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Citizenship education curricula: the changes and challenges presented by global and European integration

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Introduction: Citizenship education curricula: the changes and challenges presented by global and European integration

AVRIL KEATING, DEBORA HINDERLITER ORTLOFF and
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Citizenship education has been the subject of growing attention in policy and academic circles over the past 20 years. Citizenship education curricula have typically focused on national institutions, issues, and ties. Citizenship education has been closely bound up with the legitimacy of the nation-state, and alternative institutions and citizenships thus present a significant challenge not only to the contents of national curricula, but also to the traditional purpose and assumptions of citizenship education. The articles in this special issue seek to explore how nation-states have responded to this challenge by exploring, from a comparative perspective, the ways in which one supra-national, regional citizenship (namely European citizenship) has been defined in the citizenship education curricula of states from across Europe. This *Introduction* describes the supra-national policy developments that have led European states to consider reforming their citizenship education curricula.

Keywords: citizenship education; curricula; education policy; Europeanization

Citizenship education has been the subject of growing attention in policy and academic circles over the past 20 years (cf. Lockyer *et al.* 2004, Ortloff 2005, Osler and Starkey 2006, Stevick and Levinson 2006, Torney-Purta *et al.* 1999). Various reasons for this resurgence of interest have been cited, but a key concern amidst the debates has been the transformation of governance and the increasing strength of local, regional, and global institutions and citizenships. As we will elucidate below, citizenship education curricula have typically focused on national institutions, issues, and ties. However, the

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emergence, or re-emergence, of sub- and supra-national institutions has meant that citizenship education curricula are now supposed to embrace local, regional, and global citizenships as well as national citizenship (Stromquist 2008). This reality presents a fundamental challenge to traditionally held notions of citizenship education.

Indeed these reforms require reconsideration of the very basis of citizenship education in nation-states. Citizenship education has been closely bound up with the legitimacy of the nation-state, and these alternative institutions and citizenships present a significant test not only to the contents of national curricula, but also to the traditional purpose and assumptions of citizenship education (cf. Heater 2003, 2004). The papers in this issue of *JCS* seek to explore how nation-states have responded to this challenge by considering, from a comparative perspective, the ways in which one supra-national, regional citizenship (namely European citizenship) has been defined in the citizenship education curricula of states across Europe. This Introduction sets out why we have selected this focus, and describes the supra-national policy developments that have led European states to consider reforming their citizenship education curricula. In the process, we will also introduce the papers in this issue of *JCS* and the common concerns and themes that unite these contributions.

Why does global and regional integration present a challenge for citizenship education curricula?

The nation-building projects of the 18th and 19th centuries forged a close and powerful connection between the legitimacy of the nation-state and the education of citizens, particularly in Western societies (cf. Dewey 1966, Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1987). Seeking to fashion ‘disciplined workers’, ‘loyal recruits’, and a cohesive, governable community, nation-states granted school systems, and curricula, a central role in achieving these goals (Green 1997: 134). For example, in order to create a sense of ‘nation’ and loyalty, school curricula tended to focus on national institutions, history, and culture (real or imagined), and to ignore or to denigrate ‘Other’ outside cultures and communities (Soysal 2002a). Formal education thus became the main forum for the inculcation of future generations into citizenship of the nation-state. Indeed, even in nation-states where curricular control is a sub-state power, citizenship education has sought to instill nation-state allegiances as well as sub-state affiliations (see Engel and Ortloff 2009).

However, this almost symbiotic relationship between the nation-state and the education of its citizens is being challenged by globalization in its various guises. For one, the nation-state is no longer necessarily the locus of citizens’ civic participation and identity. Fuelled by the rapid advance in information technologies, globalization appears to be blurring the boundaries of economic, media, social, and political interactions, and providing new sites of participation and identity-formation for citizens in Europe (Soysal 1994) and around the world (Arnove 1999, Torres 1998). At the same time, nation-states no longer have the level of control they once had over the policies that are implemented in their education systems; education

is increasingly being subjected to global and regional forces, both directly and indirectly. Perhaps the most tangible example of this trend is the increasing number of cross-national policy initiatives being developed by international organizations. The OECD, for instance, conducts an influential Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); UNESCO sponsors the Education for All agreement;¹ and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) has opened discussions on the international trade of educational services (cf. Robertson *et al.* 2002, Huber and Gördel 2006).

The implications of these diverse developments are still unfolding, but research to date indicates that globalization has already prompted significant shifts in national education policy and the ways in which citizens are educated (Stromquist 2002, Hahn 2006). Global economic and technological developments have, for example, transformed the skills and knowledge required in post-industrial economies and, by extension, promoted in schools and higher education (cf. Brown *et al.* 2001, Banks 2004, Sutton 2005). Even in the US, with its isolationist tendencies, performance on international comparative tests such as PISA and the perceived need to be globally competitive is having a major influence on education policy, or, at the very least, the policy discourse (see Frey and Whitehead 2009). In the area of civic and citizenship education more specifically, there has been a clear effort to revise current curricula to include themes such as global injustice and inequalities; globalization, migration, and the implications for social cohesion; the changing socio- and geo-political context in the aftermath of the Cold War (Osler and Starkey 2006).

The implications of global integration for national education policy are further complicated in Europe, where nation-states have to contend with the additional pressures and policies of regional institutions, such as the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (CoE). The EU, in particular, has become a hugely significant actor in the political, economic, and educational policy-making processes at regional, national, and sub-national levels. And in the educational arena, for example, EU policy discussions now span all levels of the education system, and, since 2000 (with the creation of the so-called Lisbon Agenda), encompass virtually all aspects of education and training, from educational skills and standards to teacher training (see European Commission 2002, Education Council 2007).² Although a less influential institution, the Council of Europe has also developed a range of educational policy platforms for its more numerous and diverse member states,³ including human rights and intercultural education, the teaching of history, higher education and language policy, and education for democratic citizenship (EDC).⁴ Member states have also come together outside of the formal structures of the supranational institutions and forged autonomous frameworks for intergovernmental co-operation (namely, the so-called 'Bologna Process' for higher education),⁵ although the European Commission has also managed to carve itself a role in this Process over time (Wachter 2004).⁶

The implications for citizenship education in Europe have also been manifold for, amidst the myriad and complex dimensions of European integration, citizenship education has remained a persistent theme in

supranational policy-making. Before considering their implications, the next section gives a brief introduction to the various policy efforts that have been initiated.

The European dimension to citizenship education

The first supranational effort at influencing citizenship education policy in Europe can be traced back to the 1950s. As part of its founding mandate to promote peace and democracy in post-War Europe, the Council of Europe (CoE) conducted a range of projects on the subject throughout the 1950s and 1960s, including conferences for practitioners and policy-makers; surveys of member-state policy provision; school essay competitions; and producing teaching materials about Europe (CoE, Council for Cultural Cooperation 1963, 1966). The CoE was concerned not only with teaching about Europe and European institutions (although it undertook several initiatives to this end) but also with promoting new methods of teaching what was then known as civics education (cf. Keating 2007). The EU, for its part, only became actively involved in promoting citizenship through education in the early 1970s, when the notion of a 'European dimension to education' was introduced into EU policy discussions as part of their efforts to forge a supranational European identity and a public sphere for the citizens of its member states (Karlsen 2002).

The 'European dimension' to education was primarily aimed at formal education, and at encouraging member states to place greater emphasis on teaching about Europe in schools (cf. Keating 2007). However, these policies also included an extra-curricular dimension, which encouraged teacher and student mobility. The latter focus was expanded in the 1980s when the European Commission launched a series of mobility programmes (such as the *Erasmus* programme and, at school level, *Comenius*) that aimed to facilitate trans-national educational exchanges between teachers and students and, in the process, to foster European citizenship and identity.

While many of the EU's mobility programmes have been very successful,⁷ the impact of these early 'European dimension' policies on school curricula was more limited, and over almost four decades after its first foray into civic education policy, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe noted that the 'European dimension' to education had 'still to be effectively integrated into teaching in practice' (Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly 1989). However, three dramatic developments in the early 1990s provided new political opportunities and demands for pan-European projects about educating for citizenship in, for, and about Europe. First, the collapse of communism in central and Eastern Europe raised awareness among European policy-makers of the need for political education in these new states, and the reform of history and civics curricula in 'old' European states to accommodate the new political terrain (see Michaels and Stevick 2009). Second, the EU introduced a formal citizenship status for the citizens of its member states in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, which implied that citizens should be educated about the rights that this engendered (cf. Wiener 1998, Bellamy *et al.* 2006). Finally, and perhaps most significantly, this same text

provided the EU with a legal (if limited) basis upon which to create supra-national education policy in some areas (Corbett 2005).

Combined, these developments inspired the EU and the CoE to initiate a plethora of projects on citizenship education (see tables 1 and 2). For the CoE, the primary focus has been the Education for Democratic Citizenship project (EDC), which was established in 1997 in order to identify 'which values and skills individuals require in order to become participating citizens, how they can acquire these skills, and how they can learn to pass them on to others' (Birz ea 2000: 3).⁸ This project is ongoing, and has developed over a series of phases, the focus and products of which are described in brief in table 1.

The EU, for its part, has launched an equally diverse range of educational initiatives to promote active, democratic citizenship (see table 2). For example, supporting active citizenship is now a transversal theme that is to be promoted throughout EU policies and programmes and throughout the educational life-course (Education Council 2001, 2007, European Commission 2002). Recent policy co-operation has focused in particular on defining the basic civic competences that education systems should foster (Education Council 2005) and developing indicators for measuring active citizenship (Hoskins *et al.* 2006, 2008).

Table 1. Key phases in the Council of Europe project on Education for Democratic Citizenship.

Phase 1: EDC Project I (1997–2000)

During this phase, participants focused on developing: a conceptual framework for citizenship education; pilot projects to examine citizenship in practice ('sites of citizenship'); and training and support systems for practitioners (see Birz ea 2000).

Phase 2: EDC Project II (2001–2004)

The aim of this phase was to translate the knowledge gained from the original project into policy and practice. The project focused on: policy development, communication, and awareness-raising (including teaching training), as well as building networks of national EDC co-ordinators who were charged with managing and promoting the EDC project in their respective member states (Duerr 2002). The key achievements of this phase was the production of comparative studies of EDC policies and practices in member states (see Birz ea *et al.* 2004), and the appointment of national co-ordinators in 47 states.

Phase 3: Consolidation and dissemination (2004–2006)

This phase focused on consolidating and disseminating the EDC policies. 2005 was designated as the 'European Year of Citizenship through Education' to raise the profile of the EDC project and citizenship through education as a whole. These discussions and activities produced a wide range of discussion papers, reports, and materials, and official statements from the Committee of Ministers (resolutions, recommendations, and declarations).

Phase 4: 'Learning and Living Democracy for All' programme (2006–2009)

Phase 4 seeks to build on and develop the findings of the EDC project and Human Rights Education (HRE) project. Its specific goals include:

- Promoting education policy development and implementation for democratic citizenship and social inclusion;
- Developing new roles and competences of teachers and other educational staff in EDC/HRE; and
- Democratic governance of educational institutions.

This project is ongoing but seeks to produce guidelines on each of these issues; examples of best practice; and methodological and educational resources for educators (see Ad Hoc Committee of Experts 2006).

Table 2. EU citizenship education initiatives since the early 1990s.*Promoting a European dimension to education (1993)*

The Commission published a Green Paper on the *European Dimension to Education* (European Commission 1993), a discussion document that proposes policies for future EU-level action on education in light of the new legislative context. This document includes a more considered discussion of the form and objectives of the European dimension to education, one of which is that it should contribute to creating European citizenship.

Transversal theme (1995–2000)

Citizenship was discussed as a transversal theme in key policy documents, namely:

- the Commission's White Paper *Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society* (European Commission 1995);
- the report from the Study Group on Education and Training, *Accomplishing Europe through Education and Training* (European Commission 1996); and
- the Commission's paper, *Towards a Europe of Knowledge* (European Commission 1997).

In addition, the Commission conducted a large-scale study on the role of EU action programmes in promoting active citizenship, *Education and Active Citizenship in the European Union* (European Commission 2006).

Lisbon Agenda Goals (2000–present)

Active citizenship was identified during the Lisbon Agenda discussions as one of the three major pillars of lifelong learning and a core objective of future educational activities (European Commission 2002). This spawned a diverse range of activities and policy statements, including:

- The European Parliament report on the *European Dimension to Secondary Education in 2003* (European Parliament 2003).
- The Education Council statement on the relationship between education and citizenship (Education Council 2004).
- *Defining the core components of civic competences*: This was undertaken as part of the development of the *European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* (see Education Council 2006). Civic competences were identified as one of the eight core competences that should be acquired through education and training, and the competences framework defined (albeit broadly) the type of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that an individual have the capacity to be an active citizen.
- *Developing indicators*: to measure progress in the civic competences that had been identified (see Hoskins *et al.* 2006, 2008).
- *Report on Active Citizenship Education*: to review current educational practice in Europe towards promoting active citizenship throughout the life-course. The study sought to uncover how this concept is understood by educational researchers and practitioners, as well as identify and analyse good practice (see European Commission 2007).
- *2008 Year of Intercultural Dialogue*: one of the key aims of which is to: 'foster the role of education as an important medium for teaching about diversity, increase the understanding of other cultures and developing skills and best social practices, and highlight the central role of the media in promoting the principle of equality and mutual understanding' (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2006: 46).

What are the implications of the European dimension for citizenship education in member states?

There has been considerable contestation about the meaning and implications of this long series of European educational initiatives. Some argue that a European dimension to education has helped (Schissler and Soysal 2005), or could help (e.g. Philippou 2005, 2007), nation-states transcend their traditional national and nationalist approach to citizenship education and curricula. Others, however, have suggested that the EU 'still adheres to some of the key components of the nationalist discourse it seeks to evade' (Hansen 1998: 15),

and that European education policies are replicating many of the same exclusionary tendencies of nationalist citizenship education. Hansen (1998), for example, points to the way in which EU education policies tend to assume (and promote) the idea that a common pan-European 'culture' is inherent and inherited, despite the rhetoric of 'unity in diversity' and multiple identities. Similarly, Nóvoa and Lawn (2002) point to the way in which European institutions have sought to create their own ethno-cultural myth of a common past and shared future for the peoples of Europe. Others still have argued that EU education policy agendas are increasingly concerned by neoliberal economic agendas rather than democratic citizenship (see Dale and Robertson 2002, Mitchell 2003, 2006). And critics can also point to democratic deficiencies of the EU, and argue that this institution does not have the democratic practices that Guttmann and Thompson (1996) suggests are required to provide the anchor of citizenship education in consolidated democracies.

What is apparent, however, is that there has been a shift away from the narrow focus on promoting a 'European dimension', and towards a broader platform that promotes active citizenship *and* its European dimension, namely a *European citizenship*. Yet what the European dimension to (citizenship) education could or should entail is not always clear, even to European policy actors themselves. Thus, there was sufficient ambiguity about this concept to require the European Commission to set up a working group in 2004 to try to define its meaning and educational implications (European Commission 2004: 9–13). The ambiguity is further exacerbated by the fact that the European institutions cannot compel their member states to teach about Europe in schools or to implement the citizenship education policies that have been agreed within their educational forums. Although the European institutions have managed to gradually increase their power and influence in the educational arena, the responsibility for the content of school curricula still firmly rests with individual member states (and/or their sub-national governance structures) (Corbett 2005, Pépin 2007). In short, European education policies are not binding, and can (at least ostensibly) be interpreted and implemented as and when individual member states see fit. This makes it particularly important to examine changes in the European citizenship education comparatively; a comparative perspective enables us to understand the choices being made at the national or sub-national levels where the nexus of control for education policy still legally rests.

This governance issue creates at least two potentially significant implications for citizenship education in, for, and about Europe. First, member states could choose not to implement European policies about citizenship education, whether teaching about Europe or the more recent and more general policies on the subject of civic competences. The latter are a more recent innovation, and their impact perhaps too early to assess. However, although not compelled to do so, each member state *does* teach about Europe and European integration in some way or another (see Brock and Tulasiewicz 2000, European Parliament 2003). Second, and perhaps more importantly, is the question of *how* member states choose to interpret these supranational policies, and, in particular, the notion of 'European citizenship' in their national civic and citizenship education programmes. It is this question which is the focus of this issue of JCS.

Aims and scope of this special issue

This special issue (the first issue of the *JCS* to focus exclusively on citizenship education) is comprised of case studies which highlight the ways in which official national and sub-national citizenship curricula are being reframed in each context in response to European citizenship and global citizenship discourses. We first present a series of qualitative case studies from across Europe, and their interpretation of European citizenship and European policies for citizenship education. In the first instance, the issue considers three cases from 'old Europe' (that is, cases that have been members of the European institutions for at least two decades), starting with a paper on Ireland by Keating (2009), followed by a comparative paper on Spain and Germany by Engel and Ortloff (2009). Exploring the case of the Republic of Ireland and curricular reform between 1922 and 2006, Keating examines the ways in which the concept of European citizenship has been reframed in the Irish curricula as Ireland's own conceptualization of citizenship and citizenship education has evolved. Examining a shorter period, Engel and Ortloff use curricular and policy statements since 2000 to investigate the complex interplay between sub-national, national, and supranational governance in the construction of the ideal citizen in Spain (Catalonia) and Germany (Bavaria).

While the first section sheds light on some of the implications that supranational citizenship can have (or not have) over time, the second part of the issue shifts its attention to Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and to some of the newer members of the European institutions, namely the cases of Slovakia, Estonia, and Cyprus. Each of these states became EU members in 2004 and have only been faced with European citizenship discourses relatively recently. Michaels and Stevick (2009) compare Slovakia and Estonia as two post-socialist independent states in the 1990s, while Philippou (2009) explores the Republic of Cyprus as a case of a country facing an unresolved political problem and geographical division. Both studies consider data from over the last 15 years and the nexus between national and supranational citizenship in the curricula of countries where issues of national identity are relatively recent and unresolved. Finally, we consider Europeanization in comparative perspective with two papers that explore the potential impact of global citizenship discourses in the USA and the UK. Marshall (2009) compares the curricular attention paid to global citizenship and European citizenship in the UK, whereas Frey and Whitehead (2009) compare the impact of international education policies in two midwestern US states, Ohio and Indiana. Combined, these perspectives highlight both the specificity of European legal and political frameworks, and the common challenges facing global and European citizenship initiatives.

However, whether considering global or European concerns, each of these case studies provides an in-depth and historically-situated account of citizenship education curricula in their chosen case(s). We chose this methodological approach because, from a substantive perspective, the questions we are probing about the Europeanization of citizenship and education often tap into deep-rooted and unacknowledged beliefs about citizenship, belonging, and national allegiance. Nuanced, close readings of texts and

peoples are required in order to draw out these beliefs and understand their implications for change (or lack thereof). In addition, by having each paper adhere to this highly contextualized approach, we are also able to make more methodologically valid comparisons across the cases (Ragin 1987). This is particularly important in this context, as a key aim of this issue is to consider the discourses of European citizenship in comparative perspective and to shed light on the multiple manifestations it may take in global, regional, national, and sub-national arenas.

The contributors have also tended to focus on the impact on the *official* curriculum for citizenship education (see Goodlad 1977); that is, the curriculum endorsed by national or sub-national official educational authorities and which is usually articulated in writing in legal and policy documents, syllabi, curriculum frameworks or guides, programmes, guidelines, and textbooks. These texts remain one of the key mechanisms by which states articulate and communicate their aims and priorities in school education in general, and citizenship education in particular. Official curricula thus illustrate some of the official discourses of citizenship and effort to shape the meaning of citizenship in contemporary contexts.

The curriculum is also made and re-made via its practice in classrooms, and some of the contributors touch upon the tensions and complexity that this entails. For example, Michaels and Stevick (2009) include ethnographic data from Estonian classrooms, and Marshall (2009) considers the role of media and NGO documentation. These points of data help to further develop the nuanced narrative that these case studies provide. However, we have purposely limited the focus of these case studies to discussing notions of curricular and policy changes in order to more effectively build the comparative analysis. While we recognize that the official curriculum is constantly re-interpreted in the course of its enactment by teachers and students, an analysis of the re-interpretations taking place at the classroom-level was beyond the scope of this issue. Teacher and student interpretations are a critical component to understanding education policy change, and warrant separate and focused attention in order to tease out to the complex issues raised by policy-in-practice and text-in-use.

Both official policy and practice in this area are likely to remain key issues in the coming years. As this special issue was nearing completion, the EU has once again been forced to face the gap between political elites and public opinion following the failure of the Irish people to ratify the Lisbon Treaty in a referendum in June 2008. Education is frequently offered as a panacea in these scenarios, and these case studies allow us to reflect upon the opportunities and constraints that this approach offers. We therefore return to these issues and this discussion in the Conclusion to the issue.

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Notes

1. See UNESCO Education for All; <http://www.unesco.org/education/efa>, accessed 1 September 2008.
2. EU education policy co-operation now encompasses: language learning; information technology; mathematics and science; standards in all the major subject areas (key competencies); guidance policy; accountability; credentials recognition and acceptance; teacher training; mobility; life-long learning; and citizenship education.
3. The EU now has 27 member states, each of which has had to meet strict political and economic standards in order to gain entry. Membership of the CoE is determined solely on the basis of political concerns, and, as a result, the institution has a larger and more diverse set of 47 members.
4. Cf. Council of Europe, *The Europe of Cultural Co-operation: Education*; see http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/, accessed 1 September 2008.
5. The Bologna Process seeks to create a 'European Higher Education Area' in order to facilitate greater mobility, employability, and competitiveness. Specific areas of concern include: the harmonization of institutional structures; the development of a comparable grading and credit-transfer systems; encouraging the mobility of students, teachers, and researchers; co-operation on quality assurance; and the European dimension of higher education. See European Commission, *The Bologna Process: Towards the European Higher Education Area*, available online at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna_en.html accessed 1 September 2008.
6. The Bologna Process was initiated in 1998 as an intergovernmental process outside of the EU system of governance. Although it remains an intergovernmental rather than an EU process, the European Commission is now a partner in the Process (Wachter 2004).
7. For example, over 90% of European universities participate in the higher education programme (known as the Erasmus programme) and over 1.9 million students have studied abroad under its auspices. EU support for the various mobility programmes is reflected in the substantial increase in funding allocated from the Community budget to these projects over the past 15 years (from €133m. in 1995 to over €400 m. in 2008) (see European Commission for Education and Training, Erasmus: available online at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc80_en.htm, accessed 1 September 2008).
8. The Council of Europe also ran a project on 'Secondary education for Europe' from 1991 to 1996. One of the goals of this project was to define the European dimension to education, and to consider how European dimension to values, citizenship, cultural heritage, and a general 'European awareness' could be promoted (Luisoni 1997: 73).

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