issue as members of a group, rather than simply as individuals. Questions for students related to their understanding of what it means to be a global citizen, their knowledge of GCE themes (e.g. globalisation, poverty, human rights and sustainable development), and the potential implications of this knowledge on their everyday lives. Each focus group meeting lasted approximately 20 minutes and the discussions were conducted in Greek for the Greek students and in English or Swedish for the Swedish students. Although participating students in Sweden could communicate well in English, a Swedish teacher was present at both focus group meetings and helped with translation issues when necessary. Yet it was ensured that that teacher did not otherwise deal with the students directly, so that the students could feel free to interact and communicate with each other.

Both interviews and focus groups were recorded, so that the researcher could later transcribe and categorise the data thematically. In order to gain access to Swedish schools, the researcher contacted the municipality of Stockholm, which made some recommendations and indicated a number of schools. An email was then sent to school principals outlining the aims of the research and access was easily granted to two schools. On the other hand, the process of gaining access was more complicated in Greece, where a detailed research plan had to be sent early on to the Ministry of Education (July 2014), which gave permission to conduct research in schools after three months.

3.4. Data analysis

International and national policy documents were analysed using qualitative content analysis. This method includes “a searching-out of underlying themes in the materials being analysed” and as such “lies at the heart of the coding approaches that are often employed in the analysis of qualitative data” (Bryman, 2012, pp. 557-559). In the present study, the researcher familiarised himself with a number of policy documents on GCE before generating some of the categories that guided the collection of data. These categories generally included: (a) specific conceptions and forms of global citizenship promoted; (b) the proclaimed objectives of GCE (skills, values and knowledge); (c) suggested teaching and learning practices; and (d) challenges to implement GCE in schools. By collecting data in these categories, the researcher could later apply the theoretical models of the study and better understand how GCE is reflected in international and national policy discourse.
Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the interview and focus group transcripts, since it is a flexible method that can be employed in relation to qualitative content analysis (Bryman, 2012). The same categories as those described above guided the deductive reading and rereading of the transcripts, while the researcher also looked inductively for emerging and relevant themes. Following the recommendations of Ryan and Bernard (as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 580), the researcher mainly looked in the transcripts for repetitions, similarities and differences, missing data and theory-related material. Niens and Reilly (2012) have also used thematic analysis in their research on global citizenship in Northern Ireland, in order to analyse transcribed data from focus groups with students. Their research is similar to this in terms of analysing qualitative data relevant to GCE. Yet this study further aimed to compare the major themes that emerged from the data analysis, taking account of the national education contexts in Greece and Sweden.

More specifically, this study has attempted a multilevel comparative analysis to achieve multifaceted and holistic understanding of GCE. Considering Cowen’s theory of shape-shifting, the comparative analysis moved from the macro to micro level, particularly from the discourse of different international organisations to the curricula of the two countries in question and to individual teachers’ and students’ perceptions. Adopting an interpretive stance, the comparative design was developed according to Bereday’s (as cited in Manzon, 2007, pp. 86-87) four-step method of comparative analysis which consists of description, interpretation, juxtaposition and simultaneous comparison. This is why the analysis of each national case first includes a brief overview of the education system, followed by a separate interpretation and juxtaposition of empirical data. After similarities and differences have been established, the data are compared simultaneously between cases in the discussion part of the study. Towards the end, convergences and divergences between international and national discourses are identified.

3.5. Trustworthiness criteria

According to Bryman (2012, p. 391), trustworthiness in qualitative research is made up of four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In order to ensure credibility of the study’s findings, the researcher provided feedback via email to policy officials and to one teacher in each participating school, with some of his first impressions and initial findings with regard to their organisation or school. While no additional comments were sent back by policy officials, some teachers offered useful insights which helped to confirm that the researcher had correctly understood the information provided. In addition, the triangulation of findings helped to ensure that the researcher had well perceived the predominant forms of global citizenship promoted in both international and national discourse. By collecting data from interviews, focus groups and official documents, the findings were cross-checked, offering a more detailed and balanced picture of how GCE has been developed in the policy and practice of international organisations, national education systems and
schools. This “thick description” (Bryman, 2012, p. 392) of different discourse levels can compensate for the limited transferability of findings resulting from the low number of individuals and groups interviewed.

In order to ensure dependability, complete records of all phases of research were kept, including the initial research proposal, the interview and focus group transcripts, as well as the analytical framework for the study. These were regularly reviewed by the researcher’s supervisor to guarantee that proper procedures had been followed. As for confirmability, the researcher tried to limit the influence of personal values and theoretical inclinations that could “sway the conduct of the research and the findings deriving from it” (Bryman, 2012, pp. 392-393). Although complete objectivity cannot be achieved, the researcher gathered and analysed his data based on well-defined theoretical models, described above, and following the recommendations of his supervisor.

3.6. Ethical considerations

When conducting a research that involves the participation of students and teachers, certain ethical principles need to be considered (Bryman, 2012). As mentioned above, the Greek Ministry of Education had to approve the research procedure before this could take place in Greek schools. Thus, the research design, methods and tools were carefully examined by the research department of the Ministry to ensure that there is no harm intended to participants. The researcher was also asked to sign an official form declaring that his data would be kept anonymous and would not be used for commercial reasons.

Prior to the research in both countries, all participants had been informed either verbally or via email about the topic and their role throughout the process, so as to avoid deception of any kind. For students who participated in the focus groups, parental consent was a prerequisite in order to ensure informed consent. Only students who provided a signed confirmation from their parents participated, which is why the number of focus group participants ranged from five to seven pupils. Last but not least, participants were informed from the outset that anonymity would be granted and that all recorded data would be kept safely by the researcher, thus ensuring confidentiality.
4.1. Building strong international discourse on GCE

Considering the increased prominence that GCE has recently received due to the efforts of international organisations to promote the concept, it is essential to describe the international policy context before proceeding to the comparative case study analysis between Greece and Sweden. This will allow for a more holistic view and examination of the concept, which will help us identify similarities and discrepancies between international and national GCE discourse at the end of the study. The following sections aim to identify how GCE has been developed in international policy, based on an analysis of documents and interviews with policy officials. The categories described in section 3.4 have been used to analyse the data. This is followed by a summary of the main findings.

4.1.1. Analysing international policy documents and initiatives on GCE

This first section will critically examine a number of key policy documents and initiatives developed by three influential organisations in the field of GCE. Specifically the content of documents developed by UNESCO, the European Union and Oxfam will be analysed based on the categories described in section 3.4, expanding though the scope of the analysis when relevant and necessary in order to provide a more complete image of international GCE discourse.

UNESCO

As an international organisation with a mission “to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue” (“Introducing UNESCO”, 2014), UNESCO has long pursued programmes and initiatives related to global citizenship. However, UNESCO’s most evident conceptualisation of the term came with the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012, a global initiative of the UN Secretary General that has set global citizenship as one of its three priorities. As a result, UNESCO has now produced several documents (UNESCO, 2014; 2013) to contextualise, promote and even measure this idea.

Looking at the GEFI website (“About the GEFI”, n.d.), it becomes evident that the particular initiative aims to accelerate progress towards the MDGs and EFA goals and push forward three main priorities: (a) put every child in school; (b) improve the quality of learning; and (c) foster global citizenship. As a global partnership, the GEFI is comprised of different actors and organisations, including governments, UN agencies and multilateral organisations, civil society organisations, philanthropic and business institutions; thus relying also on the support and expertise of the private sector. In terms of the priority on global citizenship, the initiative suggests that “education must be
transformative”, developing “an active care for the world and for those with whom we share it” (“Priority 3: Forster Global Citizenship”, n.d.).

In the GEFI context, education for global citizenship is generally attributed a transformative and ethical role, in the sense of empowering people to contribute to more “just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies”, while five barriers to global citizenship are identified: (a) legacy of the current education system, which should become more responsive to contemporary life and global challenges, introducing innovative and participatory teaching and learning practices; (b) outmoded curricula and learning materials that reinforce stereotypes, but their outcome could be reversed if “educators adopt a vision of ethical global citizenship”; (c) lack of teacher capacity, implying that many teachers lack the training, confidence and classroom materials to foster global citizenship; (d) inadequate focus on values, implying that the values of peace, human rights, respect, justice and cultural diversity are not always incorporated in the ethos of schools; and (e) lack of leadership on global citizenship that could be tackled if goals and targets are set around 21st century skills and “regularly assessed to measure progress” (“Priority 3: Forster Global Citizenship”, n.d.).

In support of the GEFI, two landmark events occurred in 2013: a Technical Consultation on GCE in Seoul and a UNESCO Forum on GCE in Bangkok. The outcomes of this consultative process were included in the 2014 UNESCO publication “Global Citizenship Education: Preparing learners for the challenges of the 21st century”, a document that summarises very well all UNESCO efforts to conceptualise and promote GCE. In this document, UNESCO (2014) recognises that global citizenship is a contested field, open to multiple interpretations, deriving from theories related to cosmopolitanism and sustainable development. It questions the more radical idea of global citizenship being a legal status and instead refers to the concept as “a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity, promoting a “global gaze” that links the local to the global and the national to the international” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 14). Grounded on “universal values”, global citizenship is also seen as “a way of understanding, acting and relating oneself to others and the environment in space and time” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 14). No reference is made to the critical and postcolonial conceptions and origins of global citizenship, while the political dimension of the concept is overlooked.

GCE is viewed as a trans-disciplinary approach to education that can be mainstreamed within existing education interventions and can be implemented through formal and non-formal education activities. It is closely related to and can thus employ methodologies from human rights education, peace education, education for sustainable development and education for intercultural understanding, while it is more commonly delivered as an integral part of an existing subject in schools. The overarching aim of GCE is “to empower learners to engage and assume active roles, both locally and globally, to face and resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 15). It is further accorded a lifelong learning perspective, a transformative character and a potential to reconcile
local and global identities. According to UNESCO (2014), GCE should foster in learners the following competencies:

- an attitude supported by an understanding of multiple levels of identity, and the potential for a ‘collective identity’ which transcends individual cultural, religious, ethnic or other differences;
- a deep knowledge of global issues and universal values such as justice, equality, dignity and respect;
- cognitive skills to think critically, systemically and creatively, including adopting a multiperspective approach that recognizes the different dimensions, perspectives and angles of issues;
- non-cognitive skills including social skills such as empathy and conflict resolution, communication skills and aptitudes for networking and interacting with people of different backgrounds, origins, cultures and perspectives; and
- behavioural capacities to act collaboratively and responsibly to find global solutions for global challenges, and to strive for the collective good. (p.17)

Although repeating several times words such as “cooperation” and “solidarity”, UNESCO (2014, p. 19) refers to perspectives that see “competitiveness” as essential element of global citizenship and indicate “a new vision of competition that promotes building the capacity of learners to survive, thrive and improve the world we live in”, revealing this way an influence from the discourse of private institutions. Furthermore, UNESCO (2014, p. 20) is very careful when referring to the role of GCE in “challenging the status quo”. While it acknowledges that GCE should promote active and participatory learning methods that can engage learners in thinking critically about global issues, it urges the reader to think with “sensitivity, care and a commitment to open dialogue” approaches to GCE that challenge existing structures or power relations.

As enabling conditions for the implementation of GCE, UNESCO indicates an open environment for universal values, engagement of local stakeholders in the transformative learning process, and public support for youth-led initiatives. With regard to learning and teaching practices, UNESCO (2014, p. 25) suggests that best GCE practices aim to: (a) develop a respectful, inclusive and interactive classroom ethos; (b) promote learner-centred approaches that align with learning goals; (c) include authentic performance tasks; (d) use globally-oriented learning resources; (e) make use of assessment and evaluation strategies; (f) offer opportunities to experience learning in different contexts (e.g. exchange programmes); and (g) foreground the teacher as a role model.

In accordance to the GEFI proposal for measuring progress, UNESCO (2014, p. 35) refers extensively to practices that could monitor and measure GCE, taking account of indicators such as the inputs (e.g. educators’ competencies, resources, learning tools and environment), the process (e.g. types of actions, teaching methodologies, learners’ engagement) and the outcomes (e.g. knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, impact on communities). In addition, UNESCO (2014, p. 35) provides various examples of efforts to measure GCE, one of which is the example of the MasterCard Foundation
Scholars Programme that “measures the ways in which learners understand, express and practise their commitment to service and social transformation in ways that integrate global awareness and identity”.

**The European Union**

At the same time that the GEFI was launched, the European Union issued a call to develop a cross-sectoral European strategy for “development education, awareness-raising and active global citizenship”, recognising as a major priority the support of active global citizenship “during periods marked by austerity, crises and the rise of nationalist and populist movements” (European Parliament, 5 July 2012). The Council of Europe’s North-South Centre and the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) are two European institutions committed to develop this strategy. As cited in the website of the North-South Centre (“North-South Centre”, 2014), all activities initiated by the particular institution aim to build “a global citizenship based on human rights and citizen’s responsibilities”, while the GENE, acting as a European network of Ministries and Agencies for global education, has produced several policy documents promoting GCE objectives.

In the European education policy environment, GCE is usually referred to within the context of global and development education, as mentioned by several international policy officials interviewed for this study. Thus, the Maastricht Global Education Declaration, which led to the development of a European policy framework in global education, constitutes the principal policy document that needs to be critically examined in this study. The specific document, signed in the 2002 Maastricht Congress by the member states of the Council of Europe, encouraged a growing number of countries to introduce national policies, strategies or frameworks in global education promoting objectives relevant to GCE. It was developed as the European response to the creation of a global partnership for the reduction of poverty, as outlined in the UN MDGs, and to international commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002).

According to the Maastricht Declaration (as cited in O’Loughlin and Wegimont, 2003, pp. 147-150), there have been various international, regional and national commitments to promote global education, “as education that supports peoples’ search for knowledge about the realities of their world, and engages them in critical global democratic citizenship towards greater justice, sustainability, equity and human rights for all”. The same document emphasises the need for raising public support for spending on development co-operation and aid programmes, suggesting that all citizens should acquire the knowledge and skills in order to “understand, participate in and interact critically with our global society as empowered global citizens” (O’Loughlin and Wegimont, 2003, p. 148). Bourn (2015) argues that public support and understanding of global and development issues became essential within the European Commission due to the major expansion of the Union to countries that had never been donor aid countries and the consequent need to justify expenditure in this area.

Another strand in the same European document related to GCE is the emphasis on multiple citizeships (e.g. local, national and global) and sustainable lifestyles. Global education, along with
other relevant disciplines similar to the ones mentioned above by UNESCO (e.g. development education, human rights education, ESD, etc.), are all considered to be the “global dimensions of Education for Citizenship”, which seems to be characterised by pedagogical approaches based on social justice, human rights and sustainable development. It is further suggested that teaching and learning about global issues should focus on “supportive learning and encouraging reflection with active participation of learners and educators”, promoting diversity and respect for others and encouraging learners to “make their choices in their own context in relation to the global context” (O’Loughlin and Wegimont, 2003, p. 149).

For the implementation of the Maastricht agreement, national ministries were called on to secure the integration of global education in educational systems and to ensure full integration into curricula of relevant formal and non-formal teaching and learning practices at all education levels. Member states were also committed to take forward efforts to define global education, ensuring that a rich diversity of experience and perspectives (Southern, Minorities, Youth and Women’s perspectives) is included at every relevant effort. This could be further supported by improving the networking of ideas and strategies between policy-makers and practitioners.

Oxfam
Oxfam is an international confederation of seventeen organisations working together with local communities and partner organisations in more than ninety countries, with the aim to end the injustices that cause poverty (“About Oxfam”, 2015). As a development and aid organisation that emerged in the UK during the Second World War, Oxfam is currently considered as one of the first NGOs that supported and became engaged in work with schools, in an attempt to open people’s minds and raise public support to the problem of poverty in countries overseas (Bourn, 2015). Oxfam’s curriculum for global citizenship, developed in 1997, was one of the first documents that tried to conceptualise GCE, influenced by both the action-orientated elements of development education and the global education movement as represented by scholars such as Selby, Pike and Hicks (Bourn, 2015).

Looking at the latest version of Oxfam’s curriculum guide for schools (2006), it becomes evident that Oxfam is trying to conceptualise global citizenship in a more holistic way, attributing to the concept moral, cultural, environmental, spiritual, as well as critical dimensions, without particularly stressing the economic or neoliberal conceptions of global citizenship. As illustrated in Table 3 below, the key objectives for what is considered to be a “responsible global citizenship” are categorised in knowledge, skills and values that students should acquire in order to become “good” and “responsible global citizens” (Oxfam, 2006, pp. 3-4).
Table 4
Oxfam’s key elements for responsible global citizenship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge and understanding</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Values and attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Social justice and equity</td>
<td>• Critical thinking</td>
<td>• Sense of identity and self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diversity</td>
<td>• Ability to argue effectively</td>
<td>• Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Globalisation and interdependence</td>
<td>• Ability to challenge injustice and inequalities</td>
<td>• Commitment to social justice and equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sustainable development</td>
<td>• Respect for people and things</td>
<td>• Value and respect for diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Peace and conflict</td>
<td>• Co-operation and conflict resolution</td>
<td>• Concern for the environment and commitment to sustainable development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Oxfam, 2006, p. 4

Oxfam (2006) adopts a more critical perspective to GCE by acknowledging that the particular approach to education is about developing critical thinking skills and reflecting on the complexity of global issues, and not about raising money for charity or telling people what to think and do. In this context, global citizen is someone who is “outraged by social injustice” and is willing to act (Oxfam, 2006, p. 3). In addition, the specific document explicitly refers to an inequitable and unsustainable use of the world’s resources that widens the gap between rich and poor, and in this respect GCE should encourage young people “to care about the planet and to develop empathy with, and an active concern for, those with whom they share it” (Oxfam, 2006, p. 1). A disposition to act and the opportunity to develop critical thinking about complex global issues are often repeated as qualities of GCE. Moreover, GCE is seen as a way that could help students to make informed choices on how to exercise their own rights and their responsibilities to others. It is noteworthy that no particular mention is made to “human rights” as essential content knowledge of GCE, while the words “diversity” and “local” are themes that are often repeated.

Furthermore, GCE is considered as relevant to all areas of the school curriculum, all abilities and all ages. It is seen as something “more than the international scale in Citizenship, or teaching about a distant locality in Geography” (Oxfam, 2006, p. 2). In terms of teaching and learning methods, GCE encompasses participatory methodologies, including for example “discussion and debate, role-
play, ranking exercises, and communities of enquiry” (Oxfam, 2006, p. 2). These methods are considered as best practice to help students develop empathy and learn how decisions made by people in other parts of the world affect our everyday lives. GCE could play an important role in improving the whole life of a school, providing coherence, purpose and motivation in teaching and learning.

4.1.2. Interviews with international policy officials

In order to better understand international discourse on GCE, this section will demonstrate data from interviews with four international policy officials currently working on GCE-related programmes. One interview took place at the headquarters of Education International, two were held at the headquarters of UNESCO and the fourth was conducted via email with an official from the IIEP. The presentation of data focuses mainly on the work of UNESCO and is organised thematically, in the following categories: (a) the development of GCE; (b) the role of international organisations in promoting GCE; and (c) challenges and future potential. For ethical reasons, anonymity for participants will be ensured.

The development of GCE within UNESCO

For UNESCO, the origins of GCE date back to the 1974 Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms. The specific document is considered by the interviewees as the normative framework of UNESCO’s ongoing work on GCE which has currently developed to become “a broad umbrella term” that “borrows content” from other relevant fields (multicultural education, human rights education, ESD, etc.) and can serve as advocacy tool for promoting values, attitudes and themes from all these interrelated disciplines; yet without establishing a hierarchical order among them.

One interviewee mentioned that GCE emerged in the 1990s – an opinion supported also by Bourn (2015) – originating from what during that time was called Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC). EDC implied a methodological shift in the way that education was delivered, especially in the former Soviet states; a shift from a knowledge-based towards a participatory approach to education. The idea behind that shift was that if people would practice democratic ways of interactions in school, they would develop the ethos of being democratic and active citizens in their societies. Thus, combining this capacity for action offered by EDC with the content knowledge, values and attitudes provided by the above mentioned values-based disciplines, we have the basic elements of GCE. And as the same interviewee explains, we can understand GCE in two levels:

One level is combined of values, attitudes and knowledge and the other level, being the most crucial, is the capacity for action or agency. That means capacity and engagement of people who think that they are capable to make some change in society, who have some skills and some access points in doing that. Because citizenship exists, in my view, only through action. You can be the most clever person living somewhere in an island, and understanding and contemplating everything and being the most adapt evaluator about all things good on global
citizenship, but if you don’t have access point, if you don’t participate then you are not a citizen. You become citizen through action and that is what citizenship education is about to bring in it [GCE].

In this respect, the participatory approach of citizenship education is seen as “the glue element” that brings together all values-related disciplines and constitutes the key aspect of GCE. As UNESCO is currently trying to place it, GCE is an approach to education which according to a UNESCO policy official:

... allows learners to understand who they are, their place in a globalised world and to know how to participate and benefit from this process of globalisation at every level, meaning to understand what are the global issues that affect their lives, how they can in their daily lives influence global issues, processes, phenomena, as well as how they can use their understanding of global processes to improve their lives on local level.

Almost all policy officials confirmed that GCE is fostering the idea that every individual is entitled to certain rights, but also to a set of responsibilities. The recent growing prominence of the concept has been attributed by one interviewee to “the universal need for building a global consensus around a set of values”. Over the last decade, the universal values that the UN stands for have been highly contested, while reaching on a global consensus about issues related to, for example, human rights or women rights has become much more challenging today than it was during the 1990s. In this context, GCE is seen as responding to the need of people to feel that there is a global vision to humanity which bonds us together and gives us a reason to be striving for. However, within UNESCO there are also views that emphasise the economic dimension of GCE. As one interviewee mentioned, “if a nation wants to somehow be competitive, thriving, stable, it has to have a population that is mindful of what is going on in the global and can leverage all these information to function”. Thus, preparing global citizens for the future implies “learning languages, learning geography of the world, understanding basic labour and economic trends, as well as how governing bodies work in regional, national and international level”.

The role of international organisations in promoting GCE

As with other concepts, UNESCO’s work on GCE aims to provide guidance and serve as a reference for member states. Upon request from a member, UNESCO is responsible for designing strategies, programmes and good practice capable of addressing the needs of a particular country. For example, one interviewee mentioned Bogotá, Colombia, where the local Secretary for Education, together with UNESCO, had developed a GCE programme in response to the war undertaken by rebel groups, trying in this way to reconstruct society and undo the damage of violence in the city. Other relevant examples involved Morocco and Tunisia, where UNESCO was asked to provide a methodology for GCE and an inventory of good practice, both formal and non-formal, so that national authorities could systematise
and introduce GCE in schools. In all cases mentioned, it was local government that decided to adopt a UNESCO recommendation and adapt (translate) it in a meaningful way for their national context. However, this seems to be both the strength and weakness of GCE, since governments can use the concept in different ways – either to promote their own agenda of world order or to dissolve national tensions.

In recent years, UNESCO has been trying to “reinvigorate the global thrust towards development in education”, as well as aiming to find “a new umbrella goal” capable of uniting leaders around the world to face growing global challenges. In this respect, GCE has emerged as the natural outcome of previous UNESCO projects and initiatives in specific areas related to global and development education. By promoting the concept in the post-2015 development agenda, UNESCO now wants to strengthen its role as an international think tank and soft power institution. According to one interviewee:

UNESCO is one organisation that partially works with the instrument of soft power, similarly to the OECD. Although traditionally, when they were set up, it was different. UNESCO worked in the past on passing resolutions and signing mutual agreements between countries and states and still does to some extent. But in fact from what I see and observe, the big international compacts or signatory agreements belong a little bit to the past. And UNESCO is very much moving with this initiative, particularly in the same direction as the OECD did some time ago in education, trying to become international think tank and soft power institution. This implies that, as a soft power, you create public discourse by developing ideas and concept papers and publications. And you create an environment or space where these ideas get legitimised by participants and then they get spread and become politically correct notions which everyone, at least formally, applies or agrees to. That is how soft power operates in society nowadays.

There is a common belief among interviewees that what UNESCO is expected to do today is to try to get countries to steer education in the interest of the global community and in line with existing conventions. In a sense, the declarations and recommendations are in place, so less normative legal work is needed in the field of education. As one UNESCO interviewee noted, “we are short of gatekeepers for certain values and normative references”.

Since the GEFI in 2012, UNESCO has pushed for GCE to be included in the post-2015 agenda, which is seen as a powerful reference document that can effectively promote such an approach to education. Yet any concept included in the agenda must be measured, so UNESCO is currently working on a framework of GCE learning objectives capable of providing indicators for assessing students’ global skills. The GCE team at UNESCO headquarters is committed till 2017 to ensuring technical leadership and overall coordination of GCE through a three-fold approach: (a) organising a policy dialogue on the post-2015 education agenda; (b) providing technical guidance on GCE and promoting transformative pedagogy; and (c) acting as a clearing-house through publications, social
media messaging, innovative partnerships and other means. The aim of this approach is to help member states to mainstream GCE in national education systems.

Other relevant international initiatives reported by interviewees included the OECD’s 2018 PISA study and the IEA’s International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, to take place in 2016, both of which will be expanded to include an evaluation of global competencies. Moreover, interviewees referred to initiatives by the EU promoting GCE as a way of “educating Western European youth about how they should show solidarity with developing countries”, focusing on the responsibility of “the wealthy towards the poor” and particularly of the economic North towards the South to be found within and outside their countries. In Europe, existing work on GCE aims to build an “allegiance to the international development agenda, so that people can support aid”, as mentioned by one policy official.

Finally, the IIEP is trying to embed GCE objectives into existing planning processes, so that policy-makers can see how the concept applies to national contexts. One example mentioned was the programme “Promoting safety, resilience and social cohesion through education: a capacity development process in support of ministries of education”, through which the IIEP is helping ministries to develop policies and curricula based on GCE values such as equity, tolerance of diversity and respect for others. In this way, GCE could be integrated more effectively in school practice, since it is believed that, if GCE appears as a totally new discipline to be integrated into an already overloaded curriculum, there will be a great deal of resistance from ministries, which may accept GCE if there are funds attached, but only in a tokenistic way and as long as the funds last.

Challenges and future potentials of GCE
When international policy officials were asked to indicate the challenges facing GCE, there was a common understanding that GCE could be perceived by many as a threat to the contemporary national-centred way of educating students. According to interviewees, the idea of global citizenship is often perceived as dangerous and meets with caution, sometimes even suspicion, particularly in countries dealing with internal contradictions, conflicts, identity clashes or socio-economic crises. In such countries, there are usually powerful forms of discourse reproducing stereotypes, such as “we should build our nation first” or “we are threatened by other groups who want to drive us apart”, examples mentioned by two policy officials. On the contrary, in countries with a long-established nation-state tradition, where people do not feel a threat to their national identity, or in countries built by immigrants, such as the US or Canada, people are considered to be more open to the idea of global citizenship.

All interviewees further agreed that global citizenship is complementary to national citizenship, though opposing xenophobic or nationalistic ideals. In order not to alienate people from the concept, UNESCO officials suggested that national education systems can choose GCE themes that they consider appropriate, since some countries are reluctant to talk about certain ethical issues
(euthanasia, sexual diversity, etc.). GCE is seen as a “pick and choose” rather than a “take it or leave it” concept.

In the future, GCE is likely to grow even more significant, finding its place within more universities and teacher training institutions. More global meetings will take place, involving many government officials, so that a binding agreement can soon be developed. UNESCO is also discussing a mapping exercise to further examine the status of GCE in national curricula around the world. However, there is an increasing concern expressed by international policy officials that GCE might become a dividing factor between those education systems that can meet the challenges of the 21st century and those that cannot. National authorities need to invest time and money to equip teachers with the necessary skills and develop GCE into an essential school concept. NGOs and youth organisations already engaged in GCE could offer their expertise in assistance to work by governments.

4.1.3. Summary of findings on international discourse

The content analysis of international policy documents and initiatives on GCE has generally shown that all three organisations examined promote certain dimensions of global citizenship, while intentionally overlooking others. What is common in the discourse of these organisations is the understanding that living in an increasingly interconnected world implies a growing number of challenges that can only be tackled if people develop global awareness, ecological thinking, empathy and a broader sense of identity. There is also a common understanding related to the moral cosmopolitan and environmental dimensions of global citizenship grounded in universalism. At the same time, more political and critical (postcolonial) conceptions of the phenomenon are sidelined, as none of the documents challenges Western-centred values, existing structures and power relations (e.g. capitalism and neoliberalism). Thus, a “soft” version of GCE, as Andreotti (2006) would argue, generally characterises international GCE discourse. In addition, there is a general consensus that GCE is relevant to all aspects of the curriculum, while active and participatory teaching and learning methods, taking place in formal or non-formal settings, are considered the most appropriate ways to deliver GCE.

UNESCO seems to focus more on an economic conception of global citizenship, stressing the need to equip learners with relevant skills and knowledge to engage in a global economy – a finding also supported by Bourn (2015). UNESCO is reluctant to suggest a legal status for global citizenship or discuss ideas that challenge the status quo. Instead it stresses the need to develop “responsible global citizens” and suggests that national education systems can “pick and choose” global themes, values and attitudes, according to what national policy officials consider appropriate to their national context. The transformative potential of GCE is seen as the greatest advantage of this approach to education, especially in divided and post-conflict societies. Yet a critical examination of controversial
issues and a more reflective attitude towards Western ideas seems to be missing. A growing effort to provide indicators for measuring GCE in national education systems can also be seen.

In the European strategy framework, GCE has emerged as the result of a perceived need for public support for development and the legitimacy of aid. Thus, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and human rights are the predominant themes in the European perception of global citizenship. Similarly, Oxfam discusses GCE with a focus on development issues, social justice and equity, though taking a more critical and activist stance than the other two organisations. Oxfam includes poverty in an understanding of the causes of inequality, denouncing a charity mentality and instead promoting critical thinking and a commitment to social change. Bourn (2015, p. 32) argues that what distinguishes the approach of NGOs from the European approach is “the linkage between awareness-raising learning and informed action, with an emphasis on empowerment and democratic engagement to ensure global social change”.

4.2. The Greek national context

4.2.1. A brief overview of education in Greece

The Greek education system is under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs (thereafter Ministry of Education) and education in Greece is compulsory for all children aged 6-15 (UNESCO-IBE, 2012a). Children first go to the kindergarten at the age of 5 years and at the age of 6 years they enter the elementary school (Dimotiko) which lasts 6 years. After elementary school students register in lower secondary school (Gymnasio), which covers the ages of 13-15 years, and after that students have the option to study for 3 more years in upper secondary school (Lykeio). Education is free for all Greek citizens on all levels at state educational institutions. According to the Article 16 of the Greek Constitution (as cited in UNESCO-IBE, 2012a, p. 2), “education constitutes a basic mission for the state and shall aim at the moral, intellectual, professional and physical training of the Greeks, the development of national and religious consciousness and at their formation as free and responsible citizens”.

Education is organised centrally with the Pedagogical Institute working as an advisory body to the Ministry of Education on curriculum development and preparation of textbooks. According to UNESCO-IBE (2012a), curricula for primary and secondary education are mandatory for all schools, while there is only one textbook for each school subject, approved by the Ministry and distributed free of charge to public schools. In 2003 the Pedagogical Institute developed a Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework (DEPPS) that introduced a cross-thematic approach to learning, focusing on the horizontal linking of all subjects. This has resulted in the design of teaching subjects which cover several disciplines and some examples of such subjects include: “social studies and citizenship education”, “studies of the environment” or “exploring the natural world” (UNESCO-IBE, 2012a, p. 10). The DEPPS provides the structure for the content of individual subjects and more specifically the key
content principles for each subject, the general education goals, the concepts for a cross-thematic approach, as well as teaching and assessment methodologies. The latest textbooks produced in 2006 are based on the DEPPS.

The introduction of the DEPPS in 2003 is seen by Faas (2011) as a shift at policy level that aimed to incorporate a European and intercultural dimension in Greek education under the general principle of “strengthening cultural and linguistic identity within a multicultural society” (Damanakis, as cited in Faas, 2011, p. 475). Although laws that recognise the educational needs of immigrants date back to 1996, intercultural and European dimensions were not perceived as compatible throughout the 1990s (Faas, 2011).

4.2.2. GCE elements in the Greek national curriculum

This section will identify key elements of GCE in the citizenship-related subjects of the Greek primary school curriculum by exploring the general aims, content themes and suggested teaching and learning practices, as outlined in the Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework (DEPPS). Examining first the introductory note of the DEPPS, we can notice that citizenship in the Greek curriculum balances between ethnocentrism and Europeanism. In the words of Alahiotis (as cited in Government Gazette, 2003, p. 5), “educational change in Greece at the present time should focus on the preservation of our national identity and cultural heritage on the one hand, and the development of European citizenship awareness, on the other”. A more global perspective of citizenship can be identified in the general education principles, which promote the values of democracy, respect for human rights, sustainable development, peace and freedom. These values are considered to “enable pupils to function as informed, responsible and active citizens in continuously changing and highly demanding social settings” (Government Gazette, 2003, p. 11).

According to the DEPPS for Citizenship Education, two compulsory subjects comprise citizenship education in Greece: “Studies of the Environment” and “Social and Citizenship Education”. The first one is taught to Kindergarten pupils and pupils of the first four grades of primary school, while the latter is addressed to students of the last two grades of primary school and the third grade of lower secondary school. Both subjects aim to “help pupils to realise the roles, rights and responsibilities they have as citizens” and they also contribute “to making pupils capable of handling and dealing with complex social and moral problems, that come up in their life, relating either with their personal or the broader environment” (Government Gazette, 2003, p. 113).

The general aims of the above mentioned subjects could be summarised as contributing to: (a) the intellectual development of students by promoting the knowledge and understanding of universal human values; (b) the moral development of students by learning how to think critically on issues related to human rights, freedom and justice, as well as their own rights and responsibilities as citizens; (c) the social, political and economic development of students by acquiring knowledge and skills essential to become active and responsible citizens; (d) the cultural development of students by
strengthening their national and cultural identity and by making them ready to accept diversity and pluralism; (e) the development of students’ “Hellenic identity and awareness”; and (f) the development of personal responsibility and social solidarity (Government Gazette, 2003, pp. 113-114).

One additional aim mentioned specifically in the “Studies of the Environment” is “to help students become conscientious consumer-producers and active citizens” (Government Gazette, 2003, p. 213).

Despite the emphasis on national identity, the curriculum tries to place the notion of citizenship within a broader context that overcomes the limitations of the nation-state and relates to the European and global community. The most explicit reference to the global dimension of citizenship can be identified in the final unit of the “Social and Citizenship Education” subject for both fifth and sixth grade. The specific unit refers to the relation between the individual and the international community, including as key content themes the role of international organisations (e.g. the UN and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), the human rights and the international dimension of social problems, such as poverty, child labour, war and racism. Through these themes the expected goals are to help students develop respect for human rights, “appreciate” the role of international organisations, recognise international cooperation as a precondition for economic and cultural development, become sensitised to global social problems, and get involved in the protection of natural environment (Government Gazette, 2003, pp. 121-124).

In terms of teaching and learning practices, the curricular guidelines suggest that the above mentioned themes should be taught through participatory and experiential learning methodologies (Government Gazette, 2003). Some good practices include learning through projects, drama, role-play, case studies, team discussions, debates, school visits, as well as meeting with experts. Activities that involve the local community are also recommended, while the active role of the student in the whole learning process is considered essential.

In sum, it can be seen that the curriculum for citizenship education emphasises mainly the development of young peoples’ Greek and European identities, whereas references to the global are made in a tokenistic and rather uncritical way. Students are supposed to learn how to “appreciate” what has been defined for them as good (e.g. international organisations), rather than question and reflect on the causes of global problems. The terms “global citizenship” or “global awareness” are not clearly mentioned in the curricular guidelines, but there is an effort to include global skills, values and themes. Faas (2011, p. 482) argues that the curriculum unit on international community and the emphasis on human rights issues could be considered “as a response to the multicultural nature of Greece”. The significance of civic responsibilities is also commonly cited, while citizenship seems to include moral, economic, cultural and environmental dimensions. Finally, the suggested teaching and learning practices indicate a link to the delivery of GCE as described in the international discourse.
4.2.3. Interviews with primary school teachers

The data presented in this section were gathered from interviews with six Greek primary school teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience in state schools. All teachers were responsible for teaching citizenship education either in the fifth or sixth grade; nevertheless, their views frequently varied because of their diverse background. One teacher, for instance, had participated in European school exchange programs, while two teachers had a Master’s degree. Overall, teachers felt that citizenship education is not a highly valued subject in the Greek curriculum since it is taught only one hour per week and sometimes not by the main classroom teacher, who knows better how to interact with his or her students. The data are organised following the themes and questions of the interview guide.

Teachers’ perceptions of global citizenship

At first, teachers were asked to define the terms “global citizenship” and “global citizen”. Although all teachers mentioned that they had heard about these terms, they confirmed that they rarely use them inside the classroom. Interestingly, none of the participants provided a direct definition, while almost all of them approached the term by deconstructing each of its two parts, referring mainly to what they thought as the ideal citizen, a tendency reported also in the research of Rapoport (2010). This illustrates why the most frequently used phrases to clarify the concept were “rights and responsibilities”, “active democratic citizenship”, “respect to humanity” and “living in an interconnected and globalized world”. The common understanding was that we all become citizens (of any level) by acquiring a certain set of values. Particular emphasis was given to moral/humanistic values, while one teacher often repeated the Greek word “Paideia”, which stands for a well-rounded development of people based on universal values.

When teachers were asked to indicate if global citizenship should be a concept promoted in schools, almost all of them responded positively. Teachers felt that the school should generally teach about global issues and develop students’ global awareness, recognising though that this is not fully achieved in their schools. Most teachers shared the view that “since we live in the era of globalisation, we have to prepare our children for that, whether we like it or not”. However, one teacher expressed a rather negative view against globalisation, replying that:

The school tends to overemphasise the idea of the world citizen in such a degree that we are about to forget what it means to be a Greek citizen. Particularly, school textbooks tend to exaggerate on this idea, with which I totally disagree. I believe that there should be a balance between the concepts of national and global citizenship and actually more emphasis should be given on the Greek identity. It is true that we are all citizens of the same world, but we shouldn’t exaggerate on that.

It is also not surprising that most teachers felt the need to highlight the importance of “first preserving our national identity and awareness”, a view that could be explained by looking at the
general aims of the curriculum described in the preceding section. Global citizenship was generally understood as a supra-national form of identity similar to the European citizenship which was often cited by the interviewees in order to explain their understanding of global citizenship. The following comment made by a teacher who had participated in European school programmes summarises a perspective that was shared by almost all interviewees:

Teachers, parents and students, we should all understand that there is a need to overcome the narrow borders of our nation-state and realise that we are not only Greek citizens, but also European and global citizens; even if the latter is not yet achieved and we still tend to focus on national identity. I do believe though, that my students have realised that we are all European citizens and that we should acquire those skills and competencies which will help us live within the European Union.

However, when commenting about the European citizenship, one of the teachers explained that the curriculum and the textbooks provide a quite narrow view of what it means to be a European, implying that teaching materials tend to correlate European citizenship to the EU and not to the European continent per se. There was also the view that “teachers are generally afraid to teach about broader conceptions of citizenship, because they themselves have little idea of what they are about”. Thus, there is a tendency to narrow the limits of what it means to be a European or a global citizen.

**Skills, values and knowledge promoted when teaching about global issues**

When teachers were asked which skills, values and knowledge students should acquire in order to develop into global citizens, they most commonly cited answers related to acceptance of diversity, equity, solidarity, socialisation, respect for the “other” and democracy. Almost all participants indicated that citizenship education in Greece “succeeds” in helping students realise that we all have the same responsibilities as citizens of Greece, Europe or the world. “As citizens and human beings, we all have rights, but we also have responsibilities”. Learning how to respect other people and particularly immigrants was considered essential, “since we live in times of great transnational mobility”. In addition, several teachers noted that teaching about global issues helps students think more critically and better understand the interrelations between things (e.g. “a natural disaster in the Amazon rainforest will affect us in the long term”). However, one teacher mentioned that students were not supposed to engage in discussions about politics or political institutions. Once again, the discussion was European oriented with most of the participants claiming that students should “learn about their rights as European citizens” or “learn several languages – English, German and French – which could help them work or study in Europe”.

All teachers stated that the content knowledge on citizenship education is dictated by the curriculum and the school textbooks, which leave no space or time for dealing with extracurricular topics or activities. As far as textbooks were concerned, all participants agreed that students do learn a
lot about sustainable development and human rights, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of Children. Poverty on the planet was also considered to be a frequently discussed topic; even so, one of the teachers mentioned that it was a rather sensitive and demanding topic to teaching, given that students never before had experience under similar circumstances. “It was hard for them [the students] to realise that children in Africa don’t have access to clean water”. On the other hand, globalisation seems to be a topic that is hardly discussed inside the classroom, since the term is not at all referred to in textbooks. For some teachers, globalisation is a complex phenomenon that should be discussed with students in the secondary and not primary schools, while for some others it is completely out of question.

Moreover, “it often happens” that students bring up for discussion global topics related to their everyday life or things they watch on TV (e.g. the crisis in Greece or the war in Syria). In spite of the fact that all teachers said that they were going to discuss “a little bit” about those topics, they did not analyse them in-depth, because: (a) there was limited time and there were certain things that needed to be taught; (b) students were not “mature enough” or “developmentally ready” to discuss about certain things; and (c) those topics were “sensitive and some students might feel uneasy about it”. Thus, teachers would not intentionally start a discussion about contemporary global problems, which were not included in the textbooks.

Two teachers mentioned that students in their classrooms had often raised the issue of economic crisis in Greece, mainly since some of them had been affected by the situation. In Christmas time, for example, some students claimed that the Christmas present they received last year was much better than the one they received this year, or as another teacher mentioned, when he asked his students what they expected from Santa Claus for this year, they all agreed that it was not wise to talk about it at all. In addition, one of the interviewees mentioned that, when she tried to teach students what it means to be a “cosmopolitan citizen”, students replied by wondering whether being a cosmopolitan citizen would involve losing one’s identity.

Teaching practices and social engagement

Participants linked teaching about global issues to most curricular subjects, such as geography, Greek language, literature and history. Almost all teachers mentioned that they would rather undertake projects related to human rights or their rights as European citizens in what they call “Flexible Zone” [a block of time allocated for lessons, during which cross-thematic activities take place].

Dialogue and discussions in groups were the main teaching methods referred to by all participants when they were asked about their didactical approach on teaching global issues. “You always begin with a discussion among students”, while “working in small groups can make it easier for students to deal with complex issues”. Given the time allocated as well as the strict curriculum, almost all teachers thought that they did not have the flexibility to teach in a different way. They mainly work with textbooks, which, according to one interviewee, are “outmoded” and “have a lot of
complicated terms that should be simplified”. Some teachers replied that they tend to bring newspaper articles in the classroom or prepare worksheets. Besides, one of the two schools in question recently printed its own newspaper which included a students’ article about “poverty and crisis in Greece”.

Moreover, teachers felt that it would be wise to promote the active engagement of students in social activities organised by the school or the local community. However, most of the commonly referred practices included a “charity mentality” rather than a “mentality of social justice”, as Bourn (2015, p. 47) would argue. Both participating schools had organised some kind of “charity bazaar”, where money was raised and toys or food were gathered in order to be sent to charity institutions, such as the SOS Children’s Village or UNICEF. These activities often took place under the guidance of the church or an NGO. Among other activities referred to by the participants were also environmental projects, such as cleaning up a lake or planting trees.

**Applied global citizenship: Existing and future challenges**

When asked about the challenges they face when teaching global issues, the answers of the participants varied. Some teachers replied that they face no challenges and are very open to teach global problems and universal values, arguing that “students usually know more than we [teachers] think they know” or “students should get an idea of the real world and we [teachers] should not try to hide certain aspects”. However, others thought that they ought to be very careful when talking about issues such as racism or homophobia, because students “may start fighting or laughing at each other or even feel somehow offended”. Those teachers also expressed a “fear” and mentioned that certain issues should be dealt with “sensitivity”, given that “the political situation in the country is quite unstable”. For example, one of the teachers made the following comment:

Let me tell you a story. Hypothetically, suppose that we are talking about racism inside a classroom and the teacher says that all immigrants in the country should have the same rights as the Greek citizens. After school, children would return home and describe what was discussed in the classroom. But what would happen if a parent was a member of the Golden Dawn [a radical right-wing party in Greece]. I, as a teacher, might get in serious trouble then. This parent could come to me shouting at or even cursing. For this reason, I avoid in-depth analyses of such issues. I touch only superficially on such matters.

Generally, teachers regarded the challenges they face to be the result of the “conservative Greek society” and the school system inefficiencies. Two of the teachers claimed that society has been constructed according to Greek national identity and tradition, which makes it difficult for students to critically analyse complex and challenging ideas of citizenship. Parents were also seen as part of the problem, since they are the first to instil certain values in their children, which cannot easily change. “We have to decide as a society if we should remain stuck in the past or open ourselves to the future”. The rest of the interviewees felt that “it is mainly a problem of the school system itself” and
“everything depends on how teachers handle it”. Teachers are the ones who decide how to deal with certain topics; nevertheless, teachers do not deviate from the curriculum and textbooks as a rule. Thus, teachers suggested that national authorities should improve the quality of textbooks by including more topics of global interest, as well as enable the teaching staff to allocate a greater amount of time to teaching citizenship education. In this manner, teachers would also acquire more autonomy to set their own instructional objectives as far as time and material are concerned.

4.2.4. Focus groups with primary school students

This section is dedicated to data gathered from two focus groups with sixth graders. Both focus groups consisted of six students, with an equal distribution between males and females, while one of the focus groups included two students with a foreign background (Albania and Sweden). Generally, the data are complementary to the views expressed by the teachers and provide some further insight into how learning about global issues has affected students’ perceptions.

Students’ perceptions of global citizenship

When asked to reflect on the term global citizen, students of both focus groups confirmed that they had hardly ever heard the term in the classroom. Some students commented that they were familiar with the term, but, generally speaking, it was not possible for them to provide a direct definition. Among their initial answers – while trying to provide a definition – were the following ones: “a global citizen is a good citizen who helps other people”, “a person that has travelled very much, speaks many languages and knows a great deal about other cultures and their traditions”, “somebody who lives everywhere in the world” or “the rights and responsibilities of all citizens in the world”. The discussion proceeded with the analysis of different views while some students seemed to disagree with the idea that we all are global citizens:

Interviewer: Are we all global citizens? 
Pupil 1: No, because we live in a certain place, we don’t travel around. 
Pupil 2: I disagree that we are global citizens only when we travel. We all belong to this world even if we haven’t explored it yet. For example, I am considered to be a citizen of Greece, without having travelled to Sparta. 
Pupil 3: I think we are, because if we are citizens of Greece and if Greece belongs to the world, then we are citizens of the world. 
Pupil 4: Someone who comes from two countries is a global citizen. 
Pupil 5: We are because we all have the same learning abilities. 
Pupil 6: Some people may be global citizens now or become later...

Some students tried to describe global citizenship by relating it to their national citizenship as well as to the rights and responsibilities that they have as Greek citizens (e.g. the right to vote). Despite the evident confusion, students came up with some common characteristics that interconnect
us as a whole of human beings, focusing mainly on the fact that we are all equal, and we live on the same planet which we have to respect:

Interviewer: What makes us global citizens?
  Pupil 1: If we respect other people.
  Pupil 2: If we don’t throw garbage on the street and we follow some rules, then we are global citizens because we respect the nature.
  Pupil 3: Yes, if we all live on the planet and we don’t pollute it.
  Pupil 4: When everything we do here, is also done by other people in the world.

Thus, it became evident from students’ responses that they had never had a thorough discussion about supra-national forms of citizenship before, while their idea of “citizen” was rather abstract. Students replied that in their classroom they “talk generally about their rights as citizens”, without being able to distinguish though if they were talking about their rights as Greek, European or global citizen. Exactly as their teachers, students tended to reflect more on what they thought to be an ideal citizen, attaching moral and environmental dimensions to their thoughts.

**Understanding global topics**

In order to identify the extent to which certain global topics are discussed inside a classroom, students were asked to reflect on the following issues: human rights, poverty, sustainable development, globalisation and interdependence. Students related their answers to subjects like citizenship education, environmental studies, Greek language, history, religion and physics. Overall, students discussed well all issues, except globalisation which proved to be a topic rarely discussed in the classroom, as teachers also claimed.

Students defined human rights as the rights that we all have because we belong to humanity (e.g. the rights to live, study, vote, have your own house and speak freely). However, students could not make the distinction between human rights and children’s rights, while they put a great emphasis on human responsibilities. “We have rights but also responsibilities” or “we have the right to do something but not exceed certain limits”. In addition, there was a common understanding of the fact that today’s world is unfair and some people may be deprived of particular rights, mentioning that “poor people don’t enjoy human rights” and “there is a lot of racism against the blacks”, without reflecting though on the causes of social injustice. Their comments indicated also empathy towards immigrants.

Learning about poverty and the Global South strongly featured in both focus groups and often involved feelings of compassion towards people living in less fortunate conditions. This became evident when students explained how lucky and privileged they felt and how sad they were when meeting homeless people in the street or hearing about something happening in an African country. For example, in one of the focus groups three pupils made the following comments:
Pupil 1: It is not a nice thing to be poor because you live outside in the cold, you don’t have food or a house to sleep.

Pupil 2: Things that we take for granted, are not for other people.

Pupil 3: We should help poor people, because it is not a big deal for us to give them one euro. We should be compassionate.

Some students, moreover, linked this topic to the economic crisis in Greece and expressed rather negative feelings. “I am afraid that one day we could as well become poor”. Interestingly, some students related this situation to their cultural heritage:

Pupil 1: I feel a bit ashamed that our country has reached at this level. How can we have poor people in a country that has such an important civilization and treat them this way?

Pupil 2: I also feel sad, because we have shared our civilisation with other countries and now these countries are against us!

All participants shared their thoughts on this issue and mentioned that they could not understand the causes that brought Greece to this situation. When asked about their teachers’ reaction to this, students in one group claimed that “sometimes our teacher tells us not to ask a lot of stuff from our parents because we are currently in an economic crisis and there is poverty around us”.

Sustainable development prevailed as a topic of discussion in both groups and was discussed to a great extent. Participants mentioned several environmental issues such as extreme weather conditions, renewable energy, climate change and recycling. Their reactions indicated a sense of global responsibility and many of the students showed a strong willingness to take action in order to protect the environment. Some of the commonly referred to phrases were the following ones: “we shouldn’t throw garbage” or “we should recycle”. When asked if knowledge on global issues can influence our everyday lives, almost all students referred to recycling actions they undertake when home. Nies and Reilly (2012, pp. 107-108) argue that sustainable development often prevails as theme due to the fact that teachers approach it with much ease. Another reason is its perceived uncontroversial nature, especially when lacking a critical analysis of economic growth and impact.

Globalisation proved to be a rather difficult term for students to explain and there was often a paucity of discussion on this particular topic. Some students mentioned that they had heard this term in the news, while one of the students tried to define it with the phrase “all countries becoming one”. Other students related globalisation to learning about foreign cultures. However, when students were asked to reflect on the interdependence between countries, they provided more accurate comments. Almost all students seemed to understand that if something happens in another country it can influence anyone in the long term, while some of the participants referred to the Ebola virus disease, the economic crisis and the Second World War.
In sum, students proved to be aware of specific global issues included in their textbooks and mentioned by their teachers on a previous occasion. They could generally understand that there is injustice and that we influence each other with our actions; however, they could not reflect critically on the causes of such issues. This could probably be explained by the uncritical stance adopted by their teachers, who prefer not to go deeply into such issues and advise their students to think and act in a certain prescribed way.

**Learning practices and social engagement**

Students in both groups confirmed that they often watched the news on TV or learned what was happening around the world by discussing with their parents, surfing the Internet or reading newspaper articles. One of the students mentioned that she had recently heard about “the Jihadists and all the things they do in Syria”, while another one referred to the crisis in Ukraine. Several students referred also to the street children and described that it is the adults who intentionally make children beg in the streets or even beat them so that people will feel sorry for them and give them some money.

Although students confront this reality on a daily basis, they all agreed that they rarely discuss such topics in class and felt that they want this to change. Interestingly enough, some participants noted that schools try to hide what is happening in the world or often present a different view of what students discuss at home. A few students explicitly said:

Interviewer: Do you discuss what is happening in other countries in class?

Pupil 1: If we listen something in the news, we will probably discuss it in class.

Pupil 2: No, I don’t think we discuss about this a lot. I think we should have spent a whole teaching hour on this.

Pupil 3: In school they don’t help us understand what is happening in other countries. Yes, we talk about Africa and other countries, but they don’t tell us everything. They present it in a different way.

Pupil 4: Very rarely do we discuss about these issues.

When they were finally asked if they take part in social activities organised by their school or the local community, students of both groups spontaneously referred to their general non-school activities (e.g. doing sports or learning foreign languages). However, after they took some time discussing with each other, they mentioned activities similar to the ones described by teachers in the above section. Their responses indicated charity-oriented activities such as donating money, clothes or food to charitable institutions, as well as environmentally-oriented activities, for example, recycling water bottles and cleaning up a beach. Generally speaking, students felt that their actions could not improve the world significantly, claiming that “nobody listens to children’s voice” or “as children, we can’t do much, but when we grow up we could”.

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4.3. The Swedish national context

4.3.1. A brief overview of education in Sweden

According to UNESCO-IBE (2012b), compulsory education in Sweden takes the form of nine-year comprehensive schooling (Grundskola) for all children aged 7-16 and is free of charge, encompassing both primary and lower secondary education. All students completing compulsory schooling are entitled to three years of upper secondary education. Students can also attend the “leisure-time centre”, which is a pedagogical group activity for school children up to the age of twelve. Most compulsory school students (88%) attend municipal schools, whereas 12% of the compulsory school population attends independent schools (friskola) (Lindström, 2013, p. 22).

The central authority in charge of the education system is the National Agency for Education (Skolverket), which is responsible for drawing up the subject and course curricula according to governmental guidelines (UNESCO-IBE, 2012b). During the 1990s, the Swedish educational system became rapidly decentralised, including market elements and emphasising choice and competition (Lundahl & Olson, 2013). A number of reforms gradually transferred responsibility for several curricular issues (e.g. the content and organisation of teaching) to individual schools and every school became responsible for determining how to organise activities in order to meet the national goals (UNESCO-IBE, 2012b). Today, teachers and schools decide about teaching materials and methods, while the national curriculum provides general national objectives and offers examples of how they can be met. However, it is the school curriculum, determined locally and not nationally, that indicates teaching guidelines and programme objectives, which must be formulated in a way allowing for measurement and evaluation of achievement (UNESCO-IBE, 2012b).

Thus, unlike its Greek equivalent, the Swedish national curriculum gives considerable free space to municipalities and individual schools to shape their own study programmes, providing only the general objectives that students need to achieve before finishing school. In 2011, new curricula in all compulsory education subjects were introduced, offering goals and guidelines for the following areas: knowledge, norms and values, choice of education, responsibility and influence of pupils, work and civic life, assessment and marks, and responsibility of the school head (UNESCO-IBE, 2012b, p. 14). In contrast to the Greek curriculum, the Swedish one is not content-focused, constructing practice-bound and competence-focused knowledge (M. Sandström Kjellin et al., 2010).

4.3.2. GCE elements in the Swedish national curriculum

Having looked at the curricular system of Sweden, this section will seek for elements of global citizenship at the fundamental values of the Curriculum for compulsory schools, preschools and leisure-time centres (Lgr11), focusing on the syllabus for civic studies for school years 1-6. As Lindström (2013, p. 21) argues, the notion of citizenship is a fundamental part of the Swedish school system, expressed in the curriculum as “the Swedish school system’s value ground/fundamental
values” that should permeate all activities in both primary and secondary schools. Although citizenship in Swedish education is not conceptualised as a distinct school subject, it is included as a part of different school subjects, such as civics.

Examining first the fundamental values of the curriculum, we can clearly see a focus on a moral/humanistic dimension of citizenship. “Education should impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based” (Skolverket, 2011, p. 9). These values are later defined as: inviolability of human life, individual freedom and privacy, equal value for all people, gender equality, and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable (Skolverket, 2011, p. 9). According to the ethics promoted by Christian tradition and Western humanism, Swedish education should develop in students “a sense of justice, generosity of spirit, tolerance and responsibility”, while all school activities must be “non-denominational” (Skolverket, 2011, p. 9). Respect for the environment is also emphasised.

The curriculum further focuses on understanding and compassion for others, stating that schools should “understand and empathise with the values and conditions of others” (Skolverket, 2011, p. 9). Interestingly, the same document stipulates that it is not sufficient if teaching transmits only knowledge about fundamental democratic values, an idea shared also by Richardson (2008). The school should in practice function in a democratic way that will prepare students for active participation in society and develop their ability to take personal responsibility for their actions. In this respect, the curriculum further acknowledges that creative activities and games are essential for active learning. Yet, the most evident conceptualisation of global citizenship can be seen in the four perspectives identified as important for all types of education, namely: historical, environmental, international and ethical (Skolverket, 2011, pp. 11-12). More specifically, the environmental perspective envisages the development of “a personal position with respect to overarching and global environmental issues”, while in the case of international perspective, there is hope that it can help students to “understand one’s own reality in a global context and create international solidarity” (Skolverket, 2011, p. 12).

Moreover, indications for the global dimension of citizenship can be clearly identified in the syllabus for civic studies, which starts with the statement that “today, people in different parts of the world are facing both opportunities and problems linked to globalisation, intercultural relations and sustainable development” (Skolverket, 2011, p. 189). Teaching in civics aims among other things to develop students’ ability to analyse local, national and global societal issues from different perspectives, helping students to familiarise themselves with human rights, democratic processes and ways of working. With regard to the core contents, there is a unit on “Living in the world” in years 1-3, while in years 4-6 students learn about “Rights and the judicial system” (Skolverket, 2011, pp. 190-191). These particular units address questions about migration, environmental issues, the use and value of money, as well as human rights, including the rights of the child under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
In sum, the textual analysis shows that the Swedish compulsory education curriculum emphasises a moral cosmopolitan and environmental form of global citizenship, with some aspects of economic cosmopolitanism. Although citizenship is generally oriented towards Western ideals, there is no particular reference on preserving or strengthening national identity as in the Greek case. Lindström (2013) argues that Swedish education authorities have paid attention so that certain rights are placed above the nation-state in the curriculum and syllabus for civics, while the Swedish school system has taken into account the fact that Sweden is a part of globalisation and of increasingly multicultural societies. However, similarly to the Greek curriculum, the Swedish one overlooks more critical or political dimensions of global citizenship. Both of them though highlight the need for active teaching and learning practices when teaching about citizenship.

4.3.3. Interviews with primary school teachers
As in the Greek case study, this section will demonstrate and critically examine data gathered from interviews with six Swedish teachers responsible for teaching civics in grades 4-6. In Sweden, there are subject teachers working in compulsory education, with citizenship-related subjects mainly taught by teachers with special training in social sciences. All teachers interviewed were female, with varying degrees of experience. Half the participants had worked for less than five years in schools, while the rest had more than ten years of experience. Three teachers were also experienced in teaching in multicultural settings. All interviews were conducted in English. Overall, teachers strongly emphasised the values of Swedish society, which places human rights above national citizenship, and suggested that students should develop into active global citizens.

Teachers’ perceptions of global citizenship
When asked about their views of global citizenship, Swedish teachers generally felt familiar with the concept, arguing that it is a very relevant and significant topic for Sweden today. One teacher mentioned that global citizenship is “a very important topic, because of how the world looks today and how politics have changed in Sweden, especially with the rise of nationalist parties that are against immigrants”. In their efforts to define the concept, some teachers oriented their thoughts towards a moral cosmopolitan form of global citizenship (Johnson, 2010), arguing that “we are all members of this world and we need to take care of it”, while others spoke more about the environment and emphasised the “interrelations between countries and global phenomena”. One teacher attributed a cultural dimension to the concept, arguing for the need to know about other cultures, learn English and travel in order to meet people from different countries. A more critical dimension was further attached to global citizenship by a teacher with experience in multicultural classrooms, who stated that global citizenship is about “understanding the differences and complexities of the world”.

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Moreover, teachers’ perceptions support Lindström’s (2013) argument that the Swedish curriculum places human rights above the nation-state. While describing the significance of values and human rights as part of global citizenship in the Swedish curriculum, one teacher said:

We don’t focus so much on national identity and certainly we don’t talk about this feeling of being a proud Swede, but instead we teach children that we must respect all kinds of people, all kinds of religion, all kinds of sexual relations...

With regard to the perceived connection between global, European and national forms of citizenship, participants further commented that the Swedish curriculum has been constructed in such a way as to gradually expand students’ understanding of citizenship, so that “at university, they get the feeling that we are global citizens”. Almost all teachers claimed that schools need to promote global citizenship, and they also felt “obliged by the curriculum” to teach students how to think as global citizens, helping them to develop an international perspective.

Skills, values and knowledge promoted when teaching about global issues
Teachers described the values that students should acquire in school by often referring to the curriculum. Empathy, respect for diversity, commitment to human rights and sustainable development were the commonly cited values promoted in both schools. Swedish teachers expressed a very positive attitude towards difference and diversity, evident in some of their phrases: “it is important that there are differences”, “diversity makes the classroom richer”, “Sweden is no longer for the Swedes; there are so many nationalities” and “the more, the better”. With regard to values, global citizenship was seen as an approach relevant to all aspects of the curriculum, covering most subjects. “The whole curriculum is almost directed towards learning about the world”. Although the curriculum builds gradually upon the concept, some common values were seen by teachers as prevalent for all school grades: concern for the environment, social justice and respect for others.

In terms of skills, participants highlighted critical thinking and willingness to act. Critical thinking was perceived by some teachers as looking at different viewpoints, listening to others and asking questions, while teachers with a multicultural background added the perspective of critical literacy. “You cannot look at something from just one view; you need to question things”. It was argued, though, that students coming from different countries cannot always understand this way of thinking; thus the role of parents as supportive of their children’s education was considered essential. Interestingly, Swedish teachers from both schools referred to students developing an active stance and felt that people can make a difference from a young age. For instance, one teacher explained: “I have to try and push my students to think differently, dare to take a position and stand up for themselves”.

In the early years of compulsory education, students learn mainly about Sweden and Europe; but, as one teacher mentioned, “for us here Europe is a part of the world, it is not the world”. Human rights, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, is a topic discussed extensively in
Swedish schools and not only in civics class. According to one interviewee, “kids in Sweden have a very good knowledge of human rights, since from year two they work really a lot with it”. In religion class, students also learn about the death penalty and animal rights. Sustainable development is another topic discussed thoroughly in several classes, including biology and chemistry.

However, poverty was considered to be a “hard topic to talk about with children, because they cannot really understand it”. Although it is included in the teaching of civics, participants reflected an uncritical image of the Global North as the privileged part of the world, which should sympathise the “poor” South. This perception is summarised well in the following comment: “I want to teach my students that we have it really good here in Sweden, but in other countries they don’t”. As can be seen, teachers’ approaches to poverty reflected what Spivak (as cited in Andreotti, 2006, p. 44) terms as “sanctioned ignorance” of the role of colonialism in the creation and maintenance of the wealth, a role placed securely in the past, so that we think it does not affect the present situation. A similar tendency to compare the situation in the Global South with life in Sweden, so that students can “appreciate” what they already have, was evident when participants referred to teaching on globalisation. For example, one teacher linked globalisation to the war in Syria and described her effort to help students “realise that it is not as safe in the world as it is in Sweden”. With regard to globalisation, the role of international organisations such as UNICEF was also discussed in participants’ classes.

Other topics which participants mentioned as relevant to teaching global citizenship included racism, gender equality, homophobia and freedom of religion. “Students are interested in these issues and want to talk about them”. Especially when there are students from other countries in the classroom, these topics will be discussed in detail by teachers and relevant projects will often be organised. In addition, it was claimed that teachers cannot hide such topics from the classroom, because without actively dealing with them, one risks reproducing stereotypes. “You have to listen and let students talk about all issues, even if the teacher doesn’t agree, because if you silence them and hide this, then you create racism”. One example mentioned by two teachers in support of this argument related to Swedish elections and the radical right-wing party (Sverigedemokraterna):

This autumn we talked a lot about Swedish elections and all. All the children knew about Sverigedemokraterna and especially foreign students were afraid... They were talking about this at home, and therefore we have talked about it a lot in class too.

Teaching practices and social engagement
As a concept relevant to all social science subjects (e.g. religion, civics, geography, history and Swedish language), global citizenship can be taught cross-thematically and not strictly in certain subjects. For instance, one teacher said: “I try to bring the global into my teaching through all subjects”. The Swedish curriculum is very flexible in this sense and allows teachers to develop their own teaching methods, as well as using a variety of teaching material. Frequently mentioned practices
for teaching about global themes included: traditional instruction methods; working in pairs or small groups and then presenting to the whole class; experiential methods, particularly in teaching sustainable development; and participatory methods such as role-play and debate.

Almost all teachers mentioned that they often use a textbook, though without this being the centre of their teaching when talking about the world. Teachers usually bring newspapers, films, maps and various books into the classroom and work a great deal with computers. Some teachers also referred to certain TV programmes, particularly to one dealing with contemporary global issues (e.g. the war in Syria and the Islamic State) and describing them in a child-friendly way. Interestingly, one teacher with experience in multicultural schools claimed that she does not use a textbook at all and works mainly with literature books. Books selected to raise students’ critical and global awareness included stories from children in the Global South, for example “a street child in Guatemala or an Afghan girl who had to become a boy to survive in the Taliban system”. Another teacher stressed the need to organise frequent excursions around the city of Stockholm or school exchange programmes, so that children can get the chance to leave their neighbourhood for a while and thus expand their thinking of the world.

All participants agreed that they would promote the active engagement of their students in social activities. Some teachers referred to charity projects, which included gathering money for the Red Cross or other charities, though arguing that such initiatives should be a part of a broader learning project. One of the teachers mentioned that she has supported “a students’ demonstration for a kid that couldn’t stay in Sweden any more”, while another teacher described a future project as follows:

My friends and I know a Romanian woman that sits outside the subway, and we have gathered some clothes to give for her children, and I have thought to see how the kids would react to this. I think students should get involved in stuff good for humanity, but I am afraid that for some parents this could be seen as very offensive.

**Applied global citizenship: Existing and future challenges**

When asked about potential challenges they face when teaching global citizenship topics, Swedish teachers felt that there are no major challenges, expressing the view that they “have to teach about this”. Very rarely it could happen that a foreign student feels uncomfortable discussing certain issues, but as one teacher explained: “This is the law in Sweden and we all have to accept it”, continuing that “I see that sometimes Muslim girls may have a problem with that, but I will teach about certain values because they are also in the curriculum”. Another teacher commented that, while she has to remain neutral on issues related to politics, she will openly tell her students that “racism shouldn’t exist here”. A strong belief was expressed by all participants that students need to hear and learn about social injustice, since this is the reality they are living in. For instance, one teacher said:
When you go to the subway, you see people begging for money and you can’t close your eyes to it. We have to help students open their eyes and make them realise that we can do something about it. You can’t hide things away because it is hard to talk about it.

Interestingly, none of the participants used the word “sensitive” or mentioned that one needs to be “careful” when talking about global issues or human values. This implies that teachers felt confident teaching the topics and values described in the curriculum, which were considered non-negotiable. However, some participants felt that it is difficult for young students to understand the complexities of global issues, while others claimed that the increasing ethnic and performance-based segregation of Swedish schools limits the possibilities of Swedish students to interact with students coming from other countries. Overall, teachers regarded Swedish schools as open and quite successful in developing students’ global thinking.

4.3.4. Focus groups with primary school students
This section will describe the data collected from two focus groups with students. All students attended the sixth grade of compulsory schooling. One focus group consisted of five students and the other one of seven, with care to ensure a balanced gender distribution. The second focus group included four immigrant students (from Somalia, Gambia and Iran). Most students could communicate very well in English; yet one Swedish teacher was present in each group to help with translation issues. The data generally indicate that students have to some extent developed their global understanding, skills and values, while their views sometimes contradict teachers’ expectations as described above.

Students’ perceptions of global citizenship
Some of the words that came to students’ minds when they were asked to brainstorm on what means to be a global citizen included: planet, Earth, cars, food, traffic, houses, countries, humans, languages, animals and environment. Although the term “global citizen” seemed initially difficult to define, students in both focus groups understood how we relate to the environment and to each other as “inhabitants of the planet”. They further seemed to understand the global as part of everyday life, using phrases such as: “whatever we do is global”, “we all shop” or “we enjoy everything”. Focusing mainly on a humanistic view of global citizenship, some students said:

Interviewer: What makes us global citizens?
   Pupil 1: Being respected and being part of humankind.
   Pupil 2: Yes, everybody has the same value.
   Pupil 3: Not everyone is rich.
   Pupil 4: Everybody breathes the same air.
However, both groups commonly claimed that global citizenship is a term rarely discussed in school, at least not until seventh grade. Instead, one student said, “we talk a lot about politics in Sweden and the EU”. After making a connection between global citizenship and human rights, though, all participants agreed that they learn about human rights as of fifth grade.

**Understanding global topics**

There was a common understanding among students that global themes are mainly discussed under social sciences. When asked to reflect on specific global themes, similar to those discussed in the Greek case above, Swedish students could generally define them, though without being able to explain the causes or implications of issues relating to social injustice and globalisation. The latter proved to be a rather complicated term, and some students confused it with global warming. “We haven’t heard it as a term, not so much in school, only on TV”. Poverty was another topic discussed “a little bit” in the classroom, associated mainly with people “who don’t have a home, money, water or food and who have to stand outside and ask for money”. It was also connected to the Global South, particularly children in Africa. Yet, as Bourn (2015, p. 47) would argue, this is a rather traditional and uncritical view of seeing the Global South as “just about poor people who were helpless and needed aid and charity”.

On the other hand, human rights and sustainable development seemed to be familiar topics that students could engage better with. Considering human rights, students’ responses indicated sensitivity to the needs and rights of others, as well as empathy and compassion:

- Pupil 1: We have to respect each other, because everybody has the same rights.
- Pupil 2: If someone has another skin colour, it doesn’t mean we don’t love them.
- Pupil 3: You have the right to be yourself and express your feelings.
- Pupil 4: We can believe in whatever we want to believe in.

Some students also referred to discussions they had in class about Swedish elections and the views of the nationalist party against immigrants, arguing that they disagree with those views, though without being able to elaborate. In addition, one girl from Iran referred to the example of Malala in order to describe how human rights are not respected in all countries:

In other countries not all people can say what they want to say and they can’t do what they want to do. And in some countries girls can’t go to school, like Pakistan and Afghanistan. People get killed because they say what they want to say. For example, Malala was almost killed because she wanted women to have the same rights as men.
With regard to sustainable development, both groups expressed a concern for the wider environment and a sense of responsibility for the use of resources. Almost all students agreed that people should be careful and aware of how much water or electricity they use, as well as how much food they waste. Some students discussed ecological products more critically, also considering economic and social factors:

Pupil 1: We should buy ecological stuff.
Pupil 2: We think that buying ecological stuff is right and good, but it is only good for yourself. But if you think of nature, then planting ecological products would require more fields, etc.
Pupil 3: We all think about the good of the Earth, but then if we want to buy ecological products, they cost double price. So what would somebody buy; the most or the least expensive products?

Students’ responses showed that they can make connections between issues and identify interrelations. Although globalisation as a term seemed strange to them, it was easier for them to provide examples of interdependence between countries. For example, students in both groups referred to Ebola or to the war in Ukraine, mentioning that both could affect Sweden. However, they thought that only some major incidents caused by powerful countries could create problems for Sweden:

Pupil 1: Something big has to happen to influence us.
Pupil 2: Something that happens in the US will influence Sweden... The US has a lot of power... But if something happens in a small country it won’t influence us.
Pupil 3: Or a country closer to Sweden, like Ukraine, influences us. But the war in Syria doesn’t influence us so much.

This brief exchange illustrates that students had developed a sense of the wider world, but could not yet realise the complexity of global issues. They also tended to think in the short term, feeling that only things close to their local environment could influence their lives in some way, which it was hard for them to define.

**Learning practices and social engagement**

Students learn about global issues mostly at home, where they have the chance to watch the news on TV or surf the Internet. When asked if they bring up such topics for discussion at school, many students responded positively, but claimed that the discussions last only a few minutes. In one focus group it was mentioned that the teacher often brings a TV into the classroom to show students “a special TV programme” explaining the weekly news – the same programme mentioned by teachers above. Other activities in school included reading, writing or watching documentaries about other countries or global social problems (e.g. global warming). Yet students thought that such knowledge
mainly reminded them of their social responsibilities, rather than influencing their lives in any significant way:

Interviewer: Has this knowledge influenced your everyday life in any way?
   Pupil 1: When I go into the woods, I know that I am not allowed to throw gums.
   Pupil 2: Yes, I am thinking more about other people. If you help them, they will help you.
   Pupil 3: It doesn’t affect me much. I had a view before and what we discussed in school didn’t help me much to change my view.

When asked if they participated in any social activity organised by their school or local community, students in both focus groups referred to different kinds of charity activities involving collecting money and giving it to people in need, either in Sweden or in a developing country. For example, some students said that their parents subscribed to the WWF or Red Cross magazine, paying a small fee to cover some of the organisations’ expenses, while others said that they often put money in charity boxes next to supermarket cashiers. “We give money when we can, but not much”. Students in one focus group also referred to environmental activities organised by their school, such as recycling or picking up rubbish. Generally, students felt that they should be doing more to help others, but that this is difficult for them in practice because they are children and cannot influence politics. “We can influence, but not as much as people with money and power”.

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Chapter Five
Discussion of findings

5.1. A comparison between cases: The Greek and Swedish experience

After the presentation and analysis of the findings that emerged from interviews and focus groups in each participating country, this section will discuss the findings through a simultaneous comparison (Bereday, as cited in Manzon, p. 86) between the two national cases, taking account of the study’s theoretical framework and particularly Johnson’s model for categorising GCE. In this way we can better understand how global citizenship is conceptualised in the two national curricula, as well as in teachers’ and students’ perceptions. Summarising the main findings from both national discourses will allow us in the next section to identify similarities and discrepancies between international and national GCE discourse.

Comparing primary school curricula

The content analysis of primary school curricula in Greece and Sweden shows that global citizenship education is not conceptualised yet as a distinct field or approach to education in either of the curricula. According to Rapoport (2010, p. 5), this “curricular insecurity” or “lack of curriculum history” could explain why global citizenship is not often mentioned in the classroom. However, some distinct elements of GCE, as reflected in academic and international policy discourse, can be clearly identified in both national curricula. For instance, both national education systems have integrated the global dimension of citizenship as a cross-curricular theme that permeates different subjects and incorporates topics such as human rights, sustainable development, international organisations and global social problems. Placed most evidently within the framework of citizenship education in Greece and civics in Sweden, global citizenship is not limited to those particular subjects. Instead, it is also reflected in the general guidelines and values of both curricula, which recognise the interdependent nature of people’s lives and the need for social justice, equity and empathy.

In Greece, a more global perspective is constrained by the general curricular emphasis on national and European citizenship. A pattern of swinging between ethnocentrism and Europeanism, identified also by Faas (2011), limits the promotion of GCE in Greek schools and indicates that references to global concerns are made in a tokenistic rather than a meaningful way. On the other hand, the global perspective is more substantially reflected in the fundamental values of the Swedish compulsory education curriculum, which places human rights above the promotion of national citizenship (Lindström, 2013). In this way, the Swedish curriculum provides more opportunities for extending students’ understanding of citizenship outside national borders, and can further engage schooling with multiple forms of identity, as suggested by Pashby (2013). With regard to teaching and
learning practices, both national curricula highlight the need for active participatory and experiential methodologies, which foster the involvement of local communities and imply that the school itself functions in a democratic way.

Considering Johnson’s (2010) typology, both curricula promote a cosmopolitan global citizenship grounded in universalism and the belief that all humans share the same fundamental values; an idea that has been criticised by some scholars as neo-colonial and Western-centric (Jorgenson, 2010; Tully, 2008). More specifically, a moral cosmopolitan form of global citizenship is most evident, when looking at the general and subject-specific guidelines of both curricula. There one can see a strong commitment to human rights and responsibilities, necessary for developing a global ethos (Johnson, 2010), as well as an emphasis on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, indicative of the moral conception of global citizenship. In addition, economic and environmental perceptions are apparent in the aims of developing responsible consumers and active citizens who will respect the environment and commit themselves to sustainable development. While critical thinking is generally promoted as a goal in both curricula, a critical/postcolonial perspective going beyond the discourse of help and empowering students to question their own cultures (Pashby, 2013) is sidelined.

Comparing teachers’ perceptions
Teachers’ understanding of global citizenship varied between and within countries, mainly as a result of diverse national education contexts and teachers’ educational background and personal beliefs. The lack of a history of GCE curricula, described above, apparently contributed to the divergence in teachers’ views. Generally, teachers in Sweden, who were specialised in social sciences, felt more familiar with the concept of global citizenship, arguing for its significance in a globalised world. Their views indicated a strong commitment to the moral values of the Swedish curriculum and implied that human rights are above national citizenship. On the contrary, Greek classroom teachers, with no particular specialisation in social sciences, felt that global citizenship is a rather controversial term, which they rarely use in class. While most of them claimed that students should develop a global outlook, Greek teachers often highlighted the importance of first preserving and promoting national citizenship and awareness, as dictated by the national curriculum. Thus, in both cases teachers’ understanding of global citizenship seems to be clearly framed by the ideals reflected in the curriculum.

Moreover, in accordance with the curriculum, teachers in both countries predominantly fostered a moral cosmopolitan form of global citizenship (Johnson, 2010). Respect for diversity, solidarity, equity, commitment to human rights and sustainability, as well as an emphasis on social responsibilities, were some of the common moral values seen by teachers as characteristic of GCE. In terms of skills, teachers in both countries referred to critical thinking, while Swedish teachers further attributed a transformative perspective to GCE (Richardson, 2008), arguing that students should be empowered to act and stand up for their rights. Global topics such as human rights, poverty,
sustainable development and globalisation, as well as other topics brought up by students in class, were discussed with different emphasis in each country. For instance, teachers in Greece felt that certain issues are extremely sensitive and that students are not developmentally ready to understand them, whereas teachers in Sweden thought that issues brought up by students should be actively discussed and resolved in class, in order to avoid reproducing stereotypes. Yet, poverty was seen in both cases as a challenging topic, which teachers often addressed in a rather uncritical way, presenting a privileged image of the Global North.

Although teachers seemed willing to broaden their students’ worldviews, they were reluctant to engage critically with different viewpoints of poverty or inequality, instead adopting “soft” approaches to GCE (Andreotti, 2006). Similar findings were also reported by Bourn and Hunt (2011), who found that teachers in England prefer not to engage critically or make connections with broader debates around social injustice. Other international findings suggest that teachers feel unprepared to teach about controversial issues, such as war and conflict, because they are concerned about potential negative impacts on students (Yamashita, as cited in Niens and Reilly, 2012, pp. 114-115). In addition, a lack of time and limited autonomy to decide what and how to teach proved to be major impediments to implementing GCE effectively, as reported by Greek teachers.

In terms of teaching practices, teachers in both countries referred to a cross-thematic approach to global citizenship and suggested that group discussion is the main method they would employ to teach about global issues. In Sweden, the more flexible nature of the curriculum allows teachers to adopt critical literacy methodologies or take part in school exchange programmes. For the same reason, experiential and participatory teaching practices, considered the most appropriate pedagogy for learning about global issues (Hicks, as cited in Bourn, 2015, p. 143), were reported more frequently by Swedish than by Greek teachers. However, with regard to engaging students in social activities, teachers in both countries referred to activities promoting a charity mentality rather than one of social justice. According to Bourn (2015), a development education perspective would question the emphasis a school might give to fundraising activities, and would instead try to challenge assumptions and stereotypes, placing poverty or other social issues within an understanding of causes, also recognising what people were actually doing for themselves.

Last but not least, teachers’ responses indicated that the promotion and effective implementation of GCE requires an open and supportive environment for universal values, a finding also reported by UNESCO (2014). The recent “unstable” socio-political situation in Greece and the traditional focus of Greek society on national identity were seen by teachers as major challenges to the promotion of global citizenship. That is why some felt that teaching about certain global values or topics should be addressed with great sensitivity. While this was not the case in Sweden, teachers argued that the increasing ethnic and performance-based segregation of Swedish schools might result in a poor delivery of global citizenship.
Comparing students’ perceptions

Students in both countries further confirmed that the terms “global citizenship”, “global citizen” and “globalisation” were rarely used in class, at least until the time they were interviewed. This explains why their responses were sometimes contradictory and rather “vague”, as Heater (as cited in Davies et al., 2005, p. 71) would argue, focusing mainly on the fact that we are all members of the human race and responsible for the planet. Despite their initial confusion, discussion with all focus groups revealed that students are generally concerned about the world at large and enjoy learning about global issues, wishing to learn even more in class. However, differences between countries were also evident, since students in Greece tended to correlate global citizenship to national citizenship, while students in Sweden conceptualised the global aspect as part of their everyday life.

Similar to the curricula and teachers’ perceptions, a moral cosmopolitan and environmental understanding of global citizenship (Johnson, 2010) was evident in students’ responses, which emphasised human rights and responsibilities, as well as an active concern for the environment. Human rights and sustainable development were also the topics that students in both countries felt most comfortable discussing and appeared to be more central than other global topics to their education. Poverty, for example, was a less discussed topic, focused mainly on countries of the Global South, particularly Africa. Although students seemed generally concerned about global inequality, their understanding of poverty illustrated what Roman (as cited in Niens and Reilly, 2012, p. 114) referred to as “intellectual tourists”, with a discourse of “brief forays into unfamiliar cultures and experiences of the other”.

A lack of critical engagement was also apparent when students provided examples of interdependence. Even though it was not possible for students to describe the complexity and causes of global topics, students in both national contexts seemed to understand how one country might influence another, while they also referred to the same contemporary global issues (e.g. war in Syria, Ukraine and Ebola). This finding indicates that younger students are already globally aware and have the cognitive capacity to recognise interrelations among countries and global phenomena. Thus, what is needed for students to engage critically with global issues is for their teachers to develop an “emotional engagement”, defined by Reilly and Niens (2014, p. 73) as the ability to recognise and challenge existing structural and contextual limitations. If teachers refuse to deal actively with the distortions of the world presented to students daily by the media and popular culture (Bourn, 2015), then students might simply reproduce stereotypes. In Greece, for instance, where teachers were more reluctant to engage in critical discussions of certain topics, students felt that school and out-of-school realities are different.

With regard to social engagement, students in both countries referred to charity and environmentally related activities, which align with teachers’ suggestions described above. However, this kind of charity practice tends to strengthen the idea of the privileged that should be compassionate to the poor, while contradicting Oxfam’s (2006, p. 3) ideal of “moral outrage”. In addition, students
generally felt that their views were not taken seriously by adults because of their age. This might limit students’ engagement in society, as well as their willingness to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place.

5.2. Convergences and divergences between international and national GCE discourse

Considering Cowen’s (2009a; 2009b; 2006) triadic scheme of transfer, translation and transformation, this section will discuss how international recommendations on GCE are reflected in the policy and practice of the two countries in question. Although clear connections cannot be established yet, since GCE has not been officially integrated in the education systems of Greece or Sweden, indications of convergences and divergences relating to the perceptions and delivery of global citizenship can be identified.

With regard to the stage of transfer, international organisations, particularly UNESCO, employ soft power mechanisms to disseminate the idea of GCE in national education systems. Through international initiatives, policy recommendations, transnational agreements, technical consultation meetings and publication of teaching and learning materials, the international organisations examined in this study have developed strong international discourse, promoting the need to educate globally competent citizens capable of resolving the growing global challenges of the 21st century. For GCE, the “space-gate moment”, defined by Cowen (2006, p. 566) as the moment of transfer with its politics of attraction, seems to be the Global Education First Initiative launched in 2012 by the UN Secretary General, while previous UN initiatives have fostered similar objectives. As a result of these international initiatives, global citizenship has been included as a target in the post-2015 development agenda and many countries have tried to mainstream GCE in their national education system, without necessarily naming the concept as such.

This study’s analysis of international discourse has offered some useful insights into the perceived nature, objectives and effective delivery of GCE. More specifically, employing Johnson’s (2010) framework, we have come to see that international organisations tend to promote moral cosmopolitan global citizenship grounded in universal values and the idea of a global ethos deriving from our common responsibilities as human beings. Further to that, environmental and economic dimensions have been attached to the concept, whereas political and critical/postcolonial dimensions have more or less been overlooked, though with different emphasis among organisations. Based on these perceptions, particular objectives have been conceptualised in the form of skills, competencies, values, attitudes and content knowledge, oriented towards liberal humanistic theories which reflect what Torres (2013, pp. 667-668) terms “globalisation of human rights”. For the effective delivery of GCE, all three examined organisations have claimed that participatory and experiential learning practices empowering students to act are essential.
When looking at how the national education curricula in Greece and Sweden translate international GCE discourse, a number of similarities and discrepancies can be identified, indicating what Cowen (2006) describes as a reinterpretation of educational ideas occurring with the transfer in space. For instance, both national education curricula have integrated a global perspective of citizenship, in an attempt to overcome the limitations of national citizenship in a globalised world and recognise changing patterns of identity. Furthermore, both curricula interpret this global perspective of citizenship similarly to international organisations, emphasising the moral, economic and environmental dimensions of the concept, while acknowledging the need to develop active, democratic and internationally thinking citizens. Similarities in discourse also exist with regard to skills, values and content knowledge promoted through the teaching of citizenship or related subjects. In addition, the proposed teaching and learning methodologies for citizenship-related themes, as well as the perceived relevance of global citizenship to all aspects of the curriculum, indicate convergences to international GCE discourse in terms of integrating active, participatory and experiential learning practices and a cross-thematic approach for the effective delivery of the concept.

However, what national education curricula seem to be overlooking is the transformative potential of GCE, highlighted extensively in the discourse of international organisations (UNESCO, 2014; Oxfam 2006; O’Loughlin and Wegimont, 2003). Moreover, globalisation is a topic neglected in both primary education curricula, whereas Oxfam (2006, p. 5) includes the topic as a key knowledge theme for students from the age of five. Social skills such as conflict resolution, the ability to challenge injustice and commitment to social change are also sidelined.

In terms of transformation, the perceptions of teachers and students, examined in the preceding section, indicate the extent to which global citizenship has been integrated at the school unit level. Generally, teachers’ perceptions proved to be influenced by curriculum guidelines, while students seemed to have developed a sense of global awareness which was not always the product of informed school learning. According to Lindström (2013, p. 34), “one must remember that to express an intention in a steering document is no guarantee that young people really have developed an understanding of how the world works or not works”. Although most teachers appeared keen to develop a global outlook in their students, this was not clearly evident in students’ understanding of citizenship and global themes. Students seemed frustrated with abstract issues such as globalisation and could not reflect critically on the causes of global social problems.

In line with the curriculum and international discourse, both teachers and students attached moral and environmental dimensions to global citizenship and claimed that the concept is related to most curricular subjects. A humanitarian and values-based approach was apparent in some teachers’ pedagogical practices, while critical engagement emerged in other teachers’ practices, but only rarely did the two co-exist. In addition, it was mainly teachers in Sweden who regarded it as essential to address all issues raised by students, while teachers in Greece preferred to concentrate on the content dictated by the curriculum and teaching materials. A tendency to avoid engaging with issues relating
to poverty and inequality was also evident with regard to teachers’ and students’ understanding of the unequal relations between the Global North and the Global South. A charity mentality, promoted through participation in fundraising activities, seemed to further perpetuate this uncritical understanding. According to Oxfam (2006), though, GCE needs to go beyond raising money for charity and instead provide opportunities for critical reflection, questioning the implications of one’s own personal engagement.

In sum, GCE has developed internationally into a powerful approach to education, transferred across borders through the discourse of international organisations. Several elements of this discourse appear to be reflected in the national education curricula of both Greece and Sweden, yet with different emphasis as a result of different societal approaches to citizenship. Finally, there are several differences between what is stipulated in policy documents and what teachers and students actually implement in practice. In fact, although the rhetorical support for GCE is evident, actual implementation is weak.
Chapter Six

Conclusions

6.1. Towards GCE: Key challenges and recommendations

The present study has explored how GCE is transferred, translated and transformed from the international to national and to school unit level, analysing how the particular concept is perceived by various actors between and across different contexts. Based on a qualitative research approach, the study first considered the work of major international organisations whose discourse has framed the contemporary understanding of the concept. This was followed by a comparative analysis of primary education curricula and school practice between Greece and Sweden, examining the perceptions and challenges facing primary school teachers and students. Although the findings cannot be generalised due to the limited number of schools represented in each country, this study has offered some useful insights into how the national education systems of the countries in question conceptualise and implement GCE. Convergences and divergences between international and national GCE discourse have also been identified, indicating interconnections which need to be further examined.

It is evident from international discourse that themes such as global citizenship and sustainable development are here to stay. As Bourn (2015) argues, these themes will become more prominent in years to come, as education becomes increasingly globalised and employment models are more determined by global forces. This study has shown that international organisations are working to establish GCE as a dominant discourse genre, mainly fostering universal humanistic values, yet failing in a sense to challenge the prevailing paradigms and interests of dominant groups, as Lapayse (2003) would suggest. For example, UNESCO and the EU tend to focus on liberal and often neoliberal ideas, emphasising the skills that young people should acquire to engage in a global economy, as well as the need to learn about human rights and sustainable development. Similarly, NGOs such as Oxfam promote a moral conception of global citizenship, orientating their discourse more actively towards awareness-raising, informed action and strong commitment to values relating to equity and social justice. However, despite the increasing prominence of GCE in international discourse, this study contends that the themes implicit in critical and postcolonial theories do not appear to have been recognised or incorporated in international policy documents or initiatives, at least not for UNESCO and the EU.

A comparison of national contexts in Greece and Sweden has shown that, although both countries have integrated a global dimension of citizenship in their educational practice, this remains largely focused on moral cosmopolitan and environmental conceptions. At least the schools selected for this study do not implement GCE in ways to foster critical perspectives, instead adopting “soft” approaches to the concept (Andreotti, 2006). However, as several researchers (Bourn, 2015; Reilly and
Niens, 2014; Andreotti, 2006) suggest, GCE needs to go beyond advocating tolerance and common humanity to include critical reflection and discourse on local identities. For instance, any discussion of human rights should also address their limitations, raising questions about “the male, heterosexual, and Western bias of human rights” (Lapayese, 2003, p. 500). In this way, GCE can overcome the limitations of its perceived moral identity and expand its scope to include more critical aspects, moving beyond a charity rationale to one of social justice. GCE has the potential to develop into “a pedagogy for global social justice”, which needs to include “not only subject and curriculum knowledge, teaching skills, and styles of learning, but also reviews and reflections on issues and their relevance within the classroom, including wider social and cultural factors” (Bourn, 2015, p. 194).

Nevertheless, mainstreaming GCE in national education systems would require rethinking and addressing several challenges raised by the participants in this study. Firstly, the fact that there is no commonly accepted definition of the concept can lead teachers or students to interpret it in various ways, which can sometimes be controversial or vague. Applying GCE to schools would therefore mean policy-makers conceptualising and naming the term, in order to avoid undermining it in practice. Secondly, a socio-economic and political environment open to universal values and global ideas is crucial for an effective and meaningful delivery of GCE. This was clearly reflected in Greece, where some teachers felt reluctant to teach about global issues, fearing that global citizenship might undermine national loyalty. On the other hand, teachers in Sweden felt obliged to teach about the values that underpin the Swedish society, placing human rights above national conceptions of citizenship. A national curriculum that meaningfully promotes an international perspective can help towards this direction, supporting teachers to actively foster global citizenship values, as proved to be the case in Sweden.

Thirdly, teachers feel ill-prepared to deal actively with controversial topics such as poverty or war, resulting in a lack of critical engagement and a “risk of (indirectly and unintentionally) reproducing the systems of belief and practices that harm those they want to support” (Andreotti, 2006, pp. 49-50). In both countries, teachers’ and students’ perceptions reflected an attitude of sympathising the poor, neglecting economic inequalities and structures. To address this uncritical understanding of controversial issues, teachers need to develop what Reilly and Niens (2014, p. 73) term “emotional engagement”, which could provide an opening to transformative learning amongst teachers and students. In this respect, national authorities should support teachers by offering appropriate professional development which can prepare them to deal with complex and dynamic issues surrounding our contemporary societies. Teachers need to embrace complexity and reflect on their context and their own assumptions, questioning the way they think and act in local and global terms with regard to power, social relationships and the distribution of labour and resources (Andreotti, 2006). Equipping teachers with skills and capacity to teach GCE could help them realise that “all knowledge is partial and incomplete, constructed in our own contexts, cultures and experiences” (Andreotti, 2006, p. 49).
Last but not least, if GCE appears as a separate school subject, it may be perceived as an add-on to an already overloaded curriculum. Therefore, it must avoid the traditional limits of curriculum development and instead, function as an alternative approach to conventional schooling. Lapayese (2003, p. 500) argues that a critical GCE may require teachers to rethink the entire curriculum and encourage students “to reflect and act on the indeterminate nature of the economy, knowledge, culture, and identity”. However, as evidenced in this study, the current structure of schools encourages the fragmentation and simplification of knowledge, allocating limited time and resources to teaching citizenship-related themes. GCE should, thus, be integrated across all areas of learning, formal and informal, curricular and extracurricular, conventional and unconventional, in order to meaningfully and effectively deliver its goals and potential.

6.2. Suggestions for future research
This study has focused its comparison on two European countries, Greece and Sweden. A broader understanding, though, of how GCE has developed in Europe would mean considering more countries or at least representative cases from the European West and East. England, for example, is one of the first countries in Europe to have addressed GCE, with a long tradition in teaching about global and development issues and with various NGOs promoting the concept of global citizenship in the K-12 system (Bourn and Hunt, 2011). In addition, researching the views of secondary school teachers and students could further help realise how global citizenship is perceived in different sectors of education, thus improving our understanding of how GCE is implemented in national education systems.

The potential effects of more critical approaches to GCE being implemented in schools could also be examined. Since the present study has raised the need to incorporate critical elements in the concept, instead of focusing narrowly on moral or environmental aspects, it would be useful to explore how teachers and students engage more critically with GCE. Identifying schools that implement a critical version of GCE would be a first step in this direction. Finally, with regard to international discourse, examining policy documents by other influential organisations interested in a more economic conception of global citizenship, such as the OECD and the World Bank, could offer a deeper insight into how GCE is conceptualised internationally. Examining the discourse of these particular organisations could also help us to better understand efforts to measure the concept.
References


Appendices

A. Interview guide for international policy officials

1. How do you understand Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in today’s globalising world? Is it important and why?

2. Is GCE an established area in the education policy discourse? Which are its origins and how long has this concept existed? What does it currently include?

3. What is the role of UNESCO in promoting GCE? Which are the main incentives for doing this?

4. Which are the main policy discourse and actions planned/implemented for GCE? Is there an effort to create tools for measuring the particular concept?

5. UNESCO has organised two technical consultation meetings on GCE, one in Seoul and one in Bangkok in 2014. Was there a general consensus/a common understanding from the participants on what is GCE and how it should be promoted?

6. Do you think that the relationship between GCE and national citizenship is complementary or contradictory? Do you believe that some countries could feel threatened by the particular concept?

7. Do you think that there are certain countries who act innovatively towards GCE? Are you aware of any successful examples of GCE from any country that would be interesting to mention?

8. Do you believe that the policies of UNESCO on GCE have an impact on national education policies and if yes, how?

9. Are you aware of any attempt to research GCE in the school level? Do you think it would be valuable to further research this concept in schools?

10. What could be done in the national and school level to promote this idea?
11. What are the challenges/issues that GCE is confronting (e.g. in terms of political, socio-cultural, economic, religious dimensions)?

12. What do you think is the future of GCE? Will it become an important element of national education policies?

B. Interview guide for primary school teachers

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<td>Years of service:</td>
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<td>Responsible for grade:</td>
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<td>Have you taught Citizenship Education before?</td>
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1. If I would ask you to provide a definition for the term “global citizen”, what would that be?

2. Do you think that schools should teach the notion of “global citizen”? And if yes, what do you think is the connection between this notion and the notions of national and European citizen?

3. What kind of knowledge, competencies, values and attitudes do you think that education needs to promote in order to help pupils to develop into global citizens?

4. To what extent are the following issues being discussed in your classroom: a) globalisation, b) human rights, c) poverty, and d) sustainable development? Are those issues mainly discussed in the citizenship education course or in other courses as well? What kind of educational resources do you use for teaching those issues and where do you find them?

5. What is your didactical approach for teaching those issues and other related global issues? Could you mention any good practice for teaching such issues that you have previously implemented in your classroom or that you are aware of?

6. Are there certain challenges when you teach global issues? If yes, could you mention some of them? Are there some measures to cope with them?

7. Do you promote the active engagement of your students in social activities inside your school? Would you for example encourage your students to participate in voluntary activities organised by your school or the community?
8. Do you think that today’s school prepares students for the 21st century? Do you have any concrete proposals for improving the situation?

C. Focus group guide for primary school students

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<td>School grade:</td>
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1. Which are the first words or phrases that come to your mind when you hear the term “global citizen”?

2. Do you think that we all here are global citizens? If yes, what do you think make us global citizens? Can you name some characteristics?

3. Do you think that the course of Citizenship Education has helped you to understand what a global citizen is? If yes, how?

4. Could you explain to me the following issues: a) globalisation, b) human rights, c) poverty, and d) sustainable development? In which courses have you learned about those issues?

5. Do you think that your knowledge on those specific issues has influenced your everyday life and in what way?

6. Do you participate in any social activity organised by your school, your community or neighbourhood?

7. Do you learn what is happening in other countries of the world? How do you learn that?

8. Do you think that something happening for example in the US could influence us here in Europe and more specifically in Greece/Sweden? Could you name an example?

9. In your opinion, how should we act in order to build a better, more just and environmentally friendly world for all of us?