

Article

Unsustainability and Decolonial Thinking: Considerations Beyond ESD

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Abstract

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has gained immense importance due to the global political call for sustainable development. At the same time, the devastating effects of anthropogenic climate change are increasing every year. Humanity is confronted with a situation of sustainable unsustainability. This contribution argues that current competence-oriented approaches to ESD maintain and reinforce unsustainability. Methodological individualism is identified as a main problem in ESD. Furthermore, the human-nature dualism and the idea of an undifferentiated humanity are discussed as problematic epistemic preconditions in the modern Western mindset. Another problem of ESD approaches is the denial and perpetuation of colonial and imperial orders. With regard to these findings, we discuss ways to overcome epistemic preconditions of ESD. We point to collective consciousness and global solidarity as different modes of living and being that offer decolonial alternatives to a good life. Such a reconceptualization implies a repoliticization of education in times of anthropogenic climate change that focuses on the entanglements in epistemic assumptions and conditions of unsustainability as central reference points.

Keywords: ESD critique; epistemic preconditions in ESD; decolonial thinking; global solidarity

1. Introduction

The year 2025 was another marked by extremes. The consequences of anthropogenic climate change were devastatingly apparent on a global scale. In May, Blatten in the Swiss canton of Wallis was destroyed by a debris and ice avalanche, leaving people homeless. In the same month, the Nigerian city of Mokwa was flooded, and people had to flee; many died. On 30 June, The Guardian reported on a heat dome across Europe and highlighted the associated dangers for humans (SRF, 2025; The Guardian, 2025; UN News, 2025).

These three incidents illustrate the serious consequences of anthropogenic climate change. They also point out that the effects of natural destruction are closely tied to social injustice: The most vulnerable and poorest population groups suffer most from the effects of climate change, even though they are not the ones who have contributed the most to climate change. Furthermore, these incidents demonstrate that sustainability and sustainable development, as well as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), do not meet general expectations (Blühndorn, 2020, p. 75; Stein et al., 2022).

The problem of unsustainable social and economic practices is widely acknowledged. There is a well-founded consensus on the existence of anthropogenic climate change, not only in scientific but also in social and media discourses. Nevertheless, only minimal efforts are being made to change this unsustainable situation. Blühndorn (2020) discusses



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this contradiction as “sustainable unsustainability”. He states that unsustainability refers to the simultaneity of an unparalleled level of knowledge about—and public awareness of—ecological and climatic changes, their causes and their effects, on the one hand, and the staunch defence of structures and lifestyles that are known to be ecologically and socially destructive on the other (Blühndorn, 2020, p. 66; see also Euler, 2022). According to Blühndorn, there are two main reasons for this remarkable contradiction: Within the sustainability paradigm, the logic of growth-oriented progress and development has never been seriously contested, and ecological matters have been depoliticized. For example, these problems are not considered in the context of global social injustices, and forms of externalization of environmental damage to the Global South (Lessenich, 2016) are consequently ignored. Furthermore, technological solutions (which may never exist in the future) are proposed as the only solution to the climate crisis. Under these circumstances, the search for actual political measures is neglected.

Against this background, we argue that current competence-oriented approaches to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) also contain tendencies to perpetuate unsustainability. In a first step, we identify three shortcomings of ESD. We focus on the question: What is flawed about ESD? (Section 2). We address methodological individualism as a main problem in ESD approaches (Section 2.1). Further, we discuss the human-nature dualism and the idea of an undifferentiated humanity as problematic epistemic preconditions in the modern Western mindset (Section 2.2). Another problem in ESD approaches lies in the denial and perpetuation of colonial and imperial orders (Section 2.3). These issues maintain and reinforce sustainable unsustainability, and to think beyond ESD, we argue from a decolonial point of view (Section 3). Hence, we discuss ways to overcome problematic epistemic preconditions (Section 3.1). We point to collective consciousness and global solidarity as different modes of living and being that offer decolonial alternatives to a good life. In doing so, we focus in particular on the concept of *buen vivir* (Section 3.2). Finally, we summarize our key findings in a conclusion (Section 4).

2. Shortcomings of ESD

ESD has gained immense importance due to the global political call for sustainable development, and since the adoption of the UN 2030 Agenda in 2015, nation states have been under considerable pressure to implement it as an integral part of their education systems. Providing learning opportunities that enable students to acquire the skills considered essential for sustainable development is a major priority. ESD is understood as a lifelong learning process, which “empowers learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society empowering people of all genders, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity” (UNESCO, 2020, p. 8; see also UNESCO, 2022).

In contrast to this, critical voices argue that ESD establishes a direct link between education and global socio-economic problems, resulting in the individualization of solutions to global crises (Kehren, 2016; McCowan et al., 2025; Obex & Scherrer, 2022). Additionally, Danielzik (2013) explores how ESD reproduces and reinforces existing injustices. Stein et al. (2023) argue similarly: “Pedagogies that seek to address the climate and nature emergency (CNE) [...] are rooted in the same modern/colonial system that created the CNE and other ‘wicked’ socio-ecological challenges in the first place, and thus they are not well-suited for preparing students to navigate these challenges” (p. 8).

ESD approaches mask social injustices as an attempt to reconcile the pursuit of economic growth with environmental protection and the establishment of (global) social justice. The rhetoric of sustainable (economic) development obscures the inherent contradiction

between continuous growth and environmental protection (Alaimo, 2012, p. 559; Danielzik, 2013, p. 30). Analyzing numerous ESD materials, Danielzik (2013) concludes that ESD fails to address historically established and ongoing colonial and capitalist relations of domination and exploitation, or at least it does not question them in any decisive way (see also Greger Eriksen, 2018; McCowan et al., 2025). This leads to the reproduction of these problematic global relations.

2.1. Methodological Individualism

Similar to other neoliberal educational concepts (e.g., Futures Literacy and Foresight, Global Citizenship Education), ESD aims to develop individual-level skills and competencies. Such ideas for addressing global challenges are grounded in the paradigm of methodological individualism, which holds that adequate explanations of social phenomena must be linked to individual motivations and behaviour (Neck, 2019). This view is tied to rational models of behaviour, in which human actions are understood in terms of teleological and intentional premises. Although there are numerous critical views of rational choice approaches, the dominant view in educational and social sciences seems to be that social phenomena can be explained by individuals' actions (Joas, 1996).

In ESD-related learning environments, learners often are addressed as consumers: For example, students should learn to make "green" consumption choices. The idea is as follows: if individuals made "greener" consumption choices, this would have a significant overall impact on a general shift towards increased sustainability. This way of thinking locates both the causes of the climate crisis and its "solution" at the individual level. The understanding of social phenomena as an aggregation of individual actions is an example of methodological individualism. A quote by Pongratz from an article on ecological education published in 1995 illustrates what this might mean:

"The greater good should be the sum of the good intentions of individuals, just as environmental crises can be explained as the sum of individual misconduct and intellectual short-sightedness. What remains unquestioned and unaddressed are the social power relations themselves, the structural causes of crisis in the industrial system, which supersede the actions of individuals" (Pongratz, 1995, p. 163f.; translation TO & MS).

The concept "responsibilization" refers precisely to the individualization of responsibility (Soneryd & Ugglä, 2015, p. 914). Responsibilization implies a subjectivizing attribution of responsibility as assigned individual responsibility. Following Michel Foucault's productive understanding of power, responsibilization is a 'gouvernemental' strategy that 'makes' subjects responsible and encourages them to engage in the most desirable form of sustainable self-management, e.g., as "green" consumers (Scherrer, 2024, p. 167).

Various ESD approaches focus on responsibilization, because they strive to enable individuals to acquire sub-competencies subsumed under the term shaping competence ("Gestaltungskompetenz"; de Haan, 2010). Kehren (2016) noted that shaping competence as one of ESD's primary goals is mostly uncritical. Although, in general, shaping competence aims to change problematic circumstances, the reasons *why* these changes are necessary are often not addressed in educational settings (Ketschau & Steib, 2023, p. 297). From a critical educational perspective, however, maturity ("Mündigkeit") and the ability to make judgments ("Urteilsfähigkeit") precisely mean that subjects are able to consider *conditions* and *possibilities* for action in a given situation (Kehren, 2017, p. 66). The discourse that views socio-ecological transformation as being driven by individuals must be questioned by identifying the problems that arise when individuals are addressed as "green consumers" rather than as citizens with political rights.

Thus, in educational contexts, it would be necessary to avoid false promises of "projective hope, simplistic solutions, and innocence" (Stein et al., 2023, p. 991). It is essential

to ask why transformation towards sustainability is not taking place: Why is it not being achieved? What are the reasons for the persistent unsustainability that manifests itself in excessive resource consumption, massive losses of biodiversity, unrestrained CO₂ emissions, scarcity of clean water, soil erosion, and so on?

A critical and in-depth exploration of the causes of ecological crises, global destruction of nature, and social injustices is essential to counter the depoliticization of socio-ecological problems. This is what Euler (2022) has referred to as “reflective subject-matter competence” (p. 85), which requires the integration of critical social analyses into educational practice. Such an understanding of education can be achieved if injustices and their causes are systematically placed at the centre of reflection.

Methodological individualism is also problematic because this perspective often triggers overwhelming feelings in learners that may lead to resignation (Scherrer & Obex, 2023). We also argue that the impulse to primarily focus on individual opportunities for action is based on powerful Western ways of thinking (see Section 2.2). Thus, ESD not only creates a practical problem for learners. ESD is also problematic on an epistemological level: in the next section, we show that the human-nature dualism and the idea of an undifferentiated humanity remain unexamined as preconditions for thinking in ESD.

2.2. Human-Nature Dualism and the Idea of an Undifferentiated Humanity

In this section, we first clarify what we mean by “preconditions” for thinking. The world is conceived and produced from a specific point of view, and cultural processes create not only knowledge and insights but also ideas and imagination. However, it is not important whether ideas are true or false. In knowledge production, ideas primarily have a heuristic function (Fleck, 1980). As epistemic preconditions, they influence social, scientific, political, and educational discourses. Epistemic preconditions define the framework within which knowledge can be gained, and they constitute a “thought style” (“Denkstil”; Fleck, 1980, p. 38). This not only has an orienting function but also limits thinking. In that way, the preconditions impede us from seeing alternatives.

ESD is an anthropocentric concept (de Haan, 2008), meaning that humans and nature are understood in dualistic terms. This conceptualization, which we see as an influential epistemic precondition, has been criticized by various authors (e.g., Alaimo, 2012; Greger Eriksen, 2018; Gudynas, 2011; Haraway, 1995; Moore, 2015; Tsing, 2015). Especially posthuman and new materialist thinkers such as Alaimo (2012), Haraway (1995) or Tsing (2015), to name just a few, have been challenging this epistemic precondition for decades. The human-nature dualism that prevails in the Western mindset is evident, for example, when the relationship between “humans” (or society, culture, etc.) and “nature” is discussed as if these were clearly distinguishable entities. Nature is seen as a passive object affected by human actions. Jason W. Moore considers the influential metaphor of the ecological “footprint” to be rooted in this problematic understanding and worthy of scrutiny: “For critical scholars—Red, Green, and many blends in between—the consensus is clear: capitalism acts upon nature that operates independently of humanity. [. . .] For a broader public concerned about climate and sustainability, a cognate consensus now reigns: humanity makes a ‘footprint’ on the earth, which must be reduced” (Moore, 2015, p. 6).

This ignores the fact that human activity not only affects nature, as humans are part of “nature-as-matrix” (Moore, 2015, p. 172). This refers to an understanding of nature “that operates not only outside and inside our bodies (from global climate to the micro-biome) but also through our bodies” (Moore, 2015, p. 172). In this light, the manifold interconnections between nature, human, and more-than-human actors come into focus, making it impossible to draw clear boundaries (Alaimo, 2012, p. 561). The human-nature dualism is not only problematic because it undermines the above-mentioned

interconnections and interdependences. It is also problematic because it perpetuates hierarchies between categories. This creates a structure of legitimacy for instrumentalizing, dominating, and exploiting the subordinated (Haraway, 1995; Nail, 2024; Plumwood, 1993): “We remain a species that continues to reify an earth-for-us” (Jagodzinski, 2015, p. 84).

This understanding of the relationship between humans and nature is not the only option. Other ways of thinking do not perceive humans and nature as separate entities. In these approaches, the focus is no longer on “what humanity *does to* nature” (Moore, 2015, p. 5). Alternatively, it is a matter of learning to think about the “double internality”—“humanity-in-nature/nature-in-humanity” (Moore, 2015, p. 5)—to acknowledge the manifold relationships between and interconnectedness of human and more-than-human ways of living and being (Tsing, 2015).

The dualism between humans and nature is linked to the idea of an “undifferentiated humanity” (Schulz, 2017, p. 49). ESD approaches that address the concept of the Anthropocene often refer to humanity or humans. Global, national, regional, and local social inequalities in terms of the causes and consequences of anthropogenic climate change are not taken into account. In contrast, it is argued that “the realities of differentiated vulnerability on all scales of human society” (Malm & Hornborg, 2014, p. 66) should be viewed as essential: “When the complex environmental challenges of our times are accounted for in aggregated terms, we lose sight of the situated conflicts, warped distribution of wealth and unequal power relations that engine ‘the great acceleration’. As a consequence, the space for political contestation, debate, and reorientation is also restricted” (Lövbrand et al., 2015, p. 214).

From a decolonial perspective, it is not sufficient to make only minor adjustments to social and economic conditions. Rather, we need to tackle the underlying values and norms that have led to the global climate catastrophe, which threatens the survival of countless human and more-than-human beings. The powerful assumptions underlying Western modernity must be countered with narratives that break with the human-nature-dichotomy and with the idea of an undifferentiated humanity. We will elaborate on this in Section 3, “Beyond ESD.” Before that, we will show how the aforementioned preconditions for thinking perpetuate imperial and colonial orders.

2.3. Denial and Perpetuation of Imperial and Colonial Orders

In *Discours sur le colonialisme*, Césaire (1950/2010) denounces European colonialism. He passionately exposes crimes committed against the people of the Global South. Galeano (2015) and Fanon (1961) recall similar experiences, and Dussel (1998) impressively demonstrates how modernity and modern Western philosophy are interwoven with colonialism. Representatives of postcolonial approaches, such as Said (1978), Chakrabarty (2000), and Spivak (1988), examine the significance of colonial history. They analyze the relationship between colonial power and knowledge production, which has an ongoing impact in former colonies. Furthermore, Brand and Wissen (2017) demonstrate how imperial lifestyles and capitalism hinder socio-ecological transformation. And Malcom Ferdinand’s *Decolonial Ecology: Thinking from the Caribbean World* (2025) demonstrates the entanglement of slavery and environmental destruction.

There is a common thread in these works: the danger of Western modern thinking for a ‘good’ life for humans and nature. They highlight the manifold problems of an ideology that underlies exploitative, violent, and exclusionary practices. According to decolonial theorists, this way of thinking obscures and legitimizes colonial continuities. In addition to the material effects of colonial history, the epistemic assumptions of oppression are also of particular importance. ESD is used as an ally of an imperial way of life (Brand & Wissen, 2017), as imperial and colonial maxims are generally neither made transparent nor

problematized in educational settings (Stein et al., 2023; Danielzik, 2013). Following Euler (2022), it is central to consider these structures in ESD.

From a decolonial perspective, Santos (2007) argues for addressing absences. By absences, he refers to a knowledge that is excluded from the hegemonic Western mindset. He states that Western modernity perpetuates an abyssal thinking based on a fixation on visible and invisible differences. “The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of ‘this side of the line’ and the realm of ‘the other side of the line.’ The division is such that ‘the other side of the line’ vanishes as reality, becomes nonexistent, and is indeed produced as nonexistent. Nonexistent means not existing in any relevant or comprehensible way of being” (Santos, 2007, p. 45).

When specific knowledge remains invisible, it is a forced distinction. It would be an important first step to reflect on this. Forms of knowledge that offer alternative perspectives in relation to the problematic dualism between humans and nature or the concept of an undifferentiated humanity are particularly relevant in the context of ESD. By no longer neglecting this “invisible” knowledge, Western epistemological assumptions could be challenged. And the new insights gained from this could form the basis for transformations that take every human and more-than-human being into account.

3. Beyond ESD

To think beyond ESD, we have to start digging beneath our own feet and set out to actively unlearn our own dominant knowledge (Danielzik, 2013, p. 32). Authors such as Danielzik (2013), McCowan et al. (2025), and Stein et al. (2022, 2023) therefore criticize the universal mode of the modern imperative of development and growth. It reproduces imbalances of power, and these authors consider post- and decolonial theories to be opening other perspectives. ESD, Danielzik (2013) specifically argues, should not tell the story of colonialism as a closed chapter in which the territorial dimension of colonialism is overemphasized. To this end, the West would have to confront colonial continuities on both a material and epistemic level, and an openness to other forms of being and living would have to be developed, motivated by the realization that Western thinking is not universal.

ESD mainly operates within the logic of (economic) growth, development, and optimization (e.g., Ferdinand, 2021; Machado de Oliveira, 2021; McCowan et al., 2025; Stein et al., 2023). Efforts to consider ecological, economic, and social issues in their interrelationships (de Haan, 2008, p. 24) do not fundamentally challenge the foundations (exploitative, unjust, etc.) of economic and social conditions as determined by the “colonial power matrix” (Mignolo, 2009, p. 177). The colonial power matrix is “a complex conceptual structure that guided actions in the domain of economy (exploitation of labor and appropriation of land/natural resources), authority (government, military forces), gender/sexuality and knowledge/subjectivity” (Mignolo, 2009, p. 177).

We propose Mignolo’s (2009) “Epistemic Disobedience” as a method of intervening in established power dynamics. Epistemic disobedience is a practice of liberation and decolonization of modes of being and knowing.

3.1. Rethinking the Preconditions of One’s Own Thinking

We have shown that methodological individualism is part of a hegemonic epistemology that structures ESD approaches as a precondition for thinking. As a result, certain ways of living and being are not taken into account in ESD: They remain invisible, they are absent. Below, we outline ways in which epistemic assumptions can be questioned. One decolonial approach to this is the post-abyssal thinking of Santos (2007). Postabyssal thinking does not mean replacing one form of knowledge with another and thus continuing the hierarchy of

types of knowledge. Rather, it is about perceiving and recognizing non-existent emotional and spiritual knowledge as a legitimate form of knowledge.

We would like to illustrate these considerations with an example. In Western modern thinking, the idea of a successful life is based on economic concepts such as growth, progress, and prosperity. A radically different idea of a good life can be found in the concept of *buen vivir*. It originates from Latin America and offers alternatives to hegemonic understandings of the good life (Acosta, 2015; Gudynas, 2011; Walsh, 2010). *Buen vivir* is part of the philosophy of indigenous communities but is also found in feminist, ecological, and Marxist approaches (Acosta, 2015). This philosophy does not exist solely as an abstract worldview but manifests itself in lived practices based on community and solidarity (see Section 3.2) rather than exploitation and domination (see Section 2.3). In Ecuador and Bolivia, *buen vivir* is enshrined in the constitution. It sets social inclusion and equality as well as the protection of biodiversity and natural resources as fundamental principles (Gudynas, 2011). The objective is a sustainable way of life based on a relational, respectful, and ethical relationship between humans and more-than-human others (Acosta & Abarca, 2018; Escobar, 2018). “*Buen vivir* is a contrast to the capitalist way of life” (Guerrero, 2018, p. 42): The understanding that humans are an integral part of nature makes it impossible to plunder natural resources and, in return, carelessly dump toxic waste into nature, thereby destroying entire ecosystems. This represents a radical break with the Western dichotomy between humans and nature (see Section 2.2).

The concepts of coexistence, plurinationality, biocentrism, justice, responsibility, connectedness, and dignity are considered guiding principles in *buen vivir* that radically rejects neoliberal imperatives of growth and development (Walsh, 2010): Growth and development are irrelevant in *buen vivir*. It can be seen as a decolonial option that challenges the modern Western mindset while also addressing issues of sustainability (Obex & Scherrer, 2023). However, it should not be understood as a clear collection of guidelines. “*Buen vivir* requires a rich, dynamic and complex vision that is a path in itself, rather than a destination” (Acosta & Abarca, 2018, p. 132). This also makes it clear that *buen vivir* does not offer any final solutions. Rather, it should be understood as a social process driven by continuous measures against hegemonic concepts of development, growth, and progress.

Communities that have long fostered alternatives to exploitative and destructive ways of life, and that are based on solidarity rather than exploitation, can provide starting points or points of reference for a good life. But only the realization that one is caught up in the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo, 2009, p. 177) allows one to acknowledge one’s own involvement in the hegemonic imperial and colonial world order. It is through this in-depth examination of one’s involvement that other ways of being and knowing (such as *buen vivir*) can open up new horizons of thought and unfold their significance.

3.2. Collective Consciousness and Global Solidarity

We suggest focusing on ways of life based on collectivity and solidarity to get past methodological individualism in ESD approaches. These ways of life already exist all over the world, and von Redecker (2020) describes such solidarity-based relationships. However, we do not count symbolic acts and philanthropic empathy as solidarity. In our view, there is a need to separate the concept of solidarity from a neoliberal view of humanity. Solidarity should rather be described as a set of practices aimed at creating a completely different model of prosperity—one that is fair, democratic, peaceful, and truly sustainable in ecological terms, beyond capitalist, patriarchal, and racist forces and beyond the subjugation and exploitation of nature (Brand & Wissen, 2017, p. 174). Sussemichel and Kastner (2021a) refer to this as “solidarity without condition”.

This approach to solidarity is based, first and foremost, on the observation that there are no shared economic, cultural, or political foundations and that these divisions can be overcome (Susemichel & Kastner, 2021a, p. 7). It is not primarily about taking sides with ‘my own kind’ but about a commitment to all beings, regardless of postulated differences. Solidarity transcends national borders, opposes global injustice, and supports others who are fighting for their rights. From a decolonial perspective, these struggles are particularly concerned with bringing invisible ways of being and knowing to light. Solidarity also creates a common ground by trying to design and pursue a shared utopia—a shared vision of a ‘better’ world (Wright, 2010).

Solidarity without condition is not a trade-off; it follows neither economic logic nor cost–benefit rationality. Rather, one stands up for others and gives something of oneself without expecting anything in return. Ultimately, according to Susemichel and Kastner (2021a), the fight for a more just society absolutely requires more solidarity, as it is urgently needed now more than ever.

Solidarity without condition thus becomes a process of creating new relationships. It is a practice of solidarity that can and should take institutionalized forms to create social conditions that strengthen solidarity (Susemichel & Kastner, 2021b, p. 14). Solidarity is not something that is simply given; it is a way of life that must be put into practice. Societies must reorganize themselves and create different forms of coexistence to achieve solidarity without condition. In solidarity-based communities, individuals relinquish their hegemonic and privileged positions to support others. The overarching aim is to create a just, socio-ecological, democratic, and solidarity-based world (Brand & Wissen, 2017, p. 178).

Our thesis is that solidarity-based ways of life and relationships counterbalance feelings of individual powerlessness. They respond to current crises, which are always linked to the erosion of social, ecological, and democratic values. Examples of global solidarity practices should feature prominently in ESD concepts. This is linked to a repoliticization of ESD that aims to foster socially and politically responsible citizens. ESD also means working for fair living conditions and resisting the temptation to become an agent for an imperialist way of life.

4. Conclusions

What implications can be drawn from our considerations? A first important aspect of thinking beyond ESD is understanding that ESD does not focus on measurable knowledge, skills, or similar outcomes. Rather, the focus is on education that promotes critical socio-political agency (Euler, 2022; Kehren, 2017). These insights challenge the problematic methodological individualism and the associated focus on individual responsibility in ESD. If this is to succeed, a critical understanding of ecological, social, and economic unsustainability must be developed. The aim is to analyze the logics, modes of living, and forms of production that impede sustainable development. The main question is: Why is sustainable development not being achieved? (Blühorn, 2020).

We have also pointed out how ESD is entangled in colonial and imperial orders and that problematic epistemic preconditions support these orders. We consider decolonial thinking to be a response to this. Decolonial options intervene in Western-influenced discussions on sustainability by making these discussions a subject of learning and unlearning. There is a great learning resource for this purpose that irritates and decolonizes Western hegemonic rationalities: “Through Other Eyes”, developed by Andreotti and de Souza (2008). This resource is suitable for a variety of educational contexts.

It becomes obvious that ESD does not offer solutions to problems. Instead, by linking ESD with decolonial approaches, we point out that ESD is a constant commitment to the realization of solidarity without conditions. Understanding ESD from the perspective of

global solidarity means seeking out allies who do not necessarily have to be ‘like me’, as long as we share certain ideas about a better world. The aim is to continuously imagine a better world for human and more-than-human beings. Consequently, critical ESD practices should be evaluated according to how thoroughly they address global injustices related to the ecological, social, and economic dimension of sustainability.

Then, the habitability of the Earth becomes the highest priority (Latour & Schultz, 2022). And not least, a major challenge can be tackled: a repoliticization of ESD that focuses on the entanglements in epistemic assumptions and conditions of unsustainability as the central reference points for thinking.

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