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Moving from global to international understanding: a century of teaching geography across borders

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ABSTRACT

The International Geographical Union's Commission on Geographical Education has, over its history, issued a number of charters that serve as guides for how geography is taught and studied in schools. In order to encourage worldwide cooperation on geography education, the foundational papers to the first Charter were based on the idea of international understanding. During the 33rd International Geographical Union Congress in 2016, the most recent Charter was accepted. That same year was named the International Year of Global Understanding. The development of educational theory and its relationship to social and political circumstances are both reflected in these writings, the central themes of which center on geography education and its role in the school curriculum. Because geography and its values are fundamental to comprehending and making sense of the world from a social and spatial vantage point, every Charter rests on an underlying expression of international educational goals.

KEYWORDS

International understanding; global understanding; international charter; Commission on Geographical Education

Introduction

International understanding was defined by the geographers' community as a foundation for international cooperation on geography education around the world and the promotion of geography education in developing nations from 1919, near the end of World War I, until the mid-twenties of the previous century, or approximately one hundred years ago. This idea spread in part because of the 1922 official formation of the International Geographical Union (IGU) in Brussels. At the centenary IGU Conference in Paris in 2022, we will celebrate the organization's founding and take stock of geography education's recent trajectory in relation to the "centennial + 3" idea of global knowledge. A new idea, global understanding, has been created to govern the scientific discipline of geography and to serve as a guiding light to the IGU Commission on Geographical Education (CGE), which was established about one hundred years after the IGU was founded. On 2015, all three worldwide

Together, the International Councils for Science, Social Science, and Philosophy and the Humanities declared 2016 the International Year of Global Understanding. A major theme during the 33rd International Geophysical Union Conference in Beijing in 2016 was global understanding. Based on the worldwide problems that humanity is now facing, the Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030) were adopted in 2016. This marks the beginning of a fifteen-year period for their implementation. After a century has passed since 1919, the political, economic, and social climates in which we live and teach geography have changed significantly from those that existed immediately after World War I. Over the course of so many years, the IGU has ratified a number of charters and declarations that seek to establish universal standards for the teaching of geography, with an emphasis on both intercultural and global perspectives. First published in 1992, the International Charter on Geographical Education supersedes earlier UNESCO publications on the subject (most notably those from 1949, 1951, 1965, and 1982). The idea behind it was to bring attention to the pressing issues that our planet is currently facing, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN, and UNESCO. These issues include issues related to migration, climate change, deforestation, and globalization, as well as more abstract ones like hunger, poverty, illiteracy, human rights violations, lack of peace, and justice. Internationally recognized as a source that promotes understanding, tolerance, and friendship among nations of the planet, as well as a means to confront the aforementioned challenges that humanity faces, the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace (1974) served as the primary basis for the Charter. Following the first proclamation, three further theme additions were made. Expanding on the original goal of geography education, the International Declaration on Geographical Education for Cultural Diversity (2000) emphasized the importance of teaching students about the world's many cultures, ways of life, and social contexts in order to help build a more equitable, sustainable, and pleasant global community. Embedded in the principles of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), the International Declaration on Geographical Education for Sustainable Development (2007) aims to bring about a positive societal transformation by introducing the concept of sustainability to all facets of education. The importance of research in geography education for informing, supporting, and evaluating progress in geography education was emphasized in the 2015 International Declaration on Research in Geography Education. In 2016, the International Geophysical Union (IGU) approved a new International Charter on Geographical Education, superseding the previous one. This was due to the fact that the previous one had become irrelevant in light of recent developments in the field of geography, the evolution of geographical education, and the spatial challenges that humanity was confronted with, as articulated in documents such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change. The majority of the prior principles are still there in the updated Charter, but new ones include things like learning about different cultures, being an engaged citizen in a globalized society, and developing spatial literacy to make effective use of digital mapping resources.

As a result, educational policy-makers, curriculum creators, geography educators, and geography instructors at all levels—from elementary to university—are addressed in this new Charter, which is pragmatic in nature and revolves around an international action plan on geography education.

A number of significant associations pertaining to geography education, including the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE), the European Association of Geographers (EUROGEO), the Geographical Association (GA), and the American

Association of Geographers (AAG), as well as the various charters and declarations that were prepared and disseminated throughout the years (Bourke & Lane, 2018). Beddingnarz, Burkill, Lidstone, & Rawling (2000), Donert, Hay, Theobald, Valiunaite, & Wakefield (2011), Higgitt et al. (2008), and Klein & Solem (2008) are among the publications that have helped bring attention to the significance of international collaboration in geography education within the aforementioned organizations and other geographers. This research takes a critical historiographical approach to look at how the idea of global awareness has come and gone over the last century as a way of thinking about geography education and how it relates to major epistemological questions.

International understanding through the teaching of geography: Historical background

1919–1939

Before the creation of the IGU Commission addressing "Geography in Schools" in 1952 at the seventeenth IGU Congress in Washington DC, there were academic references on geography education and international understanding going back more than three decades. The Treaty of Versailles, signed on June 18, 1919, includes repeated references to nations working together to ensure international security and peace after the war. Articles 1–26 of the Treaty comprised the League of Nations Covenant. The World Federation of Education Associations (WFEA), which was formally constituted in 1925 at its first World Conference in Edinburgh, but was founded in 1923 in San Francisco, was particularly influenced by this institution's promotion of international understanding (Smith, 1944).

The Geographical Teacher, the first publication of the Geographical Association (published in 1901), had two early allusions to global harmony. In 1920, geographers from all around the globe were welcomed to join this group, expanding its membership beyond the United Kingdom. The Association's academic output and journal in particular aimed to be more globally accessible as a result of this. Therefore, in the Editorial magazine, Fleure (1919) reported that the Geographical Association was engaged in "efforts for international understanding" in the weeks after the Treaty of Versailles's signing. The rise of members from outside the country was later acknowledged in the 1920 Annual Report as "supporting education and inter-national understanding" and "the steady expansion in significance of international inquiries provide credence to our assertion: geographical education, including K-12 and university curricula, is a prerequisite for the growth of global harmony (Fleure, 1921). Atwood published a second study on the subject of globalization, geo-raphy, and international understanding in 1922. Following this, one of the seminal works on the subject of geography education during the last few decades, Geography in School, argued that the subject should be required coursework. Geography classes aid students "to train future citizens to imagine accurately the conditions of the great world stage, and so help them to think sanely about political and social problems in the world around" (Fairgrieve, 1926) by gaining an appreciation for other cultures and their unique geographical locations.

Further, a more in-depth document about international awareness via geography education was published by the WFEA's first president (Thomas, 1932). The perspective on international understanding has also been influenced by the few research on geography

education (Gandy, 1963; Lidstone & Stoltman, 2002; Ursula, 1955). However, as will be discussed in more detail later on, the relationship between the IGU and UNESCO has had the most significant impact on the spread of global awareness in the field of geography education.

An essential step in promoting International Geographical Congresses was the foundation of the IGU as a permanent organization. No group of people associated with geography education was recorded as having attended the Congresses in Cairo (1925), Cambridge (1928), or Paris (1931). There were sixteen contributions to the fourth segment of the Warsaw Congress (1934) that dealt with techniques of teaching geography (International Geographical Union, 1935). The significance of geography in fostering mutual understanding between countries was highlighted in two contributions given in the sixth segment of the Amsterdam Congress (1938)—methodology and didactics—that were directly connected to the aforementioned article submitted by Thomas six years earlier. Beyond mastering political geography and boundary changes, geogra-phy may help students comprehend the global variety of landscapes, cultures, and production methods, according to one contribution each from British geographer Orford and Dutch geographer Portengen. Teaching "geography of human relations" based on the excellent understanding among the inhabitants of the globe was proposed by the former as a supplementary vision for international understanding (Orford, 1938). Regrettably, it was written during the tense days leading up to the Munich Agreement, which was eventually recognized as the disastrous appeasement strategy that led to World War II.

years

1939–1951.

The first report on "The Teaching of Geography in Secondary Schools, according to the data provided by Ministries of Education" was published in 1939 by the International Bureau of Education (IBE), which has been integrated into UNESCO since 1969. This report helped to strengthen the international perception of geography education. World War II broke out that same year, putting an end to the dream of international peace. Two international organizations, the United Nations and UNESCO, were founded after the war. The UN's foundational treaty, the San Francisco Charter of 1945, included universal principles and international rights for all humans.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was released in 1948 and proclaimed the following ideals in its Preamble: equality, justice, freedom, economic and social development, and human rights.

Another UN organ, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was also established in 1945 with the goal of fostering cultural and educational understanding among nations in order to prevent a global resurgence of hostilities and preserve international peace. UNESCO's founding document, the UNESCO Constitution, restated the organization's guiding principles from the Charter of San Francisco and stated that UNESCO's primary mission would be to promote international understanding and cooperation among nations in this endeavor. According to Bouillette and Vil'a Valent'i (1971), the Commission on Geographical Education at UNESCO Recognizing the importance of geography, history, and the social sciences as foundational

fields for its mission, UNESCO supported three important projects in 1949 that provide light on the evolution of geography education throughout the world:

1. The adoption of Recommendation number 26, called "The Teaching of Geography and International Understanding" (UNESCO, 1949a), was made at the 12th International Conference on Public Instruction and was addressed to the Ministries of Education of UNESCO Member States. The recommendation urged that geography curricula should no longer be country-centric but rather should embrace comparative teaching with other nations and geographical spaces. UNESCO held the belief that it is possible to form a national identity and love for one's own country while also understanding and respecting other nations, all of which have equal rights.
2. The publication of "Handbook for the improvement of textbooks and teaching materials as aids to international understanding" (UNESCO, 1949b), which was disseminated at the Montreal seminar in 1950, specific to geography: the teaching of geography as a means of developing international understanding. The first General Conference of UNESCO in 1946 had drawn attention to the ethnic and political indoctrination carried out in the German educational system of the Third Reich through textbooks. That is why UNESCO focused its action on school textbooks, especially those of geography and history (Power, 2015). This debate of textbooks brought as a consequence the creation of the Georg Eckert Institute for the International Research of Textbooks in 1951. Its initial task was the constitution of a French-German commission in that same year for the revision of the textbooks of geography and history based on the principle of reciprocal understanding. It meant the reconciliation and finalization of a rivalry manifested from the colonial era, the Franco-Prussian War, and later in both World Wars. In this sense, it is not a coincidence that the Treaty of Paris was signed and the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was formed as the first step toward the European Communities (similar to today's European Union) in the same year of 1951.
3. A booklet titled "Some suggestions on the teaching of geo-graphy" (UNESCO, 1949c), authored by Robert Ficheux, was published as Volume VII of the UNESCO Series on International Understanding. The booklet started with a reminder.

In accordance with UNESCO's mission to "consolidate through education that foundation of peace that is based on the knowledge and mutual understanding of the peoples," the 16th IGU Congress was held in Lisbon in 1949, the first in eleven years after the Amsterdam Congress in 1938 due to World War II. At this Congress, Neville Scarfe was appointed chair of the Geography Teaching Committee, which would later become the Commission. Scarfe became a counselor of the Joint Seminar (Committee Teaching IGU-UNESCO) of Montreal in 1950 and used the aforementioned booklet to document the debates and studies. Following the seminar's deliberations, Scarfe reviewed the document and had it published with the new title of "Handbook of Suggestions on the Teaching of Geography: It served as the primary resource for the 1965 source book, which was further detailed, and was also translated into many languages by UNESCO.

UNESCO's assistance for the IGU-CGE from 1952 to 1982: fostering better geography education and global understanding

During the 17th IGU Congress in Washington D.C., a commission named "Teaching Geography in Schools" was established. In 1952, there were some challenges, according to Bouillette and Vil'aValent'i (1971) and Lidstone and Stoltman (2002), even if there was a vague precedent from 1904 (Schneider, 1972; Wise, 1992). Until the 18th IGU Congress in Rio de Janeiro in 1956, when Benoit Brouillette was chosen as the new President of the Commission, Neville Scarfe remained in his role as the first President. The present name of the IGU-CGE was adopted at the 21st IGU Congress that took place in New Delhi in 1968.

Geography textbook published by UNESCO in 1965
Through the signing of many research contracts since 1957, Brouillette solidified the partnership between the IGU Commission and UNESCO. Their ultimate goal was to compile a resource that would serve as a guidebook or guide for educators, enhancing their knowledge of geography and inspiring them to include it into their lessons. regarding their pupils in accordance with the ideas of global understanding among all people (Brouillette & Vil'a Valent'i, 1971). At the 20th IGU Congress, which took place in 2018, some of the results of the study were shown. in 1964 in London. Nevertheless, the end result was the 1965 UNESCO Source Book for Geography Teaching, which became the go-to guide for geography teacher education in numerous nations and had extensive international dissemination thanks to its translation into eleven languages. Later on, as a way to adopt the Source Book regionally, two more volumes were released: one for Latin America in Spanish (Brouillette & Vil'a Valent'i, 1975) and one for Africa (Brouillette, Graves, & Last, 1974). An affirmation of principles—common ground—starts the Source Book. among individuals, literacy on a global scale, and civic education for young people — as well as practical pedagogies that make the guide applicable to classrooms worldwide and

in different settings. Because they were more manageable for pupils, geographers began by focusing on regional and local spatial challenges in the classroom. This paved the way for a gradual shift in focus to national and worldwide dimensions, where students learned about the importance of understanding and solidarity across nations.

UNESCO's 1974 report
Regardless, 1974 was the year when international awareness and geography's contribution were officially acknowledged by institutions. While the Source Book was being put into practice, UNESCO passed a "Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace, and Education related to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms." This global consensus not only reaffirmed the principles of the Source Book for geography education, but it also urged the member states of UNESCO to incorporate the global dimension of training into their education policies in order to foster students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Part 45 of the Recommendation echoed this sentiment, calling for "wider exchanges of textbooks, especially history and geography textbooks and other educational materials to ensure that they are accurate, balanced, up to date and unprejudiced and will enhance mutual knowledge and understanding between

different

peoples."

The 1982 edition of the new UNESCO textbook on geography. When the approach was revised twenty-two years ago, the historical backdrop was drastically different. When the 23rd International Geophysical Union Congress took place in Moscow in 1976, geopolitical tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union had little impact on the development and strengthening of international cooperation in geographical research. Despite this, there was hardly any mention of international understanding in the 1972–1980 UNESCO Source Book for Geography Teaching authored by the Chair of the IGU Commission on Geography Education (Graves, 1982). Among the many goals of this updated reference work was to promote geography as a field of study with practical applications in economics, sociology, ecology, and geography education. It also included the new jargon of education, such as course design, problem solving, assessment of learning objectives, and curricular structuring. At the turn of the 1980s, the world was facing new challenges—the Cold War was heating up, the economy was in shambles, environmental issues were on the rise, and a technological revolution was on the brink of onset—that made the old idea of international understanding, defined during the age of big conflagrations, appear archaic.

From 1992 until 2016, the era of worldwide geography education charters and declarations

The conceptual transition from international understanding to global citizenship was acknowledged by Joe Stoltman, who chaired the IGU Commission on Geography Education from 1980 to 1988.

worldwide curriculum and worldwide concerns, especially with the launch of the Global Geography Project (Lidstone & Stoltman, 2002; Stoltman, 2006). Between 1988 and 1996 (Haubrich, 2006) and 1996 and 2000 (Gerber, 2003), the Commission Chairs were in agreement with the growing global agenda for geography education in the latter half of the twentieth century.

A global charter for the field of geography education, 1992. Located in the nation's capital, the 27th IGU Congress took place in 1992. reaffirmed the Global Charter for Geographical Education. In particular, the UNESCO Recommendation of 1974 about Education for International Understanding and the aforementioned UN and UNESCO Charters, Constitutions, and Declarations provided the foundation for this paper. But the IGU Charter never once used this term again. After the introduction of the global approach in geographical education literature, as mentioned earlier, the Charter declared the "right to high quality geographical education, both a balanced regional and national identity and a commitment to international and global perspectives." Therefore, the primary goal of geography education now is international and global commitment, rather than international understanding, as it was seventy-three years ago. Put simply, the globe has undergone tremendous transformation during the last few decades. Geographical analysis as a field is now much more nuanced. The growing number of society-environment ties, spatial interconnections, environmental consequences, and scale

interactions need more reflection in geographical education in order to help students gain knowledge, understanding, skills, and values in this area. In line with the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation, the Charter emphasized the significance of teaching global geography in order to foster tolerance, understanding, and friendship among all nations through a "international dimension and a global perspective." The emphasis shifted from international understanding to awareness of global interdependence, solidarity, and cooperation. Therefore, in order to encourage geography educators from all nations to engage in bilateral or multilateral interactions, the Charter centered on International Cooperation. National geography associations play an active role in meeting with national education policy makers to set curriculum, and international geography associations like EUROGEO (which was founded in 1979 and formerly known as ESCGTA, as mentioned in the Charter Appendix A) and the International Geographical Union (IGU-CGE) have helped to consolidate an international geography education workforce (Stoltman, 1997).

A global statement on the importance of geography education in promoting cultural variety, 2000
However, the Chair of the Commission came to the realization that, given the varied state of geographical education between nations, the goal of globally uniform geography instruction was unattainable. The International Declaration on Geographical Education for Cultural Diversity, drafted by Rod Gerber, was presented and accepted during the 2000 general business meeting of the IGU-CGE in Seoul, chaired by Lea Houtsonen. The idea of

The new document did not incorporate international understanding, since it was predicated on the statement, "geographical research and teaching makes a major contribution to our understanding of the cultural, social and industrial environments of the world." This statement was obviously shaped by the foundational expression, according to Graves and Stoltman (2015), who argued that cultural diversity and the acceptance of diversity are aspects of international understanding, rather than its central concept. The document ended with the expression of "global geographical education," thus reinforcing the global approach for the upcoming references, without minimizing the Declaration's good contributions to the human, cultural, social, and environmental aspects of geography education.

Geographical education for sustainable development: the 2007 Lucerne Declaration
At the 2007 Regional Symposium of the IGU-CGE in Lucerne, Hartwig Haubrich, Sibylle Reinfried, and Yvonne Schleicher—all of whom had previously served as Chair of the IGU Commission—presented a Declaration on Geographical Education for Sustainable Development. With the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development running from 2005 to 2014 as a backdrop, the Commission (headed by Lex Chalmers) saw this as a chance to reaffirm its commitment to ESD education. Although it was seen as a continuation of the International Charter de 1992, the term "international" was omitted from the title. Instead, the emphasis was on sustainable development, methods for putting it into practice, geographical competences and educational curricula

that promote sustainable development, and the role of ICT in geography education. In spite of this, the study's focus on international education discourse does provide some intriguing suggestions. To start with, "unwise to seek consensus on a global curriculum" was one of the things that the Declaration had said. In order to address global issues and geographical phenomena with a global dimension, it sought to include regional and national requirements, information, skills, and attitudes into national curriculum. The statement emphasizes the idea of intercultural awareness as the foundation for global learning, which is made possible by advancements in information and communication technology, digital media, online collaboration, and international cooperation.

In the modern era, a worldwide strategy for mutual understanding
From 2013 to 2016, the
Despite two updates, the International Charter is still out of date and ill-suited to the current social, educational, and geographical climate. To assert a stronger position of global leadership in geography education and impact the processes of globalization and education on a global scale, the worldwide community of geography educators has to devote even more resources to addressing global ethics in the field (Haubrich, 2009). As a result, three crucial papers have been put forth to strengthen the global partnership in geography education.

on a worldwide scale, and as preparatory materials for the 2016-approved revised International Charter.

All three organizations—IGU (including CGE), EUROGEO, and EUGEO—signed a Joint Declaration on Geographical Education in Europe in 2013. The importance of geography education for Europe's future has been reaffirmed, and advocates have pushed for its formal inclusion in school curriculum, as well as for more time and better preparation for geography educators. At the 2014 EUROGEO Conference in Malta and the IGU Regional Conference in Krakow, Poland, Joop Van der Schee—one of the two co-chairs of the IGU Commission—presented an International Strategy for Geography Education. In order to strengthen the field of geography education, this statement argued that a robust professional network of geography educators is necessary to establish a worldwide research agenda.

The 2015 International Geographical Union Regional Conference in Moscow proclaimed a global statement on geographical education research. An worldwide culture of geography education, characterized by the planning and execution of research studies at different scales using international collaboration methods, was the goal of the IGU Commission in drafting this statement. The United Nations General Assembly's Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Paris Agreement were two more significant events of 2015. Even though these projects aren't often associated with geographers, any modernized geography curriculum must include them due to the spatial dimension of their influence on the global agenda.

Global agreement on the teaching of geography, 2016

The 2016 International Charter on Geographical Education was drafted by Joop van der Schee and John Lidstone, who were also co-chairs of the IGU Commission. In an effort to reach a global consensus on geography education, draft versions have been reviewed with stakeholders from organizations such as EUROGEO, EUGEO, AAG, SEAGA, and others. At its 2016 meeting in Beijing, the 33rd IGU Congress ratified the revised charter. Prior papers, including the 1992 Charter, the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation, and the Sustainable Development Goals, 2015, are first acknowledged. Consequently, it merges the tradition of mutual respect with the modern global issues and objectives of the United Nations.

Nevertheless, a cursory examination of the document reveals a distinction in the usage of the two terms: worldwide is used 40 times in a 10-page document, whereas global is used just six times in the new Charter, primarily to describe the present world system (global scale, global perspectives, global economy, global interconnections). There are several additional places where the phrase is used, such as the International Geographical Union, International Charters, and International Declarations. The new Charter encourages and recommends international cooperation and an international action plan, among many others. Given the current state of globalization, it is quite evident that teaching geography on a global scale is even more required compared to a century ago. In the beginning, it was crucial because geography education helped build global understanding, which in turn led to peace on a global scale. Sustainable development, climate change, globalization (the economic, cultural, and social aspects of globalization as a result of technological advancements in transportation and communication), and the rise of multilateralism and global geopolitics since the Cold War's end are all examples of global challenges that geography education has helped students better understand.

Teaching geography to foster intercultural awareness

Despite the absence of the phrase "global understanding" from the new Charter, the connections between the two are clear. With the help of the IGU, 2016 was first declared the International Year of Global Understanding. The revised Charter was ratified during the 33rd IGU Congress, which included Global Understanding as one of its five main issues. However, the topic of global understanding was the focus of one plenary session as well as other parallel sessions.

You can now check the initiative's progress on, although IGU has been supporting it since then.

the 34th International Geophysical Union Congress (now scheduled for 2020 in Istanbul, but moved to 2021) and the Centennial Conference (Paris, 2022) (their homepage) and will keep doing so going forward. Two areas have received particular focus from the IGU-CGE regarding international comprehension. With the new Charter in place, it held specialized sessions on global understanding at its 2017 (Lisbon) and 2018 (Quebec) Symposia. Second, Geography Education for Global Understanding is the title of one of the three volumes released by Springer as part of the International Perspectives on Geographical Education Series, which is the crown jewel of the IGU Commission's efforts (Demirci, De Miguel, & Bednarz, 2018). Among the twenty-one contributions are those of Chew-Hung Chang, the current co-chair, Rafael de Miguel, Sarah Bednarz, the former

president of the AAG, Joop van der Schee, the former chair of the commission, and co-authors of the 2016 charter. Most of these individuals establish a connection between global understanding and the new charter.

A bottom-up approach to improving the quantitative and qualitative aspects of geography education, leading to better-educated people who make positive contributions to society, is shared by both the principles of global knowledge and the new Charter. Learning geography is an educational right for every human being, and understanding sustainable development in the global context is a basic condition to protect Earth's future. Both principles highlight the need of the international community of geography educators making a commitment (Stoltman, Lidstone, & Kidman, 2017).

Research results and 2019 conclusions

To compare the conceptual evolution from international understanding to global understanding, which is a main trend in the centennial trajectory of geography education's internationalization, Table 1 summarizes the findings from the diachronic analysis of the international approaches from the perspective of the milestones in geography education.

Currently, the world is more complex and more interconnected than ever to be taught from a geographical perspective. Therefore, the global understanding approach is needed to implement a holistic learning of the Earth and the society processes and phenomena at the beginning of the 21st century. The fear of another war, a kind of obsession in the past decades, later prolonged by the Cold War and the risks of a Third “nuclear” World War, has been a constant in the political agenda and, therefore, in the educational discourses on social sciences. Today, we attend to regional conflicts or political confrontations due to religious or nationalist reaffirmations, which geography education must address. The world conflicts nowadays are virtual with a technological, environmental, or trade aspect attached more than the army one. Let us take three examples: the confrontation between China and the United States over tariffs, 5 G networks, and the fulfillment of Paris Agreement for climate change. Any of these examples or others like natural risks and hazards, population growth, and most of the Sustainable Development Goals has an indisputable spatial and geographical approach. One of the most important lessons learnt from Covid-19 pandemic is that geographical space matters because its global way of transmission. Again, mutual suspicions between China and the United States as global superpowers (reciprocal accusations about the origin of the infection, race to get the vaccine, withdrawal of the WHO) are based on a lack of international understanding, with indisputable consequences on global geopolitics.

Therefore, a combined international and global geographical approach is more needed today than ever before in a more complex framework of geography as a reference (both as a disciplinary science and a higher education field) for geography as a school subject. In the times of neo-geography and cyber-geography, the borders of the geographical knowledge are becoming more and more blurry. Thus, international

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