



Critical Global Citizenship Education: A Study on Secondary School Students

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This article describes a study conducted in Catalonia (Spain) that examines the dimensions of global citizenship education (GCE) that emerge when secondary school students analyse images taken from the digital platforms of the mainstream media. We followed a mixed methodology for the research. To analyse the data, we employed content analysis, in the form of descriptive and inferential statistics. The results show that students in the final year of compulsory secondary education (aged 15–16) have great difficulty with analysing the information and images contained in media from a global citizenship perspective. While students tend to adopt a perspective of social responsibility, they do not have the tools necessary for critical interpretation of social facts and problems; they are still less able to formulate arguments or make decisions relating to actions within the parameters of social justice.

Keywords: global citizenship education, critical citizenship, social studies education, secondary education, controversial issues

INTRODUCTION

Since the winter of 2020, people around the whole world have experienced how their lives have been conditioned because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This context has clearly demonstrated struggles and interrelations between local and global situations: such a planetary problem, experienced in very personal circumstances.

Inequalities, indeed, have increased and become unsustainable both on local and global scales: on the local, people have remained attached to personal situations, marked by gender, economic, social, and age unevenness. In the global, unfair inequities among countries and regions emerged explicitly when referring to health care and vaccination opportunities. Virus transmission knows no borders, but health policies do.

The pandemic context has also given rise to major reflections about citizenship: struggles between freedom and social control policies, social commitment, rights and responsibilities, public services, and national and global political agreements. In addition, facing increasing discriminatory narratives along with racist hate acts and speeches (Griergson, 2020; Joubin, 2020; Nhiem and Morstatter, 2021) have become a social and political core problem, which again raise the question of whether *we are all global citizens, or only some of us are global citizens* (Dower, 2008).

These social challenges are not new, but they have intensified during the recent global situation. There is increasing awareness among citizens that there are local and global problems which affect

OPEN ACCESS

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Specialty section:

This article was submitted to
Teacher Education,
a section of the journal
Frontiers in Education

Received: 31 January 2022

Accepted: 18 March 2022

Published: 12 May 2022

Citation:

González-Valencia G,
Massip Sabater M and
Santisteban Fernández A (2022)
Critical Global Citizenship Education:
A Study on Secondary School
Students. *Front. Educ.* 7:867113.
doi: 10.3389/educ.2022.867113

their daily lives, and that those problems are increasingly inter-related. This awareness on the part of citizens is a consequence of the economic, political, and cultural globalisation that has been taking place over the last three decades (Pak, 2013). According to Castells (2005), the effects of globalisation have been amplified by information technologies, not least the internet, which has contributed to creating a world that is ever more connected. The media have a direct influence on how society and participation are understood. The ability to read those media critically is crucial for education (Santisteban and González-Valencia, 2013).

A range of interpretations of the globalisation process have been produced. Four distinct approaches can be taken from analysis of the theoretical frameworks constructed by Sklair (1999); Spring (2004), and Torres (2015): neoliberalism, global culture, global systems and post-colonialist interpretations. For her part, Shultz (2007) talks about three perspectives: neoliberal, radical and transformationalist. Those diverse interpretations of globalisation are related to different ways of understanding the world, social relationships or citizenship itself, which can also be translated into teaching on or research into global citizenship education (Stromquist, 2009).

Globalisation has led to the concept of citizenship being called into question if it is considered to be associated with the schema of the nation-state. Gun Chung and Park (2016) reviewed the theoretical frameworks developed by Kymlicka and Norman (1994); Faulks (2000), Janoski and Gran (2009); Delanty (1997), Arthur et al. (2008); Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013), and Tully (2014) to demonstrate that citizenship goes beyond legal recognition, since possession of an official document certifying that a person is a “citizen” does not mean that this individual accepts the rights and responsibilities associated with that recognition. Citizenship goes beyond legal recognition and should be associated with the values of a person seeking to improve coexistence within a community. As such, citizenship is linked to the right to participation in order to improve the society surrounding you because, as Cortina argues, citizens are those who try to construct a functioning polis, striving for the common good through their political participation (2009, p. 48).

According to Rauner (1999) and Delanty (1997), citizenship can be constructed in relation to national and post-national models, such as the supranational, the international, the global and the virtual. Citizenship can also be understood as worldwide or global/local (glocal) (Bromley, 2009). We share the view of Osler and Starkey (2003) that consideration must also be given to state-level citizenship, in other words, local, regional and, in some cases, national. Borders have played a very important role in the reconfiguration of the citizenship concept, both when they are opened for the free movement of goods and capital, and when they are opened or closed for crossing by people or certain groups. Supranational government bodies have also played a crucial role and have been increasing their influence over people’s lives through agreements between states (OECD, European Union, NAFTA, Pacific Alliance, Mercosur, etc.).

There has also been a less positive side to the advance of the globalisation process in the last three decades, in which economics becomes central to everything, to the cost of

politics; this has brought about increased poverty, inequality, and pollution, among other things, across the world. In contrast with the negative effects of globalisation, however, there has been the emergence and growth of international charitable organisations, such as Save the Children, Oxfam, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Transparency International, and Greenpeace. These are supranational bodies that work with the idea of global citizenship and open up new avenues for action at the international level.

For Tully (2014), when we try to connect citizenship with globalisation:

We are already thrown into this remarkably complex inherited field of contested languages, activities, institutions, processes, and the environments in which they take place. This conjoint field is the problematisation of global citizenship: the way that formerly disparate activities, institutions and processes have been gathered together under the rubric of “global citizenship,” become the site of contestation in practice and formulated as a problem in research, policy and theory, and to which diverse solutions are presented and debated (p. 4).

Social, cultural, political, and economic changes “hold special significance in educational settings, where preparing students for a global world has come to play an important role in citizenship education” (Szelényi and Rhoads, 2007, p. 25). Schools and teachers should consider the new setting because, according to Felices et al. (2016, p. 236), they have the task of equipping people with the ability to interpret the reality that surrounds them, to engage with global problems and to play their part in building a better, more democratic future. The goal is for students to develop “the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges through education for sustainable development and global citizenship education, as well as human rights education” (UNESCO, 2018, p. 1).

Although the concept of citizenship is associated with the nation-state, new forms of citizenship are growing in the face of globalisation, such as planetary citizenship (Sant et al., 2018a). “This means that new forms of education need to be developed. It is unlikely that new forms of education will be achieved by attempting to bolt very different formulations together” (Davies et al., 2005, p. 83).

In the light of this situation, education, and particularly social sciences instruction, must contribute to the understanding of these new citizenships and the new forms of participation (Goren and Yemini, 2017; Goren et al., 2019). Critical global citizenship education (CGCE) fosters greater understanding of the interrelationships between citizenship, politics, democracy and the globalisation process, and of the consequences of political, economic, cultural, social, and environmental decisions that impact on people’s lives (O’Meara et al., 2018; Bruce et al., 2019), emphasising the ethics of participating for the common good and social justice (Akkari and Maleq, 2020). In that context, this paper seeks to answer the following question: do secondary school students apply the various dimensions of CGCE when analysing social facts or problems?

FRAME OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) has emerged from reflections on citizenship in relation to the global world and the challenges of globalisation and its implications for the field of education (Kerr, 1999). Since education, citizenship, and globalisation are core concepts in GCE, all of them complex issues, and there exist a wide multiplicity of visions, interpretations, objectives and conceptions of education for global citizenship (Sant et al., 2018a; Akkari and Maleq, 2020; González-Valencia et al., 2020; Sant and González Valencia, 2018). As Sant et al. (2018a, p. 21) explain: “Since there are different views on globalisation, citizenship and education, the views on GCE are, probably, even more diverse.”

As such a contested and diffuse term, Sant et al. (2018a) argue that it would be understandable if it lost meaning and use. However, its use is not only maintained, but consolidated and increased. The literature on education for global citizenship has an extensive corpus, which has increased remarkably over the last decade (González-Valencia et al., 2020). All of these studies agree on the importance of including global citizenship education in social studies programmes. Some authors claim new study perspectives; for example, those who do not deny that there are alternative ways of doing GCE, such as the existence of peoples and nations beyond the concept of the state (Avery, 2004).

Within the great diversity of approaches, two major trends are revealed in considering education for global citizenship (Dill, 2013; Akkari and Maleq, 2020). The first is instrumental, geared to the acquisition of competences to be successfully developed in the globalised world, with a significant influence on neoliberal visions. The second is a critical trend (see Section Critical Global Citizenship Education) which includes attention to different perspectives, awareness of being part of a global community and ethics to act for the common good, change and social justice (Akkari and Maleq, 2020). Nancy (2007) explains this duality from the choice between globalisation, on the one hand, and the creation of the world, on the other. They are understood from an exclusive dichotomy, as “one implies the exclusion of the other” (Sant et al., 2018a, p. 14).

Critical Global Citizenship Education

A definition that serves as a general framework to understand global citizenship is that proposed by UNESCO (2018), which states that it refers to the sense of belonging to a broader community and to a common humanity, where there is political, economic, and social and cultural interdependence, in interconnection with the local, national and world levels. This institution defines GCE as:

Essentially, GCE addresses three core conceptual dimensions of learning: for education to be transformative, knowledge (cognitive domain) must touch the heart (socio-emotional domain) and turn into action to bring about positive change (behavioural domain). This framework emphasises an education that fulfils individual and national aspirations and thus ensures the well-being of

all humanity and the global community at large (UNESCO, 2018, p. 2).

The UNESCO’s definition, an institution that is part of the global governance framework, emphasises aspects closer to the psychology of learning and, to a lesser extent, to the political dimension or post-colonialist discourses (Oxley and Morris, 2013). An approach close to a critical dimension of GCE is that of Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013), for whom GCE is understood:

as awareness, caring and embracing cultural diversity while promoting social justice and sustainability, coupled with a sense of responsibility to act. Prior theory and research suggest that being aware of one’s connection with others in the world (global awareness) and embedded in settings that value global citizenship (normative environment) lead to greater identification with global citizens (i.e., prosocial values and behaviours) (p. 858).

This definition puts aspects such as social justice, diversity and awareness at the centre of its approaches; essential aspects in a critical approach: a Critical Global Citizenship Education (CGCE). Although it is true that there are a large number of definitions of CGCE, some authors such as Stromquist (2009); Dill (2013), and Pak (2013) suggest that despite the lack of consensus, it is necessary to develop a greater global awareness among citizens. Following in the line of Dill (2013, p. 50):

The global consciousness element of global citizenship (...) creates lofty moral expectations: it consists of an awareness of other perspectives, a single humanity as the primary level of community, and a moral conscience to act for the good of the world. The global citizen in this discourse is a moral ideal, a vision of a person who thinks and acts about the world in specific ways: as a universal community without boundaries whose members care for each other and the planet.

UNESCO definitions leave these aspects aside or at a secondary level. Along these lines, Tawil (2013, p. 5), states that:

In “softer” approaches, the starting point for global dimensions of citizenship education is of a more moral variety based on the notion of a common humanity and a global or world ethic. In more “critical” approaches, the ethical starting point is the concept of social justice as farmed by the international normative instruments of human rights.

Our research assumed the goal of Oxley and Morris (2013) on CGCE:

Our goal is to develop a typology that includes both normative and empirically grounded conceptions of GC in terms of their ideological underpinnings (...). It is thus intended as a device to explore the critical features of a construct that is understood in diverse ways and is changing overtime” (p. 305).

Critical global citizenship education requires critical literacy to identify the ideological dimension of social problems and their stories, on a local and global scale, as well as making invisibilised people and groups visible (Santisteban et al., 2016). It is necessary for CGCE to be accompanied by the teaching of plurality, by the understanding that there are people and groups with different ways of thinking, with different ideologies and

interests. CGCE sets out from the imperative that people and peoples have to learn to live together, within ethnic, cultural and religious diversity (UNESCO, 2018). Social studies must serve to teach us to organise ourselves locally and globally, to solve social conflicts and build a future together.

The project also took as reference points the approaches of Oxley and Morris (2013) who consider that there is a direct relationship between global citizenship, cosmopolitan citizenship, and advocacy types. Cosmopolitan citizenship is specified in: political global citizenship, moral global citizenship, economic global citizenship, and cultural global citizenship. For its part, advocacy types are specified in: social global citizenship, critical global citizenship, environmental citizenship, and spiritual global citizenship. Along these lines we find the proposal of the project “Putting the World into World-Class Education” (Department for Education and Skills, 2004), in which it is proposed that in order to work on the global dimension in students the following aspects should be considered: Citizenship, Social Justice, Sustainable development, Diversity, Values, and perceptions and Interdependence, Instilling a global dimension into the learning experience of all children and young people.

From the perspective raised, CGCE is a type of education that seeks to train citizens who recognise, understand social problems and are willing to think and act globally. This perspective transcends the nation-state and is oriented to the search for the highest moral imperatives (Cortina, 2009); that is, to the construction of social justice on a global scale (Davies, 2006; Torres, 2017; Sant et al., 2018b). On the other hand, faced with social problems, people have to analyse the historical, geographical, political, legal, sociological, anthropological, economic, and legal aspects, so that GCE serves to “Empower individuals: to reflect critically on the legacies and processes of their cultures and contexts, to imagine different futures and to take responsibility for their decisions and actions” (Andreotti, 2006, p. 169). In this perspective we identify ourselves with the idea of an education for critical citizenship (Andreotti, 2006; Tully, 2014).

For Scheunpflug and Asbrand (2006) GCE oriented to social justice is considered an appropriate framework to analyse educational proposals, because it includes the central concepts of global citizenship and, in turn, those related to other aspects of education for the critical citizenship. This conception of GCE echoes one of the roots of GCE theoretical framework which is Freirean pedagogy (Scheunpflug and Asbrand, 2006). Because as Freire puts it: “For a more equitable and just society, at the heart of the development educational objectives, people must be able to critically reflect on the world, challenge assumptions that create oppression and reconstruct understanding based on this collaborative inquiry” (Freire, 1970, p. 53).

The CGCE must have as its final objective the commitment to social justice and not only have international awareness, according to Davies (2006):

What seems to happen with global citizenship education is a confirmation of the direct concern with social justice and not just the more minimalist interpretations of global education

which are about ‘international awareness’ or being a more rounded person (p. 6).

Can CGCE be a possible answer to what Sant et al. (2018a, p. 14) wondered: “Will global citizenship be part of a creating world for all or will it serve a more destructive project of mono-economic, mono-cultural and mono-political engagement that serves only a small elite?” In this case, it is essential to reflect on the challenges and commitments implied in social studies education to achieve it.

Critical Global Citizenship Education in Social Studies

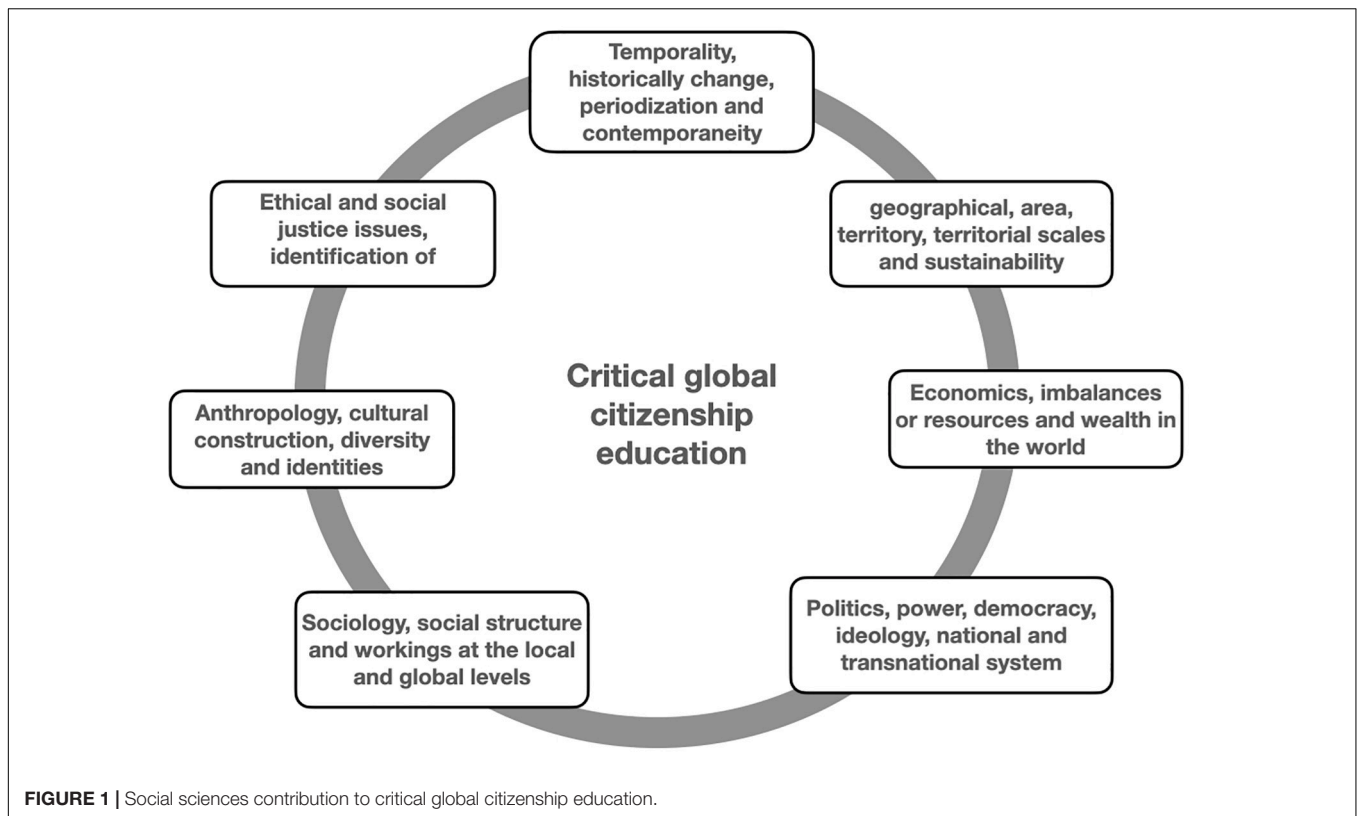
Despite the reviewed literature, there are authors who consider that the term is still very broad and difficult to specify for teaching (Tawil, 2013), since it does not include an identifiable area of educational theory or practice (Myers, 2006). In this sense, Grossman (2017) considers that GCE would be related to different perspectives, such as multicultural education, peace education, environmental/sustainable education, human rights education and development education. These realities raise the need to define in our research what we understand by GCE.

In the review of the global citizenship frameworks, Stromquist (2009) and Tully (2014) identify three types of approaches: social, political and economic. For Oxley and Morris (2013) there are social, political, economic, cultural, environmental, and moral perspectives. These interpretations are made from the theory of world culture, social and critical citizenship, and world systems framed in post-colonialist theories of globalisation (Andreotti, 2006). That is why they have been especially focussed on in Social Studies Education.

In the literature review on GCE and CGCE in social studies, there are studies that analyse their purposes (Bruce et al., 2019), the evaluation of proposals or methodologies for teaching (O’Meara et al., 2018), the influence of global education to train global citizens (Larsen and Searle, 2017); the importance of educating in the plural concept of identities and a global identity (Santisteban and González-Monfort, 2019); GCE from teaching history (Metzger and Harris, 2018; Santisteban et al., 2018) and heritage education (González-Valencia et al., 2020).

The teaching of social sciences, geography and history, from a critical and interdisciplinary perspective, helps people understand and participate in the solution of social problems. These problems are increasingly global and affect differently depending on which people and groups (Torres, 2009; Pagès and Santisteban, 2014; Anguera et al., 2018). Ultimately, it is about understanding the relationship between citizenship and globalisation (Rapoport, 2009). Different social sciences contribute essential elements to CGCE, which we summarise below (Figure 1):

- History shows the different ways of periodising history and temporal concepts such as simultaneity or contemporaneity.
- Geography helps to understand the interdependence between the different territorial scales and to defend sustainability throughout the planet.



- Political science reflects on local, national and international power, and transnational organisations in defence of democracy.
- The economy interprets exchanges at the local and global level, and imbalances in the distribution of resources and wealth.
- Sociology helps us to understand the structure and functioning of societies and their interrelationships at the local and global level.
- Anthropology interprets the processes of cultural construction and identities in contexts of diversity.
- The ethical and social justice aspects offer the necessary tools to identify injustices, as central themes of the social sciences.

Social studies education on a global scale is an obvious and yet unresolved challenge. It has been thought about for decades, for example from history education, as the teaching of history has traditionally been linked to the monolithic views of national history. Some attempts have been made to adopt multicultural approaches to world history projections. In these, however, there are some dangers and resistance (Kocka, 2012; Brett and Guyer, 2021), such as the need for some minority groups to maintain identity spaces (Sabzalian, 2019). Currently, diversity and multiperspectivity seem to be core concepts for history education from global perspectives (Fontana, 2013; Kropman et al., 2021), attending Fillafer's consideration: "If we want to dislodge the structuring assumptions connected with globality,

interrogating the premise that the world has one history is a good way to start." (Fillafer, 2017, p. 37)

Rüsen (2004), for example, understands that historiographical ethnocentrism is characterised by an asymmetric assessment, theological continuity and centralised perspective, and proposes to address it through a "culture of recognition" (2004, p. 118) focussed on (1) normative equality; (2) the reconstruction of concepts from contingency and discontinuity, and (3) the multiperspective and polycentric approaches to historical experience. Fontana (2013) left some indications for the construction of a global approach on "people's history":

- 1) To abandon the narrative form and opt for a polyphonic account through life histories from choosing "the sufficient number of the high and low, large and small voices of history to articulate them in a more meaningful chorus" (2013, p. 192).
- 2) To learn from concrete events and not from pre-established solutions.
- 3) To abandon linearity, which should allow "not only to overcome Eurocentrism, but also determinism" (2013, p. 195).

Guldi and Armitage (2016) understand that the great challenge of building historical knowledge is to regain the public mission with future projection, from recovering experiences and alternative models that serve as inspiration to imagining a possible alternative future. They consider it essential to apply transnational and transtemporal perspectives. This would be

achieved through (3) the articulation of the micro- and the macro-visions, through (4) the construction of macro-narratives that respond to current problems.

Proposals from decolonial perspectives raise the issue of epistemological deconstruction on which academic historical knowledge has been based (Massip, 2021). De Oliveira (2018) proposes questioning all epistemological bases of the discipline from the silences of the gender at intersection with the ethnic and social class. Also, Alderete (2018) opts for the deconstruction of some basic premises of academic history, such as the conception of historical time. He argues that “the experiential recovery of sub-altered sectors” cannot be given from a conception of historical time “which attributes such as linearity, homogeneity and monoculture come directly from European philosophy” (p. 141). He stands for (1) questioning the hegemonic notion of time, showing different ways to live and understand, and to (2) altering the micro- and macro-scales so that we can deal with atypical issues and obtain a general picture of historical realities, including non-hegemonic realities.

Renner (2009) also proposes “connecting the curriculum with personal and local histories,” which relates to the importance of starting from recent history and explaining the experiences of oppressed people, their experiences, emotions, etc; (2) Participating from school in situations where action can be taken for social justice, and (3) favouring such participation outside the school centre. Ross (2018) also emphasises this (1) political participation from school. At content level, it raises the need (2) to address issues such as power, imperialism, marginalisation or exploitation from critical thinking. Finally, (3) emphasising the agency from intentional actions. Santisteban et al. (2018), insist on the need for

- 1) the teacher being free to project global visions of the topics treated from independent decision-making;
- 2) breaking with national, nationalist and Eurocentric approaches, understanding that “global subdivision, we argument, is uncomfortable the antithesis of national consciousness” (p. 461), and that Eurocentric approaches to school history are what make most of the population excluded;
- 3) being based on the histories of humanity as a whole: “History Education for Global Expire shall look at the histories of the whole humanity and challenge any narratives of Western Supremacy” (p. 461);
- 3) the content being selected from relevant social problems. The proposal in the solo article by Pagès (2019) goes in the same direction: (1) to break with nationalist and Eurocentric approaches, and (2) to stem from relevant social problems. In this case, however, it adds an interesting nuance as regards the concept of relevant social problems, which is mentioned in many proposals, but which often does not specify just what type of problem is referred to. In this proposal by Pagès (2019), they would be specified as common human problems.

The current study places the emphasis on problem-based projection on global perspectives, and the assumption that

sociohistorical facts are analysed from the interaction of different sciences or disciplines.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Understanding the interaction between CGCE and the curriculum takes as reference the approaches of various authors (Andreotti, 2006; Shultz, 2007; Oxley and Morris, 2013) and provides a teleological and conceptual structure for data analysis. This structure results from the assumption that social facts are analysed from the interaction of different sciences or disciplines, with which causal or multi-causal explanations can be built (O’Meara et al., 2018). This enables the research team to keep track of the different dimensions of GCE in the responses of the research participants.

The study is comprehensive. The information has been obtained from students in the final year of compulsory secondary education (Ministerio de Educación and Cultura y Deporte [MECD], 2015), which corresponds to an age between 15–16 years ($n = 253$), from educational centres in Catalonia (Spain) in the 2018–2019 academic year. Regarding the educational stages to which GCE has been directed, Reynolds (2015), in a review of 1,110 articles on global citizenship and global education, points out that 46% are higher education studies, 33% from secondary school, 17% from primary education, and 3% from early childhood education. These data indicate that more research is needed in non-university educational stages, bringing the research closer to what happens in school classrooms and clearly linking research and innovation.

The collection of information has been carried out by means of a questionnaire in which students are presented with a series of cases, based on the theoretical framework, which they must analyse and on which they must express their opinions. The central case, which explicitly represents the relationship between the local and the global, is a photograph of the G20 meeting taken on 7 July 2017 in the city of Hamburg, Germany (**Figure 2**). The case, according to Santisteban (2019), corresponds to a controversial issue, since it presents the international leaders at the same time that it makes evident a series of cultural conventions, the lack of diversity, the invisibility of people or groups and the gender imbalance.

The study is positioned on the methodological principles of quantitative content analysis and a qualitative and quantitative interpretation of the data is carried out. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses of the students’ texts are carried out, and the appearance-absence and textual density of the theoretical attributes of the proposed conceptual model (Krippendorff, 1990; Bardin, 2002).

The data obtained have been transcribed and organised in a matrix for analysis (Miles et al., 2014). A thematic coding has been carried out (Flick, 2004; Schreier, 2014). The codes are defined based on the theoretical approach presented: temporality, territories, politics/democracy/ideology, economies, social structures, cultural practices, ethics, and social justice. In the analysis of the responses, it is identified whether or not the reference to the dimensions of the model appears, whether the

presence is classified with a point, its absence with zero, in the case of appearing more than one reference to the same code, and the number of occasions that it does. This allows us to identify the frequency in which the dimensions of GCE appears.

With the results of the thematic coding, people are classified on a scale of three levels, which correspond to what the project assumes as levels of literacy. This is understood as “the ability to read between the lines and go beyond them; that is, to identify the socio-historical, ideological background and the intentions behind the books, images, videos or the media” (Castellví et al., 2019, p. 25). Similar scales have been used by Bruce et al. (2019) in their work. The scale proposed in the research is:

1. Students oriented to the description of the facts, who mention 1 or 2 codes.
2. Interpretation-oriented students with a certain social commitment, who mention 3 or 4 codes in their story.
3. Students oriented to critical appraisal and mention four or more codes and propose social actions.

RESULTS

The questionnaire was answered by 171 students in the 4th year of compulsory education (15–16 years), from seven secondary



FIGURE 2 | Central image on research instrument: G20 meeting, July 2017.

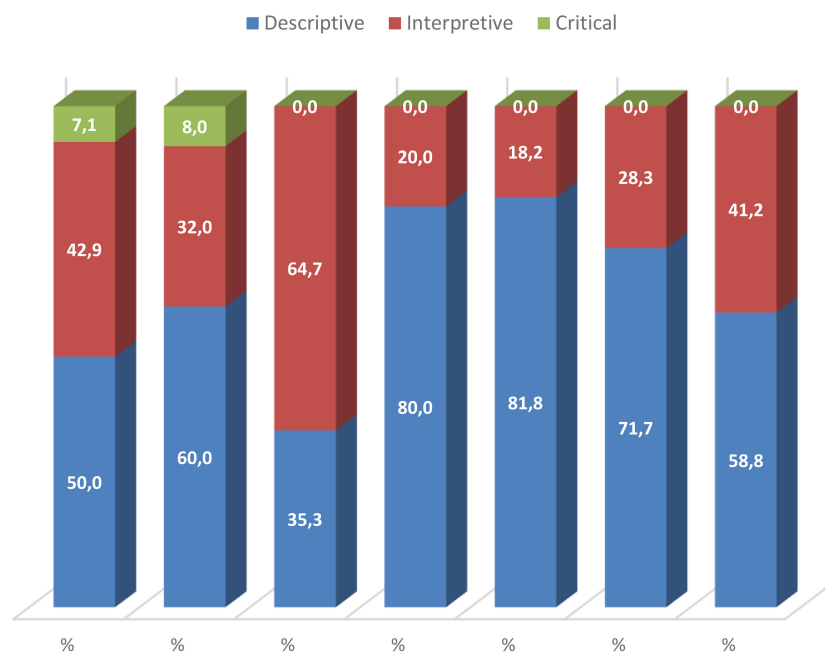


FIGURE 3 | Descriptive, interpretive, and critical answers.

schools in Catalonia, all of them in the city of Barcelona and its metropolitan area. In the first phase of the analysis, the students' responses are read and placed in one of the three proposed levels of analysis: focussed on description, oriented toward interpretation or with a critical perspective. The results show that in the case presented, the majority (61.4%) are located at the level of description, there being almost twice the number of students with an interpretive orientation in their answers (33.3%). The critical level is only present in 1.1% of the total. This information shows that the group of participants identifies the factual characteristics of the image, without actually reading beyond what is evident, without taking into account the possible readings of the implicit meaning at the political, cultural, economic level, etc.

When analysing the data by educational institution, it is found that the descriptive level is the highest in six of the seven institutions (**Figure 3**). In two of them, the difference between the descriptive and the interpretive levels was 63.6 points, the highest difference in all the institutions. In general, the dispersion of the data is wide and ranges between 7.1 and 63.6 points of difference. In the institution where the interpretive level is the highest, there is a difference of 29.4 points from the descriptive one. Only two institutions have critical levels, but the values do not exceed 8%. These data reflect a significant weight of the descriptive level in the student responses.

The students' responses have been processed through content analysis with two analytical procedures. The first is a process of coding the responses. The second is the identification of the words that appear most frequently. The first process consists of reading the responses and assigning one or more codes (political power, ways of dressing, annually, male power, strong economies, inequality, gender, Germany, injustice, etc.), and each one of these codes is associated in one of the dimensions of the CGCE (temporality, spaces, politics/democracy/ideology, economies, social structures, cultural practices, ethics, and social justice). In this phase, 264 codes were identified, taking into

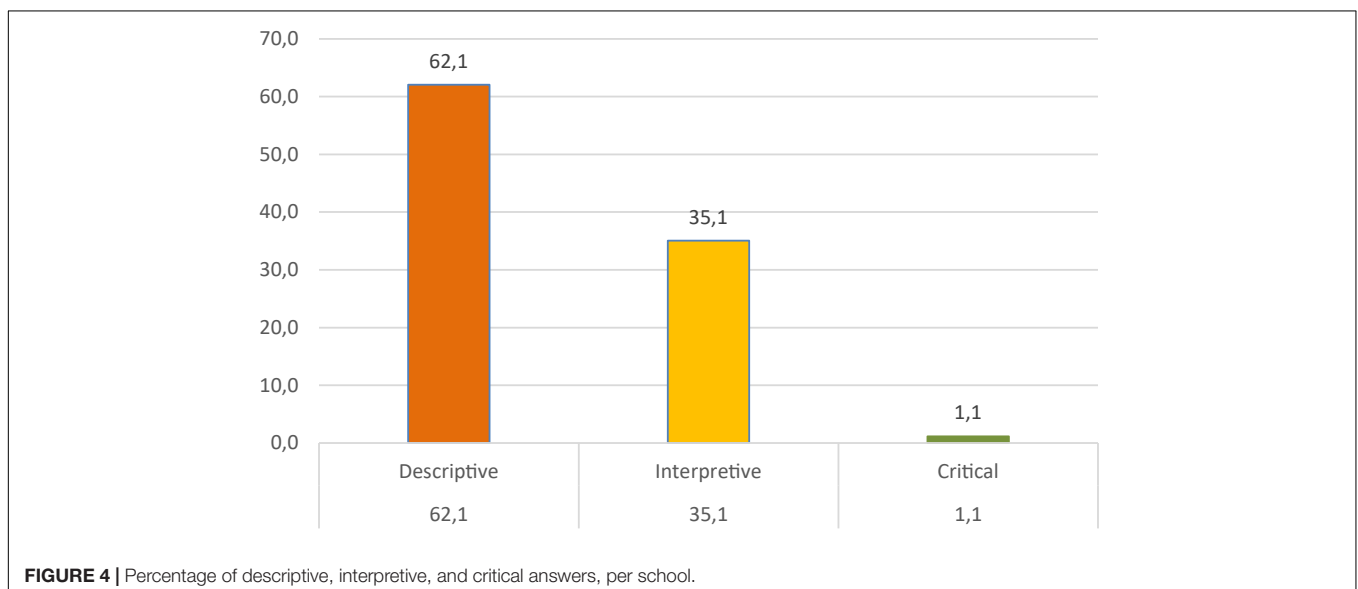
TABLE 1 | Analysing codes.

Codes	No	%
Social structures	118	44.7
Politics, democracy, and ideology	96	36.4
Ethics and social justice	20	7.6
Cultural practices	16	6.1
Economic aspects	7	2.7
The spaces of the facts	5	1.9
Temporality of the events	2	0.8
Total	264	100.0

account that each student response could refer to different codes (**Table 1**).

The coding of the responses shows that the dimension "social structures" and "democracy, politics and ideology" are the ones with the highest incidence (81.1%). This shows that the descriptive level is characterised by relating these two dimensions which, on the other hand, are also central dimensions in critical citizenship education. At this point in the analysis, a possible relationship emerged between the critical level and the ethics and social justice dimension (**Figure 4**). In the educational institution that obtained the highest score on the interpretive level, its students focus on aspects related to social structures and ethics and social justice. This last dimension is also the majority in one of the institutes that stands out at the critical level. For these reasons, it seems that students at the interpretive and critical levels are more likely to take into account aspects of social structures and social justice. The responses of the other school that achieved better results at the critical level focus on the dimensions of politics and democracy, social structures, and the economy.

These results can help in the construction of educational proposals for critical citizenship. In fact, this is what Andreotti (2006) suggests, considering that critical citizenship education



must be oriented to the values that promote critical analysis of societies and social justice. If we make a general balance, according to the data obtained as a whole, we can suggest that the interpretive and critical levels require an increasingly complex outlook, which includes significant references to a maximum number of dimensions of GCE and, especially, to the defence of social justice.

To identify the words that appear more frequently, the TermoStat software has been applied to carry out a lexicographic analysis of the response corpus. As a result of this analysis, we observe that the word that appears most frequently is “woman,” which occurs 113 times, in 100 responses out of a total of 171; that is, 58.5% of the responses used this word explicitly. It is followed by the word “man” that appears 85 times. When the words “woman” and “man” appear together, it is always to indicate the low presence of women in the photograph and, especially, the lack of women in the organs of representation or political power, as reflected in the image. These are the comments of two students:

“Both society and the government have to start accepting that as women we also know about politics... In this image you can see that the rulers of most countries are men, and I think this should change over time since women increasingly make themselves heard more and at least there are representatives, not like in the past when you were not allowed to govern as a woman.”

“Only one woman appears in the entire meeting. I observe that there are only four women, and the one that stands out the most since she is in the middle and wearing a distinctive colour is Angela Merkel, all the rest of the people are men.”

The responses reflect an analysis from the gender perspective, which is very significant in sociological terms, because it shows that the new generations identify, from a global perspective, the existence of inequalities between men and women in all political and social settings and, in a specific way, in the organisms or institutions of representation and power in the world. However, these results contrast with the high presence of responses that are located at a descriptive level, without looking deeper into the causes or consequences of the invisibility of women in certain areas.

In secondary education institutions in which the critical level is reached, even if it is a minority, the codes with the greatest presence are those of gender inequality (41/68) and that of male power, which has just confirmed the importance of the references to the situation of women within the set of responses. These references focus on pointing out the existence of inequalities that are reflected in the social structure.

This pattern of responses is common to all secondary education institutions in which we have carried out research; therefore, it can be noted that there is a significant number of responses that indicate the need to give more prominence to women in the social structure, politics and democracy. This is also associated with the idea that the greater the presence and participation of women the more social justice there will be.

“It seems to me a macho image, because only th

ree women appear in it and I at least understand by that that only men should govern and it does not seem fair to me.”

“This image when looking at it generates a lot of injustice to me when I see that in the countries of the world only three or four women govern as presidents and the other 25–30 are men.”

The analysis shows us that, although the descriptive level is the majority in the responses, the students manage to identify that the photograph reflects the inequality between men and women in political decision-making, where women are always in the minority. Identifying this situation in the image, which is evident, can be interpreted as a first level of analysis, but that does not go beyond the obvious, which is that it does not reflect what causes this situation or what consequences are derived from this marginalisation of women. Nor does it take into account that in these central spheres of power, decisions can be made against the injustices suffered by women in the world. Getting to establish this type of relationship is what could give more quality to the students’ stories, to go beyond the obvious or factual.

Given these results, we ask ourselves: what should characterise an education for critical global citizenship? The results offer us some revelations; for example, that students approaching the responses from the critical level prioritise ethical and social justice implications in their analyses. It seems clear that the critical level demands a critical citizen consciousness in the face of social problems, and requires capacities to identify inequalities or social injustices, and also that students are capable of proposing alternatives to these problems. We have obtained information that we find useful to make advances in critical global citizenship education and, in this sense, the dimensions described can help us to think about new educational proposals.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The theoretical perspective that frames the research is critical global citizenship education (CGCE) (Oxley and Morris, 2013; Davies et al., 2018), which places the education of people to identify and act at the centre of teaching against injustices on a global level. To this end, it is necessary to identify the ideological and hegemonic dimensions of the events or social problems, in order to work for global social justice (Sant et al., 2018b). In this process, progress must be made in improving critical literacy, developing cognitive skills in the critical interpretation of information, but also to intervene in society and produce social changes as global citizens (Curley et al., 2018). It is about orientating students’ work toward a global transformative change, as O’Connor and Zeichner (2011) state.

In the students’ responses there are very few references to elements that we could relate, directly or indirectly, to post-colonial discourses. This may be due to the excessive presence of the Eurocentric perspective in the history and social sciences curriculum. Post-colonial discourse is in the centre of the theoretical approaches of GCCC (Davids, 2018), as a response to the Eurocentric discourses, which are often hegemonic. It is important to make teaching proposals about the consequences of globalisation in different parts of the world (Andreotti, 2006; Oxley and Morris, 2013).

The analysis shows that the students establish some relationships between the global and local scale, as demonstrated

by Goren and Yemini (2017) or Çolak et al. (2019), in their research. But this relationship, according to our results, remains in the statement of some dimensions of GCE to describe the facts or social problems, but only a small minority is capable of establishing the interdependence between territorial scales. The two research works cited agree on the need to educate on the implications of being a global citizen.

Our findings showed, in terms of literacy, that the majority of students are located at the descriptive level of social facts, although they are aware of the negative elements of some aspects of globalisation or of the social facts analysed, making mention of aspects such as inequality, injustice, marginalisation, poverty, exploitation, etc., which coincides with the results of the works of Torres (2015). The interpretative level accounts for almost half of the descriptive level, and the critical level is only slightly more than 1%, although in two centres it is between 7 and 8%.

The textual dimension suggests that students place at the centre of their stories firstly social structures, then politics, democracy and ideology, and at a greater distance, ethics and social justice, and somewhat less cultural practices. The absence of references to temporality and territorial context is striking. The allusions to economic aspects were also scarce. This last aspect is surprising in the analysis of a fact that refers precisely to economic power. But the results are consistent with what is stated by Goren and Yemini (2017) in their research. We also agree in this sense with authors such as Hedtke (2018), who considers an economic education essential to understand the logic of globalisation and sustainability, and to make decisions from a critical and social justice perspective.

The students who are located at the critical level have in common that in their answers they made reference to aspects associated with social structures and, especially, with ethics and social justice. This last dimension is the essential difference between those who were at the critical level and those who were not. These dimensions appear explicitly in the approaches of Andreotti (2006); Davies (2006), Oxley and Morris (2013); Sant (2018), and Sant et al. (2018b), who coincide in pointing out the importance of an education for social justice in CGCE, with explicit attention to this dimension.

Let us remember the question that guided the research: Do secondary school students apply the CGCE dimensions when analysing events or social problems? These findings lead us to ask ourselves a new question: What and how should we educate students in the complexity of the various dimensions of CGCE in the analysis of facts or social problems? It is necessary to create more proposals and materials that facilitate the work of teachers to address CGCE, we need educational intervention proposals, especially from the teaching of social sciences, which address the different dimensions raised.

The data show that there is a certain global citizen awareness and a certain social commitment, given the fundamental problems that globalisation can pose, but the levels of critical literacy are very low, coinciding on this point with the study by Delacruz (2019). We also agree with this author that young people are digital natives, but they need explicit work to train critical thinking. The causes of these needs detected may be, among others, the lack of practical teaching proposals aimed at

critical reading of the media from GCE (Tawil, 2013; Culver and Kerr, 2014; Pathak-Shelat, 2018; Kim, 2019).

On the other hand, more specific training of teachers at university or in their professional development, on the content of GCE is necessary (Howe, 2012; Larsen and Searle, 2017; O'Meara et al., 2018; Sant, 2018; Tarozzi and Mallon, 2019). In this last aspect, we have to accept that without a teacher capable of teaching CGCE in secondary education, any type of educational change is impossible, which is why a new training in citizenship education is essential (Yang et al., 2017), and that education contemplates historical, geographical, political, economic, socio-anthropological aspects and an ethical and social justice approach (González-Valencia, 2013; González-Valencia and Santisteban, 2016).

The data show that ethics and social justice are two dimensions that are present at the critical level. This data is very important for thinking about educational proposals; for example, from the study of controversial issues, social problems or existing social issues on a local-global scale, as proposed by Davies et al. (2005); Davies (2006), and Santisteban (2019), from critical pedagogy, as an alternative to teaching social sciences, history, geography and new proposals for education for citizenship.

We know that the concept of education for global citizenship has different readings and meanings in each region of the world, as shown by studies on the representations of students and teachers from different continents or countries (Davies et al., 2018). In Europe, for example, young people know and value human rights as an essential good for the development of humanity, but there are important differences between countries on what citizenship education should be and how it should be practiced and how it should be understood. In Catalonia our students show their commitment to social justice, but they lack critical literacy tools to move on to responsible social action. It seems that this situation could be common to many other countries and that it would be necessary to work together, as stated for example by Lee (2015), for Asian countries.

The results obtained in this research lead us to subscribe to the reflection of Merryfield and Subedi (2001):

In the new millennium, even a multicultural American centric curriculum will be inadequate. For no matter whether Americans choose to ignore or reject the realities of globalisation, they will increasingly be affected by the world's human diversity, the acceleration of inequities from economic, ecological and technological dependence, and the repercussions of global imperialism, human conflict, poverty, and injustice. If we are to educate young Americans for effective citizenship in today's global age, the social studies curriculum must go beyond European or American constructions of knowledge and also teach the experiences, knowledge, and perspectives of diverse peoples in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. A world-centred global education removes the nationalistic filters that only allow students to see events, ideas, and issues through the lens of their country's national interests and government policy. It also challenges colonialist assumptions of superiority and manifest destiny (p. 277–278).

We also agree with other authors, such as Girard and McArthur, 2018, who propose a teaching of history that sets

aside Eurocentric approaches and that is an instrument at the service of social change. They propose that young people be helped to develop a global historical consciousness. On the other hand, the foundations of a national identity do not contradict the acceptance of belonging to a global citizenship, as also shown by various studies on identities and global citizenship (Sant et al., 2015; Leek, 2016).

In short, we propose a CGCE to educate people with the skills to identify injustices and inequalities in the world, and act accordingly, which are part of a citizenry that Banks (2008) calls “transformative citizenship,” based on an education that: “helps students to develop reflective cultural, national, regional, and global identifications and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote social justice in communities, nations, and the world” (p. 137).

Will this global world be a host home for everyone, or the disputed land? (Garcés, 2018). The results of our research, contrasted with other international studies, lead us to consider that education for critical global citizenship can be defined with new criteria and dimensions, with special emphasis on the teaching of social sciences, based on research that we are aware of. Perhaps the time has come to rethink our goals, experiences and innovations as researchers, teachers and students, as global citizens, committed to education for social justice, to make sure this global world will be a host home for everyone.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethics aspects are under good practices guidelines from University Autonomous of Barcelona agreement (Consejo de Gobierno, el 30 de enero de 2013). Written informed consent to participate in this study was provided by the participants’ legal guardian/next of kin.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research is part of the project PID2019-107383RB-I00.

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