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Education and Citizenship in Times of Crisis: A Field in Search of New Horizons

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ABSTRACT

Citizenship education of children and young people presents challenges for both educational and political systems globally. The current political and social crisis has led the discussion on citizenship as situated in cultural and historic contexts. Therefore, citizenship can be defined in different ways. Furthermore, citizenship can be developed in different spaces, and studied from the standpoint of its role and the topics it encompasses. This article aims at reflecting on the field of citizenship and education using a wide perspective. For this reason, it advances on a multidimensional map on the traits related to citizenship and the challenges that citizens face on the 21st century. Starting from the notions of Nation-State, of political systems (even those different from Western democracies), and the concept citizenship in a global context we explore different spaces for citizenship socialization (families, schools, local communities, peers, among others. We also consider the normative, attitudinal, and active roles that mark both citizenship and citizenship education, as well as a sample of the myriad of topics that fit within the study of citizenship education currently in the world. Through this mapping of dimensions, roles and topics we propose some challenges for this research field, and we delve into the specific contribution of each one of the seven articles included in this special issue. Finally, and as a conclusion, we delineate some of the research challenges for the future agenda to expand the studies of citizenship beyond the liberal democracy conceptions, allowing to study other forms of political organization, understanding their historical and cultural roots, and the way in which citizenship is built from childhood onwards.

INTRODUCTION

In current times, the socialization and development of citizenship attributes for children and youth present challenges for educational and political systems. The lives of young people are immersed in crises of various kinds. On one hand, democratic regimes are more of an exception than the rule globally. Thus, only 8% of the world's population lives in consolidated democracies, 37.3% in democracies with limitations, 17.9% in hybrid regimes, and 36.9% in authoritarian regimes (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2023). In fact, from a historical perspective, it has been argued that humanity has lived under autocratic regimes, and democracies are an exception to this trend (Zhang, 2012). Additionally, autocratic regimes usually stem from a historical context based on cultural or religious traditions that hinder the promotion of democracy and human rights.

Democratic systems, even those considered consolidated (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2023), face complex challenges. These difficulties arise from demographic diversity, migration, globalization, economic pressures, ideological dispersion, political exploitation of identity and ethnic differences, as well as the population's expectation that their demands be immediately resolved, among other social aspects. The combination of these elements has been testing the ability of democracies to address problems of this level of complexity (Innerarity, 2020). The limitations of democracies to deliver solutions to the mentioned challenges has led to waves of social protests, distrust on political institutions, and the rise of populisms that reject immigration (Grindheim, 2019) and other diversities as simplistic pseudo-solutions to crises.

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The crises of democratic political systems, and in general the crisis of Nation-States, combine with global crises threatening the environment, peace, and geopolitical stability. Environmental degradation and climate change, the persistence of armed conflicts, forced human displacement, the expansion of global organized crime, and inequality and economic downturns (Treviño et al., 2022) plague the planet and depict a bleak future for children and adolescents.

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC CONTEXTS

The concept of citizenship originated in ancient Greece and expanded through the Roman Empire. Due to its origins, citizenship is considered a Western concept, which spread in the 20th century through the creation and consolidation of Nation-States and their representation in international organizations such as the United Nations (Fierro, 2017). Despite the adoption of the Nation-State and the notion of citizenship as being part of a political community, cultural and historical traditions have led to the development of different political regimes, most of which do not have the characteristics of Western liberal democracies. As seen in Table 1, only 14.4% of countries are consolidated democracies, 28.7% are weak democracies, 21.6% are classified as hybrid regimes, and 35.3% are authoritarian regimes. Furthermore, more than half of the world's population lives in contexts where the political regime is not democratic.

Table 1: Distribution of countries and world population according to the type of political regime based on the Democracy Index 2022

Type of Regime	Number of countries	Percentage of countries	Percentage of the world population
Consolidated democracies	24	14.4	8.0
Weak democracies	48	28.7	37.3
Hybrid regimes	36	21.6	17.9
Authoritarian regimes	59	35.3	36.9

Source: Own elaboration base on The Economist Intelligence Unit (2023).

Given that democracies represent the minority of the national political systems worldwide, the study of citizenship and its formation requires a broader perspective in two aspects. First, for the sake of simplicity, research on citizenship should be based on the original concept that a citizen is a member of a Nation-State, regardless of the form of government. The context of a variety of political regimes in the world contrasts with research on citizenship based on classical conceptions of Western liberal democracies, the majority of which originate from Anglo-Saxon countries in mainstream media such as Scopus and WoS (Villalobos et al., 2021). Furthermore, the complexity of societies around the world suggests that participation in the formal channels of representative democracy is not sufficient to account for citizenship in different contexts. It must also consider aspects related to social movements, protests, and other forms of collective action that enhance the possibilities of citizen participation in the face of the crises of democracy itself.

Second, while the definition of citizenship as belonging to a Nation-State (Fierro, 2017; Villalobos et al., 2021) is useful, it falls short in recognizing other aspects of citizenship are related to human coexistence and the survival of the planet. On one hand, beyond belonging to a Nation-State, diverse social, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic groups coexist within these states, whose differences and particularities have at times been subject to processes of assimilation and cultural homogenization to strengthen national unity (Gellner, 2006). The recognition that Nation-States have multiple cultures within their territories, coupled with migratory flows which enrich diversity, a key set of skills of modern citizenship involves abilities to coexist and respect different cultures in diverse contexts (Man-delbaum, 2014). On the other hand, today's citizens face global challenges for humanity that surpass the borders of the Nation-State, such as climate change, violence and war, international networks of organized crime, and economic crises (Treviño et al., 2022). For this reason, it is essential to advance a conception of global citizenship that integrates supranational elements, according to the scale of the problems affecting the planet and humanity.

The following section presents some ideas on the different forms of citizenship that may exist around the world including regimes that are not democratic. This exercise aims at developing initial conceptual definitions that account for the forms of citizenship experienced by the population in the world. Therefore, in no way this conceptualization is intended to diminish the value of democracy as a promising system that promotes equality of rights and fosters peaceful coexistence among different social, cultural, ethnic, and religious groups.

FORMS OF CITIZENSHIP

When using a definition of citizenship as membership in a political community with the consequent rights and duties for citizens (Fierro, 2017), there may be different forms of citizenship depending on the type of regimes in which people live, such as democratic regimes, weak democracies, and other non-democratic regimes.

The dominant definitions of citizenship, originating in ancient Greece, took shape following the independence of the United States, where the right of people to pursue happiness was proclaimed (USA Congress, 1776), and in the Third Republic following the French Revolution under the motto of liberty, equality, and

fraternity (Puyol González, 2018). These ideas materialized in the birth of liberal democracies in the 20th century, with executive and legislative powers elected by citizens, separated from each other and from the judiciary. However, the beginning of these regimes excluded women from citizenship, and different members of the community were excluded from election processes and deliberative participation due to religious or political characteristics.

In democratic systems, citizens are expected to actively participate in political systems, through involvement in political parties, elections, and the formal channels of participation and deliberation. Democracies safeguard freedom of speech, political participation of citizens, and the independence of the judiciary power in case citizenship rights are violated by state agents. They also allow, within certain limits, strikes and protests that occur when a law or decision appears unjust or unpopular.

In summary, at the core of democracy is the expectation of socializing citizens committed to their political and social participation, who are entitled to equal rights, have freedom of expression, and can organize socially and politically to promote different causes. In these regimes, citizens are entitled to freedoms and rights, as long as they respect the law. Likewise, citizens are expected to fulfill their civic responsibilities in society, respect the law and, participate in elections as determined by local regulations. It is, therefore, a form of active, deliberative citizenship that respects rules and others, and can also engage in social activism when facing measures or government rules that are deemed unjust or undemocratic.

In systems with weak democracies, more complex forms of citizenship may emerge due to the existence of power enclaves that are not legitimized by popular will. In these systems, citizens' rights may be expressed in constitutions but not fully respected. Freedom of speech may be hindered because of concentration of power and media by some dominant groups in society, limiting the ability of some groups to deliver their messages and deciding the issues that may be positioned as problems among the public opinion. Additionally, journalists often face censorship risks from the state or may be affected by violence from various interest groups.

Conceptually, in weak democracies we may expect forms of citizenship that are twofold. On one hand, citizens may adhere to democratic ideals, actively participate in various formal and informal political activities, and express themselves and organize around different issues. Complementarily, along with the tools of democracy, assuming citizens in these political systems may seek to consolidate democracy, people may need to effectively combine legal tools of democracy with protest and social organization tools to pressure dominant groups which hold power positions that are beyond the reach of the state, and which may maintain those positions without being subject to public scrutiny through elections. In weak democracies, there may also be forms of citizenship that adhere to the ruling authorities, which could support the expansion of the influence of the executive over the legislative and judicial branches. In these democracies, election processes are often dominated by one party, and some citizens supporting the ruling parties may sustain a stance of influence on the different branches of govern-

ment as a cautionary measure in case a new party wins power.

The forms of citizenship in authoritarian systems may be separated in at least two general contexts: secular authoritarian systems and religious authoritarian systems. Usually, in both types of systems, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches are either united, or if separation exists, it is only in form. In these systems, decision-making is often concentrated in one person or a small group of individuals, commonly from the executive branch, who have direct influence on the decisions of the other branches. In autocracies, those in power are not subject to popular election processes. Whey they face elections, they are usually indirect election processes, or direct election processes spill with suspicions—or sometimes confirmation—of electoral fraud to hold power. In these regimes, freedom, equality, and fraternity are compromised as the citizenry may be classified according to their degree of support—or opposition—to the ruling regime.

In authoritarian systems there may be at least three forms of citizenship that coexist. The first form may be defined as pro-regime citizenship. People in this group may support the regime and work either directly in different branches of government or in public initiatives. Participants from this group may provide information to authorities about citizens that oppose the ruling regime.

The second form of citizenship may be labeled as silent obedience, which involves following the laws, mandates, and directions of the regime. Occasionally, this second form of citizenship may imply willingness of people to remain uninformed or ignore information about violations of fundamental rights due to fear of reprisal and as a refuge to avoid problems with authorities. In the cases of pro-regime and silent obedience citizenship it may be that culturally, people agree with the organizing principles of the regime. In the case of China, for example, it has been argued that it is a deeply meritocratic system that allows people from different backgrounds to reach leadership positions through their efforts. Following this argument, some academics propose that citizenship in China is marked by an ancient culture associated with effort, social mobility, and meritocracy throughout life (Bell, 2015).

Finally, groups in authoritarian regimes may exert a form of resistance citizenship, which opposes the existing political system. This opposition may aspire to seek a more democratic regime (although this desire may not necessarily be fulfilled when these movements come to power). These groups often suffer acts of censorship or violence from the state to suppress instances that challenge the authority of the political regime.

Complementarily, religious authoritarian systems are characterized by additional features related to adherence to an official state religion. These regimes range from theocracies to other hybrid regimes that either maintain laws that privilege one religion over others or define one official religion. Unlike secular authoritarian systems, in these systems, citizens are expected to comply with religious laws and may face sanctions when failing to follow them. These regimesçoften restrict the rights of marriage between people of different religions, enforcing punitive blasphemy laws, have inheritance systems based on religious precepts,

limit women's rights, reserve government positions for clerics, and promote censorship of critical press on religion (Bentzen & Gokmen, 2023). Therefore, the forms of citizenship in religious authoritarian regimes can complement each other as proposed.

The pro-regime form of citizenship is highly associated with adhering to the creed professed by the ruling authorities. Obedience citizenship may take two forms: a) adherence to the official religious creed; or b) public adherence to the religious creed but private rejection. The form of resistance citizenship can be motivated by professing a creed different from the official one or even the same creed with an expression different from the group in power. In religious regimes, opposition may also have the purpose of seeking a secular state.

The initial typology of citizenship forms proposed in this section must be enriched and studied empirically. Underlaying the proposed typologies, there are two contrasting notions of human nature which point to opposite types of political regimes and citizenship forms. On one hand, there is the Hobbes' conception, which proposes that human beings are inherently wicked and incapable of self-regulation and regulating their social relationships and differences (Hobbes, 1996). This suggests that citizens must be obedient to an absolute authority capable of imposing limits to prevent the extermination of the human species. On the other hand, Locke's definition proposes that human beings are capable of self-regulation and, also, able to organize forms of government that allow for freedoms, rights, duties without the need for an absolute authority constantly monitoring and punishing citizens (Locke, 2009). According to this notion, it is expected that citizens are respectful, empathetic, and capable of rational deliberation with members of their community to find peaceful and just solutions to the challenges and problems society is facing.

The forms of citizenship associated with different forms of government presented in this section seek to promote a discussion that goes beyond the assumption that democracy is the dominant system in the world, allowing for an exploration of civic life and citizenship formation in authoritarian or non-democratic contexts. In such political systems, citizens belong to a political community that has evolved throughout history. They engage politically according to the premises of their context and develop forms of citizenship that deserve deeper exploration and understanding. Obviously, this initial effort only aims at sparking a dialogue in the field about how we can study forms of citizenship beyond the ideals of liberal democracies that dominate specialized literature but do not represent the reality of most countries and the world's population.

SOCIALIZATION SPACES

Contextualized forms of citizenship are shaped in the different socialization spaces in which individual, and specifically children and youth (C&Y), develop their daily life. In this section we analyze the following socialization spaces: a) family; b) local community and peer group; c) schools; d) churches or spaces of religious socialization; and e) media and social networks.

Family is the primary space of early socialization for children where the foundations for political socialization also take place (Treviño, Carrasco, López Hornickel, et al., 2021; Treviño et al., 2017). In addition to the transmission of cultural traditions and values, the interest of families on political and social issues and the opportunities they offer children to discuss these topics spark the interest of children on citizenship themes from an early age. This early socialization is linked to greater expectations of political participation and interest in politics, although not necessarily with more democratic attitudes (Treviño et al., 2021; 2017).

Local communities and peer groups of C&Y are crucial in shaping forms of citizenship (Isac et al., 2018; Treviño et al., 2017). The economic, political, and social situations of communities and peer groups shape both shared experiences about the role that individuals play in society and the imaginaries of the possibilities for accessing participation channels to influence political decisions. Socialization does not occur homogeneously. Even when families and C&Y share similar experiences and material living conditions, their members may develop diverse ideologies and perspectives. Likewise, the socialization in local communities leads C&Y to understand their position in the social structure and their possibilities of global impact, as well as the crucial role of sharing with their peers and diverse people, for valuing themselves and their own communities (Hancock, 2022).

School systems and schools have been signaled as instruments of citizenship and political socialization. Compulsory and mass education helped shape Nation-States and generated symbolic cohesion among different cultural groups and social classes within a country (Green, 2013), sometimes even seeking to erase cultural diversities within countries (Gellner, 2006; Mandelbaum, 2014) to build a national identity. In this regard, education has been defined therefore as a field of power struggle (Carnoy & Levin, 1986) and a means used by powerful countries to develop influence through cultural imperialism (Carnoy, 1982).

Empirical data from international comparative studies suggests that schools have limited influence on students' civic outcomes (especially youth willingness to participate in politics), except for civic knowledge (Treviño et al., 2021; 2017). In fact, research suggests that nearly 90% of the variance in these attributes of student citizenship occurs within schools. Metaphorically, each school is like a country (Treviño, Carrasco, Claes, et al., 2021; Treviño et al., 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to look for evidence regarding the potential of school systems for promoting civic education and their ability to indoctrinate students. While this data comes from democratic systems, evidence is also needed on the citizenship attributes of students in non-democratic regimes. Finally, it is also necessary to understand the levels of political disaffection among young people comparatively in democratic and authoritarian systems.

Religious spaces are also places for citizenship socialization (Turner, 2017). This situation is more evident in theocratic political systems but becomes relevant in democratic contexts and even secular authoritarian ones. In democratic systems, socialization into religious creeds may strain democratic ideals, restricting, for example, the possibility of formal education addressing topics such as sexuality, discrimination against minorities, and theories of evolution, to name a few. Religious socialization, driven by parents, may link political parties and religious creeds aiming at imposing a political agenda aligned with religious perspectives, which may restrict freedoms of those who do not share the same creed. This has been seen in political discourse in the United States, as well as in Brazil and

Chile, where there are so called "evangelical caucuses" in congresses. In secular authoritarian systems, where an individual or a political group is considered the ultimate authority, religious creeds can be seen as spaces of political resistance, as has happened in the history of Turkey (Gözaydin, 2008). This can occur even if religious creeds do not necessarily aim at promoting a democratic system.

Media and social networks are means of citizen socialization for children and youth (McLeod, 2000; Xenos et al., 2014). Virtual spaces and social networks transformed the landscape of media socialization, such as radio and television, which filtered information and interpretations to be shared with the public when they were hegemonic. The internet and social networks opened access to large amounts of information on various topics, also they opened spaces to exchange perspectives, opinions, news, and even fake-news with global reach (Manca et al., 2021; Pathak-Shelat, 2018). The ability to discern between reliable and unreliable information and the awareness of the echo chamber effect—in which someone participating in a network assumes that what they exchange with other users constitutes common sense—are two of the main challenges for citizenship in social networks (Rhodes, 2022). This reality calls for generating responsibility awareness among C&Y for the quality of information and opinions shared on social networks (Ferreti, 2023).

Finally, the advent of artificial intelligence poses significant challenges for the development of citizenship, as opportunities are foreseen for its use in sustainable ecological sciences (McClure et al., 2020), boosting productivity (Roberts et al., 2021), promoting transparency and trust, and its critical appropriation by students (Ali et al., 2021). The arrival of artificial intelligence brings ethical considerations regarding the use of such tools (Robinson, 2020). Additionally, the arrival of artificial intelligence also harbors dangers, especially due to the possibility of manipulating citizens' decisions (Helbing et al., 2019) and its use as a tool for social and political control of citizens (Helbing et al., 2019; Roberts et al., 2021). It is still early to assess the relationship between artificial intelligence, citizenship, and education, so it will undoubtedly be a central subject on research agendas.

The different spaces for citizenship socialization are historically and culturally shaped, and they also influence the official definitions of citizenship, as well as the competing perspectives to official definitions. Thus, historical development of social structures and culture frames the orientations, degrees of coherence, and tensions that appear in the civic education of young people in different contexts.

CITIZENSHIP AND EDUCATION: ROLES AND TOPICS

Citizenship education encompasses at least three roles: a) normative, b) attitudinal, and c) active or participatory (Schulz et al., 2011, 2013). Each of these roles involve a set of themes such as human rights, government systems, gender and diversity, interculturality, civic engagement, civic knowledge, media and social networks, globalization, violence, and religion, among others.

The normative role of citizenship education aims at socializing individuals who adhere to and respect laws, rules, as well as customs and traditions that frame citizenship. Laws define how citizenship is acquired, as well as citizens' rights, duties, responsibilities, and the degree of adherence expected from citizens to identity definitions, acceptance of institutional arrangements, and national symbols (Torres Irribarra & Carrasco, 2021). Education fosters adherence to norms through curricular definitions, the organization of the school system, and the socialization that occurs in classrooms and school routines. In consequence, topics related to the normative role of citizenship education include, among others, respect for the laws, duty fulfillment, levels of legitimacy, civic knowledge, understanding of the political institutional framework, and appreciation for national symbols of the Nation-State.

Citizenship education also involves fostering attitudes, which are defined as a set of moral and practical decisions reflected in the daily behavior of students, both within and outside the schools (Treviño et al., 2017). In schools, students can develop and express their social identity while engaging in civic behaviors (Allen et al., 2016). Political interest involves a process of information selection that activates an attitude or social behavior (Hidi, 1990). Political interest depends on a specific context and may vary in different situations. It may be unstable because it is situational, meaning that it may be triggered by an event in the environment or a specific individual's situation that fuels the person's predisposition and commitment. How information is retained and remembered is a component of political knowledge, which facilitates the understanding and functioning of political and social processes (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1993).

Attitudes related to citizenship seem to be linked to, at least, two elements. On the one hand, attitudes can be influenced by the proximity of the curriculum contents and teaching methods to students' lives and interests. On the other hand, attitudes are also shaped by the possibility of openly discussing these topics in the classroom (Campbell, 2008; Carrasco et al., 2020; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Lin, 2014).

The topics associated with attitudes may widely vary according to the different contexts in which students live. Attitudes toward norms or social issues (Torres Irribarra & Carrasco, 2021), cultural and gender diversity (Miranda & Castillo, 2018), or global economic, environmental, and security threats (Treviño et al., 2022) are examples of the breadth of topics that can be included in the field of attitudes. Attitudes are important because they become a gateway to motivation for students (Marzano & Kendall, 2007) to become involved in specific topics. This way, they may identify different roles of citizenship and seek proper participation within their political systems.

The promotion of active and participatory citizenship constitutes the third role of education in this matter. Conceptually, the combination of normative and attitudinal aspects, along with opportunities for participation may interact to educate active citizens in democratic societies. Something similar can probably be expected in non-democratic regimes in terms of promoting participation that supports the regime in power. Available research suggests that students' participation in classrooms, schools, and communities predict their willingness to participate in political processes when they reach adulthood (Gaiser et al., 2010; Miranda et al., 2020; Treviño et al., 2017).

Active citizenship topics are usually contextualized, as people engage in social and political participation in relation to issues that interest them or directly affect them (Biesta et al., 2009). Therefore, the range of themes is widely diverse. School openness to including these topics in formal education is essential to promote participation. In school, students develop socio-political learning that includes political behavior acquired through school interactions (Beaumont, 2011). In developing this type of political behavior, the main influence does not come from teacher practices but rather from the school's practices, such as promoting student participation spaces, creating spaces for the formation of values, democratic attitudes, or opinions about democracy (Vaessen et al., 2022), and raising awareness about inequalities in the political system (e.g., gender gaps) (Archard, 2013).

Citizen participation is directly related to specific themes that spark youth's interest. Among the most common topics are electoral participation (voting intention or representation in political positions, among others), social participation (e.g., activities with student or cultural associations, volunteering), non-conventional participation (such as legal and illegal protests or deliberate refusal to obey rules), and digital participation (Internet access, use of social networks, or reading news, among others). Additionally, student participation can also occur within schools through group work, assigned tasks, or school projects (Teegelbeckers et al., 2023), and in the classroom through interaction with the teacher and peers.

Before concluding this section, it is worth mentioning that when accounting for the combination of the four types of political regimes, the four main sources of political socialization, the three roles related to citizenship education, and the list of nine citizenship topics presented here, there are 432 possible combinations. This simple exercise serves to grasp the magnitude of the intersectionality and multidimensionality of the concept of citizenship and the challenges for education. It also highlights the difficulty involved in studying this field because, in addition to the interweaving of topics, they are rooted in historical, cultural, and political heritages highly dependent on specific contexts.

In the following section, we present the articles included in this special issue and the way in which they contribute to this broader discussion on understanding the different forms of citizenship at a global level.

CONTRIBUTION OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

This special issue includes seven articles, in addition to this one, which are indicative of the thematic diversity and the roles of citizenship education. They address socialization spaces, forms of citizenship, the roles of schools and families, as well as the influence of material and virtual contexts on specific topics studied empirically.

The first article studies direct, structural, and cultural violence in Mexico using quantitative methods and data from the 2016 International Civics and Citizenship Study (ICCS). The study employs the concepts of direct, cultural, and structural violence to create a theoretical framework of the material and symbolic aspects of this phenomenon. The results suggest that students' trust in civic institutions, empathy, and support for gender equality are associated with a lower approval of violence. Conversely, approval of corrupt practices in government, disobedience to the law, and participation in illegal actions would increase acceptance of violence among secondary school students in Mexico. Additionally, the average school-level indicator of political discussion at home is a factor associated with a decrease in violence. Hence, the importance role modelling at home as a mean to reduce support for violence.

The second article examines how teachers in the subject of Civic Education in secondary education in Chile address controversial topics. The research uses both secondary data from a survey of 103 teachers in three regions of Chile and qualitative interviews with ten teachers. It arrives at the paradoxical conclusion that teachers value the strategy of discussing controversial topics, but they seldom use it and mainly in contingent informal situations. This can be explained by teachers' fear of classroom conflict, the risk of being accused of indoctrination by parents, and the desire to avoid problems with school authorities. The study highlights teacher self-censorship in applying this strategy due to fear of repercussions and the lack of guidance and tools for classroom deliberation and pedagogical practices (Claes et al., 2017; Zúñiga et al., 2020).

The third article explores the forms of experiencing citizenship in relation to environmental degradation conditions. The study, carried in the province of Buenos Aires (Argentina), challenges the traditional concept of citizenship through analyzing the daily experiences of secondary school students living near a city garbage dump. Qualitative methodologies such as interviews, focus groups, and audiovisual production are used to study three schools in the subjects of Geography and History. Findings show how students question the unequal distribution of environmental impact of city life among different populations through pollution, affecting youth bodies, their surroundings, and their local environment. Additionally, the paper shows students' awareness of demanding better living conditions through collective participation for a common cause that connects citizens with their environment. The study shows how these situations can be problematized in schools to place them in the realm of politics and civic participation as a way to address community needs.

The fourth article focuses on environmental education (EE) based on environmental awareness (EA). It analyzes the curriculum foundations of primary and secondary education in the subjects of Natural Sciences and History, Geography, and Social Sciences in Chile through four dimensions: cognitive, affective, dispositional, and behavioral. The results indicate that, in general, EA and EE are part of the academic subjects, with an emphasis on the cognitive and dispositional dimensions. In the cognitive dimension, only general information about the environment is presented, while in the dispositional dimension, pro-environmental behaviors are emphasized. Additionally, there is a perspective of humans as users and caretakers of the environment, but humans are not exposed as an integral part of ecosystems. On the other hand, the curriculum proposes to address the topics in their complexity, despite this perspective being at odds with

both the constitutional principle of freedom of education and the pedagogical guidelines that organize teaching into disconnected disciplines. Finally, a lack of coherence is identified between the curriculum and the environmental problems affecting the entire territory of Chile.

The fifth article addresses gender equality attitudes in secondary school students from Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Peru, and the Dominican Republic using data from ICCS 2016. Four profiles related to adherence to gender equity are identified: a) egalitarian, which includes 54% of students who fully support equal rights between men and women; b) normative egalitarians, representing 22.6% of students who support equal treatment under the law between men and women while simultaneously exhibiting less egalitarian attitudes for women when men and women possess the same capabilities for jobs or political leadership; c) equivocal egalitarians, with 7.4% of students showing intermediate agreement levels regarding gender equality and having lower odds of supporting income equality for men and women when jobs are scarce, and d) political sexists, comprising 15.9% of students with low probabilities of supporting gender equity. Comparative data shows that Mexico faces a significant challenge in promoting gender equality because only 3% of Mexican students agree with gender equality, compared to nearly 80% in the other countries. Additionally, 63.6% of Mexican students are classified as political sexists. This highlights a significant challenge in promoting gender equity as a human right in Mexican society.

The sixth article pertains to political engagement in virtual spaces using data from 21 participating countries in ICCS 2016. It focuses on a relatively understudied socialization space that disseminates diverse information, not necessarily political, worldwide. The results show that adolescents participate in virtual spaces, and their level of participation is associated with individual attributes such as students' family, school, and classroom political socialization processes. Interest in political topics, political self-efficacy, and adherence to norms are also predictors of online participation. This article expands the repertoire of political participation and provides evidence for future comparative research addressing inequalities and contradictions in virtual participation.

The seventh article is an exploratory study on family participation in the educational system. Through a documentary analysis of policies, the paper examines family participation in schools of Mexico, Colombia, Uruguay, and Chile. The research focuses on four approaches: family involvement centered on the pedagogical or formative aspects of childhood (Colombia and Uruguay), family involvement centered on diversity inclusion (Colombia and Chile), family participation oriented towards the regulation of administrative and financial institutional efficiency (Mexico, Colombia, and Chile), and family participation as an expression of democratic school governance (Mexico and Chile). The latter approach focuses on the power relations constructed in the school environment; the interpellation of a normative role for the school in promoting inclusion and diversity is only situated in Mexico and Chile, while Colombia and Uruguay appear to be focused on traditional forms of family participation.

The papers in this special issue show the breadth and intersectionality of topics regarding education and citizenship. They portray the local and global crises by addressing topics such as violence, experiences of pollution, the lack of comprehensive perspectives that position humans as part of ecosystems, views on gender equity, and family involvement in schools along with their association with the COVID-19 pandemic. The different studies portray realities from countries or regions by studying a topic related to citizenship bringing the specific context into place. On the other hand, the volume includes an exploratory analysis on virtual participation for an initial connection between this participation and citizenship socialization, a topic with incipient evidence.

The collection of articles also opens avenues for future research. The first area of study relates to inequalities, cultural diversity, beliefs, values, and expectations of future political participation. The second area for further research implies changing the emphasis from youth to early childhood socialization and education, with focus on global citizenship with a contextualized perspective (Hancock, 2022). Third, there is a need to advance our understanding of the link between teaching practices and the development of democratic competencies or political engagement in students (Teegelbeckers et al., 2023). Furthermore, the challenges of low trust in institutions and low political participation requires an understanding of how citizenship can be promoted through education, always in relation to students' contexts. Finally, expanding the definition of citizenship to study how it is formed in non-democratic contexts and in relation to global challenges—environmental, technological, economic, and political—is undoubtedly a challenge that will require moving beyond traditional conceptual frameworks and searching for others that allow for the synthesis of theoretical conceptions of 21st-century citizenship for the inhabitants of the planet.

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