

# The global citizen as an agent of change: Ideals of the global citizen in the narratives of Polish NGO employees

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## **Abstract**

*One of the main goals of global education is to develop students as global citizens working for social change, equality and justice. However, the notion of the global citizen remains a subject of debate because of its various theoretical and ideological underpinnings, as well as diverse meanings associated with it. Non-critical ways of understanding of the concept of the global citizen may result in global education perpetuating the status quo and reproducing inequalities. This paper investigates how employees of Polish non-governmental organisations' conceptualise the notions of the global citizen and global citizenship. Qualitative analysis of 12 in-depth interviews is carried out from the perspective of critical postcolonial global education (Andreotti) and includes the typology of global citizenship proposed by Oxley and Morris. This enables me to gain insight into the interviewees' ideals of the global citizen, to identify critical and non-critical patterns of conceptualisation of the global citizen and to examine the value of global citizenship typology in the study of empirically grounded conceptions of global citizenship.*

**Keywords:** *global citizen, critical postcolonial global education, non-governmental organisations, qualitative research*

## **Introduction**

The formation of a global citizen who will work for social change, equality and social justice is one of the main goals of global education (Pike, 2008; Andreotti, 2011a; Marshall, 2011; Pashby, 2011; Jasikowska, 2015). However, understanding of two crucial categories – global citizen and global citizenship – remains a subject of debate (Dower, 2002; Schattle, 2008; Bourn, 2010). That debate is due to their various theoretical and ideological underpinnings, as well as diverse meanings associated with them: from Kantian cosmopolitanism, through the neoliberal ideal of “the citizen of the world,” to the notion of the critical, engaged global citizen (Dower, 2002; Nussbaum, 2002; Schattle, 2008; Andreotti, 2011b).

With that in mind, one may suppose that global education can, in fact, reproduce inequality and perpetuate the status quo against its own declared goal of achieving change (Andreotti, 2006; Pashby, 2011). For example, the global education discourse

of charity and of the global citizen framed as a benevolent donor giving money, time or resources overlooks the complex roots of inequalities and may result in hegemonic, paternalistic or ethnocentric educational practices. It is therefore important to recognise hidden assumptions and concepts behind the categories of global citizen and global citizenship.

Pike (2001, p. 11, cited in Schweisfurth 2006, p. 42) states: “global education itself is infused with distinctive national characteristics.” At the same time, the field of global and global citizenship education is dominated by the research conducted in countries belonging to the so-called global North (i.e. the United Kingdom, the United States, or Canada). It is understandable, given the colonial past, long traditions, and broad array of formal and non-formal global education activities at different levels, but it has its shortcomings, too. It creates a distorted, West-centric picture of global education and raises the issue of global education as a neocolonial project imposing its own agenda on other countries. Poland does not fit well into the divisions of global North/South, West/East and developed/developing countries (Starnawski, 2015). As a semi-peripheral, East Central European country<sup>1</sup>, a member of the OECD, a former aid recipient and, now, a recent donor, Poland may constitute an interesting case to explore the meanings and interpretations of global citizenship.

In some countries, global education is a domain of the formal education system; in others it is dominated either by academia or by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Hartmeyer, O’Loughlin and Wegimont, 2013). This is the case in Poland, where NGOs are the most active and engaged stakeholders in global education. They play a crucial role in implementing global education in Poland by publishing educational materials, as well as conducting teachers training and school activities (Jasikowska and Witkowski, 2012).

In this paper, I investigate how employees of Polish non-governmental organisations conceptualise the notions of the global citizen and global citizenship. I adopt a qualitative approach, since it is particularly useful in gaining a detailed understanding of a phenomenon from the point of view of the actor (Bryman, 1984, p. 77). As Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 3) put it: “[...] qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.” Since the focus of this study lies in exploration and understanding how interviewees conceptualise global citizenship, a qualitative approach seems to be an appropriate choice.

In my analyses of the in-depth interviews I conducted, I use a typology of global

citizenship proposed by Laura Oxley and Paul Morris (2013). To examine the critical<sup>2</sup> and non-critical ways of understanding the concept of the global citizen, I adopt a critical global education perspective (Andreotti, 2006).

This paper is organised in the following way: first, I introduce readers to the typology of global citizenship and then to the critical postcolonial global education. Next, I describe such methodological issues as methods of gathering and interpreting data, sample and the research process. Then I look at the interviewees' interpretations of the global citizen category and present them with illustrations from the data. In the next step, I employ Oxley and Morris's typology of global citizenship in the qualitative analysis of the data gathered and identify the models the interviewees promote, with a special focus on critical form of global citizenship. Finally, I explore in detail the critical and non-critical ways of understanding global citizen among the interviewees and examine the typology's potential for analysing the interviewees' perspectives.

## **Theoretical framework**

### Typology of global citizenship

The concept of the global citizen is increasingly gaining international prominence. Students around the world may “change the world by changing themselves,” “empower communities, see the world and experience the adventure of a lifetime” and “grow as role models for others” with the AIESEC Global Citizen volunteering abroad programme.<sup>3</sup> Fostering global citizenship is one of the three priorities of the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI), launched in 2012 to build a better future for all humankind.<sup>4</sup> The Procter & Gamble Climate Change Position Statement says: “As a global citizen, we are concerned about the negative consequences of climate change and believe prudent and cost-effective action by governments, industry and consumers to reduce emissions to the atmosphere are necessary.”<sup>5</sup>

Critics argue that it is difficult or even impossible to think of global citizens without any global government or world state, and that local, ethnic or national loyalties will always prevail over the factitious global citizenship (Wood, 2008).

Although criticised, the concept of the global citizen – along with the associated term “global citizenship” – is widely used in academic, non-governmental, political and educational discourse in many countries, including the UK, the USA, Canada and Japan (Fujikane, 2003; Schattle, 2008; Bourn, 2010; Shultz, Abdi and Richardson, 2011). It has also appeared in Poland (Wonicki, 2010; Hildebrandt-Wypych, 2012). As Douglas Bourn (2010, p. 19) stated several years ago, “‘being a global citizen’ has become part of the rhetoric of policy-makers, non-governmental organisations

(NGOs) and societal commentators in recent years.” But what does it mean to be a global citizen? How is this concept understood? Increasing academic literature on the global citizen and global citizenship provides a range of answers that differ in theoretical underpinnings, (un)conscious assumptions and (instrumental) agendas (Dower, 2002; Schattle, 2008; Andreotti, 2011b; Marshall, 2011).

Oxley and Morris (2013) identified eight prevailing conceptions of global citizenship and grouped them into two types: cosmopolitan and advocacy. According to them, cosmopolitan types dominate the literature on the subject and hence can be perceived as mainstream. In various forms, cosmopolitan global citizenship is linked to the ancient idea of cosmopolitanism and to the universalistic idea of global citizen as “a citizen of the world.” Cosmopolitan types include:

- Political global citizenship, which focuses on the relationship between the individual and the state.
- Moral global citizenship, rooted in Stoicism and in Kantian cosmopolitanism and focused on the ethical aspects of global community, on the idea of human rights and moral obligations.
- Economic global citizenship, which brings into focus “the interplay between power, forms of capital, labour, resources and the human condition” (Oxley and Morris, 2013, p. 6), often presented as international development.
- Cultural global citizenship, which promotes values of cultural awareness and highlights the role of cultural symbols uniting and dividing people.

Advocacy types of global citizenship are described by Oxley and Morris as embracing “more relativistic or holistic (anti-individualistic) ideologies” (Oxley and Morris, 2013, p. 11). Even their proponents define them in contrast to the cosmopolitan types of global citizenship. This category includes:

- Social global citizenship, which manifests itself mainly through civil society organisations working toward global community and focuses on interconnections and interdependencies;
- Critical global citizenship rooted in critical, post-colonial and post-development theories and promoting deconstruction and critique of social norms, institutions and structures reproducing inequalities and oppression. The proponents of this model advocate action to improve the lives of those who have been marginalised, to make us listen to them and to be responsible toward them – not for them (Andreotti, 2006).
- Environmental global citizenship, which focuses on environmental issues, both from ecocentric and, more often, anthropocentric positions with the main concept of sustainable development. It advocates changes in human actions in relation to the environment.

- Spiritual global citizenship, which “generally promotes a form of a holism and connections between faith (or emotion) and our relationship to the world” (Oxley and Morris, 2013, p. 15). It includes faith-based conceptions of global citizenship. The typology presented by Oxley and Morris can serve as a theoretical tool helpful in exploring and examining empirically grounded understandings of global citizenship and their implications. It allows for variations, more or less radical forms of a particular model of global citizenship. Various models can also overlap. It served me as a basis for constructing a set of theoretical codes I used to analyse empirical data.

#### Critical postcolonial global education perspective

Drawing on works of Spivak, Bhabha and Said, Vanessa Andreotti (2006; 2011b) develops an idea of critical postcolonial global education (or global citizenship education) that focuses on such notions as social justice, complicity in harm and ethical engagement with the Other. It aims at preparing learners to live in today’s globalizing and interdependent world, and to be able to shape the world and the future instead of merely adapting to them. Andreotti calls for education that helps students develop critical literacy. She defines it as an ability to recognise and critically examine unspoken assumptions and implications of different perspectives to open the possibility of alternative conceptualisations, meanings or systems of signification. Critical literacy expands our horizons of thinking and relating to the Other (Andreotti, 2014).

As the author argues, critical postcolonial global education is a transformative learning process that not only changes the learner but also leads to the transformation of society.

Education, therefore, is about the creation of a critical mass of people who could see and imagine beyond the limitations and oppression of the current system in order to bring a different reality into being. Engagement with difference involves listening to and empowering those who have been marginalised and insisting on the need for spaces of dissent where other alternatives can emerge. (Andreotti, 2014, p. 26)

According to Andreotti, critical postcolonial global education is an attempt to create an education that is not hegemonic, ethnocentric or paternalistic. An education founded on mutuality and reciprocity supports “unlearning one’s privilege” and “learning to learn from below” (Spivak, 2004, cited in Andreotti, 2011b, p. 48) to promote reflexivity, critical analyses of unequal power relations and politics of representation, as well as epistemological pluralism. I employed Andreotti’s perspective in the qualitative analysis of empirical data to identify critical and non-critical ways of understanding global citizenship. By the former I mean such

conceptualisations of global citizenship that take into account more complex analyses of global issues, that recognise “how we are implicated or complicit in the problems we are trying to address” (Andreotti, 2012, p. 2) and promote critical engagement with multiple perspectives, their underlying assumptions and potential implications (Andreotti, 2006).

### **Methodology**

This study uses qualitative analysis to gain insights into the understandings of the concept of the global citizen among the Polish NGO employees. It aims to explore their perspectives in depth, to identify critical and non-critical patterns of conceptualisation of the global citizen, and to examine the value of global citizenship typology in the study of empirically grounded conceptions of global citizenship.

The research questions are therefore as follows: How do the Polish NGO employees conceptualise the notion of the global citizen? What model of global citizen – in terms of Oxley and Morris’s typology – do they promote?

Numerous scholars have highlighted the importance of making explicit philosophical assumptions and beliefs that inform particular study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Bazeley, 2013). This research is generally framed within an interpretivist, social constructivist theoretical framework, with a social-justice orientation. In my understanding of global education, I draw on the work of critical and/or postcolonial scholars who point out the limitations of soft approaches to global education and global citizenship and promote the critical postcolonial ones (Andreotti, 2011b, 2014; Swanson and Pashby, 2016; Jefferess, 2008). In addition, I am also inspired by the tradition of Polish social pedagogy (*pedagogika społeczna*) and its long-standing focus on social justice, active engagement, empowerment and emancipation of individuals or groups in their local settings (Lepalczyk and Marynowicz-Hetka, 2003). I find it very up-to-date and convergent with recent debates on the development aid, its failures and side effects, or global education framed as a benevolent charity (Andreotti and Pashby, 2013; Jefferess, 2008).

I conducted twelve in-depth individual interviews with NGO employees from nine organisations. I chose NGOs as a subject of the study because of the important role they play in global education in Poland (Jasikowska and Witkowski, 2012). They implement educational projects for and with schools; they conduct numerous educational activities engaging pupils, teachers and students as well as teacher trainers; they publish educational materials and lesson scenarios. They also advocate for the inclusion of global education in Poland’s formal education system.

The interviewees were selected on the basis of their experience, personal and organisational, in global education. All had at least a few years of experience in global education; one had been in the field for 20 years. They represent both large and small organisations known as the most active and experienced in the NGO sector. All the organisations included in the study belong to Grupa Zagranica, a national platform of Polish civil society organisations engaged in development cooperation, global education and humanitarian aid.<sup>6</sup> They differ in their educational strategies, target groups and methods, as well as their ideological backgrounds.

All participants were fully informed about the nature and aims of the study in an email invitation to participate in an interview. At the beginning of each interview, I again explained the aims and scope of the research, asked the participants if they would mind audio recording and said they could ask questions or withdraw at any time. I ensured privacy through confidential and anonymous treatment of the data. I stored the data securely and protected the participants' identities in any written dissemination of my findings using code numbers assigned to identify the data. All information that might have disclosed any identity (like staff or organisations' names) was removed from the interview transcripts.

Most of the interviews were conducted face to face (in locations including Warsaw, Wrocław, Łódź, Kraków and Poznań, in 2013-2014); two were done via Skype (in 2013). All interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed. Before analysing the interview data, the transcripts were checked for potential mistakes. Then the data were coded with QDA Miner Lite (free qualitative data analysis software) in two ways: open coding using codes that emerged from the data to capture ideas and meanings from the perspective of the interviewees, and theoretical coding with codes developed from the analysis of the literature (Bazeley, 2013). Drawing on the typology proposed by Oxley and Morris, I constructed a preliminary set of theoretical codes organised in eight main categories mirroring different models of global citizenship (political, moral, economic, cultural, social, critical, environmental and spiritual). For example, the category "moral GC" contains such codes as "global ethics," "moral obligations," "human rights," "new cosmopolitans," "strong cosmopolitans," and "empathy"; the category "social GC" includes such codes as "building relations/links," "global community," "global civil society," "interdependence," "cooperation" and "advocacy for specific groups."

Furthermore, following the critical global education perspective, I used an educational tool called HEADS UP that facilitates discovering "seven problematic historical patterns of thinking and relationships" (Andreotti, 2012, p. 2), including hegemony, ethnocentrism, ahistoricism, depoliticisation, salvationism, uncomplicated solutions

and paternalism. Originally, it was a kind of checklist created to analyse campaigns, educational initiatives addressing social justice, and other local and global engagements in global issues. I adopted this tool as a basis for a set of theoretical codes, which included “hegemony,” “ethnocentrism,” “ahistoricism,” “depoliticisation,” “salvationism,” “uncomplicated solutions” and “paternalisation”.

Apart from the concept and theme codes, I also created also a single set of value codes indicating how strongly each concept was represented, as well as the speaker’s attitude toward it. These value codes were used to code relevant text together with concept or theme codes.

The process of qualitative analysis involved ordering and refining codes and the code structure, comparing relevant codes to identify their dimensional structure (i.e., “change,” “knowledge” or “links/connections”), relating them and building a final structure of meaning (Bazeley, 2013).

### **What does it mean to be a global citizen? Interviewees’ understandings**

In this section, I consider the meanings the interviewees ascribe to the term “global citizen.” I explore the skills, values and attitudes they see as necessary for young people to develop as global citizens. They defined “global citizen” in terms of learning outcomes and, although the concept is complex and highly contested, focused on similar themes like knowledge and global awareness, equality, diversity and justice, empathy, cooperation and responsible action.

All expressed views that are almost perfectly consistent with the UNESCO approach to global citizenship education (UNESCO, 2015). Both, the interviewees and UNESCO echoed Bloom’s (1956) well-known taxonomy of learning outcomes (and its numerous modifications), which divides learning outcomes into three groups: cognitive (knowledge-based), affective (emotive-based) and psychomotor (action-based). According to UNESCO (2015), learning outcomes in global citizenship education fall into three educational domains: cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural. Following this classification, when it started to emerge from the data, I achieved a multidimensional picture of the global citizen seen by the interviewees from the educational point of view.

#### Cognitive domain

Within the cognitive domain, central to their understanding of the global citizen was the idea of global awareness. As Schattle points out, “awareness serves as the crucial starting point for global citizenship” and “extends into responsibility and participation” (Schattle, n.d.). A global citizen understands global processes and



global connections, is aware of their complexity and realises the impact his or her decisions and actions may have on a whole planet and people living nearby as well as in distant areas:

Being aware of how our activities influence other people, how other people's actions influence us both locally and globally. (12)

I would like this person to be aware of the impact they have on their environment, not the immediate one but in general. Local and global. And that's I guess the most important thing, to be aware of that. (03)

Several interviewees elaborated:

A good global citizen understands global processes. He knows in what way he is implicated in them. On the one hand, he knows that there are things he can't change. But on the other, to the best of his ability, he actively participates in the shaping of these processes or does something to counteract those he considers wrong. He is involved in efforts toward positive changes, changes he personally believes are good, and not only locally but also globally. At the same time, such a global citizen acts locally as much as he can, he's building some relationships or helps to raise awareness in his local community. I think if we are aware of the fact that we are a part of something very large, but the only real changes we can make, the only things that can make a difference, are doing something locally, on the level of daily choices or on the level of daily declaration, that's already a significant involvement. (01)

According to a majority of interviewees, to develop this kind of global awareness, one needs adequate knowledge that makes it possible to gain understanding of globalised world, complex links and interconnectedness:

A person who certainly has knowledge, we have given her the knowledge about the contemporary world and the challenges we face and problems we deal with. Also possibilities and opportunities. A person who is able to develop this knowledge further, to find out information, learn more, analyse critically. To separate one's opinion from facts and in this way to arrive at one's opinion. (09)

One person described the global citizen from a personal perspective – as a parent educating a child. This interviewee also indicated the role of knowledge – in this case, knowledge that includes others' points of view and questions ethnocentrism:

Being here, I would like my child to be a citizen of the world and when she's going to think about what good for Europe did the geographical discoveries bring? Well, economic development, right? And what bad things? Not only economic crises but also physical extermination of a large part of humanity, yes? We know about extermination, yes? Well, the Native Americans. So I want her conscience to tell her: all right, for my part of the

world, for Europe, it did bring good things. But the price other people paid for it was too high. And that knowing who Columbus was, whom I mean to, well, I have no idea how because there are not sources, no children's books in Poland about what consequences it had for the native peoples... Well, I would like my daughter to know how it really was, not just from this Eurocentric perspective. And I want her to be able to draw her own conclusions, for her to learn from history. That since things like this happened, since for economic reasons slavery was introduced, so... exploitation of other people can happen again and maybe is happening right now. I want her to be able to think about it, to evaluate, to draw practical conclusions, right? (07)

However – as the comment above illustrates – knowledge alone is not sufficient. In participants' opinion, focusing on mere knowledge will not help in cultivating a global citizen, who should not be a disengaged, passive and self-oriented person. One interviewee, talking about insufficiency of knowledge, compared global citizenship education to religious education:

I don't know if it's the spirit or the flesh or something like this... Something soft and, I don't know, the flesh of the fruit? Something is just missing. And without this it's just manufacturing people who will know that somewhere bad things are happening and maybe, with some luck, if they should have enough time, maybe they will know that that's because of, say, the lack of quality education. Or the country's being in debt. But this will not be connected to it in any way... There will be nothing to do about it. Just that there is a status quo and well, that's what it is and I don't consider that I might do something about it. All I know is that I need to find a spot for myself in this world, in this system, as it is. And there is nothing I need to do about it apart, perhaps, from remembering about it for an exam. Like a religious education test, right? Will I be graded for lip service or for faith? I learned the prayers by heart; does it mean that I believe in God? And should this be measured and graded? I think it's similar in this case. (02)

Knowledge should become personally relevant, leading to the sense of belonging to the world and responsible attitudes and actions:

From this knowledge and from developing this worldview, broadening horizons, all this is to bring specific attitudes, to result in a sensitivity to other human being, to his problems. A thought how to help this person, and also that we depend on other people and that they depend on us. And some tangible engagement in such a help. (08)

There is therefore a need to develop some cognitive, socioemotional and behavioural skills. Among the first, critical thinking appears as the most important. The interviewees perceived critical thinking as an ability to consider rationally, clearly and independently what to do, in what to believe, what the alternatives are and how valuable they are.

[As a global citizen] I know that the world is complex, that no truth should be taken for granted, and that we shouldn't see the world in black and white. I would consider any idea or belief, where it comes from, whether it is OK for me or not. (11)

The most important are attitudes, critical thinking and curiosity. To be up to date with what is going on and to try to understand it and to live consciously... And, I think, knowledge is less important, because it is still changing. (03)

Apart from critical thinking, the interviewees highlighted also the importance of an "ability to ponder, to analyse" (01), "having my own opinion" (03), "reasoning and drawing conclusions" (07).

In their opinion, global citizen should also be open-minded, unprejudiced, and willing to consider new ideas and perspectives on a given subject. One person elaborated:

Coming from this part of the world I'm open to other points of view, to... discovering that for entirely different historical and cultural reasons people think differently about the same thing and about what we have in common, that it's a whole different perspective. And that you will never have all world perspectives, because it's physically impossible. But, yeah, I'm talking more about an attitude, about openness to this. [...] And as a Pole how do I react to the information that there was the Maritime and Colonial League, or something like that, that wanted Poland to have colonies in Africa, in the interwar period? How do I react? If I am a person open to views of other cultures and societies, then I take it as a fact which I interpret now knowing where did it come from in Polish culture. For example, to get rid of the Jews. One of the reasons, not the only one, right? Or also to have a powerful country. On the other hand, though, how can it be interpreted from the angle of the countries, peoples of the global South? For myself, this conclusion I say, we are not morally better than Western Europe. We were just too weak and not resourceful enough to get this colony, right? So our sins are not like the French because we didn't do it but there was the intent, right? So now, OK, what do the people from various African countries think about that, what do they think about colonialism? Then I'm allowing for people to think about Poles like they do about people who did manage to have colonies. That's how I take it. And if this openness is missing, then the basic reaction is denial, for example: 'Yeah, so what that there were writings, journals, Poland never had a colony and so we are not colonialists, thank you very much.' (07)

While many interviewees tended to equate global awareness with profound understanding of global issues and connections, one thought of it more in terms of something less than knowledge and more akin to a generalized sensitivity that would be easy to achieve in the educational process:

Moving from awareness and from information about what's going on around us, in

various regions of the world, to creating global citizenship. Those three things I mentioned earlier. The sense that I am a part of this and that I also am responsible for what's happening. That I can change it a little bit, that I can influence the situation. (10)

Global awareness or global outlook, when “one starts to think about this world in much broader terms” (01) and looks beyond one's own environment, together with adequate knowledge constitute the basis for developing global citizenship. However, as Bourn (2015, pp. 104, 106) reminds us, “a global outlook could be neo-colonialist, even imperialist in outlook” and “may well reinforce existing notions.” It should be therefore accompanied by values and attitudes promoting critical engagement and recognition of power and inequalities in the world.

### Socio-emotional domain

Turning now to the socio-emotional dimension of the global citizen, it should be noted that for the interviewees the cognitive domain appears to be less important than the socio-emotional one. They emphasised that neither knowledge nor even cognitive skills are sufficient to be a good global citizen. They are necessary first steps towards it, but later other attributes play the main role. The interviewees highlighted the significance of specific values, attitudes and dispositions, among them equality, diversity and justice. Very few participants mentioned social justice.<sup>7</sup>

Equality is understood as the idea that “all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights”<sup>8</sup> regardless of race, religion, skin colour, gender or sexual orientation.

Sometimes the interviewees directly referred to the Declaration of Human Rights. Equality often appears in close relationship with diversity like in the idea “different but equal” mentioned a few times by a number of interviewees:

It sure is equality and diversity, like this, together, so that it's different but equal. (01)

All of us have the same rights and in this respect we are equal. Sure, different, but even just in the light of the rights of human being and also those following generations, the same right to self-determination and to development. (09)

The interviewees spoke of diversity as a natural and desirable characteristic of the world. Global citizens should value and respect diversity, appreciate its role in enriching and enhancing our lives:

Respect for diversity, being able to appreciate this diversity as wealth and not as a problem, and I mean all kinds of diversity. (11)

We are different and that's how things are, and that's good. But different doesn't mean worse. So what I'm kind of thinking is that there are other people around me, simply

different, and I also see a lot of common things, right? Things that bring us together and not divide us. More in this direction. That's what I think. (05)

Showing, for instance, the beauty of diversity. (06)

When asked what justice meant for them, the interviewees encountered significant difficulties. Some of them admitted that it is easier to indicate what justice is not:

I'm not going to try to formulate a definition of justice. That... it's not the same thing for everyone, nor to everyone according to their needs, nor to everyone according to their merits. Well, no. That's hard. (10)

I have no idea how to define justice. (09)

Yeah, I'm very vague about justice, but I wouldn't try to define it, I wouldn't. (07)

Other values that interviewees associated with the idea of the global citizen included dignity and solidarity. They did not elaborate but rather just mentioned them among others.

Apart from values that global citizens should internalise, the interviewees pointed out several attitudes and dispositions that make up the picture of global citizen: responsibility, empathy and capacity for cooperation.

Responsible global citizens try not to hurt anyone purposely (neither people nor the environment), consider close and distant consequences of their actions and choices, and are aware of their responsibility rooted in the sense of belonging to the global community:

I'm looking at the things I do, and I try to make sure that my actions don't cause any harm to people and environment. (11)

To be responsible for what you do. To think about possible consequences and about more consensual ways of solving issues [...]. (02)

The feeling that I am a part of this and that I am in some way responsible for what's going on there. And that I can change it a little or influence the situation. (10)

Empathy and sensitivity to others are important features of the global citizen. In the interviewees' opinion, they may help people make knowledge about global links personally relevant and to feel a part of global community. According to Elaine Hatfield, Richard L. Rapson and Le L. Yen-Chi (2009, p. 19), "true empathy requires

three distinct skills: the ability to share the other person's feelings, the cognitive ability to intuit what another person is feeling, and a 'socially beneficial' intention to respond compassionately to that person's distress." When talking about empathy and sensitivity to others, the interviewees focused less on the emotional or cognitive components and more on their behavioural consequences. They indicated that both empathy and responsibility should lead to engagement and action, or – more precisely – to the willingness and motivation for action. Some interviewees put it explicitly:

I would like to raise my children so that they become, like we talked earlier, open – I don't know, sensitive. So that they can feel other people's emotions, can empathise, can give up something for someone, can react if they disagree with something. Can react, know how to react. (02)

In the interviewees' opinion, global citizens should also be able to cooperate with others, not only on a global level, but also in their immediate surroundings. Cooperation and capacity for it are perceived as both a goal of the educational process in global education and a method to practice it. A majority of interviewees limited themselves to mentioning the value of cooperation and cooperational skills, but one elaborated more on that topic:

In global education, especially on the practical level, we pay attention to things, to values, really, like cooperation, peace education.... we do not teach that all that matters is competition but that cooperation. And here we show a certain value and we come up with some sort of a fun game about cooperation, well, in this direction. This cooperation to me always value. Cooperation as a method and a goal and a value. (12)

### Behavioural domain

In the behavioural sphere, engagement and action were central to the interviewees' understandings of the global citizen. All of them pointed out that global citizens should actively practice their global citizenship to make the world a better and more just place. This engagement and action, they said, may take various forms on different levels: from the responsible choices we make in everyday life, through organisation of a campaign against sweatshops or excessive emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, to voluntary work in global South. The interviewees gave numerous examples of "being an agent of change":

Ability to influence the shape of the community. And that starts from our own backyard, right? From whether I will put a bench for everyone to sit there, to whether or not I will speak up about a treaty against selling small arms or about in what conditions the clothes are manufactured. (10)

Helping, say, an elderly lady to carry her groceries, but that they be able if need be to,

say, donate money in some situation or to some other form of supporting, dunno, with their own actions of some sort, things that are taking place. (03)

[...] that the administrative staff would print documents on both sides or that it became impossible to xerox things with wide margins, right? (06)

That I don't have to drive everywhere; maybe I can bike or use public transport. Maybe it's not all that difficult; maybe it's paying attention, say, to my grocery shopping makes sense too. Maybe, really, my garment choices, I don't know, can translate somehow. Or I can ask a person from whom I'm buying something if she knows where is this stuff from, even at this level to try to react in some way. Contrary to how it seems, by such everyday choices, everyday activities, we can do quite a lot. (01)

As the comments above illustrate, the interviewees focused on a local level as a primary area of practicing global citizenship. There were some vague suggestions about engagement on a global level, but a recurrent theme in the interviews was “think globally, act locally.” A majority of the interviewees made explicit connections between everyday life, individual choices or actions on a local level and their global consequences. They spoke of them in terms of “having the impact,” “making real changes” and “being a conscious global citizen.” Taking action locally is perceived as one of the most readily available ways of achieving desirable change in an unjust world:

[The global citizen] acts locally as much as he can; he's building some relationships or helps to raise awareness in his local community. I think if we are aware of the fact that we are a part of something very large, but the only real changes we can make, the only things that can make a difference is doing something locally, on the level of daily choices or on the level of daily declaration, that's already a significant involvement. For example, for me a choice like this: I don't buy bananas from this or that company, but I buy apples, say, directly from a farmer near Grojec<sup>9</sup>; this is a choice that... the making of which makes a person a conscious global citizen for me. (01)

Buying chocolate that's as if a direct struggle for the rights of the person who collects those cocoa seeds. (05)

For example, in the NGO we work from the assumption, in our values it is written, that we don't take planes, we don't fly. Privately, if someone wants to, that's his business, but we don't fly to any conferences somewhere because the carbon dioxide emissions from planes are so large that it doesn't make sense to fly anywhere, it's better to take a train. (03)

Another interviewee echoed this view and elaborated on global interdependencies and interconnectedness:

That it will become obvious for them that, say, giving up driving and using public transport is not only a step toward improving the air quality in our town, but that it's also a step toward limiting the consequences of global warming. And this in turn contributes to improving life conditions in the countries, peoples from the global South. It is this incredible network of interdependencies, very often overlooked. They are so distant that it is necessary to show all these intermediary stages to make people realise that using public transport can influence a life of a farmer in Ecuador. That's fairly abstract, I realise. (04)

While talking about dealing with sceptics and opponents of global education, this person again referred to everyday actions:

For example, I go to stores and ask everyone about eggs with the number 0 [organic eggs - MKH]. For me that is something that makes sense. And I explain to people what this number 0 is. And for the first time, it turns out that the woman at the store had no idea what I am talking about. That's this method of little steps, I think. (04)

Audrey Bryan and Meliosa Bracken (2011, p. 193) argue that such awareness of interconnectedness and links between individuals' choices and their global consequences is "central to more critical approaches to development education," but deeper analysis using HEADS UP tool provides us with a more complex picture. I will elaborate on that in later sections of the article.

Prioritising engagement and the behavioural component of being a global citizen is a common feature of the interviewees' understandings of the global citizen. They share the opinion that he or she should not only be aware of global interdependencies, have the global outlook, feel responsible and internalise such values as equality, diversity and justice, but should also act responsibly and try to make this world a better place to live for all human beings.

Even an interviewee overtly sceptical about an activist focus in global education admitted that this behavioural component is important. This reluctance stemmed from two sources: first, the belief that, however important, informed and responsible actions should not be imposed on students but rather result from their autonomous decisions; and second, the feeling that some NGOs' approaches to global education are more similar to campaigning or raising awareness than to learning/education itself.

We do not assume activism to be a large part, although doing something is very important for us and it is somehow fundamental to what we do, but this education is not necessarily oriented for activism, and we understand that whether a pupil will get involved in something, that's his or her independent decision. We are trying to create a space for involvement, to suggest options, but we don't require this action because we think it's not



our role and that it is a decision to be made by each of the participants, if he wants to do something or not. A little... in some organisations I do see this activist streak, but that's not for me. (10)

Interestingly, another interviewee, working in the NGO perceived as one of the most focused on activism and advocacy, expressed a similar opinion:

I think that unfortunately, most of us are implicated in various global processes without knowing, and global education is to show those relations, to make us aware of them, and – let's hope – as a result there will be some reaction, some action coming from this awareness. Of course the activity can vary. It can also be like, I don't care why we are destroying natural resources in Africa; I couldn't care less. That's also some sort of a reaction for me. Or it can be signing a petition. Or an attempt at using the resources in a more conscious way. Reactions can be various... [...] I would accept this sort of reaction. As long as it results from an informed, conscious choice and not, like, "I don't care about it, I don't know anything and I don't care." Instead: "I know, I have thought it through and I've made up my mind: I don't care." I really don't want global education to be like preaching. (01)

Another interviewee, on the contrary, admitted that "global education as it is implemented by xxx [the NGO – MKH] always includes educational and campaign components in order to provide participants with the belief that they can implement this knowledge into practice and they can take action" (06).

Most of the interviewees located themselves somewhere in between these two dichotomous ends. As Bourn (2015, p. 31) states in relation to development education, "[a] recurring theme within the debates on development education practice across Europe has been the relationship between learning for its own sake and as a means towards preferred goals and objectives." Apparently this is the case in Poland as well. One interviewee elaborated on the internal debate within Grupa Zagranica on this relationship and a personal dilemma:

It should be a person who has knowledge [...] about the contemporary world and the challenges we face and problems we encounter. Also possibilities and opportunities. A person who can independently deepen this knowledge, find out more, critically analyse the information. To separate what some people think from facts and base one's opinion on that. That's already a lot to expect and there is more. Because next this person... And further the opinions are divided. Are we expecting that he will make the decisions we teach him he should? Is it enough to make him aware? We can't expect to change somebody's behaviour, but only that we change consciousness and we give an option of a conscious choice if he wants to do something, if he wants to influence the issues we talk about.... I mean, I think that to expect that we will influence the learner in such a way that he will make correct choices in the future is too much. But on the other hand, you

could say that being aware of the consequences of our choices and not doing anything to improve the condition of, say, the planet and people, you can say that's not sufficient. That it leads nowhere. I won't give an answer personally. No, when the issue emerges, I will say that I can't decide here, that I have this dilemma. (09)

Unsurprisingly, since the ideal of the global citizen was (re)constructed in the context of global education and its goals, it is a highly normative vision. It falls under the category "global citizen attributes approach," as defined by Oxley and Morris (2013). The interviewees define global citizen in terms of learning outcomes and desirable characteristics acquired by a learner finishing a global education course or project. These outcomes and characteristics are, in addition, consistent with UNESCO Global Citizenship Education model (UNESCO, 2015).

Biesta and Lawy (2006, p. 72) criticize such an approach for being individualistic, treated as "a status, something that someone can 'have' ," and for placing "young people in the problematic position of not-yet-being-a-citizen". They argue that citizenship is not an identity nor a competence, but rather a "practice of identification," something that people do (Biesta and Lawy, 2006, p. 72). The "citizenship as practice" model is not present in the interviews.

### **Typology of global citizenship applied**

This section sets out to explore what form of global citizenship the interviewees promote and to analyse them from the perspective of critical postcolonial global education, informed by Andreotti (2006; 2011b).

In terms of Oxley and Morris's typology, a majority of participants expressed mixed forms of global citizenship, with a combination of critical and social forms predominant.

Only few interviewees articulated "pure" or almost "pure" forms such as environmental (case 3) or critical global citizenship (cases 1, 6, 7). These are people with the longest experience in global (case 7) or ecological education and education for sustainable development (case 3), dating back even to the 1990s. They probably have had many opportunities to consider, analyse and clarify their approach.

It is interesting to note that all interviewees omitted spiritual, economic and political understandings of global citizenship. In relation to the last, several participants explicitly criticised it for being too limited and passive:

There is no close connection to the definition of citizenship as a relation between a state and a citizen. But it seems to me that such a definition is exclusively legal and very

limiting. It does not match even what is discussed in citizenship education in schools regarding citizens' rights and obligations. It's more than that. (10)

Global citizenship... it's sort of hollow for me to use this word, it does not include the change of consciousness.... behaviours that are expected from me and respecting certain social norms but in the global context, being a good citizen, yes? That's what comes to my mind, yes? ... respecting norms and within some action framework, respecting the status quo. (02)

In the data, there was also hardly any evidence of the cultural understanding of "global citizen." Interestingly, even a person from the NGO whose approach to global education is more akin to multicultural education did not define "global citizen" with focus on cultural issues. There is therefore a noticeable inconsistency between the expressed ideal of the global citizen and topics, content and methods of global education as implemented by this NGO.

A majority of the interviewees focused on critical global citizenship, criticising the mainstream popular discourse and discursive practices about the global South for painting a black picture of the situation there, emphasising problems and fostering inequalities. Some interviewees expressed very high awareness of these issues, identifying "aid/development pornography" in some media messages or paternalistic and hegemonic practices as indicators of "low-quality" global education. Moreover, these respondents did not use phrases like "problems of the global South." Instead, they spoke of "global issues," "global challenges" or "experiences of the global South."

However, only a few interviewees pointed out the problematic status of the global North/South division. Most did not challenge the issue and uncritically accepted Poland as a country belonging to the global North. Almost all used this division as widely understood and convenient. This is in line with Jasikowska and Witkowski's analysis of multi-stakeholders process and consensus on global education in Poland. They write: "The divisions between the so-called Global North and Global South remain striking in the Report. All non-Europeans are put together under one label, 'the Global South,' where it is assumed that the conditions of life need to be improved" (Jasikowska and Witkowski, 2012, p. 18). Such an approach also neglects socio-economic inequalities in the global North. These findings may support Starnawski's concern (2015, p. 51) that this division might be, in the Polish context, just an uncritically imported epistemological-ethical tool whose meaning is unintelligible.

The participants also highlighted the need to challenge the stereotypes about the global South and to promote non-hierarchical approaches to people from distant

regions. Some argued that it is crucial to include the voices of marginalised individuals and communities in global education “to give them a chance to tell their own story” (5) and to engage them as experts and consultants in all activities concerning the global South.

We always try, even in educational projects, to include partners from the global South as experts or text authors or participants in larger events. So as to avoid mediating this voice from the South, to let them speak. And we try as much as possible to consult our projects, our proposals or various materials or data about them that we present. So that what we say was as close as possible to their reality. (01)

In global education, if there are any source materials, at least half of them should be from the authors who live in the global South. At least a half if not more. (07)

In practice, it takes the form of publishing materials written by activists and NGO employees from Uganda, Mexico or Laos, implementing cooperative projects and engaging individuals from the South in conducting workshops in schools or kindergartens.

Taking into account perspective(s) of the global South has not been recognised as problematic. The interviewees did not consider whose these perspectives and voices are, on whose behalf and for whose benefit these stories are being told.

Participants expressing the critical global citizenship also focused on critiquing unjust global processes, structures and institutions like neoliberal economy, international relations founded on the neoliberal system, production chains that exploit the global South, land-grabbing or tax havens. Some strongly objected to mainstream approaches to global education, development aid and development cooperation, such as “benevolent discourse of helping” (Andreotti and Pashby, 2013), and their negative consequences such as strengthening stereotypes, fostering inequalities and maintaining dependency:

[...] Showing or referring to images of hunger or cataclysm. Or often paternalistic language. It’s hard to explain, to notice sometimes. Sometimes these are very subtle things and people who are involved in those activities, well, they mean well and they think that their actions can only lead to improving quality of life in developing countries. They want to help, but unfortunately they contribute to strengthening the stereotypes, to this inequality between us and them. And we try to make people really sensitive to this. [...] sometimes you see something like donations for... poor African children. Weird ideas like, say, collecting stuffed animal toys, even. And evaluative language. These are common, well, fairly common mistakes of less experienced organizations. (09)

As the data suggest, critical forms of global citizenship often coexist with its social forms. It is in line with Oxley and Morris's (2013, p. 13) suggestion that social global citizenship may be perceived as a less radical version of critical global citizenship. A majority of interviewees expressed the former, which was dominant in two cases. A recurrent theme associated with it was a sense among the interviewees that today's world is interconnected and interdependent, and our choices or actions influence other people's lives. For the informants, interdependencies are the main topic in global education and a reason for learning about distant others. Speaking about this issue, one interviewee said:

So that we know that, say, the things we wear, that it's not really true that if we buy them in Poland, they were made in Poland. That everything is a much longer process, that our cell phone, our computer, these also are various processes. And it turns out that somewhere at the very end there are the global South countries, somewhere... and that the truth is... maybe it's a strong word, we are exploiting them. To show that all this is interconnected and that we should simply be aware of that even in our everyday choices. (01)

Another used the term "interdependence paradigm" to capture his understanding of interdependencies and to highlight their importance:

It's this way of thinking and hence also speaking about these global issues. And it is very strongly linked to that we need to show causes and consequences of things, taking into account both what's going on, on the local and global level. [...] when we talk about poverty within this interdependence paradigm, then we do not limit ourselves to speaking only about internal causes that nobody denies, like, say in Tanzania. Internal conflicts, external like with Uganda, but also corruption, weak state apparatus. But somewhere here is also the foreign debt those countries have. Or international commerce. How does it come into play here? What's the role of regional cooperation or of its lack in Africa? So this is what I mean when I talk about interdependence. (10)

However, analysing these data from the critical global education perspective enables one to see two divergent discourses of interdependencies. The first, despite using the term "interdependencies," frames them as rather unidirectional links, highlighting the influence that people from the global North have on the life and situation in the global South. A majority of interviewees pointed out, for example, the significance of responsible consumption and buying Fair Trade products, which, in their opinion, would improve the situation of small farmers and workers in distant regions. This discourse fails, though unwittingly, to transform North-South relations into a partnership and falls into a donor-recipient framework.

And that often we here, in Poland, can do more for those people than they can do for

themselves there. I mean, with our decisions we influence their lives a great deal. And it's on the small scale. Say, by choosing Fair Trade products, we support sustainable agriculture somewhere far away and in this way *we give those people a chance* for a decent income. (04, emphasis added)

Our everyday consumer choices influence what's going on in the countries that manufacture those goods and services we use every day. We don't even realize that. (06)

The second discourse defines interdependencies in terms of true mutuality and emphasises the need to learn with and from the Other (Andreotti, 2011). As one interviewee explains:

We are in no way better or worse than anyone else. This makes it impossible for us to discriminate against or be condescending toward anyone. We are equal and we can learn from each other and work together. Only then we will get any results. And it's not like that one enlightened volunteer from Poland goes there and will teach someone how to do something because he knows better. It's always that an experienced volunteer from Poland goes there, meets professional people there, so that together, using all skills, competences and resources they have, they act to achieve some clearly defined goals. (11)

The interviewees also emphasised the significance of cooperation as a value, an efficient way of solving global problems and a preferred learning method. Some interviewees stressed the need to establish true cooperation with people from the global South for common benefit. They argued that only real partnership taking into account voices and views from the global South might be fruitful and non-detrimental to anyone engaged. It goes beyond the mainstream hegemonic discourse of charity.

We're trying to go in the direction that it's not global North and global South, but everyone together. But there are common problems that need solving together, right? And to act together. And then this common action toward one is not... It assumes partnership, right? Sharing knowledge, experience, coming up with solutions together, right? (02)

Another theme associated with social global citizenship was global community. Usually, this theme came up when interviewees referred to global problems common to all human beings, which should be solved together, or when they were discussing the issue of diversity and highlighted what people have in common.

Moral and environmental understandings of global citizenship were also evident but not prevalent in the interviews. Regarding the former, the interviewees raised the issues of human rights, empathy and moral obligations toward dispossessed, marginalised or vulnerable people. In general, they were aware of continuing debates on human rights, their alternative interpretations and controversies, but they

recognised their prominence and normative role.

With regard to environmental understanding of global citizenship, dominant was the emphasis on sustainable development and interdependencies between environmental issues and people's lives – for example, climate changes and their impact on living conditions in the global South. This is an anthropocentric point of view. Surprisingly, only two individuals explicitly advocated changes in our everyday habits: choosing bus or bike instead a car, and turning off the tap while brushing the teeth.

Turning back to the predominant form expressed by the interviewees, this consistency in critical understanding of global citizenship is surprising.<sup>10</sup> It may have several reasons. First, a relatively limited number of people work in global education in Poland, so they usually know one another to some degree and often cooperate. Second, the national platform Grupa Zagranica conducts numerous activities including seminars, training, publications and peer reviews of educational materials, and these may favour promoting one approach, especially if it is expressed by the NGOs perceived as experts in the field. Third, all the organisations that participated in research took part in multi-stakeholder process on global education<sup>11</sup>, having discussed the definitions, principles and rationale of global education in Poland. This process has ended with adopting a shared definition of global education, and all stakeholders agreed to use it in their activities and documents. The interviewees explicitly referred to that several times while talking about global education, its goals and values.

However, a deeper look into the data using Andreotti's (2012) HEADS UP tool reveals that this critical understanding is in some cases rather superficial and declarative. Although, in line with the perspective of critical postcolonial global education, many interviewees promoted more complex analysis of global issues, going beyond the strongly criticised donor-recipient framework and taking into account complex roots and causes of problems like poverty, at the same time as they proposed simplistic solutions to these problems. Talking about engagement and action, making a difference and being an agent of change, a majority of the interviewees suggested changing everyday habits or ethical buying and consumption. The relative popularity of the latter may be a little disturbing, as it promotes a global responsible consumer instead of a global citizen.<sup>12</sup> Such simple answers to complex and multi-layered problems will probably not be helpful in achieving structural and social change as stipulated in critical global education (Andreotti, 2006; 2011b). The interviewees did not mention any form of political activism, apart from few who talked about signing petitions (10) or "joint action towards the taxation of financial transactions" (01). Surprisingly, one of them was the interviewee noticeably inimical toward the activist approach in global education.

Most of the interviewees also did not recognise our (i.e., people from global North) role in global issues, which raises another question. According to Andreotti (2006; 2011b), one crucial feature of the critical global citizen is a sense of responsibility toward the Other, rooted in acknowledging one's historical, social and cultural complicity in harm. Although the interviewees spoke about responsibility quite often, most failed to recognise that aspect of it. They linked responsibility to one's privileged position and moral imperative to share: "we depend on one another, and if someone has more, he should also demand more of himself" (05). It may mirror the predominant way of thinking. According to the latest opinion poll (Poles on development assistance, 2015), 65 percent of Poles are supportive toward development assistance. As major reasons, they indicate reciprocity for aid Poland received in the past (46 percent) and moral obligations (44 percent). Simultaneously, the Polish people perceive their country's economic situation as worse than it is in reality and wrongly assert that 81 countries around the world are poorer or less developed than Poland, while Human Development Report 2015 ranks Poland 36<sup>th</sup> on the Human Development Index.

Only a few participants framed this issue in terms of being a part of a problem, not only a solution. These interviewees also mentioned the need to analyse global issues from multiple perspectives. It is consistent with the perspective of critical postcolonial global education:

To look at things globally, I mean, there is a problem, something going on. You can narrow it down to a picture of a crying child. Or you can see it as a whole, what is our role here, what is the role of the developed countries, Global North countries? What is going on there, what the authorities are doing, to look at this comprehensively? (11)

Being here, I would like my child to be a citizen of the world, and when she's going to think about what good for Europe did the geographical discoveries bring. Well, economic development, right? And what bad things? Not only economic crises, but also physical extermination of a large part of humanity, yes? We know about extermination, yes? Well, the Native Americans. So I want her conscience to tell her: all right, for my part of the world, for Europe, it did bring good things. But the price other people paid for it was too high. (07)

The second interviewee quoted above insisted on critical engagement with our own culture, which also indicates the approach of critical postcolonial global education (Andreotti, 2006; 2011):

If the sources of global education are balanced, representative, yes? Then it's possible that this global education will not entrench our Eurocentric thinking. But it will question



and correct it. (07)

To sum up, while at the first step the data analysis using typology of global citizenship allowed me to discover the predominance of critical forms of global citizenship among the interviewees, employing the perspective of critical postcolonial global education reveals that in several cases it is just a declarative stance, not accompanied by critical literacy or critical engagement.

According to Jasikowska and Witkowski (2012), the development of global education in Poland was influenced by several factors. Among them are the historical trajectory of Polish society (and its key elements, such as relative ethnic and religious homogeneity after World War II, lack of colonial legacy, significant experience of Soviet colonialism and rapid neoliberal modernisation after 1989); the impact of transnational advocacy networks; the characteristics of the Polish formal education system and the peculiarities of civic dialogue in Poland. The authors argue that global education may be perceived in Poland as one of the components of “a Western [modernisation – MKH] package of ‘necessary changes’ in order to leave behind any remnant of the country’s Soviet legacy” (Jasikowska and Witkowski, 2012, p. 21). At the same time, transnational advocacy networks, such as the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD) and its Development Education Exchange in Europe Project (DEEEP), as well as the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, strongly influenced the shape of global education in Poland through their numerous activities. Although important discussions were held within these networks about the aims, nature, role and focus of global education, in Poland, a country that is “a relative late-comer” (Jasikowska and Witkowski, 2012, p. 18) to these debates, the issues were not discussed in a sufficiently thorough and critical manner. This may lead to such a declarative, superficial stance as presented above.

## **Conclusions**

The goal of this article was twofold: first, to explore the ideals of the global citizen among NGO employees engaged in global education in Poland and their critical and non-critical ways of understanding; and second, to examine the potential of the typology of global citizenship for analysing the interviewees’ perspectives in the study of empirically grounded conceptualisations of the global citizen.

The interviewees’ views were consistent with the principles, aims and objectives articulated by UNESCO. Participants defined the global citizen in terms of learning outcomes, focusing on global awareness and knowledge, values of equality, diversity and justice, as well as engagement in action.

Almost all of them expressed individualistic ways of understanding the global citizen framed as a series of voluntary, individual practices, disconnected from legal links with a state. In their opinion, a global citizen has no need for global government or a global state. That opinion is in agreement with other research (Schattle, n.d.; Myers, 2010). These individualistic notions of the global citizen may be perceived as “disconnected from citizens’ real lives” (Oxley and Morris 2013, p. 4) and interpreted as falling into a competence model of citizenship (Biesta and Lawy, 2006).

Employing Oxley and Morris’s typology of global citizenship helped in gaining a detailed understanding of the interviewees’ conceptions of global citizens. It showed that despite the overall consistency, interviewees differed in relation to specific focus, key concepts and hidden assumptions. Most expressed mixed forms of global citizenship, with the predominance of the critical model. This is surprising, given previous research showing that the critical understanding of the global citizen rarely belongs to the mainstream viewpoint. Adopting a perspective of critical postcolonial global education allowed me to see a more nuanced and complex picture, and helped explain this unexpected finding. It revealed that although a majority of the interviewees prioritised critical global citizenship over other forms, only few of them did that in a thorough way. Others lacked critical engagement and sometimes, despite criticizing approaches limited to charity, failed to go beyond the discourse of helping.

Finally, it should be noted that this was a limited study focused on the interview data. The qualitative paradigm used in this research does not allow drawing any generalised conclusions. However, despite its limitations, this is a first study exploring the NGO sector’s approaches to global citizenship in the Polish context, different from both the so-called global North and the global South countries. To develop a full picture of NGOs’ global citizen ideals, further research is needed that will investigate NGOs’ mission statements and educational materials, search for consistencies and divergences, and explore their educational practice (not only what they say but what they actually do) – for example, in ethnographic studies.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> There is continuing controversy regarding the concept of Central Europe and Poland's status as Eastern European, Central European or East Central European country. See i.e. Halecki, 1950; Kłoczowski, 2004; Arnason and Doyle, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> The term "critical" is used in social and educational sciences in several more or less overlapping senses (i.e., within (neo)Marxist tradition, Foucauldian approach, different strands of critical pedagogy etc.). In my usage of this term, I follow Andreotti's work.

<sup>3</sup> <http://aiesec.org/students/volunteer-abroad/>. Accessed 1 March 2016.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.globaleducationfirst.org>. Accessed 1 March 2016.

<sup>5</sup> [http://us.pg.com/sustainability/environmental\\_sustainability/policies\\_practices/climate\\_change](http://us.pg.com/sustainability/environmental_sustainability/policies_practices/climate_change). Accessed 1 March 2016.

<sup>6</sup> <http://zagranica.org.pl/en>. Accessed 15 March 2016.

<sup>7</sup> For historical reasons, in Poland the term "social justice" is still marked by the past. For many Poles it relates directly to times when Poland was under the communist regime and "social justice" served as a propagandistic category, deprived of meaning, imposed on the citizens, also by force. One of the popular jokes of these times, which can sometimes be heard even today, was: "What is the difference between justice and social justice? The same as between a chair and an electric chair." Only recently has the notion of "social justice" begun to reappear in public discourse without this negative connotation.

<sup>8</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 1. Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>. Accessed 15 March 2016.

<sup>9</sup> A town near Warsaw, whose surroundings are known as the biggest apple-growing area in Poland.

<sup>10</sup> See i.e. McCloskey, 2009; Bryan and Bracken, 2011; Oxley and Morris, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> The multi-stakeholder process on global education was a series of regular meetings aimed at discussing common principles and priorities of global education in Poland. Among the participants were representatives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Environment and Grupa Zagranica. See also: Jasikowska and Witkowski, 2012; Moryc and Szewczyk, 2013; Grupa Zagranica, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> See also Scriven, 2012.

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