

First of all, I am very grateful to the organising team of this CAAE for having me here. As Kerr commented “the period has witnessed increased consensus, within and across countries and regions, about the importance of citizenship education for strengthening of democratic society and for protection against the rise of xenophobia, racism, and injustice.” (2012: 19) As a result, research on citizenship education is divided in two major strands: 1) theoretical inquiry on principles and pedagogies suitable for today’s challenges (eg: globalisation or democratic deficit); 2) practical assessment of actors’ perception. This is to say: most field research on CitEd is descriptive and most critical evaluation remains theoretical. This contribution aims at questioning the consensus on the emancipatory effect of citizenship curriculum. I shall therefore present the findings of a case study in French-speaking Belgium conducted in 2013 at the University of Cambridge. The research was elaborated in English but as a native French-speaker I would gladly welcome any question in French after the presentation.

From an epistemological and ontological standpoint, my approach relates to Cornelius Castoriadis’s understanding of the human world as being ‘imaginary’ instituted (Castoriadis, 1975). This is not to say that everything in human society is artificial. Castoriadis’s ontological framework is grounded in sound understanding of human psychology and sociology. He argues that every society constructs its imaginary based on its environmental and biological constraints but that these constraints are “interpreted” in various ways in each society and that society creates additional imaginary elements to provide meaning to both the social and the natural worlds. According to him, the provision of meaning, of social imaginary, to the psyche makes lives liveable. Therefore, every single society needs to provide meaning to its members. Yet, for Castoriadis, this meaning is not immutable and reflecting upon it is crucial for democratic societies. Reflection is a manner of identifying what require societal changes.

In the field of education, citizenship education has become a major issue for enhancing pupils’ democratic involvement as well as counteracting social reproduction trends. Inequalities within educational systems are related to institutionalised class reproduction (see Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970). Thus, I wanted to enquire whether citizenship education was effectively confronting class reproduction. Here, the question is *how discursive construction of ideal citizens participates in this social wrong despite the egalitarian element of most theories of CitEd?* / What role models do schools picture for their pupils and how this interplays with social classes.

Methodologically, my approach derives from critical discourse analysis, from the idea that: “discourse is shaped by the world, and shapes the world” (Gillén and Peterson, 2005, p. 148). This has determined both which material I would seek for and how I would analyse it. My material has consisted of written and spoken texts on citizenship education from two different kinds of institution: the ministry of Education in French-speaking Belgium, and three catholic schools. My methods of critical discourse analysis have been based on both Fairclough and Halliday (regarding the linguistic analysis). I used constant comparative analysis to better approach the various dimensions of my material. As you can see, there are three level of intertextuality, and of

comparison. Firstly, I compare written and spoken texts obtained from each institution studied. Secondly, I compared the discourses of the different schools. Thirdly, I compared schools and Ministry discourses, attempting to establish the general patterns of the system. Attention was paid on linguistics that construct discourses (///Hallidays), and on discrepancies between theories of CitEd and obtained results.

[NB : I chose this material because WBF does not offer an official curriculum in Cit Ed. Citizenship education is regarded as a cross-curricular discipline. Teachers must integrate that to their specific disciplines, and it can appear in specific activities organised by the school, but there is no handbook or anything similar.]

The literature allowed me to identify three dimensions of citizenship that are present in the 4 theories of democracy highlighted by both Held and Gutmann. The theories are liberalism, communitarianism, civic republicanism and cosmopolitanism. The three dimensions are:

- community of belonging (type of community + degree of inclusiveness)
- political involvement (as continuum)
- principles of justification (from legal to ethical)

Those result in a first typology as illustrated here. This theoretical framework helped me designing prompt questions for the semi-structured interviews and approaching text analysis. The present account underlines dimensions 2 and 3.

The French-speaking Belgian educational system is interesting because it reflects two principles driving contemporary debates in education: freedom of choice and equality of chances. All schools are state funded, private schools barely exists \leftrightarrow equality of chance is officially strongly valued. At the same time, parents (almost) freely choose their children's school. That combination has resulted in a so-called "nearly market". This situation can have interesting effect on citizenship education.

The government establishes a socio-economic index of schools, for directing public funds towards segregated schools. It is kept away from public knowledge in order to prevent any additional discriminatory effect. This was problematic when choosing the schools to be investigated. Yet, as is the case in other countries, there is a strong social segregation across types of schooling, be it general schooling, technical schooling or vocational schooling. My research regarded general schooling but I chose three schools, from different cities, that I expected having different socio-economic index. Headteachers gave me the index of their respective school, and that corresponds to the education they offer. The first one, Saint-François, only offers general schooling and is renowned as elitist (19/20). The second, Saint-Denis, offers both general and technical schooling (11/20). Saint-Guillaume offers the three streams of schooling (3/20).

Analysis of the legal texts (decrees) suggests a soft socio-democratic model, but large room for interpretation is left. First, because decrees depict CitEd as cross-curricular, and do not organise its assessment. Second, because the most specific decree is mainly dedicated to establish the guideline of a textbook, which would

include as a minimum 14 themes. Yet, there exists not one class dedicated to this schoolbook. Third, other sections entitle schools organising interdisciplinary activities; and implanting participatory structures in school, namely pupils' councils. Thus, Cit Ed is legally enabled to vary significantly across schools. This was exemplified in the advisor's interview. I noticed that she had referred to passive and active citizenship, and I asked what the ministry wanted to favour. She answered :

A passive or active role that isn't... School give tools but then everyone is free to say 'I like to apply this' and the other feels better listening... I think it depends a lot on schools pedagogy... In alternative pedagogy ... like Freinet or Decroly... pupils are better tooled for becoming mediators or opinion makers... Then there are schools that say... 'Well no, we equip pupils to be ready to take a job'... this is respect for autonomy... not even of schools but... individual autonomy

Even more, the decree entitles strong discrepancies from one legislative to the other, depending on political party's hobbyhorses. For example, in this case, the Minister's advisor develops a notion of cosmopolitan citizenship that focuses on *understanding* (or enlightened choice) and informal activities; while the schoolbook was actually developed under socialist minister and depicts a republican model. Also, as I shall illustrate, each of the schools presents different models. Nevertheless, similarities arise. Firstly, political education seems marginal compared to education for politeness and prevention of addictions ('well-being').

Secondly, when social issues appear, they often focus on disadvantages in developing countries. This denotes a specific understanding of 'solidarity' that seems to be shared across these cases: solidarity as individual support ('responsibility') for the poor (overseas).

Thirdly, all actors highlight pupil councils, which correspond to implementing elective democracy at school.

I shall depict the results from the analysis of the schools.

Saint-Guillaume : The ideal citizen proposed by this school resembles much Schumpeterian minimalism. The focus is on pupils' suitability for jobs, respectful behaviour and cultural assimilation, as summarized straightfully by its headteacher : "We insist on that a lot here... on what's expected from a builder from a technician from an engineer for some sections..." Occasional invitation of politicians corresponds to Schumpeter's ideal that good citizens must choose their government leader reasonably from among professionals and contributes to maintaining the order at school. In that sense, the headteacher of this school even declared when asked if he wanted to add anything to the interview "Well no... we... we even talked about politics that is... I must say something I hadn't thought of". This statement underlines the apolitical character of his conception of citizenship education.

Saint-Denis : This school's ideal citizen is collaborative, helpful and caring for the common good. Although the school document promotes ideas of civic republicanism, the complete picture rather suggests a form of utilitarian cosmopolitanism and includes features of communitarianism.

The headteacher phrased her view in this way: “Ideally I think we should make them citizens of the world”

However, the political dimension of citizenship is limited to pupils’ representation. Neither the headteacher or the school document focus on political issues. These dimensions do not seem to arise from the school’s diverse activities.

Activities targeting well-being and interculturalism are numerous in that school (as illustrated in the graph). Most of the time, these activities respond to existing problems. This suggests that staff members pay attention to their pupils and are involved in developing long-term solutions. Nevertheless, this leaves it unclear as to whether this citizenship education corresponds to the school’s concept of ideal citizen. It could be a mere tool for building peace and consensus in school. The attention to ‘well-being’ tends to suggest the latter.

Saint-François : This school accentuates two contrasting elements : respect or civility, and active citizenship and social initiatives. The former could limit the scope of the latter. It also has a strong rhetoric of excellence, which appears both in the school project and in the headteacher’s discourse.

“Jesuit Colleges have always wished to give quality or high quality education [...] so as to create ... and I will come up with the word... an elite [...] that is, in terms of education equal to hum the powerful of this world”; or in other words:

“considering them [as citizens] through actualisation of their fundamental rights, freedom of expression and participation in appropriate place and time (pupils’ councils, council of participation). There they will be able to exercise critical oversight on the life of the ‘City’ and to participate in the power of appreciating, confirming, influencing and modifying common rules and community’s environment”

In addition, firstly, Saint-François was the only school that does not explicitly favour teamwork in the curriculum. This adds to the individualistic tone implied by its rhetoric of excellence. As such, it tends to corroborate the hypothesis of a Schumpeterian model of excellence.

From this very short overview of schools and official representations of ideal citizens, the comparison between notions of ideal citizen and school socio-economic index is noteworthy. Saint-François has the highest socio-economic index and acknowledges a wealthy community. Its model of citizenship is the most pro-active and covers more areas of concerns than the other two schools do. It does not limit pupils’ expectations and scope for action since it encourages them to compete with world leaders.

Saint-Denis proposes a type of citizenship education that targets the world as ideal community, yet it invites its pupils to consider charitable work as principal means of action. Its socio-economic index is average and its community middle-class. Finally, Saint-Guillaume appears to focus its citizenship education on politeness and workers’ professionalism. Interestingly, it presents the lowest socio-economic index and welcomes pupils from a diverse and disadvantaged community. This seems to suggest that citizenship education, in particular the degree of agency that schools aim at for their pupils, is related to class reproduction.

This case study finds that there are two levels of variation in this educational system. On the one hand, the Mission Decree and the Citizenship Decree promote a social-democratic model of citizen, while the advisor

of the current Minister of Education expresses an ethical cosmopolitanism. On the other hand, each of the schools presents a different conception of ideal citizen.

Nevertheless, the comparison between these three general secondary schools suggests common patterns. For example, politeness and well-being seem to be prioritised over political education. Secondly, discourses of human rights and democracy are used to justify the divergent models of citizenship, although the meaning of these phrases varies. Saint-Denis relies on this terminology to support intercultural dialogue. By contrast, Saint-Guillaume refers to it as legitimate and mature culture.

Yet these findings must be nuanced. Firstly, the scope of the investigation does not guarantee that these patterns would appear systematically across the educational system in WBF. Secondly, the focus on conceptions of ideal citizens limits the understanding of actual outcomes of citizenship education in schools. The school projects and headteachers' discourses might not truthfully reflect teachers' actual practices and pupils' real learning. Thirdly, it has not been possible to identify if the notions of citizenship are voluntarily tailored by the schools for their communities, if they are independent of their communities, or to what extent citizenship education influences parents' choice when they choose a school for their children. If these findings were confirmed, though, three ways of improving of citizenship education in WBF have been suggested. Firstly, the definition of the ideal citizen could be clarified. Secondly, the Minister of Compulsory Education could increase their influence on free schools. Thirdly, social heterogeneity of schools could be enhanced.

Further research could scrutinise the way discourses of emancipation are used to mask the dynamics of class reproduction through citizenship education. This field of research would require larger-scale studies to investigate notions of ideal citizens across schools and pay attention to the socio-economic background of pupils in each school, as well as more traditional analyses of policy discourses.

(NB: the subject of politics arose unexpectedly from the discussion of governmental evaluation of citizenship education in schools: he mentioned that the only criticisms he had received came from parents or pupils who complained about the lack of democracy at school. This anecdote reminded him of a time when they had invited the minister of education who had passed a bill that pupils opposed explicitly, troubling the "school order"; then I asked him if he had invited politicians at other occasions and that is when he mentioned the organisation of panels before each election