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Learning About the European Union in Times of Crisis: Portuguese Textbooks' Normative Visions of European Citizenship

- EU related topics are almost absent in EFL textbooks.
- History textbooks include a significant amount of information about the EU.
- Textbooks do not prioritize students' critical thinking about the EU.
- The economic crisis and Euroscepticism are increasingly addressed in History textbooks.
- European citizenship is marginally and normatively addressed in History textbooks.

Purpose: To investigate how EU related contents are represented in Portuguese upper secondary school textbooks of History and English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Design/methodology/approach: The study performs a textbook analysis on two History textbooks and three EFL textbooks to explore if and how EU related topics are addressed. The methodological approach was mainly qualitative, based on a content analysis of the textbooks, but also includes some quantitative data (e.g., number of paragraphs) to determine the importance given to European topics in each of the selected school subjects.

Findings: EFL textbooks have a residual approach to EU topics that is mainly focused in students' mobility. History textbooks, while containing a significant amount of information about the EU, present it mainly in a non-confrontational perspective and do not prioritize the development of students' critical thinking about the EU. Our data also points to a predominance of national level citizenship related content, with European citizenship being briefly and normatively presented to the students.

Research limitations/implications: EFL is attended by almost 100% of students in the academic track of secondary education, but History is a curricular subject only available to 25-30% of the students; as such, our findings refer to a specific group.

Practical implications: Textbooks should include more information about the actual problems and challenges of the EU to foster the development of students' critical thinking about the EU.

Keywords:

European Union, European citizenship, textbooks, students

1 Introduction

The European Union has reshaped Europe's socio-political framework by introducing a transnational dimension to citizenship that was formally implemented, in

1993, by the European Union Treaty. However, the subsequent development of European citizenship has met several challenges and difficulties (Dolejsiová & López, 2009) that have also been exacerbated by the fact that, until recently, the European integration process continued to be largely developed from a neoliberal approach (Hermann, 2007). Facing increasing economic difficulties, large sectors of the populations of the member-states that were particularly affected by the economic crisis became less supportive of the EU (Braun & Tausendpfund, 2014), making it difficult to develop a collective European identity (Petithomme, 2008; Grek & Lawn, 2009). Furthermore, the creation of this collective European identity has also been defied by the emergence of other recent events like the EU's inability to give an appropriate response to the refugee influx (Carrera, Blockmans, Gros & Guild, 2015) or the Brexit (Hobolt, 2016). Even if we recognize the complexity and multidimensionality of the concept of Euroscepticism (Boomgaarden, Schuck, Elenbaas & De Vreese, 2010), we cannot dismiss the effects that these recent events have had in the spread of Eurosceptic perspectives and attitudes (Serricchio, Tsakatika & Quaglia, 2012) within the EU.

Confronted by these difficulties, EU's institutions, recognizing that education continues to be a classical

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variable in the understanding of citizenship (Emler & Frazer, 1999; Hoskins, D'hombres & Campbell, 2008; Ribeiro, Caetano & Menezes, 2016), have been stressing that “the EU should be more visible, and better integrated, in teaching materials and extracurricular activities, given its impact on the everyday life of its citizens” (European Parliament, 2016, p. 6). Furthermore, the EU’s official discourse claims that “enhancing an EU dimension in school education [...] can help to overcome Euroscepticism” (*ibidem*, p. 12), in a time in which there is “a resurgence of divisions and narrow nationalisms across the Union” (European Commission, 2013, p. 5). Under these circumstances, it becomes essential to study the role that national educational systems have been playing regarding the promotion of students’ knowledge about the EU.

Textbook research has been widely used to study the influence of formal education in the process of socialization of young people because “in textbooks, we find what a society wishes to convey to the next generation” (Soysal & Schissler, 2005, p. 7). By allowing us to look into “society’s collective ‘officialized’ memory and normative structure” (Schissler, 2009, p. 204), textbooks may be considered as both an important data source for the analysis of students’ exposure to European and international topics (Brennetot, 2011; Pingel, 2000 and 2001, Soysal & Schissler, 2005), as well as for the study of schools’ contributions to the consolidation of European citizenship and the European project itself (Banús, 2007). Although there has been, over the last decades, a diversification of pedagogical tools available to teachers and students (Moeglin, 2006), textbooks still play a significant role in the “understanding of one’s own nation and the world at large and how they are used to forge a sense of belonging” (Schissler, 2009, p. 204). Meaning that textbooks are one more influence over the identification of students and young people at large with a certain community, since they actually act as instruments of socialization that “introduce young people to a quite specific historical, cultural and socio-economic order” (Crawford, 2003, p. 6).

As such, by focusing our analysis on textbooks, we are looking into one of the most highly influential teaching materials in the formal educational process (Issitt, 2004), exploring whether EU’s educational recommendations¹ were integrated into those pedagogical tools in Portugal. Our data was collected under the scope of the research project “CATCH-EyoU - Constructing Active Citizenship with European Youth: Policies, Practices, Challenges and Solutions”, and, in this article, we focus on the representations of the EU presented in Portuguese History and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks. We will try to investigate if these textbooks are, in fact, trying to stimulate students’ critical thinking about the EU. We will also consider if the sampled textbooks are approaching European issues, such as the economic crisis and Euroscepticism, and how they are doing it. Finally, we will investigate if and how these textbooks are addressing the topic of European citizenship.

2 Methodology

In spite of the growing number of attempts to develop textbook analysis (Morgan & Henning, 2013), methodologically there is still a wide analytical discrepancy between research efforts in this field (Nicholls, 2003). Following the guidelines of the *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*, we used “both quantitative and qualitative methods” (Pingel, 2010, p. 66), first, to explore if and how European topics are depicted by the textbooks and, secondly, to consider the pedagogical approach to those topics. The selection of History and EFL as subjects was based on their relevance for the development of both historical and intercultural competences. History textbooks are not only conveyers of knowledge but they are also tools “in [the] shaping [of] the collective meanings of identity” (Soysal, 1998, p. 54) that, as we have seen, are essential to the establishment and maintenance of the connection between a specific political entity and its citizens. EFL textbooks were included because, aside from facilitating students acquisition of linguistic competences that may facilitate their interactions with other European nationals, they are also seen as tools for the development of student’s multiculturalism, with some recommendations going towards the idea that “particular attention should be paid to the cultural information conveyed through foreign language textbooks” (Pingel, 2010, p. 76). This selection of disciplines should thus allow us to study both a historical as well as a cultural approach to European topics in textbooks. In this paper, our focus will be the European dimension. Based on relevant literature concerning European youth citizenship (Lister, Smith, Middleton & Cox, 2003; Ekman & Amná, 2012; Mejias, Banaji; Noula & Hirzalla, 2016) we specifically explored topics related to the creation of the EU, its institutional organization and functioning as well as the EU sense of belonging and identity.

2.1 Sample

The selection of our sample of textbooks was based on two criteria: bestselling status and innovative character. The first criteria was determined by data shared by the Portuguese Ministry of Education, following the information sent by individual public schools regarding the adopted textbooks in each discipline. This data allowed us to include in our sample some of the most used History and EFL textbooks in upper secondary education. The second criteria was based on consultation with History and EFL teachers’ who gave us some recommendations regarding particularly interesting textbooks in terms of their pedagogical approaches. This selection includes textbooks from some of the major textbook publishers in Portugal (Table 1).

Table 1: sample of textbooks²

Textbook	Subject	Grade	Editor	Year
12 Nova Construção da História (12 New Construction of History)	History A	12 th	Asa Editores II, SA	2013
Um novo Tempo da História (A New Time in History)	History A	12 th	Porto Editora, Lda	2015
iTEEN 11	EFL	11 th	Areal Editores, SA	2014
New Frontiers 2 ³	EFL	11 th	Areal Editores, SA	2013
Insight	EFL	11 th	Oxford University Press	2014

2.2 Methods

Based on existing literature (Pingel, 2010; Brennetot, 2011), a specific analytical grid was created (Ribeiro, Ferreira & Menezes, 2016) covering young people's everyday life issues, sense of belonging and active citizenship at the local, national and European levels. Preliminary versions of the grid were used by the international team of the research project "CATCH-EyoU" (including researchers from Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Portugal) using EFL textbooks. This was the base of a collaborative and interactive process of cross-validation, as researchers discussed and reviewed each other's analysis to make the grid as clear and exhaustive as possible. After this revision process, the grid was applied to the sample of textbooks in each country. The data presented in this paper will refer only to EU related topics, as mentioned above.

The grid collected qualitative and quantitative data. As Pingel points out, "a quantitative spatial analysis (such as the space a textbook allocates to the portrayal of a country, a region or to the global dimension as a percentage of the total volume) provides important results for the content-related weighing of various spatial entities" (2010, pp. 67-68). In this case, the grid collects information regarding the number of pages, paragraphs and exercises related with the EU. The calculation of the percentage of pages dedicated to those topics in each textbook indicates the relevance given to European related issues in History and EFL textbooks.

This quantitative analysis was then complemented by a qualitative analysis. The relevant textual materials of the textbooks were submitted to a content analysis to access what the author/s of the textbooks regard as "important, what he or she feels needs to be explained and what he or she takes for granted" (Pingel, 2010, p. 71), in this case, concerning EU related topics. The content analysis followed an inductive approach that allowed us to identify the themes that were especially relevant in the textbooks. As such, the themes about exchange programs and mobility, historical perspectives and knowledge about the EU and Portugal and the EU are representative of the knowledge conveyed to students about the creation of the EU. Discussions about the economic crisis and the future of the EU emerged from contents related to the description of the EU's institutions and functioning and, finally, Euroscepticism

and other challenges for European integration and European citizenship are themes closely connected with a EU sense of belonging and identity. These themes will guide the presentation of the data, illustrated with excerpts that, in the case of History textbooks, were translated from Portuguese to English.

3 Results

3.1 Quantitative analysis

A descriptive analysis of the data presented in tables 2 and 3 clearly demonstrates that History textbooks include much more contents about European issues than EFL textbooks. In fact, it becomes obvious that those topics are virtually absent from EFL textbooks, with a residual approach to the EU's institutional structure and functioning in EFL textbook#1.

Table 2: History quantitative data

History	12 Nova Construção da História (History textbook#1)			Um novo Tempo da História (History textbook#2)		
	Nr of pages (n=447)	Nr of paragraphs	Nr of exercises	Nr of pages (n=504)	Nr of paragraphs	Nr of exercises
Construction of the EU (i.e., mainly in the historic perspective)	18	47	16	23	110	19
EU institutions and functioning	5	6	1	5	11	2
Sense of belonging or identity at EU level	4	19	6	14	40	6
Total	27	72	23	42	161	27

If we take into account the page count dedicated to EU related topics, History textbook#2 appears as the one that gives more relevance to those topics, dedicating 8,33% of its pages to European issues, while History textbook#1 dedicates 6,04% of its pages to those same topics. If we take into consideration that textbook#1 was published in 2013 while textbook#2 was published in 2015, this difference between the two textbooks may indicate a modest growth in the importance given to the European dimension in more recent Portuguese History textbooks. On the other hand, EFL textbooks vary from only 0,85% (EFL textbook#1) to a complete absence (EFL textbook#2 and #3) of contents related to the EU.

Table 3: EFL quantitative data

EFL	iTEEN 11 (EFL textbook#1)			New Frontiers 2 (Modules: 4, 5, 6) (EFL textbook#2)			Insight (Student's Book) (EFL textbook#3)		
	Nr of pages (n=352)	Nr of paragraphs	Nr of exercises	Nr of pages (n=256)	Nr of paragraphs	Nr of exercises	Nr of pages (n=114)	Nr of paragraphs	Nr of exercises
Construction of the EU (i.e., mainly in the historic perspective)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EU institutions and functioning	3	6	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sense of belonging or identity at EU level	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3	6	7	0	0	0	0	0	0

3.2 Qualitative analysis

Exchange programs and mobility

In terms of contents related to the EU, as previously mentioned, EFL textbooks have evidenced a residual approach to such topics. The only EFL textbook that mentions European topics does so by focusing on European students' exchange programs. More specifically, EFL textbook#1 mentions the Erasmus, the Comenius and the Leonardo da Vinci exchange programs. Not surprisingly the authors give a special emphasis to the Erasmus entitling it as "one of the greatest success stories of the European Union" and presenting it as one of the best tools developed by the EU for fighting "youth unemployment by focusing more on skills development" and by allowing students "to improve their knowledge of foreign languages and to develop skills such as adaptability which improved their job prospects" (EFL textbook#1, p. 132).

Historical perspectives and knowledge about the EU

History textbooks, on the other hand, present a very different scenario. The two textbooks mention several historical characters, from the "fathers of Europe", Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet, to national politicians who have proved their importance in the development of the EU, such as the Portuguese Mário Soares, the British Tony Blair and the French Jacques Delors. Usually from a historical perspective, an analysis of the textual materials about European issues included in these textbooks reveals that they generally portray the EU as an element for maintaining peace, stability and freedom in Europe, by uniting historical adversary European countries. The following statement in History textbook#1 is representative of this approach:

"As such, the 20th century begins less than auspicious, in the shadow of war, that, in the case of Europe, some see as being a long Civil War, initiated in 1914 and only ending in the 90s with the end of the Soviet domain over Eastern Europe, with the German reunification and with the consolidation of the European Union" (Vol. 1, p. 18).

The EU is also represented as a tool for European countries to maintain their international political influence. In fact, in geostrategic terms, the EU appears as instrumental for the assurance that European countries

continue to have a significant political influence over international affairs. This idea is clearly present in the following quote of History textbook#1:

"Thus, the 20th century is one of decadence for the European powers regarding their global influence (at least until the beginning of the 21st century, with the consolidation of the European Union) [...] The 21st century presents itself as an uncertainty, but it all points to the emergence of a new world order in which three major geopolitical areas, the European Union, the USA and China, fight amongst themselves to dominate the rest of the world" (Vol. 1, p. 19).

In cultural and political terms, the EU is represented as a natural guardian and promoter of Universal Human Rights, which, together with an allegedly intrinsic respect for democracy, tries to reinforce the idea of a common European cultural heritage from which the EU appears as a natural political expression. The following quote taken from History textbook#2 is illustrative of this approach to the EU and its historical and current identity:

"After almost self-destructing with two fratricide wars in the first half of the century, Europe recognized its common cultural heritage and the necessity to unite in order to find, once again, economic prosperity and, if possible, its political influence" (Vol. 2, p. 68).

Naturally, both textbooks contain a detailed historical retrospective of the development of the European project. From the first European communities, like the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC), to the most significant treaties and European meetings, such as Treaty of Rome (1958), the Merger Treaty (1965) or the European Council Meeting at Fontainebleau (1984). These contents are usually accessible and historically accurate, but their pedagogical intent is clearly oriented towards memorising the chronological sequencing of the development of the EU. This type of approach is visible in the following paragraph taken from History textbook#1:

"The stages of the European construction process are the following: in 1949 the European Council is created, with the objective of preparing for the political union; in 1951, the European Coal and Steel Community, that creates a



common market for these products in France, Germany, Italy, and Netherlands (Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg); in 1957 the Treaties of Rome are signed, they create the European Atomic Energy Community and the European Economic Community, giving place to the “official” birth of Europe. In 1965 the three Communities are merged by the Merger Treaty, paving the way to the subsequent steps towards the strengthening of the Community” (Vol. 2, pp. 50-51).

Both textbooks also mention several of the EU’s institutions, such as the European Council, the European Parliament, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the European Commission, but without an in-depth explanation of their organizational functions and internal structure. In fact, these contents are usually presented in a somewhat schematic fashion, leaving its interpretation to the teacher and additional information to be collected from other sources by the students.

Keeping in mind that we are dealing with History textbooks it is not surprising that the successive enlargements of the EU since its birth are also mentioned and described with a significant level of detail. Both textbooks, in addition to a textual explanation of these events, include maps and tables that try to provide the students with a clearer picture about the territorial developments of the EU over the years. These enlargements are usually described as challenging events for the EU’s internal cohesion, particularly because of economic inequalities between founding and joining member countries but also because they have made it even more difficult to reconcile the interests of so many different countries and to develop and implement concerted common policies that effectively address national necessities. History textbook#2 sums up this idea in the following statement: “the difficulties of a political union have been significantly increased by the successive enlargements of the Community that demand the conjugation of the interests of very different countries” (Vol. 2, p. 36).

Portugal and the EU

Naturally, Portugal’s entrance, in 1986, in the EEC receives a special emphasis. Both textbooks present some facts and discussion about the reasons that led the country to join the EEC as well as a description of some of the effects – mainly financial and economic – that resulted from this membership process. Both textbooks present Portugal’s membership as a largely positive political decision that allowed the country to economically and socially recover from the negative impacts of the Portuguese 48-year-old dictatorial period. History textbook#2 includes a short text in which the EEC is described as an institution that “allowed Portugal the opportunity of escaping its political isolation once and for all, opening, at the same time, the prospect of a future and the possibility for recovering the economy of the country” (Vol. 3, p. 33). This textbook does, however, also mention the “rigorous budget contention program imposed by the IMF, the ECB and European Union – the so called *troika*” in Portugal. The program is not

described with great detail but it is stated that in “these difficult years, the Portuguese are confronted with companies and banking institutions bankruptcies, with the growth of unemployment, [and] with the degradation of the living conditions and the growth of emigration” (Vol. 3, p. 126). Even if it does not explore the role played by the European institutions in this scenario, and it does not explicitly use the notion of an “austerity” that was imposed by the EU, this brief summary does, however, implicitly give a less positive image of the EU’s economic policies and of its impacts in the Portuguese economy.

The economic crisis and the future of the EU

The original intention of evolving the EU towards a federal union is also mentioned in both textbooks. The EU is described as an ambitious project that, while trying to reach that political goal, by increasing economic integration and prosperity of its member-states, has, however, had its ups and downs over the last decades. For both textbooks, one of the representative elements of this path is the EU’s common currency, the Euro. For History textbook#1 this step “although economic in essence” was also “political, towards integration”, stressing its symbolic importance in the transference of sovereignty from the national states to the EU, since by joining the Eurozone these “renounce to one of their main symbols of sovereignty – the currency” (Vol. 2, p. 53). On the other hand, History textbook#2, while describing the Euro as “a strong currency, capable of facing the dollar in the international markets”, in that same paragraph, implicates the Euro in the development of the European economic crisis. In a “new century [that] has not proved to be ideal to the European economy”, the EU, confronted with “Greece, Cyprus, Ireland, Portugal” financial and economic difficulties, started being “accused of a preoccupying slowness in its response to the crisis and a lack of solidarity between its members”, leading to “a future filled with uncertainties and challenges” (Vol. 3, p. 31). It is worth noting that there is a significant difference between these two textbooks when approaching these topics. History textbook#1 does not present students with didactic materials or exercises that may encourage their reflection about the Euro economic implications while History textbook#2 provides students with didactics – including the image of the cover of a *Courrier International* issue that presents a critical position about the Euro, describing it as a “Nightmare” – and some exercises that intent to promote reflection about the Euro and its positive and negative impacts on national economies and in the all European integration project.

Regarding the impact of the economic crisis in the EU, a comparative analysis of the contents in each of these History textbooks reveals a significant difference in the level of relevance given to the topic. While textbook#1 does not present the students with contents that may lead them to reflect upon this issue, textbook#2 problematizes it by approaching the European economic crisis as a historical development that tests the foundations of



the EU. In fact, textbook#2 even ventures a critical position regarding the EU, suggesting that it has not been able to respond to the crisis effectively, which, in turn, has led to an increase in the lack of solidarity between its members. This critical overview of the current conditions under which the EU has to operate, are also connected with its inability to create a coherent and unified response to some international challenges and, on the other hand, to its failure when it comes to promoting a common European identity and a significant connection between the populations of its member-states and with the EU's institutional framework. The following paragraph is a good representation of this approach:

“The recent economic crisis has created a deep gap between Northern and Southern countries, the Union did not find, until now, a strong diplomatic voice and never implemented a truly common army, normally acting within the OTAN scope. Finally, the efforts made in order to promote an identification of the citizens with Europe and its institutions have not achieved the desired outcomes. Proving this, are the elections for the European Parliament which have been showing a downfall in participation numbers” (Vol. 3, p. 37).

Euroscepticism and other challenges for European integration

On the one hand, the textual materials contained in History textbook#1 appear to follow a more linear approach to European topics, mainly focusing on economic integration and free movement within the EU. Textbook#1 presents the EU as being capable of helping all its members to achieve economic growth and prosperity, underlining the importance of both the Single European Act and the Schengen Agreement in the process of European integration by creating a common economic market within which products and people can circulate freely. In this line of thought, in spite of the acknowledgement that there are “many pitfalls in its path” (Vol. 3, p. 107) students are led to the conclusion that economic integration will, inevitably, lead to political integration, meaning that textbook#1 tends to reproduce the “fathers of Europe” original beliefs regarding the European integration project and the EU official discourses about its historical merits and future prospects. For now, however, “there isn't an equivalent political weight to Europe's economic importance” (Vol. 3, p. 37).

On the other hand, in History textbook#2 contrasting discourses about the EU are present. Textbook#2 promotes the students' exposure to arguments that, while still supporting the idea of the EU, present different visions about its future institutional structure and policy. In this sense, it is even acknowledged that “over the last 50 years, Europeans have been diverging about the future of their continent”, stressing that there are “those who only support a collaboration between sovereign states (unionists) and those who bet in the creation of some kind of United States of Europe, with a single and supranational government (federalists)” (Vol. 3, p. 34). In

fact, contrary to textbook#1, that only very briefly mentions the existence of “Eurosceptics” (Vol. 3, p. 107) within the EU, textbook#2 addresses with much more detail an alleged increase in Euroscepticism within the EU. Independently of the merits of the European project, “however, a feeling of disbelief, and even rejection – the Euroscepticism – has made it difficult to achieve the final stage of the European project which is the creation of the United States of Europe” (Vol. 3, p. 75). Following this line of thought, this textbook goes as far as presenting the students with information related to the Brexit, while still recognizing the fact that, “however, Euroscepticism and the resistance to all measures that imply sovereignty transferences are not exclusive to England. [They] exist, to some degree, in all the countries of the Community” (Vol. 3, p. 35). This information is accompanied by a paragraph that is representative of how this textbook tries to summarize the difficulties that the EU has been facing since the emergence of the economic crisis:

«The reluctant way in which many Europeans see the Union is, partly, the result of the weak popular implementation of a European sentiment. Despite the measures that have been taken to make “Europe” present in everyday lives (symbols, exchange programs and school projects, annual choosing of a European city of culture, amongst many others), it still appears as a far away and abstract reality which functioning concerns very little the common citizen» (Vol. 3, p. 36).

Furthermore, textbook#2 dedicates two pages to the rise of nationalist political forces in European countries – such as the French National Front - that allegedly endanger the strengthening of a truly “multicultural Europe” (Vol. 3, p. 94).

In spite of the economic setbacks originated by the crisis, History textbooks still convey the idea that economically the EU has achieved a good level of integration of its member-states. Simultaneously, however, the discourses included in these textbooks also uncover several of the EU's difficulties in its path to achieve political integration and to create a truly common European identity. This last impairment of the EU can be seen as being closely connected with the consolidation of an effective notion of European citizenship. Considering that this consolidation is one of the main objectives of the EU it may be surprising that both textbooks only address European citizenship in a very brief and superficial way.

European citizenship

In fact, European citizenship is almost completely absent in History textbook#1. The most significant content about it is limited to a multiple choice exercise in which the student is asked about which individuals are covered by the “rights and the privileges” granted by European citizenship. Students simply have to choose one of the following options:

- a) to anyone that lives in the space of the European Union.
- b) to anyone that lives in the European continent.
- c) to the citizens of the member-states of the European Union.
- d) to the citizens of any European country" (Vol. 3, p. 56).

The most significant piece of information contained in this exercise is actually given in a footnote in which the students are told that, amongst the rights of European citizens, are also included the right to vote and to be elected in local elections and in elections to the European Parliament. In this simplistic and normative approach to European citizenship both students' knowledge and reflection about the topic is reduced to a bare minimum.

On the other hand, History textbook#2 gives European citizenship a little more relevance. It starts by presenting the students the following very concise definition of European citizenship:

"Created by the European Union Treaty, the citizenship of the Union is cumulative with national citizenship and it is expressed by the right to vote in European and local elections in the residence zone of the citizen, regardless if it is located in his original country or not. It also establishes the right to present (collective) proposals to the European Commission, to address petitions to the European Parliament, to file complaints and to benefit from diplomatic protection, in third countries, granted by embassies and consulates of any of the member-states in case the country of origin does not have delegations in that country" (Vol. 3, p. 34).

This conceptualization is also accompanied by a transcription of the articles of the European Union Treaty that concern European citizenship. Finally, students are encouraged to reflect about the implications of European citizenship by the introduction of an exercise in which they are asked to "mention three aspects in which European citizenship tries to reinforce the sense of belonging to the Union" (Vol. 3, p. 37).

4 Discussion

First of all, our results revealed that the claim that "the European dimension is being given more prominent space in the textbooks and it is becoming visually salient" (Soysal, 1998, p. 55) must be carefully contextualized. Our analysis clearly shows that, while this statement may be true for Portuguese History textbooks, it is not confirmed by the results we have achieved in our analysis of EFL textbooks. Nevertheless, since the European institutions themselves stress the importance of making the EU "more visible in textbooks" (European Parliament, 2016, p. 13) without specifying any particular subjects, it becomes even more important to try to understand why Portuguese EFL textbooks have such a residual approach to European topics.

Since textbooks are usually pedagogical physical expressions of the curricula, we have compared our results from the three sampled EFL textbooks with the corresponding curriculum. The EFL curriculum for secondary

school grades (10th, 11th and 12th) starts by stating that "in the context of a multilingual and multicultural Europe, the access to several languages becomes increasingly valuable for European citizens" (Ministério da Educação, 2001/2003, p. 2), meaning that the importance of the European dimension is initially recognised. This importance, however, is mainly focused on the notion of mobility. In fact, while outlining the competences that are to be acquired by the students, the curriculum only directly mentions the EU in one occasion – and specifically concerning pedagogical objectives to be achieved in the 12th grade. This single mention is closely connected to the only approach to EU related topics that we have encountered in the sampled textbooks, since, according to the curriculum, the EU is supposed to be addressed through the study of its policies on mobility and migration. Altogether, the textbooks suggest that EFL is a subject that contributes very little to students' knowledge about EU related issues even if, by addressing the Erasmus program, EFL textbook#1 actually goes beyond curricular impositions for the 11th grade, while still following a neo-liberal approach that mainly stresses the EU success in the flexibilization of the European labour markets and in the implementation of educational programs that, allegedly, help to increase European citizens' employability. We should not, however, disregard the role that teachers may assume in filling in these gaps in the EFL curriculum and textbooks.

Contrary to EFL, our results suggest that, in general, History is a subject that places a significant level of importance in European topics. The results demonstrate that History textbook#1 contains more exercises suggestions that try to promote some discussion about the EU, like the one in which the students are asked to write an essay about "European integration, the beginning or the end of a process?" (Vol. 3, p. 109), while History textbook#2 addresses a wider range of EU related topics and is more diverse in the selection of historical documentation and in the presentation of textual summaries that present the students opposed arguments about the EU. In a sense, we can consider both textbooks to foster a relatively small level of reflection and critical thinking about European topics, even if textbook#1 does it more explicitly, by means of objective exercises suggestions, textbook#2 also achieves this goal by exposing the students to diverse opinions and visions about the EU. Notwithstanding these efforts, by simply presenting the students with contents about the EU in the majority of the pages dedicated to these topics, and even if keeping in mind that, since we are dealing with History textbooks, it is expectable that the approach to the EU development would be more focused on its historical landmarks and past accomplishments, one can argue that there is still the need to significantly increase the inclusion of more pedagogical materials that may stimulate students to critically discuss the EU, both in its current form as well as its possible future model.

Considering that previous studies have revealed a tendency for an oversimplification of historical contents in Portuguese basic education textbooks (Rodrigues,



Caetano, Pais, Ferreira & Menezes, 2012), our analysis of upper secondary school textbooks reveals a noticeable increase in the level of detail and depth with which historical events related to the European integration process are presented to the students. Nevertheless, it is somewhat surprising that the higher complexity of the approach to such topics has not been accompanied by a corresponding increase in the presentation of contrastive and even controversial textual and other didactic materials that may significantly contribute to improve the student's critical thinking about European issues.

Actually, and although History textbook#2, in particular, discusses the emergence of an increasingly widespread Euroscepticism over the last decades, in general, the continuation of the development of the European integration process is presented to the students as an unquestionably desirable future that is to be accomplished, regardless of its possible difficulties or negative effects. In this sense, our results seem to follow in line with previous international studies about EU's representations in textbooks, which already adverted to the fact that "basically, European curricula and textbooks provide an enthusiastic and normative vision of what the EU is and should be", and that "in textbooks, the EU is commonly reduced to a consensual and non-confrontational territory unanimously accepted, and as a political actor, as neutral as possible" (Brennetot, 2011, p. 36).

European citizenship is completely absent from EFL textbooks and it is only minimally addressed in History textbooks. Moreover, there is a normative approach to European citizenship that focuses on its legal rights, avoiding a possible confrontation between national and European identities. In fact, these results clearly demonstrate that "national citizenship [still] remains the central focus of curricula and textbooks" (Keating, 2009, p. 148). They also keep the allegation that "member states' schools and policies are contributing to the development of European citizenship, or at least having a positive impact on youth attitudes towards European identity" (Keating, 2014, p. 182) in check, at least for the Portuguese case. Instead, the results of this study seem to suggest that, in spite of the allegation that European citizenship is to be developed in parallel with national ones, European educational recommendations for this topic still seem to find a significant resistance by national textbook authors for the inclusion of extensive pedagogical contents that transcend the national level of identity.

It is important to mention, however, the fact that these results are especially relevant for Portuguese upper secondary school students that opt for the Languages & Humanities courses (25,7% of the totality of Portuguese upper secondary school students). These students have EFL until the end of the 11th grade and, more importantly, History A is a compulsory subject for the three years of upper secondary school. However, the results that we have achieved are less significant when it comes to Portuguese secondary students that choose Sciences & Technologies courses (55,1% of the totality of

Portuguese secondary school students)⁴, since History is not even an optional subject that they can choose (though EFL is mandatory for grades 10 and 11). This means that the conclusions that we have discussed are clearly more relevant for the first group of students but they are not so significant for the second group, who are the majority.

In any case, it would be important to explore how the information contained in these textbooks translates into the students' personal beliefs and discourses about the EU and its possible influence in their definitions of citizenship. Additionally, since the most recent History textbook appears to take the discussion about European issues further, by mentioning both the negative impact of the economic crisis in the development of the EU and the rise of a widespread Eurosceptic sentiment in many European countries, and considering that similar studies in other European countries have led to the conclusion that History textbooks are increasing the space dedicated to European topics (Elmersjö, 2011), it would also be interesting to explore more recent Portuguese History textbooks. Finally, since leaving the exposure to European issues of students in an academic track exclusively to EFL would mean that they would be residually addressing those topics in school, it would be important to complement our research with an analysis of the contents of textbooks from other subjects – whether compulsory or optional - integrated into the curricular course of Portuguese upper secondary education that are enrolled in academic tracks of studies.

Although our results reveal some serious and concerning shortcomings in both EFL and History Portuguese textbooks when it comes to stimulating the student's interest, engagement and knowledge about European issues, we must, nevertheless, keep in mind that textbook analysis only unveils a part of the whole pedagogical process that takes place in classrooms. As we have previously mentioned, we cannot dismiss the influence that teachers may have in filling the gaps that are found in textbooks. This means that, although our results should not be taken lightly by both educational policy-makers and textbook authors and publishers alike, they should also be complemented by further research on the role of the teachers in the process of educating students as European citizens.

5 Conclusions

In conclusion, both EFL curriculum and textbooks grant very little relevance to topics connected to the EU. Considering that it is expectable that Portuguese students in academic tracks are not extensively exposed to those topics in most of the disciplines that compose their upper secondary education, EFL should significantly increase the level of information provided to students about European issues. On the other hand, History textbooks actually include a significant amount of informative contents about European topics. In fact, the level of detail and complexity with which upper secondary school History textbooks present these topics proved to be significantly higher when compared to the contents of



textbooks adopted in the Portuguese basic education system. This study does, however, point to the fact that this increase should also be accompanied by the introduction of contrastive and controversial contents and suggestions of activities that might contribute to a critical reflection and discussion by the students about the topics that are addressed in class. When it comes to the recommended pedagogical approaches to European topics, it is necessary that these textbooks move forward from presenting a generally consensual and normative vision of the EU and increasingly include contents that may act as catalysts for “a critical reflection on the EU” (European Parliament, 2016, p. 6) in Portuguese schools. Likewise, textbooks should not only include more information about the channels available for young peoples’ civic and political expression and participation, both at the national and European levels, but should also include pedagogical suggestions that promote a less normative approach to these topics by sparking critical debates about them amongst the students that might be a catalyst for further political reflection and action.

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Endnotes

¹ Since there hasn't been a consensual agreement that would lead to a common European educational framework, educational policies continue to be the responsibility of individual member-states of the EU. The European institutions limit their action to general directives that may be voluntarily adopted by their member-states within a system of subsidiarity.

² The data analysed in this paper is made available for open access in compliance with H2020 Program regulation and following the guidelines stipulated by the Data Management Plan adopted by the CATCH-EyoU research project. Dataset available at: [//zenodo.org/record/1240958#.WuwY35fOUVG](https://zenodo.org/record/1240958#.WuwY35fOUVG).

³ This textbook is specifically used in vocational tracks.

⁴ The percentages for upper secondary school students enlisted in Languages and Humanities and Sciences and Technologies fields of studies that are presented here are relative to the school year of 2014-2015 and were retrieved from the following official source: [//infoescolas.mec.pt/Secundario/#.WYs67FGQzIU](http://infoescolas.mec.pt/Secundario/#.WYs67FGQzIU) (last accessed in 09/08/2017).