

Twenty-Five Years of Citizenship Education Scholarship Presented at CERN

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Abstract

This paper reviews the history of submissions to the Citizenship Education Research Network (CERN) in a narrative that reflects on how citizenship and citizenship education have been theorized and how this work has connected to social, cultural, national, and global events and factors. The author carried out a critical literature review of papers submitted to CERN and identified key themes using a grounded theory approach. After contextualizing concepts of citizenship and citizenship education, this paper describes trends and changes in work submitted to CERN and concludes with a discussion of where work in the field may be trending next.

Key Words: Citizenship Education, History of Education, Scholarship

Theories and Conceptions of Citizenship and Citizenship Education

Citizenship relates to the nature of belonging and identity within a social or cultural group (Broom, 2016). It identifies who is a member and who isn't, based on particular socially-developed criteria. It also lists the rights and duties of people who are considered to be members ("citizens") and includes social and political laws or rules about what citizenship is, what it entails, and how the group governs and protects itself. In European historical traditions and some contemporary contexts, citizenship is *ethnic citizenship*, in which citizenship and culture interweave (Kohn, 2005). In more recent European traditions, citizenship is not cultural but rather centered on a place, whether that is at a nation state (*nation state citizenship* [Kohn, 2005]) or global (*global citizenship* [Pashby et al., 2020]) level. In some nation states with European/Western backgrounds, there is also an association with *democratic citizenship education*, in which citizenship means being a member of a state with a democratic government, where citizens participate in government through some delineated forms, such as voting and informed participation in civic matters. This can also include participation in civic life, as will be discussed next.

Citizenship can also be understood to be of varied forms including political, civic, social, and ecological forms (Broom, 2016; Marshall, 1950). *Political citizenship* relates to participation in political processes; *civic citizenship* to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship such as those outlined in Human Rights Codes; *social citizenship* to the nature of relationships between people; and *ecological citizenship* to the relationships between people and the natural world (Dobson, 2003). *Citizenship education* relates to how we educate about conceptions of citizenship.

There is a rich, scholarly literature on citizenship education, based on what content and skills should be taught, and how teachers can educate for citizenship, such as through inquiry and exploring social inequities in democratic citizenship (Castro & Knowles, 2017). In school citizenship education programs, political citizenship has been a traditional focus area of study. This includes content on the structures and functions of government departments and the rights and duties of citizens, such as that of voting. Scholars have also explored the form and nature of eco-citizenship and how teachers can develop citizens who value and care for our natural environment (Dobson, 2003). While social citizenship is less clearly identified, it can be related to exploring the relations

that bind individuals together (Putnam, 2000) and include elements such as anti-racist education and Critical Race Theory, which explore the history and nature of inequitable social relations between citizens and how these might be addressed (Cao, 2021).

In sum, conceptions of citizenship and related programs of citizenship education are complex and multi-layered. This paper explores how these concepts have been understood in Canada over the last twenty-five years through a literature review of papers submitted to the national Citizenship Education Research Network (CERN), a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC), which is itself an association of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE).

Methods and Questions

This paper presents the findings of a critical literature review of papers submitted to CERN, CSSE from 1998 to 2023. Using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the author read through the CERN programs from 1998 to 2023 and identified themes that emerged from these readings. The questions that underlay the study were:

- What were the contexts/drivers that led to the foundation of CERN?
- How has CERN changed over time? That is, what type of presentations have been made, and how have these changed or stayed the same over time?
- What are the possible relations between papers presented and contextual factors and events?

Citizenship Education Scholarship Prior to CERN

Interest and scholarship in Citizenship has a long tradition. For example, in Europe, philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle have written about their conceptions of what it meant to be a “good” citizen, a participant in Athenian democracy (Plato, 1999; “Civil Society”, 2023). At that time, political institutions were melded to the community, as the community was the government in the sense that those who were citizens (which excluded groups including women and slaves) participated directly in government through debate on issues which arose in society. The end goal was *eudaimonia*, governing in such a manner as to ensure the common wellbeing, that is, the provision of conditions which allowed individuals to flourish (Broom, 2021). Citizens were viewed as rational and able to work for, or towards, the common good. They were to govern with the interests of all citizens in mind. This required citizens to have a good, or ethical character, which explains the close relations between Ethics and Political Philosophy/Civics in the work of thinkers such as Plato (1999).

The Romans developed this concept further through Cicero’s writing which interweaved a republican society with citizens that had “civility” (“Civil Society”). During Medieval times, the focus turned from people to faith. With the re-emergence of attention to, and belief in the value of, people during the Renaissance and Enlightenment and the development of nation-states, discussion about the nature of the relations between states and citizens developed. Thinkers such as Locke and Rousseau argued that people agreed to social contracts. That is, people accepted government and limitations on their freedoms in exchange for the benefits government could provide, such as security. Thus, government was to be in the interests of its citizens, and its actions were limited as people held certain inalienable rights, such as those of life and liberty. This conception evolved as Marx and Hegel’s work described the nature of capitalist economic societies in which wealthy business owners acted in their own self interests. Thus, citizenship involved identifying inequalities

in society and working to address these. In the twentieth century, as described above, different conceptions of citizenship have developed, depending on scholars' conceptual frameworks. Dewey's (1916) work on *Democracy and Education* that interweaved History and Geography and citizenship education was foundational to the development of Social Studies in the United States and Canada, an orientation that some have called Progressivist. This philosophic orientation has had a strong focus on developing good citizens for a democratic state (Broom 2009; Fallace, 2017; Thornton, 2017).

Citizenship Education in the Twentieth Century

Over the Twentieth century, interest in citizenship education has ebbed and flowed depending on contemporary philosophic traditions and interests (Broom & Evans, 2015; Fallace, 2017; Thornton, 2017). In the 1980s, interest in citizenship education was kindled through work on education for citizenship, teaching social issues, and support for interdisciplinary and skills-focused education. Kohlberg (1987), for example, argued that Social Studies should include "civic education [...] the stimulation of development of more advanced patterns of reasoning about political and social decisions" (p. 166). In British Columbia, Bognar and Cassidy (1996) argued that the current BC curriculum did not provide for adequate citizenship education. In the 1990s, citizenship education scholarship grew (e.g. Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Sears, 2004; Sears & Hughes, 1996; Osborne, 1996; Kilgour, 1997; Briley, 1997).

According to the background of CERN posted on its website (CERN, 2021), interest in Citizenship Education in Canada in the 1990s was illustrated through conferences and events including the 44th International Conference of Education in Geneva, where Ministers came together to discuss democratic education; a 1995 Citizenship Education conference that led to articles published in the journal of Canadian and International Education (volume 25, number 2, December 1996), and citizenship education sessions presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE). Papers from the 1995 and 1997 conferences were published in journals and in a book edited by Dr. Yvonne Hébert, who was at the heart of the founding of CERN.

The Establishment of the Citizenship Education Research Network (CERN)

CERN's website mentions that CERN began as a collaboration between scholars and Canadian government departments (CERN, 2021). The website elaborates that, on November 23, 1997, the Multiculturalism Directorate of the federal department of Canadian Heritage organized a discussion on civic participation. A background paper, "Civic Participation, Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills" by Jim Frideres fostered discussion. At the same time, between 1996-1997, the departments of Canadian Heritage, Citizenship and Immigration, Human Resources Development, and Justice and Industry Canada agreed to collaborate. In March 27-30, 1998, a Citizenship Education Think Tank was held in Alberta. It was organized by the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) and sponsored by the department of Canadian Heritage. It led to the foundation of CERN (CERN, 2021). Participants shared papers and discussed an agenda for citizenship education, with an interest in social cohesion, identity and immigration. Thus, the foundation of CERN focused on political and social citizenship. Dr. Yvonne Hébert, was a key figure. The area of her work was on identity, which connects to the idea of social cohesion and belonging. She was also CSSE's president. This collaboration between scholars and government seems to reflect changes that were occurring in Canada, as Canada became increasingly ethnically diverse. Thus, at its founding, CERN aimed to address collaborative research on "social cohesion" (CERN).

The Four Pillars of CERN's Initial Work

The four original themes of work in CERN were:

- Citizenship Conceptions, which explored contexts and ideas of citizenship.
- Citizenship Practices, which explored citizenship education.
- Citizenship Values and Principles, which explored values shared by Canadians and conflicts over values.
- Citizenship Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviours, which explored students and citizens' attitudes, skills, knowledge, and behaviours, the relations between attitudes and behaviours, citizenship education and developing efficacy.

The next sections of this paper describe themes of citizenship work that has been presented at CERN sessions.

Papers Presented in the Early Years of CERN

In the 1998 Conference, a day-long session was chaired by Dr. Yvonne Hébert, and Jeff Bullard, from the government department of Canadian Heritage, in French. It included Ken Dion, Y. Hebert, and Will Kymlicka (facilitator) and was titled, "Identity, Immigration, and Migration: The current state of Knowledge." Its sessions explored the nature of identity from psychological, social/academic, historical, literary, artistic, anthropological, and cultural perspectives. At the session, "Working groups: Towards a National Research and Policy Capacity" were set up.

In sum, the foundation of CERN was based in exploring the nature of identity in Canada, and how it was influenced by the changing nature of Canadian society due to increasingly ethnically-diverse immigration. Thus, there was a connection between the foundation of CERN and contemporary society and events. Questions about the nature of Canada's identity are not new, however, as illustrated in the writing of textbooks that aimed to tell Canada's nation-building narrative in nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Broom, 2012; Francis, 1997) and as discussed in Tomkins' (1986) book *A Common Countenance*. The first four CERN conference sessions were full day symposia with a rich and diverse array of topics exploring the nature of citizenship and citizenship education, including social/political ideas of citizenship education and the influence of contemporary events on ideas of citizenship.

Themes of Papers Presented at CERN over Time

As discussed above, British scholar Marshall (1950) described different forms of citizenship, including political, civic, and social citizenship. The foundations of CERN lay in Political and Social Citizenship that can be associated with the changing nature of Canada's society. Papers presented at CERN sessions reflected this foundation and the four foundational pillars of CERN described above but went beyond this to include a broad array of work exploring the nature and form of citizenship and citizenship education.

Papers explored the nature and form of citizenship, citizenship education, global citizenship education, the influence of social events/changes and surrounding contexts/conditions (such as war, terrorism, and immigration) on citizenship, and youth and citizenship. Consistent sessions explored Canadian citizenship and its relations to a multicultural society and Global Citizenship education. There were also sessions that discussed "Democratic education." Citizenship and democratic

education can be related but are not necessarily synonymous. Democratic education focuses on government of/by/for the people, that is, the conceptions and processes of a democratic form of government, while citizenship is a broader concept related to being a member of group that entails rights and responsibilities in or to the group. Democratic citizenship education identifies the group to be a democracy, and this is often also associated with the place of a nation-state.

More Recent Scholarship Presented at CERN Sessions

Papers presented in more recent CERN sessions explore the problematics of traditional political/civic citizenship, such as how citizens are inequitably valued due to factors such as race/ethnicity and class. Themes of work draw from Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Social Justice perspectives (Banks & Banks, 2019; Castro & Knowles, 2017; Cao, 2021; Guo, 2021; Guo & Maitra, 2017; Guo & Guo, 2015) and consider social inequities due to historical/structural factors, race, and ethnicity. These inequalities are problematic in a nation-state that has Multiculturalism as a federal policy, has released the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and supports the concept of inclusion. Papers have discussed the themes of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization (EDID), the experiences and perspectives of minority students, and settlement for new immigrants and refugees. Work has also considered the legacies of colonialism and how Reconciliation and Indigenization connect to citizenship, as well as the impact of technological change, such as digital citizenship education, and of climate change.

Consistent Themes of Work Over 25 Years

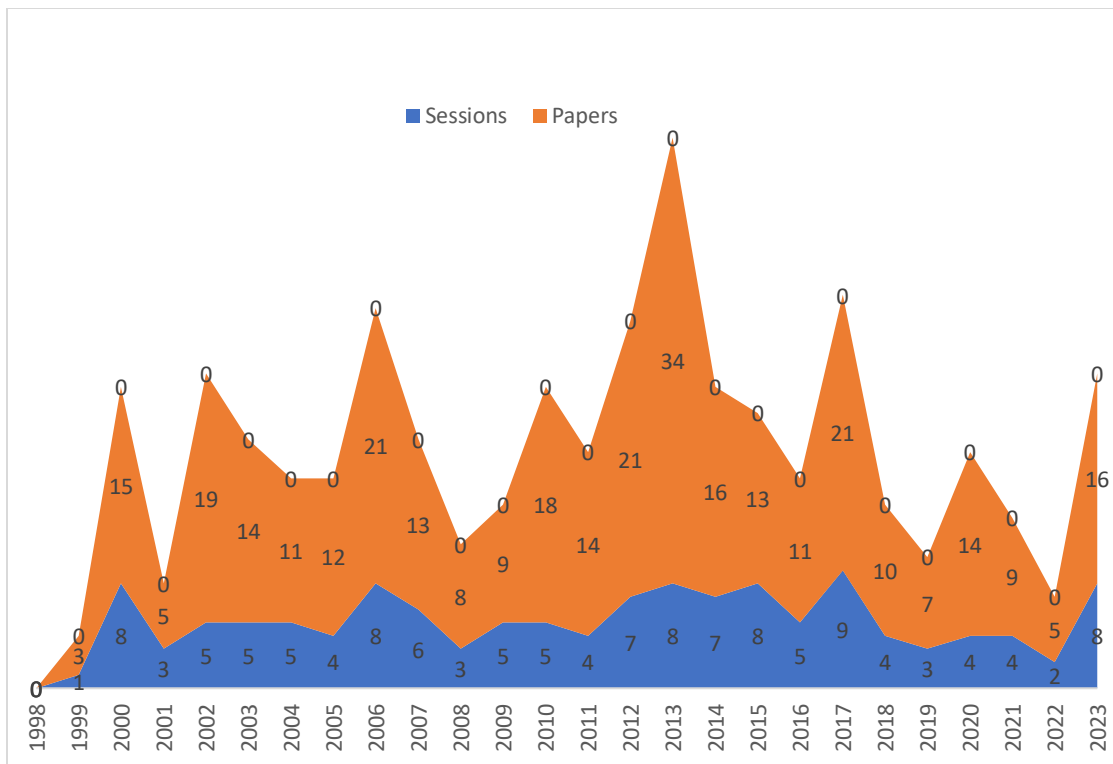
Some consistent themes of research and writing have been presented in CERN sessions over the years. These connect well to the larger umbrella themes of CERN's parent organization, the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC), whose topics include comparative and international education, internationalization, globalization, anti-racist education, and post-colonial theory. Consistent themes of work in CERN include: global citizenship education; multiculturalism/inclusion/EDID; internationalism/globalization; peace education/restorative practices; youth attitudes; teaching practices related to citizenship; social inclusion in Canada; and immigration, integration, and inclusion.

Numbers of Papers/Sessions

Figure 1 presents a graphic summary of the number of sessions and papers presented in CERN since the foundation of CERN in 1998. The diagram illustrates how the number of papers presented has varied over time, appearing in waves. In some years, more papers were presented. This could be due to the locations of CSSE, as the overall conference size is smaller in smaller cities, as well as general factors that have influenced conference size, such as the impact of the pandemic. Other factors might relate to topical areas of interest in the field.

Figure 1

Number of Sessions and Papers Presented at CERN



Influences on Scholarship

There is a connection between general scholarship in the field and work presented at CERN sessions. Further, current events have influenced the nature of work and discussions. For example, citizenship sessions have considered 9-1-1, wars, terrorism, and immigration to Canada. Fears of climate change are leading to a rise in papers on eco-citizenship.

Considering the Future of Citizenship Education Scholarship

Consistently, papers presented in CERN sessions have advocated for citizen involvement through education, critical thinking, participation in discussion, deliberation, and action. Scholars have also discussed social inequities and citizenship and argued for anti-racism education. Others like Bickmore (2017) have argued for peace education, that is, for conflict resolution. Work that builds on this includes restorative justice and considering the nature of well being. Underlying this scholarship, are philosophical and ethical beliefs about the nature of what is right, purpose, and action. Papers support a stance that it is right that we recognise our common yet unequal humanity and aim to address social inequities.

So where might citizenship education scholarship go from here? Drawing from Truth and Reconciliation work in Canada, we could argue that papers have explored Truth: Work recognizes historical and contemporary wrongs regarding historical and contemporary social inequities and issues in Canada. Could citizenship education move forward from Truth to Reconciliation and how

might this happen? Perhaps, work can begin by honouring the place we are in (where we live) and our Indigenous people and Reconciliation. Could citizenship scholarship be about the healing of past inequities and understanding our personal relations and intersectionality, in the larger social forces and positionalities we are part of, as we make commitments to live as ethical beings in a civic community in which we: (1) value each of our uniqueness as (2) members of a community (3) where we engage in complex deliberations about, and actions towards addressing our shared fate (Williams, 2003; Vitikainen, 2021)?

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