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Cosmopolitan Citizenship Education: Realistic Political Program or Program to Disillusioned Powerlessness? A Plea for a Critical Power Perspective within Global Citizenship Education

- Citizen understood as both co-actor and rights-holder at the national level, and mostly as a limited rights-holder at the supranational and global stage
- Do political educational programs overestimate the power of education in creating a global citizen (with no actual power)?
- There is a lack of a critical power perspective on Global Citizenship Education.

Purpose: The aim of the research is to determine to what extent one can talk about “cosmopolitan citizenship” not only programmatically, but also as an already functioning entity. And what role can and should civic education play in the development of such a citizenship?

Methods: A working definition of citizenship at the national, supranational, and global level is developed with the help of political theory and European and international law.

Several theses on the understanding of cosmopolitan citizenship in Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development programs are discussed thanks to a policy analysis of, for example, UNESCO documents.

Findings: Supranational programs and German curriculum-recommendations are mostly reduced to the level of rights-holders and if “political action” is envisaged then it is mostly focused on its individual dimension of (private) social responsibility i.e. in its post-political dimension. This lacks analysis of global power conflicts and of the question of democratic participation on supranational policy regulation.

Practical implications: There are implications for curriculum development and implementation of educational policy.

Keywords:

Cosmopolitan citizenship, EU, Council of Europe, UNESCO, power critique, policy implementation

1 Introduction

Debates on *Global Citizenship Education* (GCED) and *Education for Sustainable Development* (ESD) stress the importance of transnational engagement of civil society and the possibility of influencing global policies. One reason for a revival of the normative orientation to *political cosmopolitanism*¹, as defended by authors such as Jürgen Habermas (2001), John Rawls (1999), Ulrich Beck (2006), Daniele Archibugi and David Held (1995) or Anthony McGrew (together with Held, 2000) among

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others, can be seen in the ongoing economic and social-ecological crises and the crisis of democratic legitimacy in the European Union (EU) as well as in its member states. The cosmopolitan assumption that global problems can only be handled on a global scale (Beck, 2006), however, could also lead to misleading educational objectives. We will argue that there is no realistic perspective for a cosmopolitan *democracy* in order to deal with global crises like climate change, poverty, or migration. We experience only a very limited dimension of global citizenship as a “declarative” rights-holder or through a few (mostly professional) political actors such as international NGOs and transnational protest movements. This can lead to a deceptive experience of powerlessness among young people, because of the gap between the hope created by declarative models of cosmopolitan citizenship and the absence of political influence on global political issues. In this context, what should be the role and (potential) power of citizens in influencing politics at the supranational level, in a context where they experience powerlessness (meaning the lack of democratic influence) and a subsequent democratic deficit affecting both political institutions and decision-making at the supranational level?

In the first part of our paper, we will clarify our working definition of citizenship, distinguishing between two dimensions: citizens as political co-actors and citizens as rights-holders (i.e. citizenship in its democratic and in its liberal dimensions) (2). We will then analyse to what extent this model of citizenship (which has been developed at state level) can already be applied—not only



normatively-programmatically, but also *de facto*—to a supranational and global level (3). Considering this legal-theoretical background, we will then turn to the educational context and its representations of citizenship. We will analyse, in which ways international, European, and German civic education documents address students as cosmopolitan citizens instead of (or in addition to) national (sub-national) and transnational citizens (4). We will show how these documents have primarily reduced citizens to the rights-holder dimension and if “political action” is envisaged, it is then in its individual dimension of sustainable “consumer citizens”, intercultural competencies and, (private) social engagement or voluntary service, that is in a post-political dimension. Moreover, these documents show a prejudicial absence of analysis from global power conflicts and exploitation of the global south in *Citizenship Education* (5).

2 Definitional clarification: Citizens as political co-actors and rights-holders²

A liberal-democratic citizenship encompasses a double dimension in which a citizen is both a *political co-actor* and a *legal subject or rights-holder*. According to the *collective-democratic* dimension, citizens, understood as co-actors, initiate, co-decide, and control collective political actions. According to the *liberal-individual* dimension, a citizen, understood as a rights-holder, owns *rights* that he or she can defend individually before a court.

In the liberal tradition, political action is to be understood as a consequence of the ownership of rights (Rawls, 1971). The rights-holder exists before they become a political co-actor. He or she owns these Rights by Nature (Locke) or by Reason (Kant, Rawls). In Habermas' interpretation there is a “co-originality” of the *Rechtsstaat* (constitutional state/rule of law) and popular sovereignty (Habermas, 1992, p. 117, 154 ff.), which, in our model, implies a co-originality of the liberal and democratic dimensions of citizenship. The “original” rights would be participation rights that allow for political action. But why should citizens be given a right to participate before they act politically?

In accordance with the democratic idea (Rousseau, Maus 1999), on the contrary, citizens first fight politically to establish what rights they own because these rights are not given by God, by Nature or by Reason, but result from political struggles (Moulin-Doos, 2015, p. 83 ff.). Citizens are political co-actors and co-authors before they become the holders of the rights they fought for. Following Rousseau's argument, it is not the natural rights that are defended after the social contract has been concluded (as is the case in Locke, 1989, 283-4 §134), but the laws, which have been adopted by the citizens within the course of a legislative process (Rousseau, 1992, p. 80). The Rousseauan rights, which are decided upon by the Sovereign, are different from the Lockean pre-political rights. Even in an established constitutional state (*Rechtsstaat*) there is always the possibility of new rights or of a new interpretation of rights being fought for, of obsolete rights to be fought against (patriarchal rights for example), of political actors

without participation rights, and of new forms of political engagement that may emerge in the course of political struggles (ib., p. 182 ff.). In this democratic (and not liberal) tradition, one must be a co-actor before one can become a rights-holder, in order to be part to its adoption and interpretation. According to the democratic idea, citizens create their rights or, following Rancière, their political stage (Rancière, 2003), which is never fully complete.

Moreover, to be able to legitimate collective political decisions and to grant rights to other members of society, a certain degree of solidarity and a certain sense of “living together” (“vivre ensemble”) are required (see Kymlicka, 2001). Firstly, this is because in order for the rights-holder to have his or her rights respected, not only is there a need for formal police and judiciary measures, but first and foremost there should be an internalization and acceptance of these rights, which we recognize and grant one another. Secondly, in order for the collective decisions of a political majority to be accepted as legitimate by the political minority, not only should there be a formal acceptance of these decisions but also the feeling of belonging to a “we” and the knowledge that this political minority can become a political majority in the near future and decide otherwise (cf. Toqueville, 1961, p. 212; this is missing in the European context: Weiler, 1998, and in civic education: Meyer-Heidemann, 2015).

This model of citizenship in its liberal and democratic dimensions has developed at the state level. To what extent can one already speak—not only programmatically, but also *de facto*—of other dimensions of citizenship at a European and/or global stage? Does the liberal dimension of the rights-holder exist on its own? Or does the democratic dimension of the political co-actor also exist? What if the two dimensions are dissociated? Who then decides what rights rights-holders should possess and how they should be interpreted if there are no democratic co-actors at the European and/or global stage? Can a solely liberal dimension lead to a *non-democratic liberal citizenship*?

3 The supranational and global citizen: solely as a (liberal) rights-holder or also as a (democratic) political co-actor?

3.1 EU citizens: historically only as a rights-holder and then as subsidiary, partial political co-actors

The European Union offers citizenship status to national citizens of Member States (Art. 9 to 12, TEU). The EU citizen holds rights and can, under certain restrictions, act collectively (indirectly through political representation, directly through legally recognized petition initiatives and, of course, through transnational political movements related to European issues). The liberal dimension of the rights-holder was significantly developed first, thanks to international treaties, directives and regulations, as well as the *European Court of Justice's* (ECJ) case law (Eis, 2010, p. 166 ff.). This dimension of the citizen as a rights-holder is much more developed at a European Level than in the political co-actor dimension. Even social demands are formulated in terms of rights

when they reach the European level rather than as a political claim (cf. Buckel, 2011), the addressee of the demands being more often the Judiciary than Parliament. The EC/EU³ was foremost a liberal construction before attempting to develop into a democratic Community/Union.

It is very controversial as to whether or not (or how far) one can speak of democracy at all within the political system of the EU (see Scharpf, 2014; Grimm, 2015; Streeck, 2011). The great democratic hope brought by the direct election of the European Parliament (EP) (1979) and by the increasing expansion of the co-decision procedure, was hardly fulfilled. Union citizens' representatives at the EP have no right of legislative *initiative*, only limited co-decision rights in adopting legislation, and limited power in the adoption of the budget. Moreover, in the EP there is no functioning opposition and majority, which would allow for a politicization of the institution, but only a permanent "grand coalition". The two major political groups (the *European People's Party* and the *Party of European Socialists*) always make decisions by consensus. There is no realistic possibility for promoting political alternatives (Watkins, 2014). The EP is therefore not a functioning political organ, understood as a *politicized* democratic institution. The EP was created from above, *before* a (conflictual) European *political* society even existed.

If we address the dimension of solidarity and the sense of living together, it should be added that Parliamentary representation only makes sense if there is a certain level of trust and recognition between representatives and the represented, to accept decisions as legitimate. According to a republican understanding of representation, the representatives represent all interests rather than sectional interests, which is not the case for the EP. A liberal understanding of representation, according to which the representatives represent only part of the political society, better corresponds with the practice of the EP: political societies or different *demos* (Nicolaidis cited by Mouffe, 2012, p. 635) are represented. Brunkhorst (2008) – in a similar (German) *cosmopolitan perspective* as Habermas or Beck – wishes to overcome the national dimension of solidarity and sees potential in a post-national and especially European solidarity. These authors tend to consider national forms of political identification dismissively. Habermas advocates for constitutional patriotism as a rational post-national form of political society. Yet national political societies are not necessarily ethnically exclusive, there could also be non-essentialist cultural-political constructs on which democracies are built (Moore, 2001, p. 2; Kymlicka, 1997). Europe, however, is (still) very strongly based on national and even sub-national forms of identification that contain both rational and emotional dimensions (Mouffe, 2012, p. 634). EU citizenship is to be conceived of as a subsidiary to national citizenship – both in its emotional and in its rational dimension – rather than as possibly overcoming established national political identities.

However, a European public sphere has emerged through the politicization of social protest movements,

especially since the multiple crises. European issues appeared in the transnational public sphere and are now politicized in the form of conflicts (cf. Rancière, 1995). According to the democratic idea, EU citizenship is politically fought for and not only legally (i.e. formally) created. Participation rights such as electing representatives to the EP were a "gift" from above, but only a partially fulfilled promise. For, only when citizens mobilize to politicize issues at the European level, can a democratic citizenship emerge, which is more than solely a liberal citizenship. Through joint actions, political identity (identities) and possibly also political awareness at the European level are emerging and being articulated. The left, but also conservative parties, ally to defend another model for Europe. For example, right-wing parties are defending a Europe understood as a cooperation of sovereign nation-states and politicize the issue of identity in a more conservative fashion than the liberal left. A diverse European political society has developed both on the left and also on the right of the political spectrum. This politicization could lead to the politicization of the EP in the near future, but for the time being politicization still shows its influence at a state level.

3.2 "European citizens" of the Council of Europe: Human rights-holder and precursors of an elitist political actor

If we now look at the (much larger) Europe of the Council of Europe, (not the 28 EU countries, but the 47 countries, including Russia and Turkey, belonging to the Council of Europe), there are rights-holders, specifically human rights-holders, whose rights can individually be defended in front of the *European Court of Human Rights* (ECHR). The Council of Europe is not only the oldest, first pan-European Organization, it is also the only supranational institution, where citizens are eligible to complain against human rights violations or discrimination allegedly carried out by their own state. Can we speak then of European citizens? However, this is only one half of citizenship: the European citizen is a (human) rights-holder, but not a formal political actor.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that some actors act politically when they try to enforce a policy objective through a judicial procedure in the ECHR. Firstly, the lawyers who bring the action before the Court (who are often specialized in human rights) pursue a political goal in defending their interpretation of rights. In addition, the procedure before the ECHR allows collective actors such as NGOs to intervene in writing to a case. That way they can defend their political position (their interpretation of human rights) in court. However, to describe these actions as political actions of co-citizens, is unfounded. Many tend to consider litigation as a major alternative form of civic engagement in defending matters of public interest, such as consumer, environmental or anti-discrimination rights (Kavanagh, 2003). But here we are dealing with a very limited range of political actors who also have very elitist resources (the



need for money, legal knowledge etc.), which cannot be compared with democratic co-actions.

3.3 A very limited global citizenship: a "declarative" rights-holder and a few, mostly professional, political actors

A declarative rights-holder that is without legal enforcement has existed since the end of World War I and has quantitatively as well as qualitatively expanded, especially since the end of World War II. Since the euphoric nineties, where a cosmopolitan world seemed attainable – the liberal world had "won" and the "end of history" (Fukuyama) was postulated – a limited rights-holder has developed. This was especially prevalent in cases of massive violations of human rights, thanks to the proliferation of universal jurisdiction and so-called "humanitarian intervention", later renamed "responsibility to protect" (R2P). Ad hoc criminal tribunals in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes have been established under the leadership of the UN. A permanent International Criminal Court (ICC) was also established to punish crimes against international humanitarian law. All these measures, which create a kind of partial global justice, carry opposing trends: a motive of solidarity, but also the tendency of liberal paternalism and neo-colonialism (see Andreotti, 2006). As the practice of the ICC shows, with the exception of one case in January 2016, official investigations have only taken place against Africans. In February 2017, the 54 heads of state of the African Union committed themselves to a collective withdrawal from the ICC (Pigeaud, 2017).

Regarding the second dimension of citizenship, the co-actor dimension, it is questionable as to whether such a thing can be identified at a global level. Of course, many professionalized non-governmental organizations (NGOs) create solidarity as transnational collective actors. These are made up of a few amateur, but mostly professional, activists forming a kind of global civil society. These NGOs are active at a global level and lead numerous political struggles. They ensure politicization and public visibility of, to name only a couple, economic and environmental issues. Some NGOs that are active in the field of economic and social development have received a consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council and also take part in some international conferences such as the climate conferences. They play a role in the perception, and addressing, of global problems and interests. They inform experts and they lead lobbying actions. It is highly disputed as to what extent professionalized NGOs and a small number of political lay activists lead to an increased democratization of a "global society" (Brunkhorst, 2008) or bring democratic legitimacy to global decisions. A citizen is a layman and not a professional who gets paid for his political fight. "[F]oot-loose NGOs have their safe home bases in the liberal nation-states from which they draw most of their resources" (Canovan, 2001, p. 211). Eurocentric individualist interpretations of human rights and a Eurocentric articulation of political struggles bring

us back to the high risk of liberal paternalism and liberal neo-colonialism.

4 Concepts of Citizenship in European and international civic Education Documents: local, national, transnational or global citizenship?

In this fourth part of the paper, we will analyze concepts of European and global citizenship referring to the approaches of *Citizenship Education* coming from the *Council of Europe*, *UNESCO* and networks of societal actors (like *Networking European Citizenship Education*, NECE). Through selected documents we analyze the concepts of citizenship referred to for educational purposes in different scenarios for the future of the *European Union* (NECE, 2013) (4.1); in programs on *Citizenship and Human Rights Education* of the *Council of Europe* (4.2); and finally in the *Global Citizenship Education* policies from *UNESCO* (4.3). The choice of these documents is intended to show the predominance of the (liberal) rights-holder dimension of citizenship over a (politic-democratic) co-actor dimension in these discourses. These findings should be seen as an illustrative starting point that still need to be thoroughly confirmed in further investigations (through systematic analysis of educational policies, curricula, and in political discourse), which cannot be achieved within the scope of this article.

4.1 European Union Concepts of Democratic Citizenship

The "Four scenarios on the Future of Citizenship in Europe 2030" (NECE, 2013) illustrates a very good example of both the transformation of citizenship concepts by societal and educational actors and the question of how far citizens are able (or unable) to influence politics at a supranational level. This document is the result of an international workshop held in 2013 in The Hague, Netherlands. These scenarios have not been developed by so-called experts (such as academics or politicians), but by societal actors including students, associations in *Citizenship Education*, and other Non-Governmental-Organizations such as trade unions supported by the German Federal Agency for Political Education (bpb).

Although these future scenarios focus on the possible consequences of the recent economic and social crises in the *European Union*, participants at NECE-conferences are not only EU-citizens, but come from all over Western, Eastern and Southern Europe, even from some Mediterranean neighbour states including Egypt, Morocco and Israel (www.nece.eu). They focus on educational policies and programs by the Council of Europe (like *Education for Democratic Citizenship* and *Human Rights Education*, cf. 4.2).

In these scenarios there are two "key uncertainties" and options for a future development of citizenship in Europe: a Europe "in which top-down government prevails" or "in which bottom-up forces become dominant", which would mean more democratic influence from citizens over politics. The second uncertainty refers to different options of a "unified" or a more "diversified"



Europe. If we look at the two “bottom-up” scenarios, we get an interesting picture of the ambivalent future role of societal actors – perhaps not too dissimilar from our current situation.



Figure 1: Four scenarios on the Future of Citizenship in Europe 2030 (NECE 2013, 5)

In the *Scenario “Union of Communities”*, we find the following description (ib., 8) under the heading: “A world in which the ‘Do it Ourselves’ generation takes the lead.”:

“it is more important for your job, pension, health or education to have a good social network than to belong to a country or to the EU. Everyone is a member of multiple communities and associations. People avoid working with governments as much as they can. [...] Participation in civil society has become a necessity for most people. There are de facto two separate societies. The formal and institutional sphere of national and EU governments with their focus on economics and finance, and a large informal sphere in which many networks of communities operate, unified in their multiple and diverse efforts to shape civil society for the benefit of its members.”

This scenario already gives us a very good hint as to the *ambiguous role of active citizenship* and the power or powerlessness of civil society, here in a liberal sense of a “separate society” of social self-organization. In this scenario, citizens and civil society are not really sharing competencies in the *decision-making* process of democratic institutions. It is actually a disturbing scenario, where people have lost their confidence in public institutions, and even these institutions have lost their capability to really solve public problems – except those relating to the economy, finance and security. The very *active role of civil society* described here, is mainly based on the necessity that citizens are *forced* to take *self-responsibility* for organizing their social life which also means that more and more private actors pay for

economic and social risks instead of a public social welfare.

A slightly more progressive, emancipatory, grass-roots oriented political scenario, where citizens make demands for more direct democracy is described in the fourth

scenario: “European Spring”. Nonetheless, the authors do not see this kind of citizenship as a final solution without obstacles. As we have seen during the protest movements in several Arabic countries since 2011 (Arab Spring) and also in the course of current protest movements in Europe, “citizens reclaim their political power and democratic rights”. But those “bottom-up revolutions” also tend to endorse charismatic leaders and populist movements, not only those of the left-wing, but especially those with right-wing, religious, nationalist or xenophobic objectives: “Traditional power hegemonies are besieged by all sorts of movements that use combinations of liquid democracy and

charismatic leadership. [...] People align (temporarily) on issues and choose their political leaders by following them on liquid democracy platforms and then voting them in and out of office, by ‘liking’ or ‘disliking’ them and by very quickly mass-mobilizing around certain topics.” (ib., 9).

4.2 Concepts of Citizenship in the educational programs of the Council of Europe

The *Council of Europe*, besides its human rights’ policies and its jurisprudence, focuses extensively on educational programs for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (cf. www.coe.int/en/web/edc/home). The main aim of the Council of Europe is to promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, as implemented by several *European Conventions on Human Rights*, ... *the Prevention of Torture*, ... *against Racism and Intolerance*, ... *on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation*, ... *against Trafficking in Human Beings*, ... *for linguistic and minority rights* and for social and educational rights, as established by the *European Social Charter* (ETS 35/1961) and by the *Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education* (CM/Rec(2010)7).

The basic dimensions of active citizenship according to the educational citizenship programs of the Council of Europe are encompassed within the following two approaches: *Education for Democratic Citizenship* (EDC) and *Human Rights Education* (HRE), both of which received support from UNESCO. In these approaches, the Council of Europe has developed different recommendations for curriculum, teaching, and learning materials for schools, pre-schools and higher education, as well as tools for non-formal education and training sessions for volunteers or professionals.



Figure 2: Democracy and Human Rights Start with Us – Charter for All (<http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc>)

In the diagram *Active Citizenship Composite Indicator* (Figure 3, cf. Hoskins & Mascherini, 2009, p. 469), there are four dimensions of citizenship activities and competencies. These four dimensions try to combine and to include different approaches to citizenship and democracy theories.

There is, on the one hand, the traditional way of participating in representative institutions, that is membership in political parties, voting turnout, and additionally – still within the logic of representative democracy – the participation of women and minority groups. On the

other hand, there are more “unconventional” ways of active citizenship such as protest movements and taking part in social net-works, e.g. human rights or environmental organizations.

Besides the basis of “Democratic Values”, there is also a fourth dimension of “Community Life”, which includes all sorts of cultural, social, or even economical voluntary service and charity work from the football club to the volunteer fire brigade, to the church and other religious aid associations.

The “Active Citizenship Composite Indicator” was proposed by an international research group (Hoskins & Mascherini, 2009; Hoskins et al., 2012), which also measured several citizenship competencies, such as *Citizenship values*, *Participation attitudes* or *Cognition about democratic institutions*. Although we remain somewhat skeptical as to whether it makes sense at all to measure citizenship competencies, what was really interesting in the results of this study was the fact that it was not always the established “stable” democracies of, say, England, Sweden or Finland who scored highly in citizenship values. „The opposite is true for less stable and more recent democracies that can be found in Southern and Eastern Europe: in these countries young people have greater Participatory attitudes and values.” (Hoskins et al., 2008, p. 9).

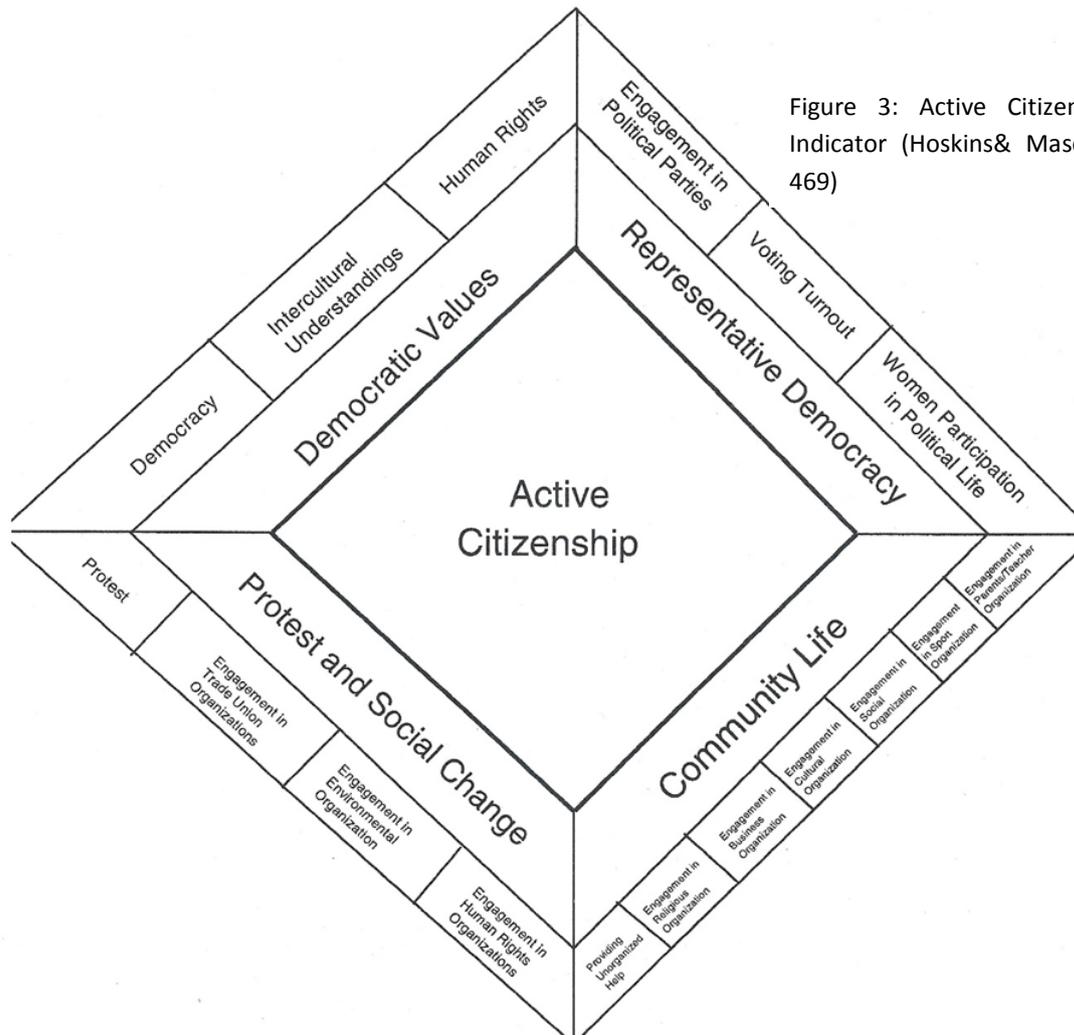


Figure 3: Active Citizenship Composite Indicator (Hoskins & Mascherini, 2009, p. 469)

4.3 Recommendations on *Global Citizenship Education* policies from *UNESCO*

Although the Active Citizenship approach focuses primarily on *Democratic Citizenship Education* in single states and in (transnational) European societies, these

dimensions look very similar to the “learning objectives” for “Global Citizenship Education” (Figure 4) developed by UNESCO (2015a, p. 29), but with the substantial difference that the UNESCO-approach does not enhance a specific dimension of “protest and social change”.

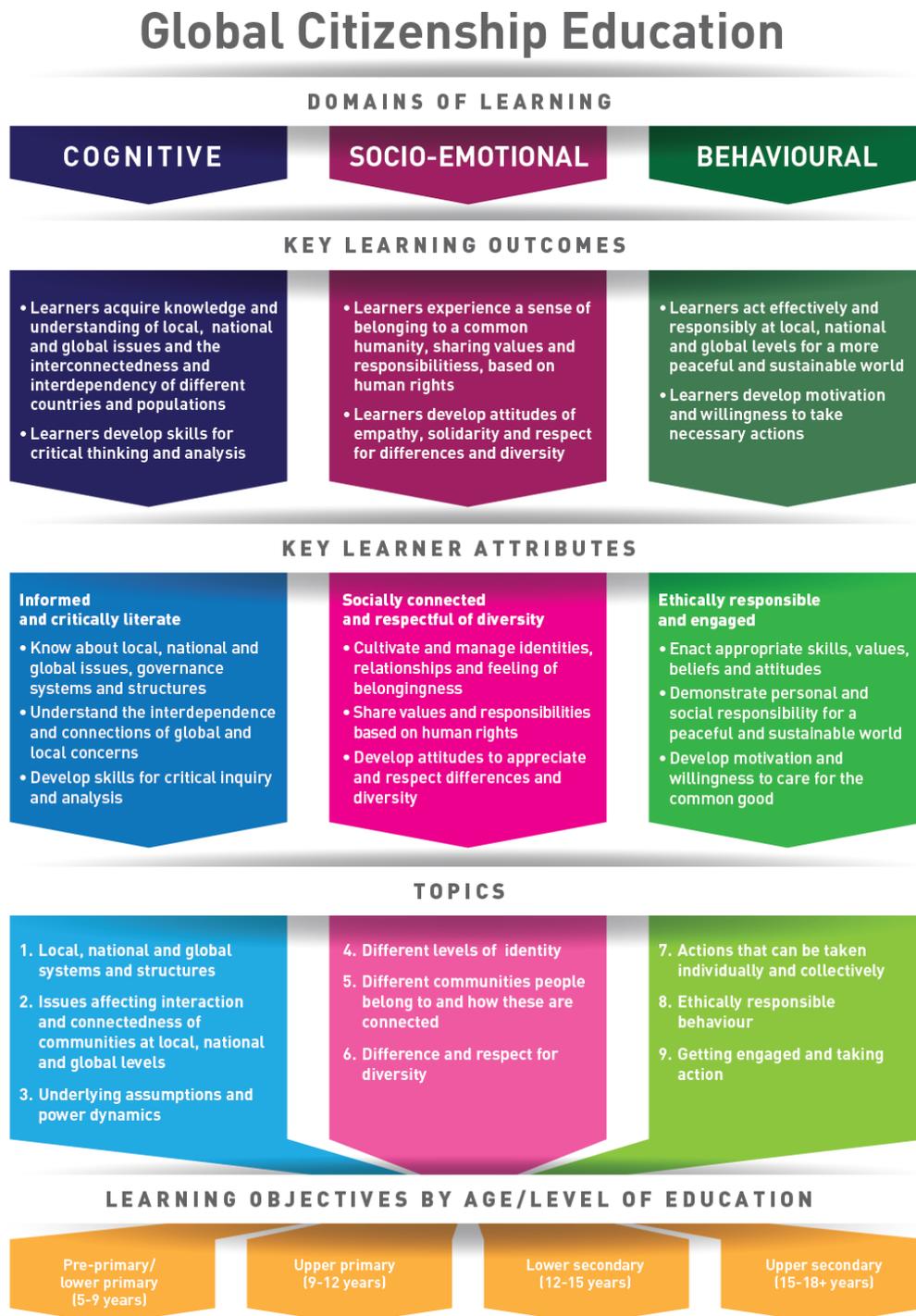


Figure 4: Global Citizenship Education – Overall Guidance (UNESCO 2015a, p. 29)



The “first pedagogical guidance” of UNESCO on “topics and learning objectives” of Global Citizenship Education (UNESCO 2015, p. 7) was developed by an Expert Advisory Group and field tested by teachers and curriculum planners in five member states over three continents (ib., p. 74). As a competence-oriented curriculum recommendation, the guidance differentiates a multidimensional concept of Global Citizenship within three cross-disciplinary domains of learning: Cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural (cf. Fig. 4). As a central “key learning outcome” of the socio-emotional domain, the guidance repeats its global citizen definition: “Learners experience a sense of *belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights*” (cf. Fig. 4, p. 29, see also p. 14). At first sight, the guidance combines both the political analysis of “global issues, governance systems and structures” and the knowledge of “actions that can be taken individually and collectively” (Fig. 4: see “Key Learner Attributes” and “Topics”). Nonetheless the intended “actions” tend to be reduced to non-politicized “actions” within civil society such as “community work” and “civic engagement” and do not encompass the action of co-citizens as described above that take part in the political elaboration of collective choices and values, through the adoption of legislation and of rights.

The concept of citizenship is further differentiated between learning objectives and topics and according to different groups of learners from “pre-primary & lower primary (5-9 years)” up to “upper secondary (15-18+ years)” (pp. 31-40). The learning object “introduce[s] the concept of citizenship” for young pupils and the connection between “key local, national and global issues” within the “cognitive domain” corresponds to the “socio-emotional domain” with the objective to “recognize that everyone has rights and responsibilities” (p. 31). These responsibilities should be further developed through upper primary as a behavioral competence to “discuss the importance of individual and collective action and engage in community work” and at the upper secondary level to “develop and apply skills for effective civic engagement” (ibid.).

The guidance also mentions “inequalities and power dynamics” (at lower secondary level) and focuses at the upper secondary level on “critically assess[ing] the ways in which power dynamics affect voice, influence, access to resources, decision-making and governance” (ibid.). Nonetheless, these topics do not lead to a critical reflection on agency nor of the limited power—or even powerlessness—of citizens especially at the supranational and global level. The “behavioural” domain is dominated by the social – individual and interpersonal – “behaviour” and not the political “action” and power struggles of communities. Even at the highest learning level, it is about “social justice and ethical responsibility” or about “action to challenge discrimination and inequality” or to “propose action for and become agents of positive change”, and not about how global inequalities are reproduced by everyday economic activities and political decisions.

5 Conclusion: Adding a critical power perspective to the optimistic (post-political) *Global Citizenship Education*

The recent UNESCO program *Global Citizenship Education* (GCED) shows similar problems to those of various former programs of *Education for Democratic Citizenship* (EDC), also promoted by UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the European Union. There is a significant number of important topics, skills, and attitudes which focus on the personal, social, and ethical dimensions (as “domains of learning”, cf. Figure 4) to educate “ethically responsible and engaged” citizens who “demonstrate personal and social responsibility for a peaceful and sustainable world” (UNESCO, 2015a, p. 29).

Yet many open questions still remain as to whether these programs have anything to do with political or democratic education in the sense of analysing global power relations, reasons for global inequalities, failing political regulation and the lack of (and often ineffective) ways of “political action” and not solely “post-political action” on a global scale (cf. Dean et al., 2009; Harvey, 2009).

(1) *The concept of GCED is too broad, too inclusive and in normative terms, it is far too affirmative and optimistic.* The GCED-concept includes every conceivable and consensual educational goal (such as peace, tolerance, conflict resolution, environmental protection, gender equality etc.). However, at the same time it (usually) does not focus on the economic and social resources as a precondition for political action. *Global* citizenship should first of all enable students to analyze global exploitation and power structures, the inequalities of the Global South, and the extent to which the Global North contributes to this. In addition to this critical analysis, we can also search for possible means of empowering collective actors (or subordinated groups) to make their voice heard, to take part in transnational decision making, and to democratize global economic power structures (Dean, 2006; Dean et al., 2009; Eis et al., 2014; Frankfurt Declaration, 2016).

(2) *GCED overestimates the function and influence—meaning the power—of education.* How far can education initiate or foster change in societies and “help build peaceful and sustainable societies” (UNESCO 2015b, p. 2)? Empirically, the *social* function of education in the first place is to stabilize power relations by selecting individuals for access to higher education and to privileged positions in the labor market; to stabilize hegemonic discourses, produce societal consensus and not to initiate (counter-hegemonic) social transformation.

This leads us back to a fundamental question and dilemma of *Citizenship Education*: is it and should it be the objective of *education* to actually solve *political* problems, to change or to develop societies? There may be a difference in formal or non-formal education: in schools, universities, professional training, or in educational programs of societal actors. This is of course very often the intention of educational policies which shape curricula in order to educate socially responsible and economically competent young citizens who are capable of developing their personal, social, and economic lives

in a globalized world (cf. UNESCO, 2015a, b; Engagement Global/KMK/BMZ, 2016). But could it realistically be the aim of social science education to change society? Could there indeed be something like an Education for Sustainable Development in a free-market capitalist society based on permanent growth and unsustainable conditions of production and consumption? To formulate unreachable and excessive educational objectives may overburden educational practice. With regard to this point, we are definitely not arguing that we should only teach and learn what we can measure and quantify by standardized tests. One could even argue, that some of these objectives only “simulate” a cosmopolitan, sustainable and/or democratic development. But there is of course a substantial difference between encouraging students to participate in neoliberal self-governance, self-responsibility (e.g. voluntary services) or simulated (post-political) procedures – or to educate people in critical thinking and show them the limits of political regulation and participation (cf. “Soft versus critical global citizenship education”, by Andreotti, 2006).

(3) *GCED has – similar to the EDC programs – a structural lack of theories of democracy. Furthermore, it is lacking suitable analyses of power relations and of growing global, as well as societal injustices.* Finally, perspectives on failing global political regulation and a general lack of supranational democracy as well as the dimension of democratic co-actors are absent. Criticisms of power have always been a key competence within an emancipatory understanding of “Political Education”, which were revised once more in the *Frankfurt Declaration 2015*: “autonomous thinking and action are limited by dependencies and structural social inequalities. These relations of power and domination should be detected and analysed. [...] Which societal problems are being debated, which voices are being heard and which actors impose their understanding of the common good? What are the reasons for social- and self-exclusion of groups and individuals from social and political participation? Political Education discusses how exclusions are produced and how barriers are created: between the private and public sphere, between the social and the political, legitimate and illegitimate, experts and lay people.” (Eis et al., 2016) Instead, the concept of GCED seems to a greater extent to be pure simulation, if not a misleading illusion, of current global politics. What otherwise should be the meaning of “global” or “cosmopolitan citizenship”, if it is not a *political citizenship*, i.e. *power critical* with the possibility of acting politically?

(4) With the aspiration of cosmopolitan citizenship education – similar to some EU Citizenship Education programs – there seems to be a questionable political program: the possible further development of political and democratic conceptualizations of postnational citizenship. This raises questions over to what extent (political) education can and should fill the role of creating the conscience of a global, cosmopolitan citizen. Decoupling the rights-holder from the political co-actor raises the problematic issue of their relationship: If the

supranational and global dimensions of citizenship are reduced to the rights-holder component and to a post-political actor within civil society, then is this cosmopolitan citizenship necessarily post-democratic? Who can lead the political struggle for the adoption of new policies, of new rights, or of new interpretation of rights and who should decide upon these interpretations? Only the double-dimension of rights-holder and the political co-action of fellow citizens allows for the possibility of a democratic adoption and interpretation of policies and rights (cf. Haller, 2012; Maus, 1999). Otherwise *political cosmopolitanism* transforms into solely *moral cosmopolitanism*.

There seem to be only two possible solutions to this dilemma if we still cling to the idea of democracy (which of course we don't necessarily have to) and therefore want to link the dimensions of the rights-holder and the co-actor/co-author once more. The two options are, on the one hand striving for a global democracy, or on the other hand returning to regional, national, state, or sub-national forms of political societies as (political and economic) decision-making levels. The first solution runs the risk that the liberal individualistic values would not (demographically) win as the cosmopolitans often imagine. Therefore, from a liberal perspective the striving for a non-democratic liberal moralism on the global stage may be more desirable than the political risk of the rise of democratic anti-liberalism. The second solution suggests a kind of “de-globalization” or “re-localization”. Such movements can be seen everywhere in Europe (Scotland, Brexit, Catalonia, right-wing populisms, left-wing populisms such as PODEMOS...) as a reaction to the loss of power of citizens as political co-actors (Moulin-Doos, 2017). This second solution runs the risk of being judged as retrograde, conservative, and even illegitimate from a liberal cosmopolitan perspective, and requires a kind of revolution in liberal thinking, but if we stick to the idea of democracy and not solely of liberal moralism then it seems to be the only emancipatory way.

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Endnotes

¹ Political Cosmopolitanism addresses the needs and interests of individuals directly as "cosmopolitan citizens" and not as national or state citizens, that is, via their membership to a particular collectivity.

² This section builds on the following article: Moulin-Doos (2016): Bürger als Mit-Akteur und Rechtssubjekt: europäische und globale Bürgerschaft als Orientierung für die politische Bildung? In: Zeitschrift für internationale Bildungsforschung und Entwicklungspädagogik (ZEP), p. 12-16.

³ EC/EU stands for the European Community and its successor the European Union.

