What kind of Citizenship Education will we need in Europe?

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Thank you very much for inviting me to speak at your conference. I am honoured to be here in the Czech Republic and in Ostrava.

I must begin by apologising that my talk this morning is in English. I am guilty of what I am afraid is a typical British arrogance towards learning other languages, and I must offer my thanks to my translator, and my apologies to you for having to listen to me in this manner.

My theme today is one that I believe is of enormous interest across all the countries of Europe. We all know that we are living in times of great and sweeping changes but these changes are very unlike the changes that swept Europe in the first half of the twentieth century.

Those times were turbulent, antagonistic and eventually barbaric. The changes in which we are currently participating are democratic, participatory, and by consensus.

This is not to say that they are not controversial, and they seem likely to be more permanent and more sweeping than changes in the past.

What kind of citizenship education will we need for the Europe that is now developing?

Education and Social Change

The role of educational processes in the relationship between society and the individual has always been complex, and prone to controversy.

> In modern times there are opposing views about the tasks to be set [in education], for there are no generally accepted assumptions about what the young should learn, either for their virtue or for the best life; nor yet is it clear whether their education ought to be conducted with more concern for the intellect than for the character of the soul. ... It is by no means certain whether training should be directed at things useful in life, or at those most conducive to virtue, or at exceptional accomplishments
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> Aristotle: *The Politics*

There is a pair of contradictions here. In one sense, society uses education to create citizens and members of society: we are taught to be who we are.

At the same time, we — citizens — are the sum of the experiences we have learned from our society: we are what we have learned to be.

It is this problem that lies at the heart of the tension between the individual and the social/civic relationship. Identity is defined as both in terms of membership of a group, and not being members of other groups.

This is an identity both of inclusion and of exclusion — "we" are not "the other".

But individual identities are different from, and in tension with, group identities.

I want to argue today that there are today some substantial changes taking place in both the nature of individual identities and of societies or nations, that can perhaps be characterised as part of post-modernism.

These changes are particularly important for teachers and teacher educators, because we work at the point of cultural and social transmission: one of our significant responsibilities is to play a leading part in the passing on of cultural and social norms to the next generation. If

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we are living in a period of social and cultural flux, as I will argue that we are, then our task has particular difficulties.

Of course, teachers and teacher educators do not have the exclusive responsibility for this task. The role of preparing children to take their part in society — participating in social institutions, contributing to political democracy, and playing a part in economic activity — is shared between parents, those professional workers who have a role in educating and caring for children and young people, and members of society at large.

The task is complex, and the responsibility is great. Higher education institutions have a particular duty in the education and training of the professionals who will work with children: teachers, early childhood workers, social pedagogues, youth workers.

Education has a pivotal role in the development of the understanding of society. It used to be held that the role of education was to transmit existing social structures: to reproduce social patterns, structures and relationships.

Thus a century ago, Durkheim characterised education as "the image and *reflection* of society. It imitates and reproduces the latter in an abbreviated form; it does not create it". For him, education was "the means by which society prepares, within the children, the essential conditions of its very existence. ... the person whom education should realise in us is not the person as made by nature, but as the person society wishes them to be ... Society draws for us the portrait of the kind of person we should be, and in this portrait all the peculiarities of its organisation come to be *reflected*".

Education was held to hold a mirror to society, reproducing social behaviour, distinctions and patterns.

Current thinking gives education a more important and a more sensitive transfomative role. Education can change and translate society, rather than simply reproduce it.

It can open new opportunities to individuals and groups, enhancing their ability to participate in the community — economically, politically and socially. Social exclusion can be lessened, inequities reduced, and access to power, influence and involvement increased. Much of this is achieved by ensuring that the structures that provide education distribute knowledge, ideas, skills and attitudes in ways that all groups and classes of people can achieve.

But social and civic education develops particular abilities and attitudes that are especially important for the development of a civic culture amongst young people.

Theories of social and educational reproduction worked well in the pre-modern period. Identities were simpler and fewer: most people were members of small communities, and had well defined roles around their locality, their work, class and gender.

They would rarely come into contact with people with different languages, religions and customs. Educational systems would safely and uncontroversially teach children to hold their roles and identities in society.

Modernism brought new identities — particularly of the nation state, and often of religious, linguistic and ethnic diversity. Identity became more troublesome, but was nevertheless generally fairly exclusive, distinguishing "us" from "the other" with tolerable efficiency.

But this situation is now running out. We are moving out of the modern period into something new. And we in Europe are in the vanguard of these moves.

The Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Network Project

I am approaching this subject from the position of coordinator a one of the European Union's ERASMUS programmes Thematic Network Projects, The Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe.

They provide an environment for a deeper understanding of the theme, for example through

- comparing systems in different participating countries;
- assessing the quality of cooperation and curriculum innovation;
- promoting discussions on improvements in teaching methods in the area;
- fostering joint European programmes and specialised courses; and
- improving the dialogue between academic and other partners.

Thematic Networks necessarily have to include Universities and Colleges from every eligible state. Eligible states are all of those in the European Community, all of those in the European Economic Area, and all of those states which are associated in discussions to join the European Community.

The Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Network links 28 European states and 90 University and College Departments which educate students about how children and youths learn about and understand their society, their identity and citizenship.

We are a cross-disciplinary group, with interests in social psychology, pedagogy, sociology and curriculum studies, who educate various professions such as teachers, social pedagogues, early childhood workers and youth workers, as well as students on academic pathways.

We have very active members in the Czech Republic. One of our working groups includes our Conference Coordinator, Professor Hana Kantorková; we have a very active National Coordinator here in Jan Masek from Západoceská University, and Pavel Vacek from Hradec Králové has been active in our conferences. We have members in the University of Jana Evangelisty, and in all some 18 Czechs are members.

The CiCe Network started in 1996, and was selected for support by Erasmus from September 1998 to August 2001. The three-year project aimed to:

1. develop a permanent pan-European network
2. survey and analyse relevant courses in Higher Education
3. analyse provision for social learning by young people in each state
4. analyse children's perceptions of identity and citizenship
5. identify areas for further research
6. identify areas for further course development

We have built up a strong and integrated Network, through sets of working groups that are deliberately drawn from across the continent. With our central coordination unit in London, we have a Steering Group that represents various disciplines and diverse states,

and sets of working parties,

National Coordinators in each state.

Our membership is now of over 90 institutions — including, as I have said, four from the Czech Republic.

The European Commission's priorities for European education for the period 2000–2006 identified — in *Towards a Europe of knowledge* (COM (97) 563) (December 1997) - three major areas, the second of which was citizenship. The Commission wished to emphasise

"the enhancement of citizenship through the sharing of common values, and the development of a sense of belonging to a common social and cultural area. [This] ... must encourage a broader-based understanding of citizenship, founded on active solidarity and on mutual understanding of the cultural diversities that constitute Europe's originality and richness".

CiCe directly addresses this priority in an inter-disciplinary manner through the agency of the Universities and Colleges of Europe. Professional and academic courses in Higher Education are directly concerned with

- how children and young people are socialised;

- how they learn about and understand the social, political, economic and cultural environment; and
- how they construct identities which recognise the complexities of this environment.

CiCe's aim is to build shared educational approaches to learning and teaching about social, economic and political similarities and differences across Europe, enhancing the quality of academic and professional education in all participating states. This will contribute to the development of an informed and responsible citizenry. These concerns need to be addressed in the early years of learning, and to continue to at least age 15.

Changing Identity and Changing Citizenship

The development of this civic or social education is of particular significance now, because of the current nature and direction of change in our societies. Societies have always been changing, sometimes at such a slow pace that the next generation does appear to be more or less the image and reflection of the one that went before, as Durkheim observed.

What is important here and now is not just the speed of social change, but its particular characteristics, which impinge on the nature of citizenship and of identity.

In CiCe we aim to develop shared understandings and patterns of our teaching which will inform the development of practices to make citizenship with a European dimension a practical reality. These match those in the European Union's publication *Achieving Europe through Education and Training*, and the *European Declaration on Human Rights Education.*

Most members of CiCe share an interest in the development of European citizenship — but do not want to see the emergence of a new form of supra-nationalism, that will replace the nation-state with membership of a chauvinistic 'fortress Europe'. They are instead interested in how children and young people will develop a new form of citizenship, an identity that aligns them as citizens of Europe and of the world, members of a common shared humanity.

Research by CiCe members suggests that children's thinking on such issues is best developed during this age range, before prejudices have become entrenched.

The following sequence shows the consensus of our members views on when children and young people become aware of their different identities. We asked a sample of our members when they though children and young people became aware of themselves have particular identities. These are the average ages that represent their responses:

Between the ages of 2 and 3 — being a member of a family, and being aware of being either a boy or a girl;

Between 7 and 8 — identification with the local area, and being aware they are members of a state or nation;

Between 8 and 9 — knowing they are part of a region within the country, and becoming aware they are members of a social class; and

Between 11 and 12 — being aware that they have some form of European identity.

But we are also aware that these items. these identities, are changing. It's therefore important that students in relevant disciplines in higher education

- know about the way in which children and young people develop these social ideas, and when they happen;
- are aware of current social changes and the implications these have for the future; and
- are aware of pedagogic practices and findings from across Europe.

Firstly, Europe is transforming itself. Recent and continuing developments in the integration of the European Union have brought increasing social and economic changes that will greatly affect children in their adult lives. The European Union has increased substantially in size over

the past two decades, and is set to increase dramatically more over the decade to come, as a dozen more nations are set to join.

In a few months time, much of the existing Union will have a common currency. The EU has taken on the responsibility, in Article 8 of the Maastricht Treaty, of helping the population of Europe - including its children and young people — adjust to and take full advantage of the opportunities that citizenship in the Union will make possible.

Secondly, there are a set of sweeping social changes that seem to be characteristic our times. All of these can be seen as changing the individual's sense of identity.

- We have seen an erosion of the old national certainties. Political boundaries at the national level have weakened — the idea of Europe itself is also linked to the re-affirmation of the regional characteristics that had been subdued in the nation-state phase. The idea of a "Europe of the regions" has many advantages over a "Europe of the nations".
- There has been much greater social mobility that was found in the past, as the old certainties of class have weakened. Social class divisions are less distinct and in many ways weaker.
- All over Europe, employment opportunities have moved from physical production to mental and electronic creativity and interconnectivity, the 'middle class' has expanded, and educational opportunities have increased.
- There have been population movements across Europe and the world on a scale hitherto unimagined - migration, tourism, refugees, that have defied national borders and frontiers. Unlike the mass migrations of the past, these movements are quick, multi-directional and sometimes reversible, and undertaken for a multitude of reasons.
- Ethnic distinctions have changed enormously: there is evidence in some places of increasing racism and xenophobia, and in others of its decline, with increasing numbers of marriages between ethnic groups. , and — despite continuing racism and xenophobia — there are weakening distinctions in this area.
- There has been a weakening of the traditional gender roles across European society. Equality of opportunity is beginning to affect roles at work and in the family, and customary expectations of the masculine and the feminine no longer apply.
- The end of the phase of the European overseas empires has resulted in a new set of roles, less certain than before, between the states of the North and the South, and between the peoples of both.
- Globalisation and the growth of multi-national business has left national states less able to defend their own close economic interests, and enmeshed more and more firmly in the economic world system — and this internationalisation of trade, commerce brings us all closer together in the market.
- Similarly, there are changes in mass culture and media, which make for further globalisation, and less differentiation about how we define ourselves.
- Finally, and not least, the advent of the new information communication technologies mean that the individual no longer need subscribe to either local or to mass cultures in the same way as was necessary in the past: we can personalise our own individual cultural references.

Identity now becomes multiple, contingent and situational.

Because of these changes, children and young people who are currently being educated, and those in the future, are likely to have a very different civic relationship between themselves as individuals and their society. This will not be the same citizenship, or the same kind of identity,

as their parents or teachers — or politicians. Those responsible for the social education of the young will no longer be reflecting the social relationships of earlier ages.

How will it be different? The tendency for identities to be multiple will become even greater and more evident tan it is today: people will select, from a wide range of possibilities, whom they will be in relation to the various groups amongst which they move.

Being a citizen of state X will still be an identity, but so will being a citizen of region Y, and of Europe, and of the world. Which citizenship is expressed at any moment of time will be contingent on the location, the time and the reference group.

The heterogeneity of social life in contemporary and developing Europe will mean that movement between these identities occurs more often. We encounter different groups of people more often — different languages, cultures, religious beliefs, national affiliations, ethnic groups, and different social locations more often — multinational shops and employers, and international web-sites.

The implications of this are that we will have civic and social relationships that are rather different from the old, simpler loyalties of nation, class and family. Tolerance of differences, and recognition of underlying similarities, will become key elements of social behaviour.

The Challenge to Social Educators

As educators, we know that the development of social identity and the understanding of social behaviours begins in children and young people at an early age. It is an error to believe either that social education 'just happens', and will become evident when young people become adult and 'join society', or that it is an activity that can be left until young people are about to finish their formal education.

Social education starts from birth, and continues through life. Children and young people make sense of their social world as they encounter different groups of people and different forms of social behaviour, at home, with friends, in schools, in the shops and banks, as they encounter people working and at leisure, and through the mass media.

The professionals and other adults who are responsible for children and young people's development and learning in these spheres are many and varied. Parents play a particular role, as to teachers. But there are also many other significant professional workers early childhood workers, social pedagogues, youth workers, social workers. All of these professions need to be prepared to work with children and young people to develop social, economic and political understanding within the new and developing social relationships of Europe.

We aim to promote European-wide understanding of the ways in which children and young people are socialised into constructing identities — including a European identity — through programmes of Higher Education that focus on children's and young peoples' development of a common European understanding and sense of identity around the social, economic and political issues facing Europe in the early 21st century. We seek to identify curriculum activities, research and structures concerned with children's learning across a wide range of European social issues.

CiCe addresses both what children / young people know and how they learn in order to develop activities in Higher Education that will channel the development of these understandings within the European context. Our concern is not just with *what* they can understand, but with *how* they can be enabled to *participate and act*, and how our knowledge of this can inform and develop Higher Education students' learning and practice.

We have examined many of the courses of training and preparation for these professionals, in the Higher Education contexts in which we work. We have found much good and innovative practice.

But we have also found many courses that are outdated and no longer relevant. We have often found a certain insularity and lack of awareness of practice elsewhere, of alternative

perspectives.

The links between different courses and institutions across Europe are few and weak.

Through this process, we have developed the view that we need to develop greater links and exchanges between those responsible for training social educators. We need to develop criteria for evaluating good practice, models of innovative courses, and mechanisms to allow the sharing of ideas and practice.

So how should educational systems change, to accommodate these social upheavals?

We particularly recognise that there is a need for more courses of professional education that emphasise

- the processes of social learning and action to develop social identities and the forms of civic relationships that will accompany these, so that children and young people are taught competencies and how to act effectively
- the diversity and variety of social, political and economic life in Europe, and the underlying similarities and common elements in this
- the need to understand and respect minority views, of culture, ethnicity, and language, and to welcome such diversity
- the controversial and contested nature of social life, and the potential for instability
- the need for learning — in Higher Education as much as in Schools — to emphasise active engagement and process, rather than the passive transmission of information.

Social change is never easy, and the rate of social change we are involved in is at a speed and complexity that we have not seen before. Education is inextricably and inevitably linked into this process.

There will be pressures on us to resist change, to stick to the old, the known, the customary, particularly from politicians and parents. But our responsibilities are not only to the older generations: they are also to the coming generations.

We have to help them understand a different social world, different kinds of societies, different kinds of identities. This is the role of the civic educator.

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