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Article abstract

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Tracing the Lines of Power, Coloniality, and Neoliberalism in UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development Policy

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Abstract

This paper critically analyses a reflection paper commissioned by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that proposes a future where we, humans, learn to coexist with the non-human world and thereby contribute to its preservation. The paper, titled *Learning To Become With the World: Education for Future Survival,* represents a response to previous unsuccessful Education for sustainable development (ESD) initiatives. Drawing on Carol Bacchi's (2009), "What's the problem represented to be?" method, our analysis sheds light on assumptions and silences and considers potentially conflicting interests among different actors in formulating the policy proposed by the paper. Through this critical approach to analysis, several crucial implications have emerged. We argue that the report lacks practical applicability by ignoring human complexities and diversity and does not pay enough attention to the potential important role Indigenous ways of knowing, learning, and teaching could play for education for sustainable development.

Introduction

In recent years, educational systems worldwide have developed, as a priority, policies that promote education for sustainable development (ESD) (Ahu Akgün et al., 2011; UNESCO, 2015a). This prioritization of ESD was evident in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development's declarations (UNESCO, 2015b) that aimed at changing people's behavior to create a just and "sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability" for all generations (para. 2). This initiative was followed by the Global Action Program (GAP) (2018) and the UN's (2015) proposal, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, both of which share the same objective, that is, promoting and accelerating progress towards ESD to create a sustainable world. Despite all these efforts, it could be argued that global ESD strategies have failed (Common Worlds Research Collective [CWRC], 2020). One of the main reasons for this failure was that humans around the globe have been active agents in the change and formation of "a new geological era, the Anthropocene" (Gough, 2021, p. 12). The Anthropocene is theorized as a period of human history during which human activity significantly reshaped the planet and impacted the global ecosystems (Curley & Smith, 2023; Xausa, 2020), such as the nuclear bomb explosion (Xausa, 2020). Considering this, the authors of the CWRC (2020) highlighted a pressing concern: if policymakers fail to "redress

the root causes of the Anthropocene" (p. 2), humanity will face tragic consequences that can lead to the end of the world as we know it today.

In response to this alarming situation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) formed the International Commission on the Futures of Education (ICFE) and published a report that introduced the future of education and presented it as a social responsibility, *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education* (ICFE, 2021). The CWRC[1] was commissioned by UNESCO to provide a background paper for the report: The CWRC report, titled *Learning To Become With the World: Education for Future Survival,* has been chosen as the subject of our analysis. Couch (2020) stressed, specifically, that it is equally as important to examine a policy's development from its conception as it is from its implementation. The choice to analyze the CWRC report stems from our belief that it presents the foundational principles that can drive current and future educational policy. Bacchi (2009) argued that policies like those in the CWRC's report should not be seen as neutral or objective. Instead, they should be understood as constructing certain realities while concealing others. Therefore, we applied a poststructuralist lens to the CWRC's report, hoping that it will enable us to challenge taken for granted societal norms, critique established power structures, and question whose voices and perspectives are privileged in the report, and whose might be marginalized. To deconstruct the assumptions, knowledge structures, and power relations embedded in the report, this paper critically examines the CWRC's background report from a poststructuralist view. Poststructuralism contributes to the idea that meaning (in policy making) is flexible and politicized (Bacchi, 2009). This way, we explore education's implicit challenges as we approach a critical geological era: the Anthropocene. To achieve this, the main guiding questions to be addressed are as follows:

> RQ1: How is the problem in education represented during the Anthropocene?
> RQ2: What are the implicit silences and actors interplaying in education during the Anthropocene?

To answer these questions, we have employed Bacchi's policy analysis method, "What's the problem represented to be?" (WPR), which has enabled us to conduct a problematization-oriented critical analysis. After presenting our research paradigm and methodology, we will analyze the CWRC report using Bacchi's six WPR questions presented in Table 1.

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[1] The background report, "Learning to Become with the World: Education for Future Survival" (CWRC, 2020), reflects the views and opinions of the authors and not UNESCO.

Table 1

Bacchi's WPR Framework[2]

Question 1: What's the problem (e.g., of "Unskilled Workforce," "Insufficient workforce to meet market demands," "Lack of economic competition") represented to be in a specific policy or policies?
Question 2: What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the "problem" (*problem representation*)?
Question 3: How has this representation of the "problem" come about?
Question 4: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be conceptualized differently?
Question 5: What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the "problem"?
Question 6: How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated, and defended?

Following Bacchi's WPR Framework, we started by answering questions three (How has this representation of the "problem" come about?) and six (How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated, and defended?) to introduce the background information on the representation problem. We then discuss the problem of representation by analyzing the suggested solutions, particularly in the context of reconfiguring education. Following that, we shed some light on the explicit and implicit assumptions regarding the potential governing actors, specifically international organizations and the prevailing ideologies of Euro-Western dominance, which influence decision-making. We also highlight the neglect of marginalized epistemologies held by Black and Indigenous communities. Next, the paper presents the delineation of the effects of this problem's representation on readers and policy analysts. Finally, we discuss the analysis and present our conclusions.

Research Paradigm and Methodology

The research questions of this paper are situated in the constructivist paradigm. This philosophical paradigm explains what reality is (the ontological view) and how it is formed (the epistemological view) and, therefore, guides the choices of the methodology used in this study (Lincoln et al., 2018). The constructivist ontological view asserts that reality is relative and there is no absolute reality, since people construct their realities through their interactions with the world, thus, reflecting their epistemological views (Lincoln et al., 2018). As peoples' interpretations of reality are created, masked by the influences driving their conception, the truth cannot be recognized for where it stands but rather for what has shaped its formation (Lincoln et al., 2018). Hence, in this philosophical paradigm, it is critical to understand how problem discourses have evolved and what lies beneath them (Lincoln et al., 2018).

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[2] Adapted from Bacchi, C. (2009). Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be? Pearson Education.

This paper seeks to get behind the representation of problems in education during the Anthropocene and examine what the implicit silences and actors are that interplay with these problems, thus situating the research questions in the constructive paradigm. For this inquiry, we focus on ideas, perspectives, constructions, and interpretations rather than quantitative data, which keeps the study in line with the constructivist paradigm (Bryman, 2012). In this context, a qualitative approach to document analysis common within the social sciences (Bowen, 2009) is the most appropriate. Thus, we analyzed the foundational document, 'Learning to Become with the World: Education for Future Survival' (CWRC, 2020).

To critically analyze this document, we identified and interrogated its problematizations using Bacchi's methodological WPR approach. More specifically, we systematically examined the problem representation using an iterative process comprising different phases, from reading, self-reflecting, and discussions to writing and re-writing. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, both authors separately applied this process to each question of the WPR method (Bacchi, 2012) over a 5-month period, after which we compared each author's analysis.

Poststructural Policy Analysis Framework: The WPR Approach

The work of Carol Lee Bacchi (2009) and, more specifically, the policy analysis WPR question tool, has gained major interest from scholars in recent years (Archibald, 2020; Cairney, 2019; Bletsas, 2012). Bacchi's work pushed for a deep dive into critical problematization-driven policy analysis to enable the emergence of non-linear understandings (2015), a well-needed strategy (Bacchi, 2020) in response to the complexity of policy development and enactment in today's world. By asserting that "what one proposes to do about something reveals what one thinks is problematic" (Bacchi, 2012, p. 21) and needs to change, Bacchi's work aligns with the paradigm shift recognized in the field of policy analysis by Clarke et al. (2015). This shift marked the move from a linear, positivist-oriented approach to one which is a non-linear, critical way (Young & Diem, 2017) of conducting and understanding policymaking, actors, and context. Bacchi (2009) argued against problem-solving approaches to policy analysis, claiming that they led to insufficient policies because they over-simplified the problem. In concurrence, while it is commonly accepted that policies are solutions created in response to problems (Turnbull, 2017) and "problem-solving dominates the current intellectual and policy landscape" (Bacchi, 2020, p. 98), policies are also at risk of producing problems, which requires a paradigm shift (Bacchi, 2010). Therefore, it is legitimate "to ask questions about assumed knowledges" (Bacchi, 2020, p. 98) through problematization. The term "problematization" does not have "a single correct meaning and/or ought to be used in only one way" (Bacchi, 2015, p. 2). For Bacchi (2015), problematization (as a methodology) is a way of interrogating assumptions, presuppositions, and ways of thinking upon which accepted practices rely, are being produced, and are reproduced. Bacchi's work (2015) "directs attention to problematizations as the products of governmental practices" (p. 3), keeping a distance from the interpretive stream that emphasizes the role of people as the problematizing agents.

Bacchi (2009) utilized a "problem-questioning" (p. xvii) paradigm to policy analysis by posing six questions (see Table 1) that offer a systematic critical examination of the conceptual premises that underlie policy. As a first step, Bacchi's (2009) framework asks about the policy's proposed

solutions to trace how the proposed problem is problematized. The following four questions examine the logic behind such problem representations by inquiring about the rationale behind the solution, the underlying assumptions related to the problem representation, the possible overlooked areas that can help solve the problem, and the potential impacts associated with such problem representation (p. x). The last question is formed to allow policy analysts to express their positionality. Essentially, the premise of Bacchi's (2009) framework is that by "problematizing the representations of the problem," the "taken-for-granted assumptions" are challenged (p. xv). Thus, this present paper will employ Bacchi's (2009) WPR approach to examine the context of the problem representation, the problem representation itself, and the implicit assumptions, silences, and effects of the problem representation in the CWCR document.

Analysis of the Common World Research Collective's (2020) Document

This paper employs Bacchi's poststructuralist (2012) WPR method to conduct a critical policy analysis of CWCR's background paper entitled "Learning to become with the world: Education for Future Survival." In response to Bacchi's (2009) questions, the following sections address: broader context and the premises of problem identification; beyond the problem representation; questioning presuppositions to identify key actors and silences; global key actors; and collective human or euro-western responsibility.

Broader Context and the Premises of Problem Identification

According to Bacchi (2009), contextualizing the problem representation is important since policies vary with time and place. To understand issue representations, it is therefore essential to identify the contexts of policies (p. 11). To contextualize the present representation of the problem, we started our inquiry by responding to Bacchi's (2009) third question (How has this representation of the "problem" come about?), and sixth question (How has this representation of the "problem" come about?), which help to explain how and where certain problem representations have emerged. This WPR approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the problem and the solutions' backgrounds as they are "heavily laden with meaning and context" (Bacchi, 2012, p. 23). As such, the context of this policy problematization – the planet's risk of survival in the future – will be explained. As mentioned above, "Learning to Become with the World: Education for Future Survival" (CWCR, 2020) is a background report commissioned by UNESCO to inform the write-up of the Futures of Education initiative report (UNESCO, 2019). This report draws "on the inputs of over a million people" (para. 2) and was written in several languages using a co-construction process. Both documents – the aforementioned CWCR's (2020) and UNESCO's ICFE's (2021) "Reimagining our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education" – were developed in the context of a global initiative aimed at shaping the future of the planet and its inhabitants by rethinking education, learning, and knowledge in a spirit of peaceful, just, and sustainable survival, all in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty, inequality, and precarity (UNESCO, 2019, para. 1). In short, the CWRC seems to be pushing for a paradigm shift that moves away from Rousseau's social contract (Principles of Political Right) – an essential publication originally from 1762 that was a decisive turning point for modernity – to a new era driven by UNESCO's new social contract for

education. It is worth mentioning that the CWCR report developed for UNESCO was led by an independent international commission under the leadership of Sahle-Work Zewde's, a former Ambassador and diplomat of Ethiopia in France, and now the first female president of Ethiopia (ITU, 2022).

Beyond the Problem Representation

Examining CWCR paper through the lens of Bacchi's (2009) first question (What's the problem represented to be […] in a specific policy or policy proposal?) can help in gaining an understanding of how this policy articulates the problem. Here, Bacchi (2009) stresses the importance of first examining the proposed solution and then working backwards to determine how the problem is conceived. In the document under analysis, the proposed solution is reconfiguring education through "a fundamental break with humanist education" (CWRC, 2020, p.8) to foster people's ecological consciousness to save the planet and survive in the future. From this standpoint, the current system of education is the issue. This idea is reinforced by the title (Education for Future Survival) and its objective: "By 2050, education will be radically reorganized around survival in the Anthropocene" (p. 8) – both the title and the objectives of the document link education to the survival of Earth.

Rather than focusing on saving of the planet as the primary problem, as is presented in the paper, Bacchi's problematization instead redirects us to consider those who have identified and shaped the problem. By exploring who is behind the CWRC rather than merely focusing on the seemingly fixable problem of a heating planet, we discover some potentially problematic saviors. Upon research into the authors, we came to see that, for the most part, the authors of the report are well-positioned scholars who appear to be primarily abled, white women (based on pictures), and who seemed to use English as the common language, suggested by their website being only available in English (CWCR, 2020). In addition, most of these authors' works have been published in the Global North. The CWRC represents education as the problem, which, based on their positionality, leads us to question which education they seek to reform. Is it education that adheres to a dominant Euro-Western, human-centric philosophy and is assumed to be the reason for the current ecological crisis? Considering this, it could be assumed that by "fixing" this type of education, the current problem will be resolved.

We argue that the current education is not solely responsible for the world's collapse; those who hold power and can make decisions can be just as (or even more) problematic. In this context, the question of power and decision-making, and the ideologies that drive these, cannot be ignored. Neoliberalism is one powerful ideology that prevails in many fields, and education is no exception. As an ideology of market-driven policies and actions, neoliberalism has greatly influenced educational discourses concerning privatization, marketization, individualism, and performativity (Apple, 2001). In education, this ideology impacts the nature and value of knowledge systems (e.g., modern, competitive, meritocratic, technological), which may conflict with the past values associated with education being for the global good (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Considering this, and the fact that neoliberalism is "a political discourse imposed by Western nations" (Olssen and Peters, 2005, p. 314) that emphasizes economic practices over the public good, we argue that this approach/philosophy plays a significant and negative role in the

deterioration of the world. We assert that those who wield power and possess the ability to make decisions hold a significant share of the responsibility in impacting the education system. Our rationale is that neoliberalism prioritizes economic practices and therefore links education with economic growth. The effect of prioritizing economic growth on the planet can be seen in the growing degradation of the environment, such as the incidence of climate change, the contamination of water bodies and courses, and the growing death toll from air pollution (Fukuda et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2015a). Sylvia Wynter has argued that the overrepresentation of "Man2" – the "eugenicist and economic view of the human" (Hantel, 2018, p. 63) could result in a "planetary scale of environmental destruction" (p. 71). Given this, it would be plausible to question how neoliberalism contributes to the growth or decline of the planet.

Questioning Presuppositions to Identify Key Actors and Silences

To examine the presuppositions that might underpin the problem representation, Bacchi (2009) suggests answering the second question (What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the "problem" (*problem representation*)?), thus revealing issues that policymakers take for granted. Building upon this logic, it is also possible to uncover issues that may have been overlooked or interpreted differently by answering Bacchi's (2009) fourth question (What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be conceptualized differently?). Taking a closer look at the problem representation of UNESCO's (2020) proposed solution, there is an assumption that education is crucial to developing human ecological consciousness and preserving the planet. The report also assumes that education could change/transform people's worldviews about the planet. The governing of people's worldviews and actions is a form of governmentality, which French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault, referred to as "conduct of conduct" (Gordon, 1991, p. 2). Since education is viewed as a savior by the CWRC (2020), it is puzzling why it has failed to achieve sustainable development, as mentioned earlier. Problematizing the current system of education, assuming that it is the primary force that can save the planet, seems unfair, given that other actors also have a part to play in preserving the planet. Thus, we assume that the roles of other different actors remained unproblematized.

Global Key Actors

An assumption of the CWRC is that education is one of the primary factors that can secure the world's future; however, it needs to be transformed to achieve post-growth education. Our argument is that, if we agree with this assumption, International Organizations (IOs), which Shultz and Viczko (2021) described as major "global education actors" (p. 219), are key actors that drive education; thus, their roles deserve to be examined. The World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are examples of IOs. An important question to ask here is how such organizations can contribute to global ecological awareness and whether this is addressed in the CWRC's analysis. Considering the diverse ideologies among these IOs, potentially conflicting interests can occur. Shultz and Viczko (2021) note, while examining responses of these IOs towards education during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, there is a "distinction of UNESCO's position as an IO from that of the solely economically focused World Bank and OECD" (p. 233). This distinction is also evident in how

the OECD (2018) tackles the issue of sustainable development through education. On the one hand, to promote sustainability, the OECD (2018) suggests educating students to acquire "global competence" (p. 5), which demands students to be able to cope with changing labor markets. Similarly, the World Bank (2022) proposes to contribute to the growth of an inclusive and sustainable economy through education. However, the CWRC (2020) explicitly warns that "more of the same type of education will only compound our problems" (p. 2), implying that the current educational system is flawed. This is substantiated by viewing education as a tool to increase human capital, where "schools and higher education systems continue to prioritize workforce supply for economic growth over environmental sustainability" (p. 2). Given that, it is surprising that the CWRC (2020) report does not explain how such organizations can contribute to raise global ecological awareness. It is, therefore, pertinent that UNESCO considers certain questions: How will education raise individuals' ecological consciousness in a world driven by economic growth? How will UNESCO reach such a large population of people? Who will be involved in developing and implementing an idealistic policy like this? The different interests among IOs could challenge the CWRC's goal of raising people's ecological awareness rather than economic growth. Given this, how will UNESCO address such conflicting interests?

Collective Human or Euro-Western Responsibility

In arguing that education cannot be the sole actor to be highlighted when the topic of saving the planet is discussed, as proposed by the CWRC (2020), we explore another actor that can be perceived as a contributing factor to the representation of the problem. Bacchi (2012) states, "what one proposes to do about something reveals what one thinks is problematic" (p. 21) and, therefore, what supposedly needs to change is identified. Thus, one can start thinking about the problem differently by looking at the solution. The solution proposed by the CWRC (2020) is shifting the education paradigm – more specifically, going "from learning about the world in order to act upon it, to learning to become with the world around us" (p. 2) – not only proposes a solution but also highlights their perception of the problem: a lack of equilibrium between humans and the nature. Expanding on this point, the CWRC addresses the deeper issue of disconnection, that human societies have become increasingly disconnected from the natural environment, disrupting homeostasis. However, it is critical to note that the problem cannot exclusively be about education, as the issue can lie fundamentally within larger societal structures, economic systems, political ideologies, cultural norms, and individual behaviors. From this standpoint, we started to explore the responsibility of various forces.

The CWRC (2020) presents a homogenized picture of humans by depicting a lack of ecological consciousness as a global problem that leaves the question of responsibility unproblematized. Viewing all people as a destructive force on the planet, this proposed policy can result in neglecting the roles and effects of other political and economic actors. Although it is accurate to assume that humanity is responsible for the world's ecological problems, there are different arguments in this regard. According to Malm and Hornborg (2014), compared to the poorest sectors, which have minimal environmental impacts, the wealthiest sectors negatively impact the environment. These findings have led Malm and Hornborg (2014) to question the "Anthropocene narrative" (p. 62), since it does not differentiate between human populations' responsibilities towards the planet based on their impacts on it. According to UNESCO (2015a), the Global

North exploits the world, yet international policies support this exploitation. This dark side of "the colonial matrix of power" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 179) is still associated with the Global North and Western modernity. Even though colonialism ended in the Global South, Mignolo (2011) argues that it continues in different forms, such as promoting the modernity of the Eurocentric culture through education. According to Giroux (2001), these new forms aim to legitimize colonial interests, where neo-colonial powers seek to change those who differ from the dominant Western norms and values, including Indigenous populations, marginalized communities, and non-Western cultures. This can be seen by how the CWRC document presents the West and non-West as binary opposites, and which Tikly (2004) calls an emerging colonialism that serves Western hegemony.

The CWRC's representation of the problem reminds us of the concept of the colonial matrix of power. Mignolo described this matrix as "two simultaneous movements, [with one] building itself as a civilizational project and [and the other] destroying other civilizations" (E-International Relations, 2017, para. 25). In the context of the policy background paper, the alignment with the principle of this matrix is not acknowledged, thus, it is left unproblematic by a lack of self-reflexivity and distance. Several aspects of the text remind us of this matrix. First, the intense need to re-build human civilization through ecological, consciousness-oriented education, while simultaneously breaking with Euro-Western, humanist-oriented education by "extracting education from the Cartesian divides that structure its established humanist knowledge traditions and pedagogies" (CWRC, 2020, p. 10). By not acknowledging its place in the colonial matrix of power, one can assume that the CWRC considers unproblematic its way of wanting to implement/spread its visionary solution. This is reinforced by presenting a solution to be enacted by 2050, a time frame trapped in a unipolar conception of time (the Gregorian calendar) and owned by Western civilization (E-International Relations, 2017). Awasis (Métis/Anishinaabe) has pointed out that Western temporal concepts like clock time, and the Gregorian calendar are not inherent to the Earth, but rather promote a singular, linear perception of time as Curley and Smith (2023) noted. Further, Curley and Smith express concerns that environmental issues being oversimplified into a singular timeline, a process they view as potentially erasing diverse, and nonlinear times, thus obscuring the complexity of global progress. The CWRC fails to see that the solution presented is only one ideology among many, leaving no room for debate and challenges in the intellectual spaces they have created. In that sense, the CWRC may, consciously or not, be setting up the stage for a new form of aberration in the name of future survival, described by Mignolo as the pretense of holding a complete truthful best solution that everybody should be following (E-International Relations, 2017).

Northern or Marginalized Epistemologies

Throughout the background paper, education represents the problem as universal. Yet, we argue that the problem is presented from a Euro-Western and human-centric perspective, ignoring other epistemologies, such as Indigenous epistemologies, that are more likely to be effective in saving the planet. In other words, education is driven by Cartesian philosophy, enabled by colonialism and modernity, and maintained through the coloniality of power as Curley and Smith (2023) noted. In this representation, education can then be perceived as a monolithic approach and humans as a homogenous group that is enslaved to it. Although we do not deny the

dominance of Euro-Western thinking in education worldwide, we do see in this rhetoric a reductionist representation, which removes any form of plurality and multiplicity in both education and humans across time and space. Therefore, such reduction implicitly bypasses ways of knowing, being, living, and believing, as well as resisting forces that coexisted and continue to exist around the globe (Giroux, 2001). In representing the problem this way, the rhetoric becomes complicit in "silencing and disavowing non-European knowledge and way of living" (E-International Relations, 2017, para. 24), such as Indigenous ways of knowing, teaching, and learning, which have been resisting and disturbing mainstream educational order (Madjidi & Restoule, 2008).

Lawhon (2013) highlights that the dominance of northern epistemologies and ontologies creates a disadvantage for the ontologies of the Global South and marginalized communities. This marginalization is exemplified by Fricker's (2018) concept of epistemic injustice, which pertains to unfair discrimination against one's capacity as a knower. Indigenous knowledge and ontologies are rooted in understanding humans' interconnectedness with the planet and other species (Cheater, 2018). Despite their significance, Indigenous knowledge and ontologies remain underrepresented in international environmental policies (Ford et al., 2016), illustrating the presence of epistemic injustice. The CWRC (2020) report does not formally acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge, ontologies, and experiences. However, it does recognize the potential problems that may arise if the population continues to receive the same Euro-Western, human-centric education. Acknowledging this epistemic injustice, Curley and Smith (2023) advocate for including Black and Indigenous experiences and philosophies in developing new histories. Notably, Indigenous scholars such as Kim TallBear, Grace Dillon, and Kyle Powys White reinforce this call, emphasizing that Indigenous peoples have already endured post-apocalyptic conditions resulting from catastrophic violence and profound environmental transformations that have had detrimental physical, emotional, and spiritual effects (Simmons, 2019). To address the underrepresentation and acknowledgement of knowledge, ontologies, and experiences from the Global South and marginalized communities, Mignolo (2011) proposes to enforce decolonial thinking. This approach paves the way for intercultural processes that draw upon the ontologies and epistemologies of the Global South, offering a potential solution to foster inclusivity and representation.

For the CWRC, the trigger for the emergence of the above-described representation of the problem is the assumed ecological crisis of the 21st century. This crisis holds significant ramifications, and the possible unlivable future directly links to the imaginary human failure and incapacity to enact practical agency. Indeed, the CWRC (2020) assumes and states that a near catastrophic future results from "our failure to imagine and work out new ways to live with the Earth" (p. 2). In short, the ecological crisis can be a failure of imagination, caused directly by a Euro-Western, human-centric education that has dominated the world by their epistemological views.

Potential Implications of the Problem Representation

Bacchi's (2009) fifth question (What effects [discursive, subjectification, lived] are produced by this representation of the "problem"?) explores the impact of the way particular problems are

problematized through three types of interconnected effects: discursive, subjectification, and lived. Bacchi (2009) noted that discursive effects of policy refer to the delimitations created by how an issue is represented. Subjectification effects refer to the intended participants within a particular representation of a problem. As Bacchi (2009) explains, both discursive and subjectification effects should be examined along with their lived effects – how these effects get translated into people's lives. Discursive effects are evident in the CWRC's limited solving of the problem through formal education, which may lead to overlooking alternative solutions provided by other entities, such as the community. This oversight highlights the absence of a non-formal learning role in UNESCO's (2020) policy that can pose a challenge when implementing such policy, as a large percentage of the population is not engaged in formal education. As UNESCO (2015a) has previously noted, various community organizations such as "community centres, religious organizations, … youth groups" can offer valuable learning opportunities (p. 56).

Regarding policy subjectification effects, the CWRC does not identify a specific group but focuses on all subjects related to formal education. This choice raises critical questions, such as "Who is sitting around the decision-making table, and more importantly, who's not sitting around the decision-making table?" (Diem et al., 2014, p. 1077); answering such questions can help to identify the role of both power and control in policy analysis. Regarding UNESCO's (2020) policy, formal education leaders will likely acquire more power to implement interventions. As Smith (2008) has noted, there is also a concern that some leadership roles can be influenced by higher power entities, such as large corporations that often control educational policies. Thus, it is critical for different stakeholders to be included while envisioning this potential idealistic policy.

Such a reconfiguration of education will require changing the educational culture and involving key agents in the educational systems (Diem et al., 2014). Teachers, in particular, must be prepared to help students understand the need to live with the planet and how economic and political forces affect natural systems (Paniagua & Istance, 2018). In addition to teachers' preparations, other educational considerations include pedagogy, curriculum, school environment, and systems (p. 1). Following Paniagua and Istance (2018), who argue that sustainability should be integrated into subjects and all educational policies, we envision that ecological awareness should be similarly integrated. In addition, the curriculum is expected to be rethought based on a more-than-human approach and the plurality of worldviews (UNESCO, 2015a). For people's worldviews to change, educators will need to develop pedagogical approaches that enable them to govern themselves in the correct way into transformation (UNESCO, 2020, p. 49).

Discussion and Conclusions

This paper employed Bacchi's (2012) WPR approach to critically examine "Learning to Become with the World: Education for Future Survival" (CWRC, 2020). This paper aimed to build an understanding of how the CWRC represents the significant challenges of the 21st century, its underlying emergence, and its assumptions. Thus far, the first question of the WPR method has helped to identify the problem representation presented. It has also shed light on the emergence

of this representation, the explicit and implicit assumptions, and the effects of this problem representation on readers and policy analysts. Further, this approach has also allowed us to examine the CWRC's identity, context, and way of thinking regarding the problematic and the unproblematic.

In examining the solution proposed in the background paper, we aimed to move towards what has been left unproblematic in this problem representation. When the document assumes the hegemony of the Euro-Western epistemology and lumps everybody together using the pronoun *we*, a universalistic approach to education reform is revealed. The document identifies education as the *saviour* but, by digging deeper, education is also assumed to be the *problem that needs to be reformed* to save the planet. Highlighting the implicit representation of the problem, education, led us to examine the assumptions to reveal the silences and the actors in the play. Building upon Bacchi's (2009) questions, it was possible to uncover issues that may have been overlooked or interpreted differently, such as the CWRC ignoring the contribution of neoliberalism to the planet's deterioration, and the influential roles of power dynamics in the decision-making processes in shaping various fields, including education. The CWRC also failed to recognize the damaging role of international organizations (such as the World Bank and the OECD). Thus, it is pertinent to consider the potentially conflicting interests among these actors while formulating the proposed policy. Further, this paper discussed the CWRC's silencing of key aspects of knowledge production, namely, the non-Euro-Western collective of humans, knowledge, and discourses, and not acknowledging, for example, the influence of Indigenous ways of knowing, learning, and teaching in drafting their paper. It is important to note that "epistemic reconstitution is taking place in many places and in many forms" (E-International Relations, 2017, para. 10) around the world, and "knowledges are plural" (UNESCO, 2021, p. 223) not universal. From this standpoint, the background paper becomes an idealistic, postmodern aberration that fails to be practical by ignoring human complexities and diversity. Specifically, the CWRC "addresses" diversity by ignoring "the increased importance of 'difference' for our understanding of politics'" (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2009, p. 9).

Additionally, the hegemonic discourse presented in the document raises the question of sincere and authentic reflexivity and meta-deliberation principles (Dryzek & Stevenson, 2014, p. 212), before, during, and after the policy development process. Although a deliberative approach to policymaking may not be the best to manage global educational reform and climate change governance, it does open possibilities for engagement from various intellectual spaces, not only privileged, English-speaking Western scholars, which mainly formed the CWCR presented in this paper. A deliberative approach could provide opportunities for disrupting the status quo (Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014) and for hybrid forms of governance and knowledge production to emerge.

To respond to-the crisis highlighted in the CWRC's report, UNESCO's (2020) emerging policy calls for reconstructing education to achieve global ecological awareness but without questioning the responsibility of the Global North in the planet's deterioration. Rather, the report blames the whole of humanity without acknowledging enough the role Indigenous knowledge could/must play. Beneath the surface of a dramatic narrative, a theory of change grounded in a new form of Euro-Western salvation emerges for ecological justice and human survival, which overwrites the

ontologies and epistemologies of marginalized communities. We interpreted the rise of this theory as a reaction to cover a deep fear of the Global North to be sharing, if not shortly losing, control and power. Our critical analysis enabled us to highlight an implicit discourse of coloniality and aberrations, along with the value of examining policies through problematization to better comprehend complex, imperfect, and messy aspects of human realities and policies. The issue of Earth's future survival is critical to consider in policy making. We agree with the CWRC's call for a paradigm shift towards learning how to become a part of the world rather than simply learning about it. We advocate for a post-growth education, which can enable teachers and student to embrace the complexity of a post-growth future that is yet to unfold. This paper proposed to include key actors – teachers and the local community – in formulating educational policy, rethinking teacher preparation, and redesigning curriculum. There is still a chance for policymakers to guide the world towards ecological awareness. In sum, policies are crucial guidelines that shape the world (Ramírez, 2022), and we, as educators and educational leaders, need to understand the policies before considering them for our professional practices.

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