

TEACHING CONDITIONS AND YOUTH CITIZENSHIP FORMATION IN KYRGYZSTAN AND CHINA DURING SOCIOPOLITICAL TRANSFORMATION (1990–2000)

CONDIÇÕES DE ENSINO E FORMAÇÃO DA CIDADANIA JOVEM NO QUIRGUISTÃO E NA CHINA DURANTE A TRANSFORMAÇÃO SOCIOPOLÍTICA (1990–2000)

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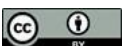
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Abstract

Citizenship education plays a central role in shaping young people's civic identities during periods of sociopolitical transformation. This study examines how youth citizenship formation was shaped by teaching conditions in the Kyrgyz Republic and the People's Republic of China between 1990 and 2000. Adopting a qualitative comparative-historical design, the study conceptualizes citizenship formation as an institutionally mediated process rather than a direct outcome of policy intent or curriculum content. Drawing on policy documents, curriculum frameworks, and qualitative scholarship, a directed qualitative content analysis was conducted across six dimensions of teaching conditions: curriculum governance, civic narratives, teacher support, school routines, pedagogy, and participation structures. The findings reveal distinct national configurations.

Resumo

A educação para a cidadania desempenha um papel central na formação da identidade cívica dos jovens durante períodos de transformação sociopolítica. Este estudo examina como a formação da cidadania juvenil foi moldada pelas condições de ensino na República do Quirguistão e na República Popular da China entre 1990 e 2000. Adotando um desenho qualitativo comparativo-histórico, o estudo conceitua a formação da cidadania como um processo mediado institucionalmente, em vez de um resultado direto da intenção política ou do conteúdo curricular. Com base em documentos de políticas, estruturas curriculares e estudos qualitativos, foi realizada uma análise de conteúdo qualitativa direcionada em seis dimensões das condições de ensino: governança curricular, narrativas cívicas, apoio aos professores, rotinas escolares, pedagogia e



In China, citizenship formation was shaped by a centralized and coherent governance framework, promoting a state-integrative and developmentalist model of citizenship through patriotic education and standardized curricula. In Kyrgyzstan, citizenship formation unfolded within a post-Soviet context of system rebuilding and uneven institutional capacity, resulting in a more transitional and negotiated model of citizenship. The study demonstrates that youth citizenship formation is best understood through the configuration and coherence of teaching conditions, offering insights for comparative education research and citizenship education reform in transforming societies.

Keywords: Citizenship Education. Youth Citizenship Formation. Teaching Conditions. Comparative Education. Sociopolitical Transformation.

estruturas de participação. Os resultados revelam configurações nacionais distintas. Na China, a formação da cidadania foi moldada por uma estrutura de governança centralizada e coerente, promovendo um modelo de cidadania integrador do Estado e desenvolvimentista por meio da educação patriótica e de currículos padronizados. No Quirguistão, a formação da cidadania desenrolou-se dentro de um contexto pós-soviético de reconstrução do sistema e capacidade institucional desigual, resultando em um modelo de cidadania mais transitório e negociado. O estudo demonstra que a formação da cidadania juvenil é melhor compreendida por meio da configuração e da coerência das condições de ensino, oferecendo insights para a pesquisa em educação comparada e a reforma da educação para a cidadania em sociedades em transformação.

Palavras-chave: Educação para a Cidadania. Formação da Cidadania Juvenil. Condições de Ensino. Educação Comparada. Transformação Sociopolítica.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Citizenship education has long been recognized as a central function of formal schooling, particularly in societies experiencing significant political, economic, and social transformation. Schools are not neutral institutions; rather, they are key sites through which states seek to cultivate civic identity, transmit normative values, and regulate relationships between individuals and the political community (Green, 1990; Apple, 2004). From this perspective, citizenship education is deeply embedded in broader processes of state formation, governance, and social integration.

Classical theories of citizenship emphasize that citizenship extends beyond legal status to encompass social membership, civic identity, and participation in collective life. Marshall's (1950) influential framework conceptualized citizenship as comprising civil, political, and social rights, highlighting the role of social institutions—particularly education—in enabling individuals to exercise these rights meaningfully. Subsequent

sociological work has further emphasized citizenship as a socially constructed and institutionally mediated identity, shaped by power relations, cultural narratives, and everyday practices within schools (Turner, 1993; Banks, 2008). These perspectives underscore the importance of examining how citizenship is formed through educational structures rather than assuming it as an abstract or universal outcome.

Comparative education research demonstrates that citizenship education becomes especially salient during periods of sociopolitical transition. In such contexts, existing ideological frameworks are destabilized, and education systems are often mobilized to redefine national identity and political legitimacy (Carnoy & Samoff, 1990; Silova, 2011). Post-socialist and reform-oriented societies face the dual challenge of transforming inherited education systems while responding to new demands for civic competence, social cohesion, and global integration. Citizenship education thus emerges as a contested domain in which competing visions of nationhood, democracy, and social order are negotiated.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and Central Asia created unprecedented conditions for such negotiation. Education systems that had previously served as instruments of socialist political socialization required substantial reform to align with newly independent or reforming states (Silova, 2011). In these contexts, citizenship education often shifted from ideologically unified models toward more fragmented and experimental forms, shaped by limited institutional capacity, external influence, and rapid policy change. Scholars have noted that such transitions frequently result in uneven implementation of civic education, producing differentiated experiences of citizenship among youth (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004).

Within this broader historical landscape, the decade from 1990 to 2000 represents a critical period for examining youth citizenship formation in both the Kyrgyz Republic and the People's Republic of China. Although the two countries followed divergent political trajectories, both confronted fundamental challenges related to legitimacy, identity, and governance during this period. These challenges were reflected in educational reforms that repositioned schools as strategic sites for civic formation.

In Kyrgyzstan, independence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 initiated a process of post-socialist transition marked by state-building, economic restructuring, and institutional discontinuity. Education systems inherited from the Soviet

era were characterized by centralized governance and ideologically prescribed curricula, necessitating substantial reform to support the construction of a new national civic identity (Silova, 2011). Citizenship education, previously embedded within Soviet ideological frameworks, had to be reconceptualized in relation to national sovereignty, democratic aspirations, and social cohesion. National reform efforts during the mid-1990s culminated in the approval of the National Education Program Bilim in 1996, which was intended to guide education sector development through the year 2000 (UNESCO, n.d.). However, scholars emphasize that the implementation of such reforms occurred under conditions of fiscal constraint, limited administrative capacity, and regional inequality, raising concerns about the consistency and effectiveness of citizenship education at the school level (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004).

China's experience during the 1990s illustrates a different but equally instructive pathway of citizenship formation under transformation. While maintaining political continuity, China underwent rapid economic reform, social differentiation, and cultural change. Following the political crisis of 1989, the Chinese state intensified its use of education as a mechanism of political socialization, particularly through patriotic education and civics-related curricula (Zhao, 1998). Research on curriculum governance indicates that subjects such as Thought and Politics played a central role in embedding civic meanings that linked individual morality, national identity, and developmental responsibility (Vickers, 2009). Unlike many post-socialist contexts, China's relatively stable and centralized governance structure allowed for a high degree of coherence between policy objectives, curriculum narratives, and school-level implementation.

Studies in comparative citizenship education suggest that such differences in governance coherence and institutional capacity have profound implications for how citizenship is experienced by students (Osler & Starkey, 2005; Banks, 2008). Centralized systems may promote consistency and shared national narratives, but they may also limit pluralism and critical engagement. Conversely, decentralized or transitional systems may allow for greater local adaptation but risk producing fragmented and unequal civic learning opportunities (Turner, 1993). These contrasting dynamics highlight the importance of moving beyond analyses of policy intent or curriculum content to examine the teaching conditions that mediate citizenship formation in everyday schooling.

Despite a growing body of scholarship on citizenship education in both post-socialist and reform-oriented contexts, existing studies often focus on ideological orientation, policy discourse, or textbook analysis in isolation. Less attention has been paid to how institutional capacity, teacher support, school routines, and participation structures interact to shape youth citizenship formation over time. As a result, there remains a significant gap in comparative, institutionally grounded research that examines citizenship education as a configurational process embedded within teaching conditions.

Addressing this gap requires a qualitative, comparative-historical approach that situates citizenship education within its broader sociopolitical and institutional context. By focusing on Kyrgyzstan and China during the 1990–2000 period, this study seeks to deepen understanding of how different configurations of teaching conditions shape youth citizenship formation under conditions of transformation, offering insights relevant to both comparative education research and contemporary policy debates.

1.2 Research questions

This study seeks to examine how youth citizenship formation was shaped by teaching conditions in Kyrgyzstan and China during the sociopolitical transformation period from 1990 to 2000. Rather than treating citizenship education as a uniform or purely ideological phenomenon, the study approaches it as an institutionally mediated process embedded within specific educational contexts.

RQ1. How were citizenship education aims articulated through policy and curriculum governance in Kyrgyzstan and China during the period 1990–2000?

RQ2. How were civic meanings constructed and conveyed through curriculum and textbook narratives in the two national contexts?

RQ3. How did school-level teaching conditions—including teacher support, school routines, pedagogical practices, and participation structures—shape the implementation of citizenship education?

RQ4. What forms of youth citizenship formation can be identified from the configuration of teaching conditions in Kyrgyzstan and China during this period?

These research questions are designed to support a qualitative, comparative analysis that links macro-level sociopolitical change with meso- and micro-level

educational processes. Collectively, they provide an analytical framework for examining citizenship formation as an institutional and contextual phenomenon.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Analyze how citizenship education was framed and governed through policy and curriculum structures in Kyrgyzstan and China during the 1990–2000 period;
2. Examine the ways in which civic meanings were constructed and stabilized through curriculum and textbook narratives in each national context;
3. Investigate how school-level teaching conditions mediated the implementation of citizenship education under differing institutional capacities;
4. Theoretically interpret the forms of youth citizenship formation implied by these teaching-condition configurations in both countries.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Qualitative research on citizenship education emphasizes that civic identities are socially constructed through institutionalized processes of political socialization rather than merely acquired as abstract knowledge. Schools play a particularly significant role in periods of sociopolitical transformation, when states seek to redefine national narratives, reestablish legitimacy, and regulate acceptable forms of civic participation (Green, 1990; Osler & Starkey, 2005). From a curriculum governance perspective, citizenship education is embedded in policy texts, curriculum standards, textbooks, and assessment regimes that collectively define what counts as legitimate civic knowledge and behavior.

In the Chinese context, a substantial body of qualitative scholarship has examined the patriotic education campaign of the 1990s. Zhao (1998) argues that patriotic education represented a form of state-led nationalism designed to reinforce political loyalty and national cohesion following the legitimacy crisis of 1989. This campaign extended into schooling through curriculum revision, textbook production, and symbolic school practices. Curriculum-focused studies further demonstrate how civic education was

embedded within the *Thought and Politics* subject, where narratives of national humiliation, economic development, and state strength were mobilized to legitimate China's developmental strategy (Vickers, 2009). These studies suggest a relatively high degree of alignment between political objectives and curriculum narratives, even as classroom interpretation and student reception remained contextually variable.

In contrast, the literature on Kyrgyzstan highlights the challenges of reconstructing education systems in post-Soviet contexts marked by institutional disruption and limited state capacity. Policy analyses emphasize the role of national reform programs, including *Bilim*, in guiding system development and aligning education with broader state-building goals (UNESCO, n.d.). At the same time, scholars note that post-Soviet education reforms often relied on external support from international organizations and non-governmental actors, particularly in areas related to democracy, human rights, and civic education (Silova, 2011). Qualitative studies of citizenship education initiatives in Kyrgyzstan indicate that such interventions frequently produced uneven outcomes due to differences in local capacity, resource availability, and social context (Bahbahani, 2012).

Across both literatures, a common limitation is the tendency to analyze policy discourse or curriculum content in isolation from the teaching conditions that shape implementation. Moreover, cross-national comparison is often hindered by implicit assumptions of conceptual equivalence in citizenship. This study addresses these gaps by employing a shared qualitative framework that foregrounds teaching conditions as the mediating link between policy intent and civic identity formation.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative comparative-historical research design combined with curriculum policy analysis. The analysis is bounded temporally to the period from 1990 to 2000 in order to capture the formative phase of sociopolitical transformation in both countries while minimizing retrospective distortion from later reforms. The unit of analysis is the national configuration of teaching conditions for youth citizenship formation.

Data sources consist of policy documents, international and regional education reports, and peer-reviewed qualitative scholarship. For Kyrgyzstan, primary materials include UNESCO Education for All country reporting and regional policy analyses that document the development and implementation of the *Bilim* program (UNESCO, n.d.). For China, the analysis draws on qualitative studies of patriotic education and curriculum governance, particularly Zhao's (1998) analysis of state-led nationalism and Vickers' (2009) textbook-based study of *Thought and Politics*.

The analysis applies a directed qualitative content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). An a priori analytical framework identifies six dimensions of teaching conditions: policy and curriculum governance, curriculum and textbook narratives, teacher professional support, school governance and routines, pedagogical orientation and assessment, and participation opportunities. Documents were interpreted within this framework and analyzed in two subperiods (1990–1994 and 1995–2000) to capture early transition and mid-decade consolidation. Cross-case comparison focused on identifying patterns of coherence, fragmentation, and alignment across dimensions.

Trustworthiness was enhanced through triangulation across source types, transparent use of a common analytical framework, and explicit acknowledgment of contextual constraints. As a documentary-based qualitative study, the analysis prioritizes interpretive validity over generalizability.

4 RESULTS

The qualitative comparison reveals distinct configurations of teaching conditions for youth citizenship formation in Kyrgyzstan and China during 1990–2000. In China, teaching conditions were characterized by relatively centralized curriculum governance and a strong alignment between political objectives and civic narratives. Patriotic education functioned as an overarching framework through which citizenship was constructed as loyalty to the nation and participation in national development (Zhao, 1998). Curriculum narratives embedded in *Thought and Politics* textbooks emphasized state strengthening and developmental legitimacy, thereby linking civic virtue to national progress (Vickers, 2009).

In Kyrgyzstan, teaching conditions reflected the challenges of post-Soviet system rebuilding. The *Bilim* program provided a national planning framework, but implementation was constrained by limited resources and uneven institutional capacity (UNESCO, n.d.). As a result, civic education was likely experienced differently across regions and schools, with citizenship formation shaped by localized interpretations and available supports rather than by a uniformly enforced national narrative.

4.1 Table 1 summarizes the comparative teaching-condition configurations

Table 1

Teaching Conditions for Youth Citizenship Formation in Kyrgyzstan and China (1990–2000)

| Dimension | Kyrgyzstan | China |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Policy governance | Post-independence system rebuilding guided by <i>Bilim</i> | Centralized patriotic education governance |
| Curriculum narrative | Nation-building under transition, variable coherence | State strengthening and developmental legitimacy |
| Teacher support | Uneven, capacity-dependent | System-wide dissemination through curriculum |
| School routines | Localized and heterogeneous | Institutionalized political socialization |
| Pedagogy and assessment | Reform-oriented but uneven | Textbook-centered moral-political instruction |
| Participation | Context-dependent and negotiated | Bounded within state-integrative norms |

Overall, China's teaching conditions imply a state-integrative, developmentalist model of citizenship, while Kyrgyzstan's configuration implies a transitional and negotiated model shaped by reform constraints and local variation.

4.2 Table 2 curriculum governance and civic meaning construction in Kyrgyzstan and China (1990–2000)

Table 2

Curriculum Governance and Civic Meaning Construction in Kyrgyzstan and China (1990–2000)

| Dimension | Kyrgyzstan | China |
|---|--|---|
| Governance logic | Curriculum reform embedded in post-Soviet system reconstruction and national development planning, with limited enforcement capacity and differentiated local implementation (UNESCO, n.d.). | Curriculum governance functions as a centralized instrument of political socialization, closely aligned with state objectives and national ideology (Zhao, 1998). |
| Role of civics-related subjects | Civic education content dispersed across subjects and reform initiatives, often lacking a unified national framework during the transition period (Bahbahani, 2012). | Civics-related education institutionalized primarily through <i>Thought and Politics</i> , serving as a core channel for citizenship formation (Vickers, 2009). |
| Stability of curriculum objectives | Objectives subject to revision and reinterpretation as reform priorities and institutional capacity evolved throughout the 1990s. | Objectives relatively stable and consistently articulated through state policy and curriculum texts during the decade. |
| Relationship between state and individual | Citizenship framed as participation in nation-building under conditions of transition and uncertainty. | Citizenship framed as moral alignment with state goals and contribution to national development. |

Table 2 deepens the analysis by focusing specifically on curriculum governance and the construction of civic meaning. In Kyrgyzstan, civic education emerged within a fluid reform environment in which curriculum objectives were shaped by post-independence reconstruction and development planning rather than by a consolidated ideological framework. The absence of a single, strongly institutionalized civics subject suggests that citizenship meanings were more open to reinterpretation at the local level and over time (Bahbahani, 2012).

By contrast, the Chinese case demonstrates a high degree of curriculum stability and centralization. Citizenship education was institutionally anchored in *Thought and Politics*, which functioned as a standardized mechanism for transmitting civic values aligned with national development and political legitimacy. As Vickers (2009) argues, the curriculum not only conveyed civic knowledge but also legitimized a broader developmental strategy by embedding it within moral and political education. This

contrast reinforces the inference that citizenship formation in China was governed through a more coherent and state-integrative curriculum structure than in Kyrgyzstan.

4.3 Table 3 school-level implementation conditions for youth citizenship formation (1990–2000)

Table 3

School-Level Implementation Conditions for Youth Citizenship Formation (1990–2000)

| Dimension | Kyrgyzstan | China |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Teacher capacity and training | Teacher preparation and professional support varied significantly across regions, reflecting uneven institutional capacity and reform penetration (UNESCO, n.d.). | Teacher implementation supported by standardized curricula and nationally produced textbooks, reducing variability in core civic instruction (Zhao, 1998). |
| School organizational stability | School routines affected by post-Soviet institutional discontinuity, influencing consistency of civic socialization practices (Bahbahani, 2012). | School organizations function as stable and routinized sites of political socialization, reinforcing civic norms through daily practices. |
| Pedagogical control | Pedagogy shaped by pragmatic adaptation to reform constraints, resulting in diverse instructional approaches to citizenship-related content. | Pedagogical practices more tightly coupled with curriculum texts, emphasizing moral and political instruction aligned with state narratives (Vickers, 2009). |
| Student participation | Participation opportunities negotiated locally and influenced by community context and school leadership. | Participation structured within clearly defined institutional boundaries that emphasize cohesion and compliance with national norms. |

Table 3 shifts the analytical focus from curriculum governance to school-level implementation conditions, highlighting how institutional capacity and organizational stability mediate citizenship formation. In Kyrgyzstan, the variability of teacher support and school routines suggests that citizenship education was experienced unevenly by students, depending on local leadership, resources, and reform implementation. This reinforces the characterization of citizenship formation as context-dependent and negotiated, rather than uniformly imposed.

In China, the stability of school organizations and the tight coupling between curriculum texts and pedagogy indicate a more regulated civic learning environment. Citizenship formation was embedded not only in formal curriculum content but also in school routines and participation structures, contributing to a consistent reproduction of state-defined civic norms (Zhao, 1998; Vickers, 2009). These findings align with

qualitative scholarship emphasizing the role of institutional routines in political socialization.

4.4 Findings

This chapter examined the teaching conditions that shaped youth citizenship formation in Kyrgyzstan and China during the period of sociopolitical transformation from 1990 to 2000. Drawing on qualitative documentary analysis and comparative interpretation, the chapter synthesized findings through three interrelated tables that captured system-level governance, curriculum meaning construction, and school-level implementation conditions. The purpose of this summary is to consolidate the key findings of Chapter 4 and to clarify how they respond to the research questions guiding the study.

Overall, the findings indicate that youth citizenship formation in both countries was not determined by the mere presence of civic education policies or curricular references to citizenship. Rather, citizenship formation emerged from the configuration and stability of teaching conditions through which civic meanings were institutionalized in schooling. These configurations differed substantially between Kyrgyzstan and China, reflecting divergent responses to sociopolitical transformation and differing levels of institutional capacity.

In the Chinese case, the results consistently point to a highly centralized and coherent configuration of teaching conditions. Policy governance, curriculum narratives, teacher support mechanisms, school routines, pedagogical orientation, and participation structures were largely aligned with the objectives of patriotic education and political socialization. Citizenship was constructed as a moral and collective responsibility closely tied to national cohesion and developmental goals. The stability of curriculum governance, particularly through the institutionalization of civics-related subjects such as Thought and Politics, contributed to the reproduction of relatively uniform civic meanings across schools. From a qualitative perspective, this configuration implies a state-integrative and developmentalist model of citizenship, in which civic identity is shaped through alignment with nationally defined priorities.

In contrast, the findings from Kyrgyzstan reveal a transitional and heterogeneous configuration of teaching conditions. Although national reform efforts—most notably the National Education Program Bilim approved in 1996—provided a formal framework for education development through 2000, the implementation of citizenship-related teaching conditions was strongly mediated by post-Soviet system rebuilding, uneven institutional capacity, and localized governance. Curriculum narratives related to citizenship were less consolidated, teacher support and school routines varied across regions, and opportunities for civic participation were negotiated within specific local contexts. Consequently, youth citizenship formation in Kyrgyzstan was more likely to be context-dependent and negotiated, rather than uniformly shaped by a stable national civic narrative.

Importantly, the comparative findings do not suggest that one model of citizenship formation was inherently more effective or desirable than the other. Instead, they demonstrate that different sociopolitical conditions give rise to different institutional pathways of citizenship formation. China's emphasis on stability, legitimacy, and cohesion produced a tightly regulated civic learning environment, whereas Kyrgyzstan's emphasis on system reconstruction and reform under constraint produced a more fluid and differentiated civic learning experience. These differences are best understood as outcomes of institutional configuration rather than as direct reflections of policy intent.

In relation to the research questions, this chapter has shown how policy and curriculum governance articulated citizenship aims differently in each country, how civic meanings were constructed and stabilized (or destabilized) through curriculum narratives, and how school-level teaching conditions mediated the implementation of citizenship education. The analysis confirms that citizenship formation is a multi-dimensional and institutionally embedded process, particularly salient in periods of sociopolitical transformation.

This chapter therefore provides the empirical foundation for the concluding discussion. While Chapter 4 has focused on reconstructing and comparing teaching-condition configurations during 1990–2000, the following chapter synthesizes these findings to articulate the study's overall contributions, theoretical implications for citizenship education research, and directions for future inquiry.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Overall conclusions

This qualitative comparative study examined how teaching conditions shaped youth citizenship formation in Kyrgyzstan and China during the sociopolitical transformation period of 1990–2000. The findings demonstrate that citizenship formation is best understood as an outcome of interacting institutional conditions rather than as a direct product of policy rhetoric alone. China's centralized curriculum governance and patriotic education framework promoted a coherent, state-integrative civic identity, whereas Kyrgyzstan's post-Soviet reform context produced more heterogeneous and locally contingent citizenship formation.

The study contributes to qualitative citizenship education research by providing a historically grounded, multi-dimensional framework for cross-national comparison. Its limitations include reliance on documentary and secondary sources, which precludes direct observation of classroom interaction or youth reception. Future research could extend this work through textbook corpus analysis, retrospective interviews with educators and graduates, and regional case studies within post-Soviet contexts.

5.2 Theoretical contributions

This research makes several theoretical contributions to the study of citizenship education and comparative education.

First, it advances a configurational perspective on citizenship formation. Rather than isolating single factors such as curriculum content or political ideology, the study demonstrates that citizenship formation emerges from the interaction of multiple teaching conditions operating across policy, curriculum, and school levels. This approach responds to longstanding calls in qualitative education research to move beyond reductionist explanations and to account for institutional complexity.

Second, the study contributes to theorizing citizenship education in transition contexts. By focusing on the 1990–2000 period, the research shows how sociopolitical transformation intensifies the role of schooling in redefining civic identity, while

simultaneously exposing the limits of state capacity and policy coherence. The contrast between China and Kyrgyzstan illustrates how different institutional responses to transformation produce distinct pathways of citizenship formation.

Third, the study refines the conceptual distinction between state-integrative and negotiated models of citizenship. These models should not be interpreted normatively, but analytically, as ideal-types that capture how civic meanings are structured and reproduced through schooling under different governance conditions. This distinction provides a useful heuristic for future comparative research on citizenship education across diverse political systems.

5.3 Recommendations for the present

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for current citizenship education policy and practice, particularly in societies experiencing rapid social, political, or economic change.

At the policy level, governments should recognize that citizenship education cannot be effectively implemented through curriculum mandates alone. Clear policy objectives must be accompanied by stable implementation conditions, including sustained teacher professional development, coherent curriculum guidance, and institutional support at the school level. Without such alignment, citizenship education risks becoming symbolic rather than transformative.

At the curriculum level, education authorities should seek a balance between coherence and adaptability. While centralized curriculum frameworks can enhance consistency and equity, excessive rigidity may limit the capacity of schools to respond to local contexts and student experiences. Curriculum designers should therefore allow structured spaces for contextual interpretation, particularly in pluralistic or transitional societies.

At the school level, greater attention should be given to everyday institutional practices through which citizenship is enacted. School routines, participation mechanisms, and pedagogical norms play a critical role in shaping students' lived experience of citizenship. Strengthening democratic practices within schools—such as student councils, participatory decision-making, and community engagement—can

enhance the authenticity of citizenship education without undermining institutional stability.

5.4 Recommendations for the future

Looking forward, this study suggests several directions for the future development of citizenship education research and practice.

For future policy development, citizenship education should be approached as a long-term institutional project rather than a short-term policy response to sociopolitical challenges. Policymakers should prioritize continuity and capacity-building, particularly in contexts where education systems are undergoing reform or reconstruction. Investments in teacher education, curriculum research, and institutional governance are essential for sustaining meaningful citizenship formation over time.

For future research, longitudinal and mixed-methods studies are needed to examine how citizenship formation evolves beyond periods of immediate transformation. Retrospective qualitative research, including interviews with teachers and former students educated during the 1990s, could provide valuable insights into how institutional teaching conditions were experienced and internalized. Comparative research could also be extended to include additional post-socialist or reforming societies to test the transferability of the configurational framework developed in this study.

For future educational practice, greater emphasis should be placed on cultivating reflective and participatory forms of citizenship that can adapt to changing social realities. While stability and cohesion remain important, especially in post-crisis contexts, education systems should gradually expand opportunities for critical engagement, dialogue, and civic participation as institutional capacity strengthens.

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Authors’ Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study’s findings are fully available within the article.

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