

# Citizenship education after Ukraine: Global citizenship education in a world of increasing international conflict

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- Global citizenship struggles to make sense of recent developments in international politics, such as the Ukraine war.
- Theories of international politics offer tools to make sense of the current international situation.
- Global citizenship ought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the international situation.
- Didactical implications of broadening the perspective of global citizenship.
- More research is required on the didactical implications.

**Purpose:** Following globalisation, a rich literature on global citizenship education developed (Akkari & Maleq 2020; Goren & Yemini 2017). However, recent developments in international politics prompt us to ask whether global citizenship education gives young people a grasp of the international world. We argue that global citizenship education theory must be supplemented because it does not provide much guidance to help young people understand international politics properly.

**Design/methodology/approach:** We discuss how theories of global citizenship education conceptualise international conflicts and how three theories on international politics offer supplementary conceptions and perspectives.

**Findings:** Global citizenship education should be supplemented with theories of international politics.

**Research limitations/implications:** Our analysis only indicates some implications for global citizenship education, and further research on the didactical implications is required.

**Practical implications:** Global citizenship education must rely on a wider set of theories to prepare the students for understanding global issues.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Following globalisation, a rich literature on global citizenship education has developed (Akkari & Maleq 2020; Pashby et al. 2020). Examining global challenges and issues and taking responsibility for these issues as global citizens have increasingly become a focal point in global citizenship education (Bourn 2020). Education about global issues may have other foci, it is not necessarily about fostering globally oriented participation (Børhaug 2019). Teaching international issues may serve purposes of national cohesion and identity or even militarism (Vesterdal 2023), but global citizenship education has become an important approach to global issues in education.

However, recent developments in international politics prompt us to ask in this article whether global citizenship education models are suited to give young people a grasp of the current international situation and how they may relate to it. Particularly challenging are the growing tensions with a gradually more aggressive China and the war in Ukraine, as well as the repercussions the war has on international relations.

Global citizenship education theory offers a variety of concepts and models of the globalised world and how citizens may relate to it. However, this theoretical tradition must be supplemented because its diverse contributions do not provide sufficient guidance about understanding why the international order erupts in violent conflict, how to relate to it, and the conditions for peaceful cooperation instead of armed conflict among nations. This raises a second question that will be discussed in this paper: do theories of international politics offer supplementary perspectives and concepts on international conflict, conditions for international cooperation and how citizens may play a role in this regard?

We will first give a brief outline of the main contributions of global citizenship education and argue that this literature offers too little to explain and understand growing levels of conflict in the international order. Nor is it satisfactory when examining how young people may relate to international conflicts as citizens and regarding the conditions for peaceful international cooperation. Further, we will therefore argue that the current situation necessitates that young people are made aware of the basics of international politics and why conflicts arise, how states relate to the international scene, what the conditions for international cooperation are, and how citizens may participate in promoting international cooperation among states. We will base our discussion on theories of international politics from political science. These perspectives are necessary foundations for understanding international relations, how we can relate to political events and how peaceful cooperation may occur. Finally, we will point out some didactical implications of these theories of international relations to contribute to broadening global citizenship education.

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## 2. THE LIMITATIONS OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

There is extensive literature on preparing young people for the world outside their country of origin. Increasingly, global citizenship education is the heading for this quite diverse literature (Akkari & Maleq 2020; Bourn 2020). Global citizenship education is a mixture of diverse didactical traditions, some of which are not recent. Peace education, human rights education, development education, multicultural education and global perspectives in education for democracy are all mentioned as such sources for global citizenship education by Akkari and Maleq (2020). Global education (Burnouf 2004; Bourn 2020) and global literacy (Gardner 2000) are also traditions that have fed into global citizenship education.

Burnouf (2004) argued that global citizenship education stressed tolerance, multiculturalism, understanding global interconnectedness and understanding global problems and conflicts but said little about how young people could engage themselves (See also Davis, Evans & Reid 2005). Global citizenship education, however, represents a stronger emphasis on the participatory aspects.

There have been numerous attempts to systematise the various notions of global citizenship (Dower 2003; Goren & Yemini 2017). Pashby et al. (2020) underline the diversity in the field and group this into neoliberal, liberal and critical approaches. In particular, liberal approaches are quite varied, and these authors point to several attempts to order this variation, such as Oxley and Morris (2013), who distinguish between advocacy notions and cosmopolitan notions of global citizenship. The advocacy part concerns which issues global citizens should engage in, particularly environmentalism, feminism, human rights, postcolonial critique of Western claims of universalism, multicultural understanding and tolerance, human rights, feminism and social issues. It is not new that the environment, development, and arms control are pointed out as problems global citizenship education should challenge young people to engage in (Jickling & Wals 2008; Osler & Kerry 2002; Schnack 1995). This selection of issues reflects the strong ideological basis in much global citizenship education, according to Bourn (2020). Defining the most important problems and challenges is not a neutral, non-political act. Even if these are important problems, they still represent a selection and a political agenda-setting. Problems of national security, economic cooperation and organised economic exchange and trade, which affect most Western countries deeply, are not core issues in this literature. However, these are the exact issues that are deeply disturbing to most countries in the light of recent international development, not least in Europe but elsewhere. These questions concern security and economic development in a changing world economy, and at the same time, climate changes and loss of biological diversity accelerate. Global citizenship education should be open to all of them.

Oxley and Morris juxtapose advocacy varieties of global citizenship with cosmopolitan notions (2013). There are four different varieties. There is first the global market citizen, as pointed out by many (Akkari & Maleq 2020; Goren & Yemeni 2017; Pashby et al. 2020). Next, there is the notion that all humans have rights and obligations because they all belong to the moral community of mankind, with universal human rights. Third, cultural

cosmopolitanism emphasises multicultural diversity, appreciation, and tolerance. These notions of global citizenship are starting points for assessing and condemning aggressive warfare or misuse of economic power. As such, they are close to the idealist approach in theories of international relations (See below). However, they offer less understanding of why aggressive conflicts occur, how war can be supplanted by peaceful cooperation and how citizens can contribute to such cooperative actions from states. Pashby et al. point out quite specifically that the new aggressive nationalism and military confrontations have been of little concern to theories of global citizenship education (2020, p. 153).

The fourth kind of cosmopolitanism is the political one. Political cosmopolitanism can be a political programme for building and promoting supranational governing structures that are held democratically accountable (Held 2006), or it can be what Oxley and Morris label a type of anarchism, i.e., that political and social issues should be solved by the organised efforts of civil society, without governmental agencies presumably because governments are part of the problem or unable to deal with it. Participatory possibilities in providing humanitarian aid and development assistance in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are important (Cappelle, Crippini, & Lundgren 2011). Digital advances open new arenas for such engagement in NGOs and action groups with a transnational reach. Another didactical approach is that even if the problems are global, we can all make a difference by acting locally with a global consciousness (Pike & Selby 1988), for instance, by reducing consumption and our carbon footprint. Young people can thus be considered participants in online, transnational debating arenas as individual, globally concerned citizens (Delanty 2002; Linklater 2006; Kubow et al. 2022).

Pashby et al. (2020) make critical approaches to the third strand in this field of theory, pointing out many of the advocacy issues that Oxley and Morris (2013) also mention. The postcolonial critique of Western bias, social injustice and Marxist perspectives are important.

Global citizenship education theories thus point out important aspects of how young people may engage themselves transnationally as citizens. Promoting supranational political organisations, such as the European Union, makes sense as a response to an international economic and military aggression situation. Engaging in NGOs, political movements, and global awareness raising is also valuable for young people. Still, it remains a challenge to determine the arenas and where such activism makes a difference. However, what makes cooperation among states difficult, why they sometimes end up in aggressive and violent conflicts, what states may do to promote peace and meet the needs of their citizens, and how citizens may influence what states do is outside the scope of political cosmopolitanism. Because these questions are outside of the scope of global citizenship education, they must be supplemented with perspectives from international politics, incorporating theories that can account for international cooperation and the role of conflicts in the international system.

The international situation is serious and rapidly changing. Why are tensions rising with China, why has Russia developed an increasingly aggressive policy towards Ukraine,

why NATO and Ukraine have responded as they have, why attempts at cooperation with Russia failed, why new states joined NATO or wish to do so, what international cooperation could be, what may facilitate international cooperation, and what we as citizens together with others can do to favour such cooperation are some of many pressing questions.

These are not just issues that happen to be on the agenda now; they are basic international problems that concern young people in two ways. First, as far as they care about the world and the global future. Second, they have consequences for the security and welfare of all citizens in any nation-state, i.e., for the most basic political community in which young people are members. They are concerned with both the ideals of a better world and the very basic interests of young people.

Global citizenship education must be supplemented by concepts and perspectives covering these questions. Where are such concepts and theories to be found? We will discuss how theories of international politics from political science can offer additional insights about what generates conflicts and cooperation, how conflicts can be contained, how cooperation among states can be established, and how citizens may engage in international problems in addition to what is pointed out by global citizenship education. We argue that we should take these insights as a point of departure and expand global citizenship education.

### **3. WHAT EXPLAINS INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT?**

International politics parallels national politics in that public and non-public actors influence decisions with the resources they dispose of to promote their values and interests. However, international politics is fundamentally different; it is anarchic. In contrast to national political systems, there is no supreme authority to settle matters of dispute and to ensure that the rules of the political processes are respected.

#### **Anarchy**

The anarchical nature of international relations means that national security cannot be taken for granted. Security is the most central interest of a state (Holsti 1994). Without security, none of the aims of a state or its citizens can be achieved, and without security, the independence of the citizens of the state is at risk. Security is, therefore, a top priority; states are willing to do almost anything to preserve their security.

The security challenges facing states vary a lot. Small micro-states rely entirely on other states, while superpowers like the US can do almost as they like. For small states, avoiding conflicts and taking stronger neighbouring (and other) countries into account becomes paramount. For a superpower such as the US, few other states pose a real security threat. The asymmetry between small and big states creates a larger imbalance between states than in national politics. The strongest states may not fear small states, but alliances with small states can still be important in securing themselves against other major states.

States are thus in an anarchic competition, where relative strength becomes an important variable when foreign policy objectives are set. International politics are full of examples of states falling behind relative to other states, only to be humiliated by more powerful states. An example is the “gunboat diplomacy” the US engaged in against Japan in the mid-19th century, resulting in Japan realising it lacked the industrial and military power to secure its interests after being forced to sign unequal treaties with the US. After this defeat, Japan was set on rapid industrialisation, turning Japan into the most powerful Asian state towards the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Japan turned defeat into gaining strength relative to other Asian states and occupied both Manchuria and Korea in the first decades of the 20th century after these two countries lost strength relative to Japan. This implies that global poverty, development, environment and social issues may be important for a nation-state and its citizens. Still, military and economic security are even more basic from an international political perspective. It also implies that influencing the global situation will often be a matter of influencing what states do.

However, different perspectives on international politics differ in understanding which factors may drive or prevent states from going into open conflict within such an anarchic framework. In this article, we discuss three such perspectives: Realism, regionalism, and institutionalism. Other perspectives, such as imperialist theories, could also be chosen, but due to space limitations, attention is limited to these three.

## **Realism**

Realism has been promoted by John Mearsheimer (2018) and others as the best way to explain the war between Ukraine and Russia. Realism has long been considered the most influential school of thought on international politics, with history going back to Thucydides and Greek antiquity. The basic premise of realism is that international politics is concerned with power and that principles of peaceful conflict resolution make little difference. Simply put, international politics requires an approach based on a realistic understanding of human nature and acknowledgement of power's role in human nature and politics (Morgenthau 1954). Classical realism emphasises the role of human nature because international politics is, in the end, carried out by individuals (Machiavelli 1999; Hobbes 1996).

The more recent neo-realism relied on some of the same premises as those found in modern economics, such as rationality and power maximisation (Keohane 1986). Neo-realism argues that cooperation can sometimes be beneficial for states but that such cooperation never goes further than what serves self-interested states. Regionalism takes this idea further, as we discuss below.

Most academics, politicians, and analysts were caught by surprise by the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022. For most commentators, a full-scale invasion made little sense and was irrational. However, one group of theorists of international politics, those subscribing to realism, argued that a full-scale invasion made good sense

and furthered Russia's interests and security concerns. One such prominent representative of realism is John Mearsheimer. He takes issue with the idea of liberal hegemony, which 'aims to turn as many countries as possible into liberal democracies like itself while also promoting an open international economy and building international institutions' (Mearsheimer 2018, p. 1). Mearsheimer here describes the aim of turning the world into a community of liberal democracies with market-based economies built around international institutions such as the UN.

Unfortunately, such a framework is misguided and wrong, according to Mearsheimer, because great powers are rarely able to pursue a full-scale liberal foreign policy. As long as two or more of them exist on the planet, they have little choice but to pay close attention to their position in the global balance of power and act according to the dictates of realism. Great powers of all persuasions care deeply about their survival, and there is always the danger in a bipolar or multipolar system that they will be attacked by another great power (Mearsheimer 2018, p. 1-2). Security and survival always trump liberal ideals when confronted with reality. Thus, faced with an expanding NATO, Russia would react violently to preserve its security. Faced with a new level of Russian aggression, Finland and Sweden promptly joined NATO.

Mearsheimer's analysis is controversial and subjected to intense criticism (Rachman, 2023). Our point is not to take a position for or against Mearsheimer's realism. We want to draw attention to the need for students to be familiar with the realist school of thought and how this perspective explains rivalry and conflict.

Realism can be seen as self-fulfilling because when a state acts, it is always possible to find some definition of self-interest that makes the action intelligible (Allison 1969). However, a realist explanation of the conflict is that Ukraine is resisting to survive. In contrast, Russia is trying to secure a buffer on its western border against Western influences and perhaps also to undermine the global order, which Russia sees as favouring the Western world. This analysis also explains why so many third-world countries do not oppose Russia. Concerning the US and Europe, a realist analysis could be that they did not understand how they challenged Russia but encouraged Ukraine, and thus, they were bad realist players. Or they could have gambled that Russia would engage in a way that would allow the Western world to let Russia bleed seriously, thus weakening it as a rival. In the realist account, there is nothing abnormal about this. This is what states do, and moral considerations are unimportant because no agent is there to uphold moral standards.

The space for citizen participation on the global scene is very limited in the realist account; the primacy of the states is a defining feature of realism. However, the space for citizens to engage in how their country should relate to such processes is even more important because of the stakes for states and their citizens. The Vietnam War and the role of American citizen protests are important reminders in this regard. Concerning peace and cooperation, we will return to these issues below.

## Regionalism

Regionalism is a response to and part of globalisation in the sense that transnational co-operation encourages globalisation and that globalisation requires states to work together to solve global challenges. However, it is also a theory of how rivalry and conflicts may be contained by making shared interests in cooperation more important for states. Especially regarding economic regionalism, developing trade agreements and economic integration are seen as preventing conflicts by making them too costly. Regionalism 'reflects the recognition that specific activities can be performed more effectively through collective action than by states acting individually. This also helps to explain why regional integration has a predominantly economic character, as this is the area in which the functional benefits of cooperation are most evident' (Heywood 2013, p. 391-392). Regionalism shows that states often go together when the benefits outweigh the costs of coordinating and cooperating. In such a perspective of international politics, states are joining trade blocs because a larger region can offer a bigger market and fewer obstacles for cross-country trade. Expanding markets and simplifying trade processes is easier as part of a regional trading bloc than an independent country.

Today, the EU represents perhaps the region where integration and cooperation are the most advanced of all the regional trade blocs worldwide. European integration has a long history as an idea, and one might even argue that historically, the Catholic Church, to some extent, exercised some kind of 'supranational authority over much of Europe' (Heywood 2013, p. 393). Nonetheless, the modern regionalism of Europe originated after WW2 and has now grown from a coal and steel union to a large political and economic union of 27 countries. Integration in Europe has been partly idealistic based on the need for European cooperation after two devastating world wars and partly practical concerns related to economic benefits (Heywood 2013, p. 394).

Regionalism is an important perspective on the Ukraine conflict because the Western policy towards Russia since the downfall of the Soviet Union has been one of regional integration based on liberal principles of free market exchange and human rights. The idea would be that if Russia was involved in economic exchange with the West, it would have too much to lose in an open conflict. Building gas pipelines from Russia to Europe illustrates this policy. One of the reasons why the invasion was surprising was that it was not in line with this thinking of building peace through economic integration. It worked between Germany and France after 1945, but it did not work with Russia.

The war in Ukraine has also led to another Western response, which must be understood from the perspective of regional integration, i.e., the policy change to halt global economic exchange, re-securing vital supply demands and self-sufficiency. Regional integration is increasingly aimed at securing key resources in Europe and other blocs. On the other hand, Russia is also realigning its economic cooperation, integrating itself more with China as a response to the conflict. In short, several aspects of the war in Ukraine are better understood if regional integration is brought into teaching, and a key question for all citizens should be how their nation of residence should respond to this. How to position the



country in international economic structures is a very important issue that young people should be invited to have an opinion about.

Promoting the development of supranational authority is also one strand in global citizenship education, as pointed out above. However, although the EU differs greatly from other regionalism projects and is much more integrated than most other regions, the EU has still been unable to create a very strong European framework for citizenship. Many of the big EU projects have been introduced to widespread popular opposition. The EU does not offer a version of supranational citizenship or a shared sense of security (Burgess 2009). Even if there are popular elections to the European parliament, power resides with the member states. The lack of a pan-European sense of citizenship points towards some of the theoretical and practical difficulties of developing a sense of citizenship beyond the nation-state, let alone a global sense of citizenship. European regionalism was not based on a sense of European citizenship. There is also a growing arena for civil society and NGO-based engagement within the EU, and regionalism acknowledges this more than realism. However, the member states still decide what the European Union will do.

## **Institutionalism**

An institutional perspective on international politics provides a third understanding of international politics. Institutionalism is often defined as ‘a relatively enduring collection of rules and organised practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances’ (March and Olsen 2006, p. 3). Institutions are sometimes upheld and supported by formal international organisations, sometimes by precedence and tradition, and sometimes by formal treaties.

Institutions in international politics are controversial because some scholars, such as Mearsheimer, argue institutions are largely obsolete. Others, such as Robert Keohane, have argued that the growth in international organisations is one of the most important features of international politics in the 20th century (Keohane 2006). Furthermore, superpowers like the US and the former USSR spent vast resources supporting international organisations. Institutions play a role because there are costs associated with breaking common rules, because institutions may, over time, gradually become more and more important, and because the formal organisations upholding them increasingly play roles of their own.

Critics such as Mearsheimer point out that institutions in international politics play a limited role in many areas. High-stakes issues are often settled outside of international organisations. Wars and other issues relating to security are often resolved outside of international organisations. Nonetheless, membership in WTO has been growing steadily since the organisation was formed based on the GATT agreements in the 1990s. This shows that membership in international organisations is sought after by many nation-states, and not accepting WTO regulations can be costly.

The rationale for joining international organisations is often functional and based on perceived membership benefits. The scope for binding decision-making within international organisations is even more restricted than in regional organisations like the EU but represents a constraint on national sovereignty. Benefits to member states can be limited but still significant. On balance, being a non-member is often inferior to being a member. Since most international organisations have limited power, joining often offers limited costs and disadvantages, and potential benefits will likely exceed the potential costs.

In the case of the war in Ukraine, institutionalism helps us see the limits of global institutions, particularly the security framework of the UN. On the other hand, it also shows the pivotal role of organisations such as NATO and the EU. These organisations and the cooperation they institutionalise have been important in defining the war as unacceptable aggression and in defining and coordinating the response. A main point in institutional theory is that these organisations develop agendas and voices of their own; they are more than their member states. The EU illustrates this, but NATO leadership also plays an independent role. At the same time, the incapacity of the UN to resolve conflicts and other pressing issues shows some of the limits of institutionalism. We also witness how the international courts and arrangements for war crime prosecution play a role, not least in Western and Ukrainian propaganda.

Global citizenship plays no important role in developing the transnational institutional framework, even though NGOs can promote human rights and humanitarian principles and aim at their institutionalisation. However, regarding decisions about treaties and international organisations, the states are also the main actors. International institutions thrive and grow (Higgott 2006) not because of global citizenship but in the absence of global citizenship. As pointed out above, encouraging states to build international organisations is an important idea in cosmopolitanism. The development of institutionalised international cooperation also provides a receiving end for global citizens. For instance, if the environmental movement can reach the EU top-level leadership, they can get issues on the agenda. Such activism then presupposes an understanding of the EU or other institutions.

Global perspectives are institutions upheld by networks and organisations and are clearly under pressure. With the growing number of authoritarian regimes worldwide and the growth in nationalism, a sense of global citizenship is unlikely to gain a strong foothold in most parts of the world. Nationalist governments, such as the ruling party of Prime Minister Modi in India or the communist regime in China, are likely to actively oppose any global citizenship ideals in international politics. On the contrary, these regimes have been very strict on non-interference. Thus, global citizenship becomes a moral ideal put forward by cosmopolitan elites in Western countries without any foundation in the rest of the world (Goren & Yemini 2017, 171).

However, institutionalism may also point to the fact that within each state, institutions develop as a response to how states define their interests and what they see as appropriate policies and strategies. Self-interest in the classical realist understanding, as well as in

regionalism, is also a matter of how states define their interests. This is decided by national politics, which national institutions and traditions always shape. The war in Ukraine cannot be understood without examining how Russian and Ukrainian approaches and understandings of their national interests have evolved. Not least, the Russian case has to be examined similarly. What Russian institutions and traditions shape their understanding of security and the costs and benefits of international cooperation or aggression? At the same time, the US seems to be redefining its national security understanding away from the European focus it has had for decades.

Realism, regionalism and institutionalism explain international conflicts in ways that expand our understanding of international conflicts beyond what global citizenship education theory can do. They also offer a more realistic and nuanced understanding of how citizens with a global perspective may be heard. Therefore, these perspectives are necessary to help young people understand international conflict and should be included in global citizenship education.

#### **4. WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION?**

We have argued that global citizenship education is somewhat constrained when explaining ongoing developments and conflicts. But is global citizenship education a good lens through which to understand the conditions for international cooperation? After all, global citizenship education is about helping young people see that global problems are common and should be solved by all humans together.

Citizens engaged in global issues through global civil society and advocacy is seen as an important condition for international cooperation by the global citizenship education literature (see above). But under what conditions is such cooperation possible? Our discussion in this part starts with the general theories of international politics. Then, it moves on to how international cooperation takes on different forms depending on the nature of the issue at hand. Furthermore, the different forms of cooperation put constraints and limits on the scope of global citizenship initiatives. Despite these constraints, the framework wherein international cooperation takes place also offers opportunities for global citizenship education to make a difference because institutions, organisations and regional forms of cooperation are necessary conditions for making it possible to influence international cooperation. The very existence of such an organised framework is what establishes an arena for global citizen activism.

Regionalism explains how cooperation occurs at the supranational level between states in the same geographical areas. The benefits of cooperating explain why such cooperation takes place. Global citizen activism at the international level is not a decisive factor. Even in the EU, arguably the most developed example of regionalism, a sense of European identity or citizenship has not developed over the seven decades of European integration, and it is certainly not the explanation for the EU itself. However, once the EU or any other such entity is established, NGOs and international advocacy may play a role in defining EU policies. Still, the member states are also then the most important actors. The core idea is that

regional integration is possible where national and transnational elites establish this as rational problem-solving.

Institutionalism explains how organisations and practices in international politics develop through formal and informal networks that, over time, constitute fixed organisations or established practices. Such institutions provide benefits and predictability in an uncertain international environment. Especially after WW2, the world has seen a strong growth in institutions in international politics. These institutions developed independently of a sense of global citizenship and are sustained without a sense of global citizenship. Primarily, the work carried out through institutions in international politics is carried out by politicians and career civil servants acting professionally. Their work is continued by others when politicians are replaced or civil servants change jobs. Once such institutions are established, they tend to generate more international cooperation because this approach to problems is becoming institutionalised. To some extent, citizen activism with a global focus is made possible by global institutions such as human rights and UN sustainability goals. Institutionalism thus facilitates global citizenship activism.

Cooperation is still important despite the primacy of security and conflict in international politics. Thus, Realism explains why states may be reluctant to bind themselves to cooperative efforts that may represent constraints and costs and benefit rivals relatively more. States often have mutual interests and can achieve more when working together. Still, it is always subordinated to the power analysis of states trying to secure survival in an anarchic world. Once international cooperative arrangements are established, realists remind us that there is no global government to ensure their enforcement and self-interested states tend to implement agreements only when they benefit from them. The role of global citizenship becomes limited, and states' self-interest and how states define cooperation as useful or not are more important. This implies that influencing the foreign policy of the country where global citizens live is more important than global advocacy directed towards international public opinion, which is very abstract.

However, the conditions for international cooperation also reside in the issues' characteristics. Like in national politics, governmental solutions are needed to provide public goods. Many gains from international cooperation are global public goods such as financial stability, economic growth, and avoiding natural disasters and pollution.

Providing such goods offers benefits that are both non-excludable and non-rival. Once provided, no country can be prevented from enjoying a global public good, nor can any country's enjoyment of the good impinge on the consumption opportunities of other countries. When provision succeeds, global public goods make people everywhere better off. (Barrett 2007, p. 1)

Global public goods are especially relevant to global citizenship because global public goods are often focused on topics similar to global citizenship, such as environmentalism, climate change, and promoting peace.

Scott Barrett further distinguishes between different types of problems and issues according to what kind of cooperation they require for providing global public goods: 1) Single Best Efforts, 2) Weakest Links and 3) Aggregate Efforts. 1) Single Best Efforts are situations where the efforts of a single country are sufficient to avoid a disaster or provide a global public good. This can, for example, be a situation where one country can produce enough vaccines to supply the rest of the world in case of a pandemic. In such a scenario, if a single country can disable the threat, a global public good is provided by a single actor. 2) Weakest Links cases are when providing a global public good depends on the joint effort from all states. An example is the eradication of smallpox, according to Barrett. Because smallpox was eradicated in 1979, millions of lives were subsequently saved and ensured that those born later did not have to be vaccinated against smallpox. Without the efforts of all states, such a global public good would not be possible. 3) Aggregate efforts are cases when a global public good requires cumulative efforts from everyone or many states to provide the global public good. An example here is climate change. Despite the failure to reduce climate gas emissions, an example of how aggregate efforts successfully provided a global public good is the protection of the ozone layer. Aggregate efforts are not intractable, but the combination of many factors makes climate change so hard to resolve. Protecting the ozone layer required a joint effort from virtually every state to succeed. It succeeded because the problem was isolated and not linked to other problems. Because of this, costs were limited, and relatively simple technical modifications were required to be successful.

Common for all three approaches to providing global public goods is that the public good is provided regardless of global citizenship. States' self-interest and temptation to freeride may undermine necessary efforts, and global citizenship is unlikely to alter the calculations done by states unless, of course, the engaged citizens are voters in the country in question. International cooperation is possible without global citizenship and can resolve important and pressing issues when the issues are not too complex. That is not to say that climate change is too difficult to solve, only that it is one of the most complex issues to resolve.

Some issues in international politics require the coordination of measures and regulations that the states are undertaking. These are less wicked cases of cooperation than creating global public goods. A classic example of coordination is whether to drive on the left or right side of the road. It doesn't matter whether one drives on the left or the right if everyone drives on the same side. Issues requiring coordination in international politics are more complex than deciding which side of the road to drive. Nonetheless, everyone benefits from adhering to the same standards on many issues. Standards must be supported by a critical number of states to be established. Once established, they can often be self-enforced because we have almost no choice but to follow the standards.

Adhering to the same standards makes, for example, trade, travelling and communication smoother and easier for everyone involved. Some issues may seem trivial, such as agreeing on standards for the Internet or other types of communication. Nevertheless,

globalisation would be much more restricted without standards on the size of shipping containers to the size of ships, making it possible to cross the Panama Canal or the Suez Canal and the metric system.

Coordination can play a role in reducing emissions and pollution by providing technical standards that are meant to facilitate and support the environment simultaneously (Barrett 2007, p. 161-162). Coordination on technical standards provides several advantages, such as cost reductions and local benefits of adopting new technology, such as reduced pollution in cities contributing to adopting technical standards (Barrett 2007, p. 163). Currently, no new technology exists that dramatically reduces climate gas emissions. However, standards on more efficient diesel and gasoline engines or electric cars can contribute to gradual reductions as these standards are adopted in more countries. Thus, coordination can make a difference and is cost-efficient when more ambitious and complex efforts fail.

International cooperation thus depends on the interest of the involved states and the characteristics of the issues. Even though cooperation is demanding, it is important to note how much international cooperation has achieved. One example of successful international cooperation is how the EU created a basis for German-Franco cooperation and integration after WW2. Subsequently, more and more European states joined the EU after the six founding states established the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951. Here, the role of the institutional framework of the EU has been crucial. The deepening of EU cooperation has moved forward thanks to institutions rather than single politicians or the efforts of single countries. Another example of successful cooperation between small and big states is the joint management of the fishing quotas in the Arctic between Norway and Russia. Despite the asymmetry between Norway and Russia, a successful set of agreements on allocating fishing quotas of the joint fishing grounds in the Arctic has worked reasonably well. The EU and the cooperation between Norway and Russia show that international cooperation is possible and can work.

## **5. CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION**

Global citizenship education encourages students to engage with global problems, particularly climate change, the environment, poverty, democracy, and human rights. However, as argued, the agenda needs to be expanded to include matters of military and economic security. Furthermore, it is unclear in what arenas, such as global citizen engagement, make sense. International advocacy, NGOs, humanitarian aid, and civil society engagement seem part of this. Still, there is a need to expand on how young people may engage in international issues, and an obvious part of this expansion is to engage in the foreign policy of the country where the young citizen lives and has political rights.

Many generations of citizens have been mobilised politically mainly by foreign policy issues, such as in the Middle East conflicts, the Vietnam and Algerian wars, and how to relate to the European Union. Even if there is more secrecy in this policy field than in others, foreign policy derives its legitimacy from democracy.

Foreign policy concerns four main types of state objectives (Ferman 2001). The first is security, meaning control over the territory, political independence, and self-determination. States need to make sure others do not try to take control over them. For instance, they may join alliances. Second, foreign policy is important for states' economic development and welfare. For this reason, they try to make sure they can export their products, import what they lack, and have access to various natural resources and technology. Third, states may pursue their status and prestige. That is why most countries spend a lot of resources on international sports events, such as the Olympics. Finally, countries may be concerned with promoting values and ideologies, such as human rights, Islam, capitalism, or socialism.

States will engage in global problems of poverty and climate change as long as they align with some of these objectives. There are limits to what each state can do independently to reach these objectives, particularly small states. That is why small states are interested in organising international cooperation.

The tools at states' disposal when pursuing foreign policy objectives can be categorised into four main types. First, states negotiate, trying to solve conflict or agree on cooperation. The results of such negotiations can be an agreement that they trust each other to respect. In some cases, they can agree on procedures to control each other. Sometimes, agreements also include common rules or standards to which the states will adhere. Increasingly, negotiations result in setting up international organisations that administer cooperative activities, ensuring all parties respect the rules and further developing the cooperation.

Secondly, states pursue foreign policy objectives through information or propaganda, i.e., biased information trying to convince the audience at home to support the foreign policy, or it can be aimed at audiences abroad. States that are at war will try to undermine the support the opponent has at home. They will try to win the support of other countries for their position, as the Ukrainian government has done so effectively in the first two years of the war with Russia. In contrast, Russia has been less successful at this level in Europe but has had more success in the global south.

Thirdly, states use economic measures. They may try to disturb and undermine the economy of their opponents by blocking imports and exports to them, by refusing access to key natural resources and in some cases, by blockading any trade with the opponent country, as Britain maintained a naval blockade of Germany during both world wars. To support their economy, states make agreements securing access to natural resources, manpower, capital, and markets. Of particular importance is trade. Tariffs and import regulations can stop imports and exports, whereas agreements easing regulations and reducing or abandoning tariffs will greatly improve trade. The European Union is a large-scale cooperation to promote free trade among member states, i.e., there are few regulations on imports and exports between member states. Some countries may think they will benefit from free trade, while others may think they need to protect their producers against foreign competition. Economic measures also include supporting other countries' economic development through development assistance in the form of expertise, money, investments, and technology.

Finally, states use military means. They develop the military capacity to prevent others from forcing them by military action. Almost all countries do so because they want to preserve their independence. Small states will often do so in alliance with others. On the other hand, states also develop military capacity to influence others. Such influence can be based on threats or actual deployment and use of military units. Great powers have military resources that other countries cannot meet alone, and they use their military capacity regularly. The US, Russia, China, France, Britain, and India have all used military capacities in recent decades. Sometimes, military action is open and known; other times, it is secret and covert. For instance, the Russian destabilisation of eastern Ukraine before the outbreak of the war in 2022 was kept hidden and never admitted by Russia.

What intentionally brings about change in international problems is states trying to solve problems that are in their interest to solve, using these means. There are hardly any altruistic states or other actors of great strength who just want to help and save the world. Problems are solved because states, sometimes aided by international expert networks, enterprises or organisations, find a way of doing it. This is why states' foreign policy is key to dealing with international problems. Thus, engaging in the foreign policy of the country of citizenship is also an important part of global citizenship education.

## **6. CLOSING REMARKS - IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING**

We have argued that to understand ongoing developments internationally, global citizenship education does not offer much in terms of perspectives and concepts about international conflicts. It cannot explain why conflicts such as the Ukrainian war could happen the way they did. Nor any other conflict of this kind, for that matter. Nor can it say much about achieving its prime objective, peaceful cooperation, in a situation of nation-state rivalry. Other perspectives offer valuable supplementary insights here. Global citizenship activism tends to be rather vague about where to direct such efforts, and it is biased and partial about what young people can do to ignore the role of the foreign policy of the country in young people's lives.

We have argued that global citizenship education would benefit from the insights of international politics theory about why conflicts occur, the conditions for peaceful cooperation and more realistic avenues for political engagement with a global scope. Our arguments concern overarching concepts and understandings and developing teaching implications of this in terms of learning objectives, skills, and teaching methods is a different matter. But we would like to make some concluding remarks.

As far as education should encourage young people to engage at the transnational level, we have argued that the institutional arenas where such engagement may make a difference have to be a part of the teaching. This involves NGOs and online platforms. However, foreign policy is an important means of making a difference internationally; the engagement students may develop for international issues could also be directed to how their country acts on international issues. International engagement using transnational NGOs or through foreign policy activism may protest against war or work for peaceful



cooperation. Analyses of the conditions for cooperation are also important. Why and when do states cooperate? Theories of international politics offer important insights that need development to be something students can grasp. It is important in this regard to point out major progress that has been achieved in many areas, cooperation established and peacefully resolved conflicts. History can also be important in this regard.

The present analysis has a European perspective, but it would make sense to broaden the perspective of global citizenship education from a non-European perspective. Global citizenship education in other parts of the world will look different (Akkari & Maleq 2020), and the role of Western hegemony is a pertinent challenge in both economic, cultural and scientific ways. National security is also important, but different countries face different challenges. The ability to influence international civil society and advocacy will also here be limited. Global engagement in the country's foreign policy is also important but problematic in non-democratic regimes.

Global citizenship education emphasises international conflict and how rival nation-states cooperate and may benefit from cross-disciplinary teaching involving history. Many of the mechanisms of war and how nation-states stabilise relations by different measures can be better understood this way. Still, this kind of conflict mustn't be reduced to something old-fashioned that we have evolved beyond.

In any social science didactics, the problems of media manipulation, false information, polarization and propaganda are pressing. These issues are, of course, very important in the study of international politics, where the role of propaganda is well acknowledged. The didactical resources from this area are also clearly relevant when teaching international relations.

It is important to note that international conflicts, are frightening. Acknowledging this and not raising these issues too soon is important. On the other hand, the school must speak truthfully about these problems. In this vein, it is important to emphasise that states also solve problems, as argued above. History is important in this respect, as history is not only about how current problems have evolved but also about how problems have been solved, security has been obtained, and international economic cooperation has been established.

We share fully the values and ambitions of global citizenship education, i.e., peaceful cooperation and problem-solving. The points made in global citizenship education about engaging with global environmental, social justice and development issues by acting responsibly as individuals and by civil society and digital means are still relevant. However, the global issues agenda should be broadened and include questions about how states may position themselves in a conflictual world. Conflict and cooperation should be analysed from a current and historical perspective, emphasising the role of power and dependencies among states. Young people should be encouraged to engage themselves, and the role of nation-state policies and how such policies can be influenced need more attention.

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