

Chapter 12

Governmentality, Curriculum Policies, and Citizenship Education: The Need for Historical Research

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ABSTRACT

Citizenship education has received increasing attention in recent decades. After its inclusion in the agenda of international organizations and European institutions, many studies and academic debates have taken place. Despite their undoubted merits, a significant portion of that literature has not sufficiently discussed its starting presuppositions. It has often introduced citizenship education as if it were a novelty. That presentism has had a dangerous effect: the ease with which some ways of thinking and talking about citizenship education have been naturalized. Precisely for that reason, a historical perspective is essential: It helps us distance ourselves from our own frame of reference to question what is usually taken for granted by analyzing the changes in the tacit knowledge systems. In this chapter, the authors try to illustrate this by examining the main tendencies that have introduced citizenship education in national curricula during the two key cycles of socio-institutional restructuring experienced by Western countries since the end of the 19th century.

INTRODUCTION

Reflexivity, Language, and Socio-Genetic Analysis

As is well known, citizenship education has received increasing attention in recent decades. After its inclusion in the agenda of international organizations (UNESCO; OECD; OAS; IDB; etc.), European institutions (the European Council; the European Parliament), and national education authorities, there was an explosion of official reports, technical documents, and political measures related to citizenship education. The topic has inspired much academic research as well. We will mention some well-known examples. At the international level, studies financed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) – research initiatives such as the 1999 Civic Education (CivEd) Study (Torney-Purta et al., 1999, Torney-Purta et al., 2001) and the 2010 International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS) (Schulz, et al., 2010a, 2010b) – have been especially important. At the European level, there have been many famous examples such as the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator study launched in 2005 by the Center for Research on Lifelong Learning (Hoskins, D’Hombres & Campbell, 2008); the European Citizenship Learning in a Program for Secondary Education project (ECLIPSE), developed between 2011 and 2014; the Citizenship Pedagogy and Teacher Education: an Alliance between School, Territory, and Community project, started in 2015; and the work of the European Information Network on Education (Eurydice, 2005, 2012, 2017).

The number of research groups and centers dedicated to the promotion of citizenship education that have emerged in recent decades is also a good indicator of the growing importance given to this issue. For example, in the US, the Center for Civic Education was founded in 1981; and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE) was founded in 2002. In 1998, the Citizenship Education Research Network was created in Canada. In this same year, the Life Long Learning Program of the European Commission established the CiCe European Network (Children’s Identity and Citizenship in Europe). Almost a decade later, in 2007, the International Centre for Education and Democratic Citizenship was founded at the University of London (UK).

This strong focus on citizenship education has considerably enriched our knowledge about the topic. In our opinion, however, researchers, while having contributed a valuable body of research, have not paid enough attention to how the way we approach this object of study has been constructed. We do not refer to the theoretical and ideological assumptions adopted explicitly. All researchers are aware that answers to the question “How should citizenship education be taught?” are far from neutral. Hence, countless debates have arisen about the different dimensions of citizenship education. These debates range from the Crick Report (1998), and its critical reviews (McLaughlin, 2000; Osler, 2000), to the models based on the four dimensions of citizenship (status, identity, civic virtue, and participation) (eg., Schugurensky, 2006). Also, typologies about the ideal models of citizenship abound in the literature on citizenship education. Some of these typologies are:

- **The Three Basic Orientations:** Personally responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented citizenship (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004);
- **The Seven Citizenship Discourses:** Civic republican, liberal, feminist, reconstructionist, cultural, queer, and transnational citizenship (distinguished by Knight-Abowitz and Harnish, 2006).

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