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Trends and Dilemmas in Citizenship Education

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Abstract: This article elaborates some important trends and discussions in citizenship education. It seems that there are strong arguments from scientific scholars which express opposition to a focus on only formal facts and democratic procedures in the teaching of citizenship education. This approach is also criticized by students for its meaninglessness and irrelevance. There also seems to be relative agreement that democracies are being challenged for various reasons, that school plays an important role in citizenship education, that republicanism is the preferred framework, and that students construct their own views of the world (constructivist learning processes). Despite this rather general agreement, there remain quite a few important dilemmas and also disagreements in the field of citizenship education. Among these are: the conceptualization of democracy, the knowledge to be presented, adopting a national versus a global perspective, the maturity of young citizens regarding the question of multiculturalism, and approaches to teaching (particularly providing room for criticism). These and other dilemmas are discussed, and a summary of recommendations is put forward.

KEYWORDS: DEMOCRACY, CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION, TEACHER DILEMMAS

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Introduction

Democracies continue to stumble their way through history and currently face a number of challenges to social and political order. These social and political challenges have many implications for how democracies work and for a citizen's life.

First, globalization continues to change communications, networks, and national and personal identities (Castels, 1996). Global inequality, conflicts and revolutions are some of the driving forces of migration and social change. Nation-states are becoming increasingly diverse, particularly the Nordic ones, which usually are regarded as homogenous (Solhaug, Børhaug, Stugu, & Haugaløkken, 2012). Global trends also influence the ways and means of citizen participation, calling for new ways of conceptualizing citizenship. New forms of media play a greater role in participation and thus in the democratization process as well (Eide, 2011; Haste, 2010; Norris, 2001; Tapscott, 1998).

Second, young people participate somewhat less in elections, and their manner of participation displays a trend toward more virtual as well as more occasional involvement (Amnå, 2008; Kristensen & Solhaug, 2011; Osler & Starkey, 2006). Religious as well as political extremism is growing (Osler & Starkey, 2006).

Third the current financial and political situation makes it difficult for a political democracy to create welfare for its autonomous and self-supporting citizens. This erodes the legitimacy of many democracies which are dependent on citizens participating as well as trusting in their politicians and political institutions (Biesta, 2011; Hughes & Sears, 2008; Newton, 2008; Osler & Starkey, 2006).

As a response to these changes and challenges, there are increasing efforts to develop universal human rights and participation, particularly in the name of the European Council and the European Union (Hedtke, Zimenkova, & Hippe, 2008). UNESCO's member states have also agreed to develop competence, autonomy and citizenship for all young people (Osler, 2012a; UNESCO, 2004:3). Furthermore, there is also an increasing trend to develop educational programs for "democratic citizenship" or "active European citizenship" in most European countries, particularly by the European Council and the European Commission (Hedtke, et al., 2008; Hughes & Sears, 2008; Osler, 2012a; Osler & Starkey, 2006).

To summarize, the current social and political trends, together with political initiatives to promote citizenship education, provide the context for this article's critical reflections upon the dilemmas in citizenship education. The aim of this article is:

To clarify the notion of citizenship education and to discuss dilemmas in education for citizenship and democracy within the current political context.

This will be accomplished by highlighting discussions in recent research and educational and political trends, starting with the term "citizenship education" itself. The article will go on to discuss conceptualizations of democracy and citizenship and

their implications for teaching practices, before going into more detailed dilemmas. Finally, the article offers suggestions for an approach to citizenship education.

Clarifying citizenship education

"Citizenship education" comprises educational efforts to make democracy viable and stable by qualifying citizens for participation in democracy through teaching of its processes as well as citizens' rights and responsibilities. In most countries, this term refers to a more or less clearly defined subject in school with a name like "citizenship education" or "social studies". However, some countries, such as Scotland in its Curriculum for Excellence, have made "citizenship" an overall goal in most school subjects. In that approach, citizenship education is incorporated in a wide range of subjects which support the civic and political participation of citizens. A narrow versus a wide curricular approach in citizenship education is an important question and will be dealt with below.

As for the name of the subject, two terms seem to be used internationally: "citizenship education" and "social studies" (Arthur, Davis, & Hahn, 2008; Levstik & Tyson, 2008; Sextias, 2001; Shaver, 1991). The term "citizenship education" may have a wider and more pluralistic focus, intersecting with history, geography, religion and other cultural subjects, than "social studies" (Arthur, et al., 2008). Despite this, "citizenship education" has a particular focus on topics like democracy, citizenship, participation, human rights, socialization and marginalization. Internationally, the content of "citizenship education" versus "social studies" varies considerably. However, to determine which term is used most frequently in research, the results of a simple search are presented in the table below. A title-word search of the databases BYBSYS (Norwegian), ERIC, and the ISI Web of Science from 2000 to the present (date of search 12.01.2012) shows the following number of hits (Table 1);

TABLE 1

Frequency of occurrence of terms in titles in three research databases 2000-2012

Database	"Citizenship education"	"Social studies education"
BYBSYS (Norwegian)	133	13
ERIC	383	132
ICI Web of Science	598	381

The numbers show that "citizenship education" occurs the most frequently in titles, and it is also the focus of this article. A review of the hits also reveals that "citizenship education" is more global while "social studies" is more common in US-American research. This generality was also observed by Shaver (1991) and Levstick & Tyson (2008). Still, as a research field for citizenship and education, "social studies" is very relevant.

Research in "citizenship education" is also part of an old field of research called *political socialization.* In the late 1950s, the field initiated research interest in the role of school in preparing citizens for democracy. This interest was clearly motivated by political desires to enhance democratic legitimacy through increased participation. However, a lack of findings (effects on citizens' socialization and participation) led to a decline of research activity in the 1980s. Since the early 1990s, there has been a resurgence of research in this field due to interest in democratizing new states in Eastern Europe and developing countries as well as mature democracies (Dekker, 2001; Evans, 2004; Hepburn, 1995; Jennings, 2008; Niemi, 1973; Niemi & Hepburn, 1995; Sigel, 1995).

Research in citizenship education has over the last 15 years moved towards more or less agreement on four important issues. First, democracy and citizenship face economic, social and political pressures in new as well as stable democracies. Second, school should play a role in citizenship education, particularly in the area of political participation. Third, there is growing support for republican citizenship, which emphasizes participating and responsible citizens (Dagger, 2002). Fourth, there seems to be agreement on a constructivist learning approach to the field of civic learning (Hughes & Sears, 2008). However, this agreement is rather loose, and there certainly are debates over goals in education fueled by growing extremism, authoritarianism, nationalism, migration, pluralism and tensions as well as the negative impact on democratic legitimacy from the financial crises. Support for republicanism may, for instance, be interpreted as a unifying process, a focus on participation and a process of developing the political and democratic community. But that such an understanding exists is also disputable, because there are a number of debates over the role of school in the changing society.

Debates over citizenship education

Democracy, citizenship, dilemmas

The political democracy (often referred to as "liberal democracy") is a framework for citizens characterized by free elections, more political parties, freedom of speech, participatory rights and duties, and accountability (Dewey, 1938; Diamond & Morlino, 2005; Held, 2006). However the practice as well as the theoretical understanding of democracy and citizenship may take several forms and require difficult choices by educators.

Citizenship is a multidimensional concept which comprises a citizen's legal status as well as social and political rights, duties and participation (Marshall, 2000). Democracies, even the Scandinavian ones, vary according to citizens' rights and the political emphasis on duties. These social and political differences, often voiced by political parties, are rooted in political or ideological debates. Three positions are apparent: a liberal, a republican and a communitarian position, though a deliberative

position in the critical German tradition is also important. These will be briefly explained.

In their approach to democracy and citizenship, liberals try to maximize social freedom and put a greater emphasis on citizens' rights to liberty and self-determination. Competition is the overall mechanism for economic distribution in markets and for political participation in election campaigns. The most important civic duty is voting, and liberals place less emphasis on other means of participation and civic responsibilities. However, the liberal pluralist position emphasizes to a greater extent social belonging and participation in a community. Republicans (the internationally favored educational position), on the other hand, emphasize that society constitutes itself through participation in the political democratic community and self-rule. In their view, citizens develop their consciousness of the other through public debates or other means of social and political activity (Mansbridge, 1999). Participatory democracy has become a major focus of republicanism. In this view of democracy, civic virtues and above all the development of citizens through public participation are particularly important. The communitarian position points out that politics is rooted in a culturally defined community. This is different from the republican position, where the community is constructed through social and political participation (Isin & Turner, 2002) particularly also (Dagger, 2002; Delanty, 2002; Schuck, 2002).

In his contribution to decision-making in modern democracies, Habermas suggests procedural ethics for deliberation between groups in a model for deliberative democracy (Habermas,1984, 1995) . His approach has gained much interest both in politics and in education. We witness deliberative processes at all levels of democracy in attempts to reach consensus. However, Habermas also considers the public forum as vital to democracy. Only by creating political institutions that are open and subject to investigation and debate can the public exert criticism and control of political power. Public debate is therefore at the core of democracy.

The conceptualization of democracy has many implications for educators and offers them a number of choices. Among these choices are: emphasis on citizens' rights versus citizens' social responsibilities, emphasis on individuality and competitiveness versus solidarity, emphasis on the political system and voting versus deliberative practices and community involvement through social and political participation. Several other dilemmas related to the conceptualization of citizenship could be mentioned, but suffice it to say that any education reflects a particular emphasis or understanding of democracy. Consequently, educators should carefully consider how they see democracy and citizenship when choosing an approach to practical education.

National versus international citizenship identity

Citizens may have multiple formal as well as informal and subjective identities. Since citizenship defines membership in a social and political community, which is most often framed by the nation-state, all citizens have some kind of a national

identity. Particularly in Europe, the states are the results of historic processes and have developed national cultures in order to build national identities (Banks, 2008). However, a political community may be local, national, cross-national or global. Consequently, citizens feel varying amount of attachment to the communities in question and carry multiple identities. Cross-national identities may be founded in international treaties and administrative bodies like the EU. Citizens are given civil, political and social rights and to some extent responsibilities, like voting in cross-national EU parliamentary elections. Subjectively, citizens may also feel responsible to humankind regardless of national borders, or they may simply see themselves as responsible for contributing to global challenges (Linklater, 2002). Globalization, in communication as well as interaction, supports the belief that supranational identities have been strengthened. Citizens thus have multiple identities—local, national and supranational/global—regardless of their origins. Ethnic and cultural identities are also framed by political communities at all levels and make the question of identity rather complex.

Today, political questions such as war and peace, poverty, environmentalism, energy and the global economy require solutions and responsibilities that extend beyond the political community of the nation-state. Consequently, the question of local, national or global identity is of great importance for the individual, and ultimately for dealing with any political question of supranational character. The extent to which citizens feel and take responsibility for their social environment, regardless of where it might be, affects societies at all levels. Therefore the question of local, national and global identity is very much about developing citizens' sense of responsibility for what they perceive as their relevant political communities. Educators are thus faced with the dilemma of developing an inherently local or national identity or some global allegiance, which would imply taking responsibility for a greater global political and social environment.

The question of multiculturalism

Globalization and immigration change formerly "homogenous" states like the Scandinavian countries into more multicultural societies. These processes have added increasing complexity and dilemmas to the question of a national versus a global identity and thus also to citizenship education. As was pointed out earlier, most European countries have developed strong national cultures and identities along with national languages (Kymlicka, 2003). They have increasingly been criticized by groups inside and outside the states for assimilationist policies as well as suppression of minorities. The political debate has increasingly been devoted to adjusting policies to achieve more equal opportunities and to move toward more multicultural states. For such a process to take place, Kymlica emphasizes that at both the institutional state level as well as at the citizen level there must be acknowledgment of past atrocities and a search for new forms of social practices. States in particular need to take steps to adopt less oppressive methods of assimilation. Such changes imply, first of all, that a multicultural state repudiates the idea that the state is composed of a single national

group. Second, moving toward a multicultural state also implies a rejection of old assimilationist policies in favor of a policy of accommodation and recognition that all citizens deserve equal rights to access the state and retain their ethno-cultural identities. A third point is that the changes from a national unitary state policy toward greater cultural diversity requires acknowledgement of the historical injustice to minorities (see Kymlicka, 2003).

However, there is great variety among multicultural states, ranging from historically and linguistically heterogeneous nation-states to more homogenous states with smaller minorities. The composition of groups in different countries also varies considerably as does how the groups wish to relate to the state and integrate or segregate within each country. This "deep diversity" constitutes the complexity of the multicultural society. Some states, like Canada, are clearly multicultural and give distinct group rights to different minorities. The Nordic countries, on the other hand, are often referred to as homogenous but are certainly composed of distinct minorities like the Lappish minority and more recently the immigrants which live scattered around the country. The Lappish minority is, together with three other groups, labeled a "national minority" and enjoys certain group-specific rights. In Norway, a process of recognition and repudiation of past atrocities toward these minorities has taken place. However, our societies still struggle with tensions between the majority population and these minorities.

Over the last several decades, Norway and most Nordic and European countries have received a large number of immigrants who live scattered around the countries. The influx of new minorities leads to discourse on civil life and whether to follow practices of assimilation, integration, or accommodation. A multicultural state may recognize citizens' rights to equal access to social and political positions and acknowledge their right to live according to different norms, values and habits. However, the multicultural state may not be effective unless a sufficient number of citizens recognize and are willing to create and sustain these new forms of a multicultural state. To use Kymlica's term, a citizen who is able to deal with diversity is an "intercultural citizen" (Kymlicka, 2003:153). A minimalist description of an intercultural citizen is someone who supports the repudiation of assimilationist state policies. However, theorists often formulate a more robust picture of the intercultural citizen, one who supports the principles of a multicultural state and also has positive attitudes towards diversity among citizens. An effective multicultural state is therefore dependent upon a framework of rights, but most of all upon truly positive recognition by citizens of equality and diversity.

School is certainly an arena where this diversity is lived and displayed. Schools must also face the difficult questions pertaining to the historical understanding of state policies as well as the unity and tension between students from diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, questions of national identity, culture, tradition and religion are no longer simple and one-dimensional. There are more traditions, religions and cultures that have legitimate claims on attention and practice. The truly multicultural classroom is thus left with a number of educational dilemmas when the interests of the majority and that of the minorities are to be balanced in teaching and learning.

Maturity and young citizens

The overall agreement on republicanism and the importance of civic knowledge and participation has led to much international research on what promotes knowledge, participation and responsible citizens (Hahn, 2010; Hedtke, et al., 2008). This is important research, but the perspective on students in many of these studies seems to be that young children are not yet ready for, and therefore should *qualify* for, civic life. The qualification attitude is understandable, since children and adolescents do not enjoy fully political rights and certainly need to learn about social and political affairs. However the "preparation" perspective tends to ignore the fact that even young preschool children are subjects with participatory rights in society and may also be political actors. Underlying this discussion are views on the social and political maturity of young people. The discussion of students' political maturity is most obvious when we deal with lowering the voting rights age, but it also seems implicit in the questions of participation and approaches to citizenship teaching and learning.

The issue of whether young children are qualified to vote has been made quite explicit in several countries (Chan & Clayton, 2006; Gjernes, 2012). A key question in these debates is whether adolescents at the age of 16 are sufficiently mature to act responsibly when casting a vote. Considering political maturity seems important, but quantifying it is difficult. The British electoral commission argues that age groups which have sufficient social awareness and a sense of responsibility should be enfranchised. These terms (awareness and responsibility) are further explained as "one's ability and willingness to consider the effects of decisions on society at large as well as oneself" (Chan & Clayton, 2006). However, the commission seems to realize the problems of measuring maturity and therefore relies on "the public's view of when maturity is sufficiently developed" (Chan & Clayton, 2006:538).

The discussion of students' maturity as a requirement for voting is parallel to the quite common view mentioned above that school should "prepare" students for citizenship. The political socialization perspective is primarily concerned with preparation of students for the current political life. The socialization perspective also rests on the assumption that students lack the knowledge and skills necessary to be full participants in civic life. This perspective implies some kind of objectification of students as human "targets" for citizenship education (Biesta, Lawy, & Kelly, 2009,Biesta, 2011) This objectifying perspective often fails to see the actions of students as subjects and ordinary citizens. Today, young children as well as adolescents enjoy civil rights to protection, political rights to express themselves and participate, and social rights to some welfare. This is most obvious in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and also in international treaties on human rights. In many respects, within civic life, students participate in organizations, networks, blogs and cultural activities where they act as subjects. Therefore, the fact that students are not only passive recipients of information but also subjects is reason to question the "preparation" perspective in civic learning. However, a school might be trapped between a view that young citizens are regarded as not mature enough to vote but certainly mature enough to take on organizational, social, and political

responsibilities in their lives. Schools and students will have to live with such contradictions, although they might face some challenges as a result of how students see themselves in relation to school and the political authorities.

There are a few implications from this discussion of how to regard students as citizens. First, the fact that students participate in civic life and have formal civic and political rights implies that they are not only objects for "preparation", but also subjects in school and society. Second, through participation, students are continuously learning from their actions, and citizenship education in school is situated in what they learn from their social and political lives outside school. Third, the preparation perspective often implies preparation for the existing political order. This is rather obvious in the voting age debate and in discussions about lower participation trends and increasing the turnout.

Knowledge versus literacy

The next dilemma concerns *what* students should learn in citizenship education. This issue is reflected in debates over the content knowledge, skills and procedures that are necessary for citizens' social and political participation (see, for instance: Dahl, 1992; Dalton, 2000; Galston, 2001; Lupia & McCubbins, 1998; Niemi & Junn, 1998.) Debates over curriculum content in school always have to be related to the conceptualization of democracy and the goals for citizens' participation. Participation may be a minimalist conception, like voting every other year; or it may be conceived of in a broader sense, such as participatory democracy or active deliberative practice. It has been widely documented that the relationship between knowledge and voting participation is rather moderate (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010b; Solhaug, 2003; Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald, & Schultz, 2001). This means that knowledge is important but has a moderate effect on students' participation. Furthermore, the effect of knowledge on participation declines as the participation becomes more challenging or demanding. It seems that motivation and the feeling of being efficacious are more important as participation becomes more challenging (Solhaug, 2003). Consequently, if school aims to stimulate participation in the form of public debate and active influence on decisions, it should stimulate students' feeling of being efficacious. However, in addition to feeling efficacious, students also need to be motivated to learn and participate. Much civic education focusses on institutions, systems, parties and elections, and formal democratic procedures. This rather formal education, however, has been criticized by many researchers. Prof. Judith Torney-Purta, who has lead three large international IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievements) studies on "civic education" or citizenship education, has summarized these critiques (Torney-Purta, et al., 2001; Torney, Oppenheim, & Farnen, 1975). She writes that a common theme in international research after the 1999 civic education studies is that a citizenship education which focuses on concrete facts and abstract concepts often is regarded as irrelevant by the students. The authors of this research (in more than 20 countries) unanimously argue that students need to be able to wrestle with issues from their own lives, which also

may be controversial (Torney-Purta, 2007). Torney-Purta is also supported by findings in the 2010 ICCS (International Civic and Citizenship Education Study) report, which looked primarily at the goals in citizenship education. This study contains data from school principals and teachers in 38 countries and their view of these goals. In a study of goals for citizenship, education teachers and principals emphasize "knowledge" as the most important goal while "critical thinking" is the second most important. In the Nordic countries, critical thinking was regarded as the most important goal (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010a:184ff). These findings indicate that the teachers seem to value student participation and forming of opinions in school rather than being passive recipients of factual knowledge.

The concept of "civic literacy", which was introduced by Bernard Crick as early as the 1970s, is clearly related to what should be taught in citizenship education. Political literacy is first and foremost having knowledge of the important political debates in a society. Having such insights is a prerequisite for participation in political debates. Being politically literate also makes one more able to influence others and to be politically effective (Crick & QCA-DFEE, 1998:13; Davis, 2008:381).

Crick (along with others) therefore considers political debates, as well as participation and experiences, to be important in citizenship education. In line with Crick's argument, Carsten Ljunggren, who builds heavily on Habermas, argues that school needs to open up education and allow for the controversies which are important to students. He introduces what he calls "the principle of public space" as a norm for classroom dialogues (Ljunggren, 2008; Ljunggren & Øst, 2010; see also Solhaug & Børhaug, 2012). This principle implies that important issues under public deliberation may be brought into school in classroom discussions. Furthermore, it implies that public norms of dialogue are effective in school learning (Solhaug & Børhaug, 2012). From different authors and slightly different perspectives, there are strong arguments for deliberative democratic practice in school. In many ways, a deliberative perspective on school learning may turn school into a political arena, a step which in itself may be controversial.

An important question is to what extent there is a contradiction between teaching of concepts and facts on the one hand and teaching of deliberative practices on the other. First, the author would like to point out that "facts" most often can and should be questioned. Much fruitful deliberative practice can take place over understanding, interpretation and dynamics in political systems made up of clever but imperfect humans. It can also be argued that students learn particularly well from engaging in discussions. Specifically, they learn to judge differences in conceptualizations and to synthesize from public (student) dialogues. Emphasizing a deliberative practice over knowledge is in line with the German critical theory and thus a Habermas tradition. However, schools cannot discuss everything but often have to provide selected information on issues. The issues which are selected for deliberation should also be authentic in the sense that there is no "correct" answer to a question. Therefore, to become politically literate, students need to wrestle with concepts and issues which are authentic and to some extent relevant to their lives. This presents a dilemma for teachers: to *balance facts, debates and practices* in their citizenship education.

Whose knowledge?

The emphasis on school as an arena for public debates leads to the following question: “what Information should be presented in citizenship education?” Information is the basis for our understanding and our judgments, which feed the feelings upon which we act. We must also keep in mind that information is always somewhat biased—related to class, gender, ethnicity, political interest, culture, and heritage—and never neutral. School-transmitted political awareness often tries to achieve neutrality or “political balance” by using statements like “most people believe that…” or “it is widely accepted that...” Writing of textbooks is therefore highly political despite efforts to achieve neutrality (Børhaug & Christophersen, 2012). A critical view of the socialization approach to civic education maintains that students should influence what to learn by asking their own questions. They should explore the questions and develop their own civic and/or political awareness as a basis for understanding (Kincheloe, 2001:16). This is one out of several approaches to teaching which may be labeled “empowering education”. The empowering elements in the research approach can include students developing skills to address problems, searching for information, putting together the knowledge gained from searches, and arguing for issues or change. In the “research approach” to teaching, students learn to raise questions, to search for information and judge it critically, and to argue. This is all about learning to make oneself effective and politically literate. To summarize, a key question in citizenship education is to what extent it should stimulate socialization of students into civic and/or political awareness and the current political order, and to what extent it should aim to create independent and critical citizens.

Individual versus collective perspective on civic learning

As described in the previous section, school learning is most often based on individual acquisition of knowledge and skills, which also is the case for most citizenship education. This individual learning process is important for students and should not be undervalued. However, focusing on individual’s knowledge somehow implies that students lack the knowledge and skills to be able to participate properly. To be really prepared, students have to acquire the necessary skills to be able to participate as responsible citizens. Though it may be true that students need to learn more about society and democratic life, there are also two problems with this approach.

First, although knowledge is a prerequisite for individual action, there are moderate empirical associations between knowledge and participation (Schulz, et al., 2010b; Solhaug, 2003). Consequently, there are good reasons to believe that school may not enhance student participation by increasing civic and/or political awareness in individuals. Furthermore the individualized approach to teaching may also individualize participation.

The second problem with the individual- knowledge focus is that it tends to ignore that effective participation and influence are most often carried out through some kind of collective action (Biesta, 2011). To move from being individuals in an atomistic

society toward forming a group of interdependent people who are dedicated to making themselves politically effective is a long way to go. School cannot teach or lead students all this way, but it can show the weakness in individualism and the strength in interdependency as well as the need for collective action.

This brief discussion illustrates that the individual versus the collective dimension is important in approaches to citizenship education. While much school learning is individualized, effective participation and political action are highly collective. A school therefore needs to reflect on how much it emphasizes the individual versus the collective in its approaches to teaching.

A social versus a political citizenship education

An important question is whether citizenship education should be directed primarily at social activities like community service, charity work, etc. or whether it should be explicitly politicized, or both. Recall that the republican position of participatory democracy emphasizes that the political community is constructed from political participation. Alternatively, a communitarian position emphasizes a cultural community as the basis for political action. The distinction between the social and the political is rather blurred and highly dependent upon the concept of “politics”. Socially or culturally motivated actions may also be highly political. However, teaching and learning may be explicitly social and cultural or aimed at some form of political participation, be it voting, voicing opinions in some forum, or the intent to exert political influence. A special case is the British prime minister David Cameron’s idea of “big society” which may only be mentioned here but deserves a more in-depth discussion. “Big society” citizenship is understood politically as a responsibility to provide care and welfare in the local community. This reflects an understanding of citizenship in which the concept itself becomes part of state welfare politics and replaces the traditional role of the state which is to provide welfare services. Such an understanding of citizenship, as well as the accompanying welfare policies, clearly needs to be reflected upon as Paul Twivy did in *The Guardian*:

> *It became rapidly very clear to me that big society suffered from a number of intractable problems. It was seen as a fig leaf for the shrinking state and spending cuts. Or as a cynical repackaging of the civic activity that has quietly kept British society intact for hundreds of years. It was party-political, ergo tribal and divisive. The farther away from London and the south-east one went, the more toxic it became. (Twivy, 2012)*

What Twivy seems to point out here is that citizenship education may be used to replace government spending on welfare by preparing children for charity work and social care. In the British case, therefore, citizenship education as social activities can also be seen as highly political in the sense that students *may* be brought up to take on what is considered to be government's responsibility for welfare support of its population. However, citizenship education is supposed to provide opportunities for dialogue, for understanding, and for participation in a wider sense in society. Citizenship education therefore needs to be open to many forms of activities. How

education is experienced by students can only be revealed through a truly self-reflective practice by teachers as well as by students.

A citizenship education subject versus an integrated goal

So far, the discussion of citizenship education has looked at how it is taught as a subject in school. This is the case in most countries, but it often implies a narrow perspective on qualification of citizens.

Citizenship education is particularly interesting in the case of Scotland, because in that country it is an integrated goal in the Curriculum for Excellence and not confined to a particular subject (Biesta, 2011). According to this perspective, citizenship teaching and learning take place in all school subjects like math, science, language, religion and politics. Thus the school's contribution to social and political participation and to the making of effective citizens is seen as the outcome of all school subjects as well as of civic practices. There are several obvious arguments for such a broad approach to civic learning. First, social and political participation require skills and competences which are achieved in all aspects of schooling. The acquisition of civic skills is most obvious in language acquisition, calculation, science and computer technology. Second, most school subjects touch upon civic-related themes like culture and environmental questions, which offer opportunities for participation and deliberation. Consequently, civic involvement should be included as a goal in teaching and learning of these subjects. It thus may be argued that to be effective, a citizenship education must be taught and learned in most school subjects and be one of the overall school goals.

The limits of school

The author would like to point out some limits of school in citizenship education. School can never escape its role in society, which is to discipline and socialize students into the current social and political order. The “school project” inevitably implies that young people should adapt to society's values and procedures. School can hardly become a non-biased political arena that is genuinely and actively used by students as a political institution. It will have to overcome some negative attitudes from students, who often perceive school as a place they have to go to and sometimes need to protect themselves from. Therefore, regardless of approaches to teaching citizenship, school has some limits in its ability to reach out to students.

A second point is that students are always involved and encounter responses to their actions in social life (Biesta, 2010). As was already pointed out in the previous section, civic and political learning take place in all exchanges and experiences in students’ lives. Family, school, and virtual as well as physical arenas all involve communication, exchange and actions which are sources of civic and political learning. In particular, students learn from issues they are engaged in and important events that they sometimes encounter. Experiences from democratic practice or events in life—like the closing down of a youth club for financial reasons, hours spent in job lines, or lack of housing—may result in much more powerful lessons than school and

family are able to offer. Often these real life lessons overshadow most school education about democracy and participation.

Democracy and politics may therefore also involve hard and negative lessons, lessons that are sometimes quite painful but nevertheless important. School is part of students' lives and should provide room for their experiences, passions and frustrations. Consequently, school education should be situated in students' social and political practices, and the school should try to incorporate some of students' experiences in citizenship education.

Toward a civic identity

The question of identity has become an increasingly important aspect of human life. Previously, the article touched upon national, global and cultural identities which are of particular significance in students' social and political orientations and thus in citizenship education. To complicate matters further, we may also have a civic identity, which may be looked upon as multidimensional. Civic identity may be described as "how citizens see themselves in relation to the field of social and political life." Theoreticians have been concerned with the question of participation and citizens' general attitudes toward the political sphere ever since early Athenian democracy, and particularly since the release of *The Civic Culture* by Almond & Verba (Almond & Verba, 1963). Many people have a rather clear notion of how they see themselves as social and political participants. Others, perhaps a majority of adolescents, have rather vague ideas about their social and political roles in society. Citizenship education may therefore be looked upon as an arena where students develop their civic identities, how they see themselves as social and political participants. In the search for such an identity, school has a "normative voice"; but school also has to support students regardless of how it views their social and political engagement.

Summary and recommendations

The clearest international trend that can be identified here is criticism of citizenship and political education that focuses on facts and formal learning. Students often find some of this education to be irrelevant, and it has a rather uncertain effect on students' civic engagement. In light of this criticism, there is a need to reconsider the role of facts and learning in civic education. Quite a few of the dilemmas discussed in this article are related to education that stresses content knowledge. The author will continue by summarizing his recommendations with regard to the dilemmas.

First, it should not be taken for granted that democracy is good. Any political system should always *deserve* support. Democracy should therefore be subject to consideration and deliberation where questions regarding *trust, procedures and participation* are particularly important. A critical and reflective approach in teaching democracy is vital to democratic legitimacy and development of the system.

Second, regarding knowledge content, the author recommends that schools carefully consider what they need to present as facts and procedures. If the goal is to stimulate participation, school should offer options for this and also try to stimulate students' efficacy beliefs through participation. It is vital that students be given opportunities to influence the creation of knowledge, either through discussions or through participation in lesson planning. The critical approach is also vital to the construction of civic and political awareness in classrooms.

Third, school needs to consider students to be sufficiently mature as citizens and also able to participate in different arenas for learning. Its task is to provide knowledge and instill efficacy beliefs in students. To fulfill these tasks, the job of school is to provide support for students to help them manage challenging civic experiences. In providing this support, school needs to build on the capabilities of young people and carefully try to relate students' participation to their lives.

Fourth, there is support from the international research community for a participatory and deliberative orientation in citizenship education. This implies that school should take a critical approach and provide opportunities for all students to encounter questions which require consideration and engagement beyond their local and even national environment. Among the questions that can be addressed are those involving war and peace, migration, environmental issues and global responsibilities. As Banks and Osler put it, "*students should learn about the ways in which people in their community, nation, and region are increasingly interdependent with other people around the world and are connected to the economic, political, cultural, environmental and technological changes taking place across the planet"* (Banks, et al., 2004; Osler, 2012b).

Fifth, an international orientation requires openness to minorities and diversity in many classrooms. Questions of morality, religion, identity, culture, values, and attitudes toward issues all provide options for dialogue and learning. These options should serve as opportunities for students to test out their arguments and situate themselves in relation to their cultural backgrounds and the influence of new stimuli. This process should eventually lead to a situation in which "*students learn about the complex relationships between unity and diversity in their local communities, the nation, and the world"* (Banks, et al., 2004; Osler, 2012b).

Sixth, in our country and most other countries, citizenship is a particular subject that is ignored outside of that class. However, most school subjects touch upon topics and issues relevant to civics. It is therefore recommended that citizenship be made a goal or a perspective in most school subjects.

Finally, the author recommends that school focuses on the political, and possibly the controversial, aspects of democracy and citizenship in its approach to citizenship education.

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