# What type of citizens do we have in Europe? And what type of citizens do we want?

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Within European youth work and more widely across European education programmes there has been an ongoing struggle with the concept of European citizenship and how it can be applied in practice. In this context, there has been a reflection on the legal notions of EU citizenship, the rights and boundaries with regard to who can access them and more open and participatory understandings of the concept. Rather than repeating these same debates, this paper will turn the question regarding understanding the concept of European citizenship around and ask what type of citizens there are in Europe and what type of individuals do we need to maintain and develop democracy, human rights and social inclusion.

Citizenship historically has referred to the legal rights and obligations bestowed on an individual by the state in which they are citizens, denoted by their nationality (Marshall 1950). In this paper we will begin by establishing some of the different ways that people understand their rights and responsibilities in relationship to the state; and more broadly to the world as a whole as well as the other people who live there. Some of these concepts are more typically understood as citizenship than others. I then note the recent trends in policy and practice towards developing these different forms of citizenship. Building from this I argue for a new understanding of European citizenship as a hub for global citizenship and provide recommendations towards policies and practices that would enable this reality.

**The liberal democratic citizen and the neoliberal market global citizen**

There is a long history of a liberal citizenship concept in the Anglo-Saxon countries of Europe. In its original meaning, liberal democracy is typically considered "thin" democracy. This means that citizens' involvement in public life is minimal and is primarily enacted through the vote (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). In such an environment, citizens are encouraged but not obliged to vote. Education for active citizenship is focused on creating autonomous citizens who can act to support

their own self-interest and to enhance individuals' basic level of political knowledge and skills to achieve this end. Active citizenship under the liberal concept emphasises the rights of individuals to participate (or not) politically. Volunteering levels are typically high in countries that support this model of citizenship as the states' role is typically smaller, but the volunteering is frequently performed to "help" others and "look after" the poor; rarely are the situation or structures of society critically explored and the status quo and positions of power are rarely changed.

Building from the liberal democratic citizen is the neoliberal market global citizen, who takes individualism to a new level. These citizens are competitive, efficient and productive and succeed well in the global knowledge economy. They have plenty of rights and have the power, wealth and expertise to assure these rights, but simultaneously feel few responsibilities to any state or anyone else. They travel the world consuming the diverse experiences and cultures on offer to enhance their individual wealth and careers.

**The civic republican citizen, patriotism and nationalism**

Many European countries have civic republican roots, whether due to the influence of France and the narrative of the French Revolution (including much of southern Europe) or from a legacy of civic concepts of patriotism, such as in Greece and Italy (Kohn 2008). The civic republican approach places higher demands on the citizen in terms of maintenance of the democratic processes and institutions, which in turn is supposed to assure greater freedoms. From this perspective, citizens become the actors of positive laws for social change and are the instruments to prevent corruption (Lovett 2010). Civic republicanism emphasises the need for citizens to act politically within the public sphere, in particular at the national level, and to be actively engaged within a political community as equal and free citizens. Thus, the notion of civic responsibility has developed from this view. Compared to the liberal tradition, this approach assigns both a greater obligation and greater value to political engagement and involvement in political decision making. It is necessary, however, to acknowledge that civic republicanism is also associated with the values of patriotism that have been widely criticised for undermining that of equality for immigrants and minorities, and for a disregard for human rights in the process of achieving the common good (Abowitz and Harnish 2006).

Not too dissimilar from the concept of patriotism associated with civic republicanism is nationalism. The main difference is associated with an ethnic understanding of citizenship rather than civic. This means that ethnicity is used to define who is a citizen of a country. In addition, identification is made with one single specific cultural heritage and language that are said to originate from the country in question (Kohn 2008). Love for your own country based on either nationalism (ethnic understandings of citizenship) and even patriotism (civic understandings of citizenship) can fuel populist beliefs and policies that place a high emphasis on security, defence, racism and anti-immigration.

**The global citizen and the critical citizen**

In recent years, the governments of European countries have not accorded the highest policy emphasis to global or critical citizenship (Hoskins et al. 2017). Nevertheless, the values of equality and human rights featured in this model have a considerable history in Nordic countries, both within and beyond the educational system where social rights and economic redistribution are traditionally supported (Telhaug et al. 2006).

The concept of global citizenship as opposed to citizenship alone more clearly situates the concept of citizenship within a broader geographical location than the nation state towards being a citizen of the world (Davies 2006). Thus the legal notion of the citizen with rights and responsibilities within a

particular nation state is replaced by the less formal and more cosmopolitan sense of belonging and identifying with a global community, a common humanity and sense of solidarity across the planet (UNSECO 2015a). Held's 2010 seminal vision of cosmopolitanism describes a world where "each individual in the world is a moral agent entitled to equal dignity and consideration" (Held 2010: 10) and where the priority of the nation state is diminished.

In my recent work for UNESCO (Hoskins 2016) we have used the working definition of global citizenship as the rights, responsibilities, actions and identity based on the values of global human rights and the need to create social justice within and between countries, performed at the local, national and global level using both individual and collective action. What we emphasise as being important is that when individuals are involved in everyday actions and decision making at the local and national level, global citizens would understand and care about the relationship and effect of these decisions on other people all around the world.

Critical citizenship has been a "catch-all" title for various new theories that try to frame active citizenship in similar ways to the above definition of global citizenship (Abowitz and Harnish 2006), for example, by focusing on critiquing and improving equality in society through social and political action (Johnson and Morris 2010). Aspects of civic competence considered prerequisites for critical citizenship are the ability critically to analyse "social issues and injustices", for example learning to ask why people are homeless instead of merely collecting money to feed them (Westheimer and Kahne 2004: 4) and other social values such as empathy and care (Veugelers 2011).

**Which types of citizen are we?**

As educators we may have a wish to be the global and critical citizens in Europe but in reality, we probably encompass a number of these types of citizen inside each of us that arise in different contexts. Countries across Europe have different histories, traditions and norms regarding citizenship but for better or for worse elements from all these traditions are likely to be present in most countries now.

In policy terms in Europe, the emphasis during this pre-crisis period (2000-2008) had shifted from citizenship as a narrow, exclusive, national belonging to one that was broader, more inclusive and fluid: encompassing the concept of the "cosmopolitan citizen" who belonged not just to the local and national community but to a variety of communities simultaneously, which in a globalised world included regional (European) and global citizenship (Hoskins et al. 2017). However, by the time the economic crisis broke around 2007 through to 2011, policy making for citizenship had passed its high-priority point in Europe (Hoskins et al. 2017). This was the result of the cumulative impact of a number of political and policy shifts at the national level. First was the shift in type of governments across European countries from 2007 with the removal of largely centre-left governments and their replacement by centre-right/right governments. Second was the shift in philosophy, emphasis and approach to citizenship of these centre-right/right governments. Broadly, these governments viewed citizenship as narrower concept referring back to the concept as a more passive citizenship as denoted by your passport and less contested than did their predecessors. This was driven by a prevailing neo-liberal ideology that firmly believes that the state should be significantly reduced and the emphasis should be placed instead on work, entrepreneurship and wealth creation. Third was the shift in policy priorities at the national and European level, with a growing emphasis on employability and competitiveness, particularly on ensuring that young people had the key skills that prepared them for work (Hoskins et al. 2017).

The onset of the economic crisis served to exacerbate these shifts as more centre-right/right governments were elected across Europe and countries policy responses were needed to counter the immediate effects of the crisis (Hoskins et al. 2017). As a consequence, citizenship fell even further from policy favour at the national and also now at the European level. Meanwhile, as shown by the EU study on Participatory Citizenship (Hoskins et al. 2011), the onset of austerity policies in many countries ushered in significant cuts to national government and European funding for citizenship initiatives and projects relating to civil society and vulnerable groups in society. The focus now was firmly on the national citizenship and a number of European countries also revised their approach to citizenship education, adding the economic dimension and entrepreneurship and emphasising national rights (Hoskins et al. 2017).

The post-crisis austerity period from 2012 onwards has seen this general direction of travel for citizenship, continuing at the national and European level with the policy focus firmly on supporting austerity, key skills and employability. The only change in the post-crisis austerity period since 2012 to citizenship has been its identification by policy makers, at both national and European level, as a key ingredient in responding to pressing societal issues that threaten social and community cohesion, namely racism, xenophobia and violence in society, particularly against minority groups and migrant arrivals; extremism and terrorism, that placed considerable strain on borders and the ability and willingness of the EU countries to accept the refugees. Citizenship was no longer a high policy priority, but more an area that supports the dominant narrative of austerity, key skills and employability. It is also more markedly national than European with national governments setting the agenda and European institutions battling to maintain influence. It is also more defensive than expansive, about addressing violence, extremism and divisions in society, rather than building a stronger, more participatory Europe (Hoskins et al. 2017).

The recent rise of nationalism and populism globally, demonstrated by the UK EU referendum in 2016, Trump's election in the US in 2016, and the 2018 Hungarian and Italian populist victories, has led to various challenges to Europe as we know it. These events have provided an opportunity for a wake-up call in Europe and for European institutions about the importance of developing an inclusive and participatory form of European citizenship.

It is in this context, then, that I am re-examining the concept of European citizenship. European citizenship is often confounded with the concept of EU citizenship and the rights afforded by being a legal citizen of an EU country. In this section I will critique the understanding of European citizenship as EU citizenship.

If we look at the legal basis of EU citizenship we can critically engage with how this can appear to be working. At the very foundations of EU citizenship, there is the right to circulate and reside freely: study, work and travel. But what can be reflected upon is who is really benefiting most from these rights? Most studies show that those who benefit most from these rights are the highly educated, those who have worked and/or studied in several European countries, speak several languages and those who have participated in a number of European programmes or activities. The evidence for this is found in evaluations of many of the European programmes (for example, see research by Kuhn 2012 and Recchi 2015).

On the other hand, the world of business also takes advantage of these rights to import cheap labour (from people often with more skills and willing to work harder for less money) across the EU mostly from southern and eastern Europe to the west. The poor and less skilled in the west of Europe are then the ones who are feeling that they have to unfairly compete against people from other countries with more skills, for less money and worse working conditions.

It is possible to argue, then, that EU citizenship even at its very basic level is currently working more for the elites than the average European even for those with EU citizenship. Some EU citizens, of course, do live on the border between EU countries and can cross easily even on foot into another EU country, but some less advantaged EU citizens will never have visited the capital of their own country, let alone travelled to another EU country. The European Union needs to be relevant and offer the less advantaged more in order to ensure long-term survival.

In this context, what I argue then needs to be done is to develop an alternative understanding of European citizenship that is more socioeconomically inclusive than EU citizenship, includes non-EU European countries and fits more closely with global and critical understandings of citizenship. What I argue then is for understanding European citizenship as a hub for global citizenship. Across Europe we have our own legacies of good and bad practices relevant to citizenship. We have our responsibilities for colonialisation, exploitation, periods of nationalism, inequalities, racism and war, but we also have better experiences of innovation and building transnational co-operation amongst others on youth work, education and research and human rights and building the infrastructures and policies to develop and maintain them (Recchi 2015). European citizenship could be understood as citizenship that offers a space for critical reflection and evaluation of these experiences and a chance to have a say in how to develop them further towards a more inclusive and socially just Europe. Part of this citizenship would be then to share this learning with other people and regions across the world.

From my own critical reflections on Europe and from my own experience of the EU referendum in the UK, there are a number of steps that I think would be helpful to implement across Europe and its institutions. The first step is to make changes to social policy. I would argue that we need to focus on improving the life chances, working and living conditions of those who have suffered the most under austerity i.e. the young, the unemployed, the underemployed and those with low pay and poor working conditions. Structural and social policy changes are necessary and education and youth work alone cannot be expected to do everything.

Step two is to make changes to decision-making processes. In this regard, we need to open up spaces for all individuals to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. This includes local communities, inside work and learning environments and also at the national, European and global levels. The decision-making processes need to include critical reflection on how certain decisions affect other people in their own country, other people in European countries and other people around the world.

The next step is to ensure that everyone has the capacity to be involved in these decision-making processes, the education and youth policy priority has to be placed on the citizenship agenda – whether we call this European, global or critical citizenship or democratic culture. These learning opportunities need to include all groups with a strong focus on enabling the less advantaged to have their say. This can be achieved through adult education, vocational education and training, youth work and schools with less advantaged students, so that everyone has the capacity to participate and have a feeling of shared ownership and belonging across national borders. In addition, the more advantaged would also benefit from critical citizenship education in order to understand their position of power and privilege. When we teach/train European citizenship to all groups we need to understand this concept as a hub for global citizenship. In order to do this, we need to support young people's identification and sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities based on human rights and having an understanding of Europe as having its own complex history, innovation and varied practices.

I will finish this paper with a question on practice for the youth field on European citizenship. Evidence has shown that voluntary participation in decision-making processes inside and outside school and citizenship learning opportunities more generally have often led to the most advantaged and most able taking up more of these opportunities (Hoskins et al. 2017). Socioeconomic differences in participation in decision-making across Europe are still considerable (Dalton 2017 and Bovens and Wille 2010). If we add European and global citizenship to this equation, socioeconomic inequalities in participation may well be even higher. This is the challenge that needs to be addressed by the European youth field as well as youth and education policy more generally. How do we make these learning and decision-making experiences more accessible, interesting and engaging for less advantaged groups? How do we target less advantaged groups without stigmatising them? Can European non-formal education trainers work together more with vocational education and training, the youth justice system, youth clubs in disadvantaged areas and school with more disadvantaged students to support them with the topic of European citizenship? How do we get youth policy to prioritise European citizenship for all?

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