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Editorial

Keywords

Citizenship education, democratic education, talk and action, transformation countries, post-authoritarian countries, post-communist-countries, deliberation, participation

This issue of the Journal of Social Science Education continues the debate on citizenship education in societies experiencing processes of post-socialist transformation which we have started in JSSE 2-2007. It contains two conceptual papers, one of them proposing a specific methodology of analysing systems of citizenship education and the interplay of their organised actors (talk-and-action approach), the other outlining an empirically applicable typology of differences between democratic and non-democratic features of citizenship education. The two case studies on Romania and Bulgaria can be read as an exemplification of the talk-and-action approach and as a test of its applicability. An exemplary study on Russian textbooks develops a typology and a critical method of revealing notions of citizenship and analysing their restricting and enabling impact on students thinking and acting related to the political and societal background these notions are embedded in. Two further case studies on Portugal and Estonia deal among other things with the impact of an authoritarian past on current citizenship education and the difficulties to realise a sustainable democratisation of teaching, learning and every-day practices.

The paper *The talk-and-action approach to citizenship education – An outline of a methodology of critical studies in citizenship education* of Tatjana Zimenkova and Reinhold Hedtke argues for understanding all organisations of citizenship education as genuinely political organisations, be it a ministry, a regional education authority or an individual school. The authors suggest an approach allowing an analysis of citizenship education as a multi-level, multi-actor and multi-interest field focusing on actors confronted with multiple and inconsistent environments while pursuing their own interests. Against this backdrop, an understanding of citizenship education as a mere object of policies and politics ordered to develop political knowledge and competencies and to educate citizens by educational means only does not go far enough (implementation approach). Rather, citizenship education itself has to be conceptualised as an organised political field which has to be analysed in terms of interested actors, conflicting demands and political action. Like in politics, the outcome of citizenship education may be better understood as an inevitably inconsistent mix of talk, decision and action. Then, the popular diagnosis of “policy implementation gaps” does not make much sense: the imaginary deficient “gaps” turn out to be the normal working order of the system of citizenship education itself and its outcome may be analysed as unavoidable “organised hypocrisy”.

Thorsten Hippe questions the success attributed to the mere institutionalisation of citizenship education in a country because it alone does not signify anything in terms of *democratic* citizenship education and related educational goals and contents, competencies and practices. His paper *Transformed Institutions, Transformed Citizenship Education?* gives an outline of a theoretical framework for a critical analysis

of the actual democratic quality of citizenship education. He illustrates his criticism by some examples of not so democratic citizenship education from the US, Turkey, Spain, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and Russia. The research framework he proposes relies on the fundamental differentiation of the two ideal types of democratic and non-democratic citizenship education which are not designed as a dichotomy but as the two outer points of a continuum. Moreover, the five features selected for defining the ideal types – human rights, international relations, current institutions and norms, dealing with a country's history, differences in society – allow identifying intermediate, mixed cases as the normal case. They may tend to the non-democratic extremum in one dimension and touch the democratic ideal in another feature. The argumentation of Thorsten Hippe may be read as an emphatic plea for empirical research on the real democratic quality of citizenship education.

In his paper *"When Talkin' With Me You'd Shut Up". Civil Education in a Post-Communist Society Challenged by the Institutionalized Public Culture. The Case of Bulgaria*, Georgi Dimitrov investigates the tension between critical and hypocritical democratic education correlated to the discrepancy of public talk and practiced action. Whereas Bulgarian civic education is already well-established in terms of concepts, teaching material and educational content, democratic citizenship in schools and classroom culture is far from being regarded as a matter of course and a part of everyday life. Georgi Dimitrov analyses main problems of citizenship education in content and paradigms and traces their origins back to characteristic, structural and mental features of a post-communist society including inherited patterns of disciplining and exercise of power in schools. This legacy seems to be a more or less common trait of post-communist countries. To overcome the impeding impact of this heritage from the past, two conditions must be met: a profound democratisation of the educational system and a redesign of public institutions making them part of civil society.

The Romanian case shows a similar picture of obvious tensions between governmental policies and school practices. In his paper *The model of organised hypocrisy applied to Romanian civic education policies and practices*, Calin Rus shows that although much progress has been made and citizenship education enjoys a comfortable place in the compulsory curriculum, it is typically exposed to incompatible expectations and demands and suffering from its marginalised status in schools. The interactive opportunities provided by some textbooks are rarely used as the learning culture of reproducing given content continues to prevail. Concluding his case study, Calin Rus stresses the insight that citizenship education has to deal with a complex and changing environment entailing internal differences, deviations and contradictions. Taken together, this can be appropriately understood as an exemplary case of Nils Brunsson's approach of organised hypocrisy. Thus, inconsistency in citizenship education may be better perceived as a systemic outcome mirroring inconsistent demands than as an administrative failure in implementing the right policy.

Portugal has experienced deep transformations during the last three decades: democratisation, decolonisation and Europeanisation. *Cristina N. Azevedo, Isabel Menezes* investigate impacts and implications of these transformations on Portuguese citizenship education. Their paper *Transition to democracy and citizenship education in Portugal: Changes and continuities in the curricula and in adolescents' opportunities for participation* outlines the historical-political background framing citizenship education and analyses attitudes of adolescents towards citizenship, politics, civic engagement and participation. The outcome is a mixed picture of skepticism towards politics and low levels of social and political participation on the one hand, but a clear support for a social or expansive model of democracy on the other hand. Although adolescents

clearly value democracy and participatory citizenship, some influence of an authoritarian climate turns out to be still tangible in form of respect towards politicians and the law and in suspicion of criticism and pluralism. But more and more this seems to be counterweighted by an increasing relevance of a social-movement citizenship and a high regard of participation. The result that the quality of participation experiences is a significant predictor of dispositions to be politically active, is an important challenge for educational policies, school structures and classroom practices. An exemplary analysis of how textbooks construct citizenship is presented by *Tatjana Zimenkova*. In her paper *Citizenship through faith and feelings: Defining Citizenship in Citizenship Education. Exemplary Textbook Analysis*, she develops a typology of conceptions of citizenship and related attitudes. Starting with a critical discussion of currently prevailing concepts of active citizenship, the paper offers traceable pairs of attitudes which are related to the two main types of citizenship as typified by the author: citizenship as legal status and as active position. Several empirical indicators for different types of citizenship are developed, applied in an in-depth analysis of the usage of notions of citizenship in Russian textbooks, and proposed as a tool for empirical research. The detailed investigation results in revealing two language modalities used in the texts and a strong preference for citizenship based on faith and hope, morality and responsibility, belonging and supportive behaviour. The findings are put into a broader frame reconstructing the main features of current citizenship education discourse and practices in Russia as expressed in catch-phrases like patriotism and sovereign democracy.

In the same line of thinking like Thorsten Hippe and Tatjana Zimenkova, *Kaarel Haav's* paper *Civic education: democratic or authoritarian? The Estonian case* gives a critical assessment of conceptions and practices of citizenship education in a post-communist country. Against his own theoretical approach to democracy and civic education, he describes main aspects of official European approaches and key outcomes of international surveys concluding in a decided plea for a deliberative and critical civic education. Looking at Estonia, Kaarel Haav criticises conventionalism and arbitrary concepts in relevant textbooks and the strong accent on mere knowledge as preferred in Estonian national examinations. This, unfortunately, corresponds to the prevailing professional identity of teachers as deliverers of knowledge. His conclusion is rather sceptical in seeing no way for democratic change in citizenship education unless the authoritarian system of education itself will change. Here, we can see a parallel to the results of Georgi Dimitrov's paper with respect to the Bulgarian case.

The article *Citizenship Education in Slovenia after the Formation of the Independent State* describes the national system of citizenship education, its stakeholders, policies, educational goals, conceptions, curricula and practices (cf. the paper of Marjan Šimenc in JSSE 2-2003 http://www.jsse.org/2003-2/slovenia_simenc.htm). Starting with the restructuring of the educational system after 1991, *Janez Krek* and *Mojca Kovač Šebar* analyse the position, content and practice of citizenship education throughout the different levels of the school system. They trace the political struggle for influence on value education in schools, namely the demands of the Roman Catholic church and trends to depoliticise civic education. In defence against these attempts, they stress the principle of teaching citizenship education objectively, critically and pluralistically. In addition, the paper gives an overview of the current controversies on educational approaches like knowledge versus thinking or spontaneous development of the individual versus objective dimensions of education and socialisation and the impact of these discourses on citizenship education. In the end, the authors criticise the tendency of the new subject Civic Education and Ethics to disregard the core content of political and citizenship literacy.

“Making Politics Visible” is the topic of the next Journal of Social Science Education which is organised as a double-issue 2-2008/1-2009 and scheduled to be published in December 2008.