

Reviewers: Leif Kalev, Mari-Liis Jakobson

The Citizen, the Nation-State (and Globalization)

Review of the Book: "Globalization, the Nation-State and the Citizen: Dilemmas and Directions for Civics and Citizenship Education"

written by Alan Reid, Judith Gill and Alan Sears, eds.

New York; Oxon: Routledge 2010, 252 pages

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The book *Globalization, the Nation-State and the Citizen*, edited by Reid, Gill and Sears offers a valuable insight to the current trends of civics and citizenship education (CCE). The contributions include 12 case studies from various regions of the world, and their generalising reflections.

The focus of the book is very timely as citizenship has become one of the areas where the national authorities have proved stern in maintaining a close relationship of citizens to state. Even in the European Union, with the most advanced multi-level governance arrangements, citizenship and education remained relatively little changed. So CCE is a good empirical test to analyse the practical dynamics of political globalisation.

The merits of this book comprise: 1) the emphasis on contextual factors that have an impact on the development of citizenship and CCE, 2) and a broad definition of CCE, encompassing not only official curricula, but also the societal context, teaching methods that foster different citizen identity and participation of students, as well as civil society initiatives in developing citizenship education (e.g. the chapter on Brazil).

The book provides efficient access to various national experiences covering the dynamics in a broad historical and regional contexts: from the high colonial age (late 19th century) to date and ranging from calm Canadian multiculturalism to Pakistani seemingly unending row of authoritarian projects. The case studies feature highly developed Anglophone countries (England, the United States, Australia, Canada), the swift modernisers known as "the Tiger economies" (Ireland, Singapore, Hong Kong), and many developing countries who have chosen different political pathways (Brazil, South Africa, Pakistan, Russia, Mexico).

The editors justify this selection claiming that the cases "were deliberately sought as symptomatic of nation-states undergoing significant change processes at socio-political, cultural and constitutional levels" (Reid, Gill, Sears 2010, 11). Though the sample provides an interesting comparison between highly developed and developing countries in many respects, the

case studies overwhelmingly deal with the grounds of the former British empire, complemented by only 3 exceptions – Russia, Brazil and Mexico. Thus, the practical experience of globalisation of education via europeanization (EU Lisbon strategy, Bologna process, related domestic politics etc.) remains underexplored.

The empirical chapters share broadly similar thematic foci that foster the process of grasping comparable information. At the same time, not all chapters follow the same structural logic, which is understandable, since different countries have been previously studied to a different extent. Some authors go in depth with the policy discourse of citizenship (e.g. chapters on Russia, Ireland, Hong Kong), some authors stress the importance of political discourses (e.g. the chapter on the USA gives Obama's election campaign a revolutionary importance in transforming the essentials of citizenship and citizenship education).

Instead of a concluding chapter, the book ends with four analytical or reflective chapters that critically reflect on the case studies (e.g. chapters by Osler and Hébert), offer frameworks of analysis (Parker), or elaborate on the transforming context (Kennedy). Some of the key issues have been highlighted already in the analytical introduction by the editors.

The book has a specific approach to globalization. As a starting point, the editors of the book have undertaken Hobsbawm's (2007) assertion that the nation-states are not able to tackle the problems of globalizing economy and ecological problems, and ask, "how have the nation-states responded and are the responses adequate to meeting the sorts of challenges of globalisation spelt out by Hobsbawm?" (Reid, Gill, Sears 2010, 6), and in order to do so, they explore CCE.

However, this investigation tends to remain shallow: it is not supported by the foci nor the structure used in the case studies, nor is this problematic reassessed in the analytical chapters. Though the title of the book begins with the word 'globalization', it remains a contextual factor within national cases. The introductory chapter poses a problem of dealing with globalization but there is no systematic analysis of the various dimensions of globalization in the book that would enable comparison. This also inspired the title of the review, where the words of the original title have been re-aligned according to their relevance to the contents of the book.

Instead, this book can be interpreted as an empirical exploration into the multiple facets of globalization. For example, in the case of Brazil, globalization can be interpreted as multi-level governance: McCowan and Puggian describe how supranational institutions have succeeded in pressurizing domestic curricula. Hong Kong is an exemplary case of the interconnectedness and the resulting complexity of the globalizing world: Tse Kwan-Choi describes the 'rope walk' of China's regained, albeit globalized province in balancing China's nationalizing ambitions and global economic competition, and how this results in the political apathy of the citizens.

Chapters on both Russia and the United States seem to be interpreting globalization as Westernization, or even more, as Americanization. Piattoeva describes Russia's resulting scepticism, when adapting to international norms and contexts after the end of the Cold War, while Scott and Cogan envision global citizenship education as a subject, where other countries'

interpretations on US foreign policy are discussed (sic). Moodley's chapter on South Africa undertakes a Marxist stance, claiming that globalization is not an issue in South Africa, a poor and underdeveloped country, but rather, an issue for the global elite.

The more regular themes of globalization addressed in the chapters are the increasing flow of people and capital resulting in the need for multicultural education (discussed e.g. in the chapters on Australia, Canada, the United States, Ireland), or a need to balance global economic competition with national identity (discussed e.g. in chapters on Singapore, Hong Kong, and Ireland).

From a political science perspective the key interest is how does the CCE reflect the changes in statehood and power. One of the messages the case studies demonstrate is how clearly CCE is tied to the (nation-)state. The correspondence of the changes in CCE and national policies marked by several case studies reflects the ensuing importance of state for CCE both in Western world and other states.

In the Western world the liberalisation of CCE visible in 1960s-1970s was followed by a more conservative period in 1990s-2000s (see e.g. the chapter on Australia by Reid and Gill). The latter indicates that the publics have interest in some level of political integration and the governments possess tools to make this happen. Plainly activity-based and value-neutral CCE is not necessarily the legitimate or even working way to develop citizen competences and agency as people also need common reference points. As individual consumerism and disenchantment from politics increased the political elites responded with renationalising CCE.

A more colourful picture of governmental influence on CCE is illustrated by the example of the non-democratic experience such as the Pakistani consecutive national projects of technocratic modernisation, socialism and islamism. This case study demonstrates how common is the use (and abuse) of CCE by the regime as an instrument for shaping or dominating the society.

This generates caution toward the role of authorities in designing and steering CCE. The caution should not equal to rejection of their role in the national project. A more promising analytical strategy is to develop rational parameters to assess the ways authority is exercised and its practical influence.

There seems to be some hope that in the current decade it is possible to more reflexively synthesise democratic patriotism and individual emancipation in CCE. This is in particular important as several case studies point that (neo)liberalisation tends to hollow out civics as a subject undermining the national political community and citizen agency anyhow contested by globalisation.

Summing up, both the case studies and analytical elaborations provide fresh insights to the current interrelationships of education, politics and governance. Studying changes in contemporary CCE needs clearly more than one volume. In line with Hébert (2010, 237-238), we hope that the book initiates several new research projects and publications.