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Editorial

Keywords

Citizenship education, democratic education, diversity, transformation countries, post-authoritarian countries, post-communist-countries.

The topic of this issue of the Journal of Social Science Education is the embeddedness of citizenship education in processes of transformation in Southwestern, Southeastern and Eastern Europe. An introductory paper presenting the state of the art is accompanied by country case studies from Poland, Turkey, Spain, Portugal and Germany and a political case study from England. A paper on the relationship of human rights and citizenship education complements this JSSE issue.

All papers share an awareness of differences and diversity in citizenship education and its key notions as well as a scholarly sensitivity to aspects of tension and contradiction in this area. Moreover, most of them have common ground in investigating the changing of citizenship education(s) against the background of transforming polities. A majority emphasizes the role of teaching culture and teacher education for realising a real democratic approach to citizenship education. This especially holds for those cases which are—still?—characterised by some weaknesses of democratic culture be it with respect to the society or to the classrooms of a country.

The paper of *Reinhold Hedtke, Thorsten Hippe and Tatjana Zimenkova* is titled *A Trinity of Transformation, Europeanisation, and Democratisation? Current Research on Citizenship Education in Europe*. It provides a critical account of the state of the art of research on citizenship education against the background of transforming countries. The authors address three research gaps: the ignorance of the specifics of post-socialist or post-authoritarian transformation, the bias in favour of viewpoints near to the respective governments, the hidden preference for a particular notion of a democratic citizen. In consequence, they outline a research agenda which is taking results or research on transformation as well as the different contextualisation of citizenship education into account. They call for a clear differentiation between authoritarian and democratic contents of citizenship education. From a methodological point of view this paper argues that multi-level and multi-actor case studies are needed which also include the organisational issues of citizenship education. It concludes that teachers and students are the key actors who should be called upon to speak and that researchers should carefully listen to them to find out what is really—which means: locally—going on in citizenship education.

In their paper *Education for Democratic Citizenship in Poland*, *Anna Radiukiewicz and Izabela Grabowska-Lusinska* highlight the relationship of civic education, civic society and democracy. On the one hand, they draw a not very optimistic picture of the development of the Polish civic society which they see as hampered by the lasting experience of the socialist past, the clash between homo sovieticus and homo oeconomicus and the educational tradition of civic duties and nationalistic values,

expecting the students to behave in a conformist way. On the other hand, the ideas, conceptions and practices of citizenship education promoted by non-governmental organisations are assessed as rather promising. The paper concludes that the family and the school play the most important role in Polish citizenship education. All in all, the future development of civic education in Poland turns out to be a still open question.

Gonzalo Jover and *Concepción Naval* start their contribution *Transformed Institutions, Transformed Citizenship Education? Remarks about the current situation in Spain* with an outline of the meanings of “citizen” in different historical periods which are closely related to different approaches to citizenship education. They emphasize that current curricular concepts understand the idea of citizenship more as a moral than a legal concept which includes a wide and diverse range of partly highly contested values. Bringing citizenship education into schools has stimulated a broad public debate on citizenship showing that the educational concept with its post-conventional moral is outstripping the public opinion which still sticks to more conventional ways of thinking about moral issues. Having been merely religious education during the Franco dictatorship, moral education experienced a lot of distrust in the early period of Spanish democracy. That brought research to focus on citizenship education which in turn was designed as education for democratic values. Thus, ironically, value education came back on the agenda. But far from inducing a simple backward turn, a critical debate started on “the de-politicising of the pedagogical discourse on citizenship” and the state’s promotion of specific values. In conclusion, with respect to comparative research, the authors argue for carefully taking into account a country’s specific historical and local conditions and for maintaining a plurality of values and paths assessed as “progress” in civic education.

K. Peter Fritzsche presents Germany, the United Kingdom, Europe and the world as four cases of human rights education. In his paper *What do Human Rights Mean for Citizenship Education?* Fritzsche shows how the concept of human rights is increasingly been related to the concept of citizenship education. Nevertheless, he sees some persistent tensions between these two concepts. First, human rights are universal rights whereas citizens’ rights are exclusively bound to a specific political community. Second, citizenship education in Europe is focused on Europe leaving aside global issues. Third, participation is thought differently as human rights stress universal equal rights to participate, while citizenship is more focused on responsibilities. Last but not least, citizenship education aims at stability of a certain community; in contrast, human rights strive for change, taking a critical position on power and privileges. The authors concludes that—taken seriously—“the concept of human rights will change radically the concept of citizenship”.

Turkey is one of the very few countries with a very long tradition of citizenship education lasting back to the republic’s foundation in 1923. The paper *Status of Citizenship Education in Turkey. Past and Present* from *Kenan Cayir* and *İpek Gürkaynak* traces the continual tension existing between partial references to a universal notion of citizenship and a widespread and penetrating education for Turkish citizenship “imbued with parochial, duty-based, nationalistic and militaristic precepts “imbued with parochial, duty-based, nationalistic and militaristic precepts”. Ten years ago, a new course Citizenship and Human Rights was introduced welcomed by the authors as an important progress (cf. for the blending of these two approaches the paper of K. Peter Fritzsche in this JSSE issue). Nonetheless, they criticize the curriculum and relevant textbooks for presenting Turkey as surrounded by enemies and challenged by internal and external threats. For the authors, this approach entails an authoritarian, affirmative way of citizenship education focused on duties, national glory and security—a characteristic trait of other school subjects, too. All this is accompanied by a strong denial of ethnic, religious or gender differences.

Germany is made twice subject of discussion in this issue. *Tulin Sener* presents an empirical investigation of the participation of Turkish youth in Germany. Her paper *Civic Engagement of Turkish Youth in Germany* shows the societal and political participation of young people with a Turkish migration background and their own assessment of their situation in the German society and polity. Tulin Sener interviewed students in Cologne about their ideas on being listened to and represented in school bodies and about their experience and wishes of participatory activities and opportunities in their communities. In sum, as young Turks don't feel to have the same opportunities as their German peers, the author calls for policies enabling and encouraging youth participation.

Sibylle Reinhardt starts her contribution *Civic Education: The Case of Germany* with an outline of the main features of the German approach to citizenship education. She emphasizes five core competencies (change of perspectives, handling of conflicts, application of social sciences, moral and political judgment, democratic participation) and the three principles of the so-called Beutelsbach Consensus (no overwhelming of learners, controversial issues must be taught as controversies, students must be enabled to analyse and promote his or her own interests in a political situation). These goals of civic education are confronted with empirical data on students' real political thinking gathered in a representative study carried out in the German land of Saxony-Anhalt. The study revealed a severe lack in understanding and handling (political) conflicts typical for a democratic system and a widespread resistance against political controversies. On the one hand, this may be explained by students' failing to distinct clearly between rules for private and for political life. On the other hand, teaching culture is hampering discussion of controversies in the classroom, although a great majority of students feels free to express their own opinion in social studies lessons.

From recent studies on citizenship education Helena C. Araújo concludes a need to foster both democratic mentality and critical historical consciousness of the totalitarian European past. In her paper *Teachers' Perspectives in Portugal and Recent Institutional Contributions on Citizenship Education* she argues in favour of state and non-state efforts to enhance citizenship education and to provide a systematic teacher education. Recently, the Portuguese state has created an open discussion forum for citizenship education. Helena Araújo emphasizes democratic participation and the need to empower citizens against social, gender and ethnic inequalities; moreover, the situation of women could be used as an exemplary starting point of citizenship education. Currently, approaches to citizenship are more based on cultural differences and differing identities than on common features and equality as they used to be; this change is mirrored in the teachers' assessment of the relevance of related topics in citizenship education.

Bernard Crick reports in *Difficulties Even in the Best of Circumstances: a perspective from England* of the difficult plan to introduce citizenship education in a country the self-image of which was the "mother of parliaments", a shining example of representative government. As a result, this kind of educational effort was thought to be unnecessary. In addition, the project was complicated because its goals and content were and are essentially contested issues. The solution realised was a flexible national curriculum defining principles and guidelines but leaving details to teachers' decision. An eight-year longitudinal study to empirically assess the outcomes of the new curriculum has been launched. Interestingly enough, teachers are found to be not prepared to create controversial discussions in the classroom—an astonishing parallel to the cases of Germany and, to some extent, also to Poland and Turkey as presented in this issue. And last but not least, like in the Portuguese case an appropriate teacher training turned out to be of high relevance.

The forthcoming issue, JSSE no. 1-2008, will be dedicated to a more conceptual and theoretical debate on the interconnectedness of citizenship education and transformation.

The readership of the Journal of Social Science Education should know that the Editorial Board has been enlarged. We warmly welcome as new members of the Editorial Board:

Sir Bernard Crick, Prof. Emeritus of London University, UK;
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Ass. Prof. Dr. Irena Zaleskienė, Vilnius Pedagogical University, Lithuania.

Last but not least some changes in the JSSE core team have to be announced. Prof. Dr. Birgit Weber (Bielefeld University, Faculty of Sociology) and Prof. Dr. Tilman Grammes (University of Hamburg, Faculty of Education, Psychology and Human Movement)—both former members of the Editorial Board—started their work as editors of the JSSE. Editorial manager of the journal is Thorsten Hippe (Bielefeld University); Tatjana Jackel (Bielefeld University) is our new editorial assistant.