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What Do Human Rights Mean for Citizenship Education?

Abstract

The article argues that citizenship education and human rights education can be understood as educational responses to specific social and political challenges in different national, regional and global contexts. It outlines four cases:

- Nbsp; the early German response of civic education
- The late British response of citizenship education
- The response of EDC within the European framework of the Council of Europe
- The response of HRE within the global framework of the UN and the UNESCO

The main aim is to contribute to the necessary clarification of what is shared and what is different of EDC and HRE in this ongoing process of cooperation and integration between the two approaches in Europe.

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Keywords

Human rights education, citizenship education, rights, responsibilities, changes

Human Rights and Democracy

Human rights are indispensable instruments for the realization and the protection of human dignity and of fundamental human needs. Human rights are not an end in itself, but they are the strongest instruments that have been developed so far to pave the way for a life of self-determination and non-discrimination for every human being.

Human rights and democracy have always been in close relationship. The development of political participation and democracy and human rights stemmed from the same interest to control an arbitrary state. The development of democracy can be understood as the manifestation of political human rights, and the protection of human rights helped the state to get a new legitimization. The democratic state was the main institution that helped to guarantee human rights until the international regime of human rights protection was established after 1945. However, there has also been from the beginning a tension between an universal legitimization (all human beings) and the narrower political frame of respect for and protection of human rights by the nation state.

In the moment when the former subjects began to emancipate as citizens they had to learn new competencies. They had to learn how to use their rights and how to participate effectively in the public sphere. They had to learn how to support and how to

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practice the developing institutions of democracy. In the moment when the national institutions of the protection of basic rights were supplemented by international human rights institutions the individuals had to learn how to use these institutions.

Discourses on citizenship and citizenship education are increasingly being coupled with human rights discourses. In practice, there is some evidence that human rights education (HRE) is going to be recognized by educational authorities as a special feature of - or inclusive approach to - citizenship education. However, these discourses are shaped by aspirations and by concerns at the same time. What should be the relation between HRE and citizenship education (the educators and the policy makers)? Should HRE be completely integrated into citizenship education or should citizenship education be completely integrated into HRE? Should they be related but very independent from each other?

In this article I will outline how citizenship education and human rights education should be seen as educational responses to specific social and political challenges in different national, regional and global contexts.

I will outline four cases or responses:

- The early German response of civic education;
- The late British response of citizenship education;
- The response of EDC within the European framework of the Council of Europe;
- The response of HRE within the global framework of the UN and the UNESCO;

The main aim is to analyze the similarities and the differences between the two approaches of Education for Democratic Citizenship promoted by the Council of Europe and Human Rights Education promoted by the UNESCO and to understand how they respond to different challenges of changing societies. It intends to contribute to the necessary clarification of what is shared and what is different in this ongoing process of cooperation and integration in Europe of EDC and HRE.

The German Case

Especially the disaster and breakdown of the Republic of Weimar as well as the experience of Nazism led to the idea that the learning of democracy needs a special educational effort in order to enable the citizens to play their role adequately. Even though there were initiatives for civic education in different countries, Germany became the leading country for the development of civic education. The awareness that citizens need to learn democratic behaviour to develop a living democracy was already incorporated at the framing of the constitutions. Thus the constitution of Baden-Württemberg for instance laid down as early as 1953: "Gemeinschaftskunde is a regular subject in all schools."

Even though the development of civic education in Germany was very controversial – due to the influence of the cold war and the special situation of the divided Germany -, today we can underline some agreed essentials:

The objective of civic and citizenship education is to transmit democratic values and skills to pupils, so that they grow up to be responsible citizens. This is emphasised in

http://www.hrea.org/lists/hr-education/markup/msg01763.html

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Country_profiles/Profile_GERMANY_en.asp

http://www.bpb.de/themen/ZWT5G3,0,Political_Education_in_Schools_and_its_Scientific_Bases.html

¹ http://www.jsse.org/2006-1/fritzsche tibbitts intro.htm

the curricula of all the *Länder*. As early as 1976 experts of civic education agreed on the principle of not to manipulate either young people or adults, but to equip them with a critical approach which allows them to develop their own opinions.⁴

There is also an underlying assumption that civic education should follow the imperative: "Never again!" This means that civic education should work as a preventive effort in order to combat anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism. The adequate ways to fulfil this task remain controversial, however.

In Germany the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for International Understanding and Co-operation and on Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1974 had some influence on the national development of guidelines and standards for HRE. Already in 1980 the recommendations of the *Kultusministerkonferenz* (KMK) concerning HRE were adopted.

The last decade has been very much influenced by the German BLK-Project "Learning and living democracy" with a strong emphasis on the understanding of democracy as a political system and as a way of life.⁵

After decades of civic education addressing the problems of the consolidation of a democracy there are discussions about the main challenge and the key focus of civic education today. Obviously the new focus of the Federal Agency for Civic Education – without cancelling the old one – is Europe.

The Case of the United Kingdom

In comparison to Germany the UK is an interesting case of a very late development and implementation of civic education. Only in the late 1970 citizenship education (CE) became a matter of academic and political debate in the U.K, as it was thought that there was no real need in the consolidated democracy of the UK to establish an own subject at schools which aims at transmitting democracy orientated skills and attitudes.⁶

However, the following challenges in 1990 led to a shift in the perception and to the demand of the establishment of CE in the UK:

- Political apathy of the young people;
- Low voter turnout;
- Legal changes in Europe and the Human rights Act;
- Immigration and diversity;

The process culminated in the setting up of the Advisory Group in citizenship education under the Chairmanship of Bernard Crick and the publication and implementation of its final report on Citizenship Education and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools. The Crick Report (QCA 1998) has influenced the development of citizenship education across the UK from primary level to post-16.⁷

http://www.c-sap.bham.ac.uk/resources/project_reports/findings/ShowFinding.htm?id=19/S/03

⁴ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Country_profiles/Profile_GERMANY_en.asp

⁵ http://www.blk-demokratie.de/

⁷ Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). 1998. Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools. (Crick Report). London: QCA.

The Crick Report identifies three elements of citizenship education: (QCA 1998, 12-13)

- 1. Social and Moral Responsibility: Children learning from the very beginning selfconfidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour both in and beyond the classroom, both towards those in authority and towards each other.
- 2. Community Involvement: Learning about and becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their neighbourhood and communities including learning through community involvement and service to the community.
- 3. Political Literacy: Pupils learning about the institutions, problems and practices of our democracy and how to make themselves effective in the life of the nation, locally, regionally and nationally through skills and values as well as knowledge this can be termed political literacy, seeking for a term wider than political knowledge alone.

Whilst the terms of the Crick Advisory Group make explicit reference to rights, what is of particular note is that the phrase "human rights" is not used — but rather "rights of individuals as citizens" (QCA 1998, 4).8 Human rights are universal, inherent and inalienable. These characteristics are very different from those which feature in education for citizenship in England.

However, it has been questioned, whether the Crick Report's conception of citizenship account of cultural difference adequately takes and After the terrorist London bombings the debate on CE has experienced an interesting shift to issues of identity and belonging and led to the underlining of Britishness.

A review of how schools teach citizenship by Sir Keith Ajegbo found out that there was not enough emphasis on UK identity and history. In the debate it has been stated that schools should "play a leading role in creating community cohesion". Furthermore it has been underlined: "Certain values may be universal, but their application through our history is unique to these islands," However: "Britishness does not need to be dominant and certainly not a domineering identity, but it must be a significant common facet that we all can share."10

The European Case: Education for Democratic Citizenship

In addition to already existing national approaches the project of Education for Democratic Citizenship Education (EDC) has been developed within the framework of the Council of Europe in the late 1990. The following challenges led to this project in progress:

- As a response to the changes taking place in the aftermath of 1989, especially the collapse of communism and the transformation of authoritarian political systems into new democracies:
- As a reaction to what is sometimes referred to as "the crisis in the social fabric and in social cohesion";

⁸ http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmeduski/147/6060708.htm

⁹ http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=305

¹⁰ http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk news/education/6294643.stm

As a response "to the needs of today's Europe" and the challenge of a Union citizenship.

EDC is a multifaceted approach that is going to be differentiated according to national, social, cultural and historical contexts. However, there is a consensus on some essentials. The European Ministers of Education, convening for the 20th session of the Standing Conference in Cracow October 2000, adopted a Declaration of the European Ministers of Education on the main theme of the 20th session where it reads:

Education for democratic citizenship:

- Is based on the fundamental principles of human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law;
- Refers in particular to rights and responsibilities, empowerment, participation and belonging, and respect for diversity;
- Includes all age groups and sectors of society;
- Aims to prepare young people and adults for active participation in democratic society, thus strengthening democratic culture;
- Is instrumental in the fight against violence, xenophobia, racism, aggressive nationalism and intolerance;
- Contributes to social cohesion, social justice and the common good;
- Strengthens civil society by helping to make its citizens informed and knowledgeable and endowing them with democratic skills; 12

The project can be understood as work in progress that has been and is open to redefinitions, re-interpretations and enlargements of its concept. "In doing so, it ratified the notion that democratic citizenship should be seen as applying not only to the regional and national level, but also at the European and the global level"

This broader understanding of "citizen and citizenship offers a potential *new model for exploring how we live together*. The challenge therefore is to move beyond the confines of the 'Nation State' to a concept of 'community' which embraces the local, the national, regional and the international contexts that individuals live in."

The second broadening led to the integration of HR into the label: EDC/ HRE. In doing so it is intended to underline that "the fundamental aim of EDC is the promotion of a culture of democracy and human rights, a culture that enables individuals to develop the collective project of building communities. Thus it seeks to strengthen social cohesion, mutual understanding and solidarity."

Within EDC the adjective 'democratic' emphasises the fact that it is a *citizenship based* on the principles and values of human rights, respect of human dignity, pluralism, cultural diversity and the primacy of law. ¹³

However, training programmes have to take into account what teachers, students and also policy makers understand by the concept of EDC, how they perceive and use it. There have been *restricted perceptions* amongst practitioners and students about what EDC is and what it means in schools.¹⁴

¹¹ http://www.okm.gov.hu/letolt/nemzet/eu/Basic.doc

¹²http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Cooperation/education/Standing_Conferences/f.20thsessioncracow2000.

asp

13 http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/What_is_EDC/GlossaryKeyTerms_en.asp

¹⁴http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Source/Pdf/Documents/2004_44_Tool3TeacherTraining.PDF

- It is not uncommon for the aims of EDC to be identified with the making of 'good' citizens, in the sense of polite and caring individuals.
- Another form of misunderstanding is to see EDC simply as a kind of teaching method without any specific content.
- Yet another is to identify EDC with personal development that is, with the nurturing and growth of self-confidence, self-esteem and so on.
- In several European countries the term citizenship still mainly denotes a legal status and a relationship between the citizen and the state instead of the broader view of EDC.

The World Case: Human Rights Education

When the educational experts and the policy makers began to couple EDC with HRE, they had to take into account that HRE had already developed as an internationally recognized universal approach that aims to go beyond any national boundary. However, even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had already underlined the importance of HRE in 1948 and the UNESCO constantly had tried to strengthen HRE, it was only after the World Conference of Vienna 1993 when HRE had its international take off. In the UN-Decade of HRE (1995-2004) a large number of countries have incorporated HRE into pre-school, primary and secondary school level curricula, either as a cross-curricular theme, or as targets in the overall curriculum. In 2005, with the conclusion of the UN Decade for HRE, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights launched an on-going and more focused World Programme with a Plan of Action for Human Rights Education, which promises to elicit improved cooperation from governments, as well as cross-cutting support from UN bodies. 15

Possible explanations for the emerging HRE are:

- Increased globalization;
- New waves of democratisation;
- Old and new forms of racism;
- New dynamics of migration;
- Emergence of identity politics;
- Increase of NGOs.

In accordance with the purposes of the Decade, human rights education shall be defined as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes and directed to:

- (a) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- (b) The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;
- (c) The promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups;
- (d) The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society;
- (e) The furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

¹⁵ http://www.jsse.org/2006-1/fritzsche_tibbitts_intro.htm

Under the heading of "General Principles" it reads:

The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education shall be guided by the definition and normative basis set out in part I of the present Plan of Action and shall further be directed to creating the broadest possible awareness and understanding of all of the norms, concepts and values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in other relevant international human rights instruments. The Decade is placed within the context of action of States and others to eradicate illiteracy and understands education to be a constant factor in the multidimensional life of individuals and of society of which human rights are an integral part. ¹⁶

HRE reflects the development of human rights and is as such an open and controversial process. Human rights remain open for controversial interpretations and the transformation of emerging fundamental needs into protected rights is a kind of a never ending story. However, behind all debates there are two guiding principles of human rights:

- 1. Individual self-determination
- 2. Non-discrimination. 17

However, training programmes in HRE have to take into account misconceptions or one-sidedness amongst the teachers:

- HRE is only about the relationship between the individual and the state.
- HRE deals only with institutions of human rights protection.
- HRE focuses mainly on values and is understood as implicit HRE.
- HRE is criticised because of its alleged one-sided rights-orientation and the neglect of responsibilities.
- HRE is misunderstood as exclusively relevant for not yet developed countries or dictatorships.

Similarities and Differences

What we are seeing is a process, in which the concept of human rights is increasingly being coupled with the concept of citizenship. However we have to take into account that there are and still remain tensions between the two concepts. To put the two labels of EDC and HRE together is not sufficient. Especially from the perspective of human rights educators there are concerns that the two concepts should not be conflated and that the distinctions are not to be overseen.¹⁸

Before I will draft some differences between HRE and EDC I summarize some similarities:

Both approaches

- Are internationally developed and practiced approaches,
- Are based on the underlying assumption: "Educations matters",
- Meet at "participation" and promote a participatory school culture,
- Intend to have a preventive impact against discrimination, intolerance and violence.

¹⁶ http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/A.51.506.Add.1.En?OpenDocument

¹⁷ Fritzsche, K. Peter (2004) Menschenrechte – eine Einführung mit Dokumenten, Paderborn

¹⁸ http://www.hrea.org/lists/hr-education/markup/msg01764.html

Universal rights – citizens´rights:

Despite the integrative labelling of EDC/ HRE there still remains a tension between the concept of human rights and the concept of the rights of the citizens, which often coexist in the same documents. There remains "an important distinction between a more universalistic approach and an approach where citizenship is defined in political terms. Underpinning human rights is the notion of common humanity based on ethical and legal conceptualisations of the individual. In contrast, citizenship rights are underpinned in relation to a political community, based on political and legal understandings of the individual."19

Global dimension and awareness – European dimension and awareness:

Even though it has been stated that EDC includes the European and the global dimension, there is a much stronger emphasis on the European dimension. And on raising an European awareness. This is also due to the fact that the education for Europe(!) is intended to overcome shortcomings of politics: On the on hand citizenship for citizens of the EU- Member States means something additional: The EU citizenship complements the national citizenship of the Member States and does not replace it. Citizens of the Union have genuine rights under Community law (e.g.: freedom of movement and the right of residence within the territory of the Member States; right to vote and stand as a candidate at elections to the European Parliament and at municipal elections in the Member State of residence). On the other hand many citizens still feel powerless and therefore tend to perceive the EU as un-democratic. In order to overcome the democratic deficit either more participatory rights should be given to the citizens or better information about the existing rights is needed: "The challenge is to get the EU citizen interested in what the faraway Institutions do...perhaps the EU is not sexy enough!".20

Responsibilities within the frame of human rights - responsibilities within the frame of citizenship:

Both approaches share the concept of "rights and responsibilities", but they do have different guiding perspectives. Human rights orientated responsibilities aim at the recognition of the same rights of the others; they do underline the human rights principle of non-discrimination and equal human rights. The citizenship orientated responsibilities aim at the commitment for the communities; they underline the responsibility to participate. This also demonstrates a different approach to participation: the human rights perspective informs about the equal rights to participate, the citizenship perspective informs about the responsibility to practice this right. Thus one major objective of EDC is to show "how education for democratic citizenship can contribute to social cohesion through learning to participate in the life of society, to assume responsibility and to live together. "21

Change - cohesion and stability:

Education for democratic citizenship is intended to foster cohesion and stability of the social and political community. Human rights education aims at change. Article 28 of the UDHR reads, "Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized". People who are oriented toward an idea of equal human dignity and rights and who trust in their competence and power will defend themselves against discrimination, oppose tyranny

¹⁹ http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmeduski/147/6060708.htm

²⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/nav/en/citizens/citizenship/citizenship/index.html http://209.85.129.104/search?q=cache:n0uAiziH54MJ:www.friendsofeurope.org/pdfs/SoDECAS_1.pdf+citi

and step up to support the ideals of the UDHR. For this to happen, human rights education is critical. It elucidates conditions under which human rights are violated and also enables us to measure policies and actions against human rights standards. HRE also remains critical where human rights conflicts occur within democracies - as after September 11th. Human rights education is about education for taking action. Educating about human rights violations may lead to protest and to social change.

The critique of power and the encouragement of change are not appreciated by everybody. Human rights are often perceived as political and even subversive, threatening for those who would defend their interests, their power positions and/ or their privileges. If teachers are not educated and empowered sufficiently, they will tend to avoid such hot topics.

If HRE and EDC are the answers, what are the questions? Both respond to different questions: HRE responds to the question: How can the individual learn to live self-determined and non-discriminated. How can the threatened individual be protected and empowered in order to live in freedom and equality? EDC responds to the question: How can the citizens learn to support and stabilize the democratic system and the community through participation. HRE is thinking from the perspective of the individual in danger, EDC takes the perspective of the community in crisis.

Finally, we should not oversee that also CE might influence and strengthen HRE. I see at least three strands of this input and impact: CE will help;

- To underline that human rights are often just political claims and not yet rights;
- To focus more on the relationships within civil society;
- To recognize the fact that often rights are guaranteed, but they are not practiced by the citizens (like participation).

Conclusion

The relationship between EDC and HRE is neither static nor unchangeable, but it is an open process. If the new label of EDC/ HRE is more than a label, the concept of universal human rights will radically change the concept of citizenship. The development of this process depends on all those who are concerned, responsible, get involved and participate. It depends not only on the policy and programme makers, but also on the participation of the educators and the learners. It depends on the implementation of the right to education and to HRE that includes that those who get educated have a voice.

One proof of the relationship between EDC and HRE will probably be the education in and for the migration society. What are the rights and responsibilities of the migrants and the citizens of the receiving society? Where are the barriers of citizenship? How can the society overcome the barriers of racism? What is the relationship between diversity and cohesion? I would like to conclude with the hope of the UNESCO:

The aspiration is that concepts of citizenship based on human rights and responsibilities may make it more difficult to mobilize political conflict around identity issues. It has therefore become the norm for modern civic education programmes to

²²http://www.bpb.de/veranstaltungen/VUOW2G,0,Rethinking_Citizenship_Education_in_European_Migrati on Societies.html

have a strong human rights values base, to make specific reference to children's rights and address issues related to diversity and the rights of minorities within society.²³

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²³ http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL ID=4732&URL DO=DO TOPIC&URL SECTION=201.html