**Chapter 2**

**Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland: Eroded Certainties and New Possibilities**

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**Abstract**

The chapter provides a comparative critique of the current role of history teaching on the island of Ireland in the context of changing political relationships as a consequence of the Irish peace process and the rapidly expanding impact of globalisation.

Initially, it examines the vacillations in the relationship between history teaching, north and south over the last 150 years. It traces this, first, through its common origins under British rule, then the abrupt divergence caused by partition and, latterly, the influence of internal and international political, economic and cultural change which has brought history education back toward a common educational purpose.

The chapter then explores the potential for history teaching to contribute to transformative thinking amongst young people. It concludes that this can only occur when issues of national and global identity are directly problematized and history’s relationship with citizenship education is more effectively articulated through practice.

**Keywords:** History Teaching; National Identity; Globalisation; Critical Citizenship; Multiple Identities

Since the nineteenth century, history teaching in Ireland has been buffeted by political turbulence and conflict.  From a common base under British rule, partition in 1921-22 led to divergence as each jurisdiction, the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland respectively, sought to consolidate statehood through fostering the allegiance of their young. In such circumstances the messages were of conformity and certainty with little room for those who questioned the legitimacy of each state from within. From the second decade of the last century each territory followed a separate path governed by its own, frequently oppositional, political prerogatives. It is only in the last thirty years or so, when stability on the island was again threatened by violent forces, that common purpose has re-surfaced in curriculum policy, including the teaching of history. Thus, traumatic events associated with conflict and its aftermath have challenged old certainties and, prompted by the recognition that conflict sensitive education which contributes to peacebuilding requires real engagement with politics and the psychology of conflict, there has been a move on both sides of the border towards a more inclusive canon and pluralities of histories. The desire for reconciliation emanating from the Northern Ireland peace process, allied to greater political maturity in government and the influence of global educational trends have converged in ways which open up possibilities for creative synergy between the northern and southern history education communities (McCully and Waldron, 2013). This chapter briefly traces these developments but then examines the implications for history teaching’s extrinsic aims – its aspirations to contribute to societal change beyond simply promoting the cognitive development that is intrinsic to the subject – and the consequent implications for its relationship with the democratic citizenship programmes which exist within the curricula, north and south. Finally, it asks whether the current focus on the local dimensions of post-conflict community relations in existing curricula needs to be broadened to meet the global challenges of the twenty-first century.

**Politics and transnational dimensions: divergence, convergence and eroded certainties**

Prior to partition Ireland’s national system of education was overseen by a National Board. The original multi-denominational character envisaged for its structures at its establishment in 1831 had long since given way to denominational interests but the Board continued to control the curriculum offered in all its schools through approved textbooks. Initially excluded on the grounds that objectivity was problematic, history (local, British and Irish) was introduced in 1900 using sanctioned texts. Despite tensions in the revolutionary period after the 1916 rebellion the Revised Programme remained in place until partition in 1921-22 (Coolahan, 1981; McCully and Waldron, 2013, p.146).

Partition represents an obvious watershed in that education was re-constituted under two systems premised on different political ideologies and religious identifications. In the Free State the system slipped quite seamlessly into the sphere of influence of the Catholic Church. In Northern Ireland the Church resisted the new government’s initial moves to centralize and move toward a multi-denominational approach. Opposition from the Protestant churches also emerged, ensuring that, structurally, the education system was organized on clear sectarian lines. Ideologically, then, the two fledgling jurisdictions in Ireland were bound to go their separate ways but in a sense, politically, they had similar priorities. Both were new entities born out of violent upheaval and both faced enemies from without and within. Therefore, both conceived of education, and history teaching, as a way of generating loyalty by closing ranks around their respective dominant identities.

In the south the teaching of history was essentially a state-building project, particularly in the context of primary education. Prior to the introduction of free post primary education in the 1960s, the majority of children completed their compulsory schooling in national primary schools. The primary sector, therefore, presented the best opportunity for the realisation of that distinctively Gaelic national identity on which the foundational ‘imagined community’ of the Irish Free State was premised (Anderson, 1991; O’Callaghan, 2009, p. 19). In general, national curricula during this period were characterized by cultural nationalism (Coolahan, 1981).  At primary level in particular, the revival of the Irish language was prioritized and Irish became the medium of instruction for subjects such as history, even in areas where it was not children’s first language. Thus, the conflation of Irish identity with both the Irish language and with Catholicism was inherent in the nationalist ideology which permeated the primary curriculum (McCully and Waldron, 2013, pp.149-150). The post primary sector in the Free State was small in size, private and denominational. While the history curriculum was broadly consistent with the political agenda of Gaelicisation, O’Callaghan (2011) argues that the Catholic ideology that dominated the sector was even more influential. Thus, the ‘study of history was not a secular pursuit but a branch of religious education and an instruction in proper Catholic living’ (O’Callaghan, 2011, p. 10).  While these curricula and practices were contested for their inherent sectarianism and nationalistic bias, criticism of the system had little effect prior to the 1960s (McCully and Waldron, 2013; Jones, 1992; Doherty, 1996).

From the outset the northern state’s priorities were to contain the nationalist threat to its existence. It used its power over finance, school structures and curriculum to promote positive attitudes towards the United Kingdom and to guard against potential nationalist agitation in schools under the influence of the Catholic Church; and, in time, its social policy, including education, was focused on gaining parity with the rest of the UK. History education, an option only in the final three years of elementary education, but a compulsory component of secondary provision, raised a dilemma.  There was a desire to expose children to an ‘Ulster as British’ narrative but also unease that emphasis on a local dimension might legitimize the claim from Catholic schools to teach about Ireland’s past. Consequently, a watching eye was kept on the endorsement of suitable textbooks, while in the primary school a lack of attention to history was more desirable than encouraging teaching which might be subverted by a nationalist agenda. In the north, too, there were occasional voices of dissent emanating either from the nationalist community or those with premonitions that the deeply partisan and partial histories learned in the street were an ingredient for trouble in the future (McCully and Waldron, 2013, pp. 145-6).

**Landmarks with questions? From the single to the plural**

North of the border there was no prescribed statutory curriculum prior to the outbreak of violence in the late 1960s, or indeed until 1991. This, perhaps, gave schools some leeway to pursue their own agendas with regard to history teaching at primary and lower secondary levels. However, the dominant influence of external examination syllabi at ages fourteen, sixteen and eighteen which concentrated on European and British history ensured that learning remained content focused and that Irish history was often marginalized. In the early years of the Troubles when concerned educators sought to address communal division through the formal curriculum it was frequently history teaching that was placed under the spotlight. There was a strong perception that it had been used by both communities in their respective segregated school systems, in one way or another, to prop up dominant and exclusive group identities (Magee, 1970). Mutually exclusive identities between the unionist and nationalist populations were acknowledged as at least one major driver of conflict and references to historical events were often used by one side or the other to illuminate past wrongs or justify actions in the present (Walker, 1996). Influenced by exciting developments taking place in England, committed history educators saw the potential for adapting the Schools Council History project’s emphasis on the subject as a disciplinary process to enable teachers in Northern Ireland to take a more objective and enquiry based approach to contentious issues in history (McCully, In press). This emphasis on process, cognition and objectivity was carried through to the introduction of the first, statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum in 1991 which succeeded in ensuring that for the first time all primary and secondary pupils would address common aspects of Irish history. The 5-14 history curriculum was structured to allow primary pupils to gain an understanding of history as evidence-based, and open to different perspectives and interpretations, through studying largely benign aspects of family and social history. In turn, these could then be applied to increasingly contentious issues from Ireland’s past as students progressed through secondary school.

The work of Barton (2001a, 2001b) and Barton and McCully (2012, 2007, 2005) indicates that a multi-perspective, disciplinary approach had strengths not only in opening students to alternative viewpoints but also in signalling the limitations as to how far this moved them beyond their dominant community positions. There was frustration on the part of the curriculum authorities (Council for Curriculum, Education and Assessment (CCEA), 1996) that learning in history continued to be too content driven and that teachers were not exploring the full potential of the curriculum to impact on community attitudes. This led to more explicit guidelines in which aspects such as the relationship between history and national identity was given greater emphasis. Generally, even innovative teachers were more comfortable with the cognitive aspects of the disciplinary approach than making direct connections between the past and contemporary cultural and political issues (Kitson, 2007).

In the Republic, reform of the history curriculum began in the mid-1960s with the establishment of a Study Group on the Teaching of History in 1966 by the government of the day; the ensuing recommendations included a focus on historical concepts and processes, on the link between past and present and on the inclusion of social, economic and local history. Informed by a broader project of modernization, which linked the economic future of the country to the quality of its education system, the state agenda in education went beyond a consideration of history and, over the course of five years, included structural reform at post primary level and the launch of a new Primary School Curriculum in 1971. Premised on the principles of constructivism and underpinned by a child-centred ideology, the ‘new curriculum’, as it was colloquially termed, located history, along with geography, civics and elementary science, in the context of a broader subject of Social and Environmental Studies (Department of Education (DoE), 1971, p. 87).  While Tormey (2006) characterized the 1971 curriculum as continuing to draw on the rhetoric of ‘virtuous patriotism’, there is also evidence of a broader conceptualisation of history and an emergent focus on the process of historical investigation through ‘exploration and discovery’ and through an emphasis on project work (DoE, 1971, pp. 87, 92). Despite these reforms, however, and notwithstanding some increase in project-based work, traditional teaching approaches continued to dominate practice at primary level, resulting in textbook-led teaching and little engagement with the local environment or with historical sources (Motherway, 1986; Irish National Teachers Organisation, 1996).

Nonetheless, the beginning of the Troubles in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s had thrown the nationalist rhetoric and ethnocentrism associated with history teaching in the south since the foundation of the state into sharp relief. Although attempts were made to progress a reform agenda at primary level through the creation of guidelines for textbook publishers, real change at curricular level did not occur until the 1990s, when the Republic entered a period of educational reform (McCully and Waldron, 2013). The Primary History Curriculum (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), 1999a) that emerged from that process incorporated the southern state’s response to a range of influences, educational, political and ideological. Similar to developments in Northern Ireland, the curriculum, which is still in use, was strongly influenced by enquiry-based approaches emanating from the UK. Conceptualized as ‘working as a historian’ (NCCA, 1999a) the curriculum emphasizes engagement with historical sources, the development of historical concepts, recognition of multiple perspectives and the provisional and constructed nature of historical knowledge. Understanding how the past has influenced the present is a key objective of the curriculum, including how past events have shaped current attitudes and behaviours (NCCA, 1999a, p. 13). Unlike the NI primary curriculum, and consistent with its historic practice, the southern curriculum includes a focus on political history in the later years of primary when the key ‘landmarks’ of Irish and European history are introduced. Yet, while the familiar canon of national history characteristic of earlier curricula is evident, as noted elsewhere (McCully and Waldron, 2013; Ross and Faas, 2012; Tormey 2006; Waldron, 2004), it is premised on an ideological frame which embraces the idea of multiple perspectives and identities, and promotes openness to and respect for others.  Described by Waldron (2004) as ‘relentlessly post-nationalist’ (p. 217) and by Tormey (2006) as ‘globalised’ (p. 312), the 1999 history curriculum can be seen as embodying the Irish state’s educational response to the peace process and to the globalisation and increased diversification of Irish society characteristic of the Celtic Tiger period of the mid to late 1990s. It recognized the challenge both processes presented to historic presumptions of cultural homogeneity on the island (McCully and Waldron, 2013).

While history has been a compulsory subject at primary level since the foundation of the southern state, at post primary level it has been compulsory for the majority of schools in the initial phase of schooling to Intermediate or, latterly, Junior Certificate examination level only, after which it is subject to student choice. The effect of this has been that the majority of students studied history to the age of fifteen years, after which approximately seventeen to eighteen per cent of students continue its study to Leaving Certificate level (Department of Education and Skills (DES), 2014). Constrained by the state examination structure in which it has operated, curricular reform at post primary level has been limited (Coolahan, 1981, p. 135). The first major reform occurred during the 1980s with the introduction of the Junior Certificate syllabus in 1989 which endorsed a ‘new history’ approach, focusing on the development of historical skills and concepts and on the role of evidence in the construction of historical knowledge (Crowley, 1990). The syllabus, however, showed little evidence of the explicit engagement with issues of identity evident in the primary curriculum (McCully and Waldron, 2013).  More recently, efforts to ‘rebalance’ the history curriculum (NCCA, 2008) have been overtaken by a more fundamental reform of the Junior Cycle outlined below. At senior level, reform has seen an increased emphasis on disciplinary-based procedural knowledge, with the introduction of document-based work and individual source-based research projects in the most recent revision of the syllabus in 2004 (DES/NCCA, 2004).

In summary then, over recent decades the teaching of history at primary level in the Republic of Ireland has undergone significant reform in response to a range of key influences: the critical interrogation of the dominant nationalist narrative in the context of the Troubles and the emerging peace process; the increasing diversification and globalisation of Irish society which challenged notions of cultural homogeneity and of singular and fixed identities, and  new ideas in history education which saw children as actively engaged in the construction of knowledge rather than as passive learners of received narratives. While reform of the subject at post primary level has been more gradualist and constrained, the historically dominant ideologies of nationalism and Catholicism identified as characteristic of the sector have long been replaced by a commitment to the study of history as an academic discipline. In Northern Ireland the commitment to a disciplinary approach at all levels came a little earlier, partially stimulated by the same constructivist educational trends at work south of the border. Here, its association as a mechanism to open children and young people to alternative perspectives and, thereby, influence societal change, was both a strength and a constraint. It was imperative that it was embraced at policy level but, in practice, the sensitivities of a divided and violent society meant that many teachers shied away from the harder challenges it posed, leaving the ‘risk-takers’ to occupy the contested space of history’s contemporary relevance (Barton and McCully, 2007; Kitson and McCully 2005; Kitson 2007).

Recently, for both parts of the island, the contemporary relevance of history has been heightened by the politics of commemoration. The period 2012 – 2022 in Ireland has been named the ‘decade of centenaries’ as it represents a period during which key historical events associated with the Irish struggle for independence and the First World War will reach their centennial year. The decade has been identified as significant in terms of promoting discussion on identity, conflict and reconciliation in the context of the ongoing peace process and prompting renewed critical engagement with these events and their legacies in a  ‘tolerant, inclusive and respectful  way’ (Decade of Centenaries, 2014). In an educational context, much of this work resides at the nexus between history and citizenship education and requires a strong, dynamic and sustained relationship between the two subjects. How ready is either jurisdiction for this engagement?

**Pedagogy, democracy and dialogue: history, citizenship and post-conflict Ireland**

While the extent to which history education and citizenship are or should be linked is contested, the relationship has been well documented (for example Wrenn, 1999; Arthur, Davies, Wrenn, Haydn and Kerr, 1999; Lee and Shemilt 2007).  Although Lee and Shemilt (2007, p.15), for example, argue that the case for a ‘more systematic relationship between history and citizenship is compelling’ they nonetheless see that relationship as potentially problematic, while Harris (2011) describes them as ‘uncomfortable bedfellows’ (p. 186). Lee and Shemilt (2007) put forward three potential relational models i.e.:

1. the cornucopian model (where history’s intrinsic contribution to citizenship needs no further elaboration);
2. the carrier model (where history content is chosen for its potential to meet the needs of citizenship); and the
3. complementary model, where history’s unique contribution to citizenship lies in the development of historical consciousness, which includes temporal orientation.

Drawing on the theories of Jörn Rüsen, the capacity to orient in time (seen by Rüsen (2005) as the ‘practical function’ of historical thinking), supports an understanding of the ‘contingency and fragility’ of democratic structures and culture (Lee and Shemilt, 2007, p. 18).  For Barton and Levstik (2004), the relationship between history and citizenship is more fundamental. Closer to, but going beyond the idea of a ‘carrier’ relationship, education for democratic citizenship provides the justification for history’s place on school curricula in the first instance, supporting the development of ‘reasoned judgement about human affairs’, ‘an expanded view of humanity’ and ‘deliberation over the common good’ (2004, p. 36-40).

The potential synergy between history and citizenship education is illuminated further by Davies, (in Arthur et al., 2001) when he identifies three key connections between the subjects at the practical level of curriculum design; these are the knowledge dimension, the development of skills of enquiry and communication, and skills of participation and responsible action (Arthur et al., 2001, pp.29-43). Davies sees history’s knowledge contribution as focusing on first order conceptual understanding, allowing students to grasp the historical context of ideas such as democracy, communism and human rights. History should help students to grasp the evolution of government and political life and provide a background in national history. Thus they are better placed to understand the contemporary political world. History’s second contribution is through the development of enquiry and communication skills underpinning the disciplinary approach. These he regards as essential for the young person to engage in critical decision-making. As regards the third contribution, that of skills of participation and responsible action, history can provide insight into effective (and ineffective) actions in the past, for example in relation to the abolition of slavery or the campaign for factory reform. Students might also be directly engaged around community interpretations and memorializations of past events thus developing and refining historical consciousness as envisaged by Lee and Shemilt (2007).

The relational models put forward by Lee and Shemilt (2007), combined with the three key dimensions of learning indicated by Davies (in Arthur et al., 2001) provide a productive lens through which the relationship between history and citizenship at curricular level in Ireland, north and south, can be viewed.

*Citizenship and history education in Northern Ireland*

As already touched upon, the evolution of the history and citizenship curricula in Northern Ireland over the last forty-five years has taken place in very particular circumstances. First there was the context of a divided society experiencing communal violence and more latterly a post-agreement society struggling to emerge from conflict. Educational responses to conflict in Northern Ireland have been documented in detail elsewhere (Gallagher, 2004; Richardson and Gallagher, 2011) but, inevitably, history and citizenship education, as two areas of the curriculum directly impinging on the political, cultural and social attitudes at the core of division, were bound to be shaped, at least to an extent, by the prevailing tensions in the wider community.

There was no explicit tradition of citizenship education in Northern Ireland prior to the Good Friday Peace Agreement, 1998, even in the more restricted guise of informing young people of political processes through civic education. Aside from history, when addressing communal division in the early years of the conflict, attention usually focused on extra-curricular activities involving relationship building through cross-community contact and prejudice reduction.

Two curricular initiatives, which were specifically directed at addressing conflict, did emerge in the 1970s supported by both charitable and official Department of Education funding. The Schools’ Curriculum Project (SCP), led by John Malone and based at Queen’s University, Belfast and the Schools’ Cultural Studies Project (SCSP), initiated by Malcolm Skilbeck at the New University of Ulster, Coleraine (Crone and Malone, 1979; Robinson, 1983; McCully and Emerson, 2014). Both had a radical edge. Malone, a former headteacher, argued for the creation of classroom materials on a range of local and related international issues as the basis for young people discussing sensitive issues on a cross- community basis. Skilbeck’s SCSP produced a clear curricular model for addressing social division through a reconstructionist framework. He argued for ‘the renewal of the school curriculum directed toward the sensitive and vital areas of attitude formation, values and moral-civic behaviour’ (Skilbeck, 1973). Neither the SCP nor the SCSP shirked tough conversations which tackled community divisions. The SCSP, particularly, had been underpinned by principles of enquiry and evidence drawn from the social sciences but was more driven by the imperative of improving individual and group relationships, and challenging the use of violence as a political tool, than overtly fostering the concept of citizenship. Unfortunately, the work of the SCP and the SCSP failed to find a secure place within most traditionally orientated schools of the time. Indeed, to date, any experimental programmes which have sought to raise controversial social issues in Northern Ireland have either struggled to fit into existing subject boundaries or to create new space. Thus, they have lacked status in the eyes of teachers and, often, students (Niens and O’Connor, 2009).

A policy outcome did arise from the groundswell of practitioner commitment to community relations work in the formal education sector. When a statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC) was introduced in 1991, two of its cross-curricular themes were Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage. (The two were ‘conjoined’ in 1996).  EMU was important in that it brought the language of community relations into the mainstream curriculum for the first time and impressed on all schools and teachers that they had responsibilities in this area (Smith and Robinson, 1996). However, this broad cross curricular approach was a weakness in that the priorities of subject teaching inevitably trumped obligations to examine objectives such as ‘cultural understanding’ or ‘understanding conflict’. Further, EMU was essentially about relationship building and was frequently compartmentalized as engaging in cross community contact outside the formal curriculum  (even though this was not a statutory aspect of its provision) (Smith and Robinson, 1996; Smith, 2003, p.8; Arlow, 2004, pp.282-283; Richardson and Gallagher, 2011). In fairness, EMU did impact on NIC history more than on other subjects, not least in the inclusion of key aspects of Ireland’s past and the importance placed on considering ‘points of view’ and empathetic understanding (DENI, 1991).

Smith’s critique of EMU coincided with a resurgence of interest in citizenship education at international and national levels. The Council of Europe was taking an active role in promoting democratic citizenship in the countries of eastern and central Europe emerging from the communist bloc. The Civic, Social and Political Education programme in the Republic (see below) and the Crick Report (QCA, 1998), a catalyst for a statutory citizenship initiative in England, provided further impetus. At home the Good Friday Agreement, 1998[[1]](#footnote-1), made it an imperative that society move away from violence toward sustainable democratic politics. Smith (2003) advocated a civic education programme which dealt with underlying social inequalities, examined issues through the lens of social justice and allowed young people to explore the complexities of contested national identities in the context of cultural pluralism. He argued for a timetabled political education programme underpinned by a human rights framework – and recommended that this should be accompanied by opportunities for young people to develop historical understanding of the nature of conflict in Northern Ireland.

Over the next few years his initial ideas went through several iterations before Local and Global Citizenship was incorporated within the revised NIC in 2007 (Arlow 2004; CCEA 2007).  The latter marks a radical shift from what preceded it. Its ‘Big Picture’ structure puts emphasis on broader areas of study beyond individual subject disciplines. It is outcomes-based and stresses the importance of making connections across the curriculum to ensure that students’ learning is an holistic experience (CCEA 2007). In the primary school pupils follow Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU). This integrates a foundational citizenship strand with health issues, personal development and relationship building, though with some opportunity in the latter years to explore potentially contentious community issues. Local and Global Citizenship operates at secondary level. It is structured around a conceptual framework – Diversity and Inclusion, Equality and Social Justice, Democracy and Active Participation and Human Rights and Social Responsibility – and places emphasis on active and participatory learning and teaching approaches. The global dimension is an important addition in encouraging young people to see beyond the parameters of Northern Ireland. It allows core concepts to be explored in a range of contexts and opens students up to ‘multiple citizenship’ (Heater, 1999, pp.115-154).

The progress of Local and Global Citizenship since its inception has been mixed. As with citizenship initiatives in other jurisdictions it has wrestled with issues of status at the implementation stage. An evaluation in 2009 reported that it had positively influenced pupils’ confidence, attitudes, values, skills and behaviours in relation to citizenship issues and raised expectations of democratic practice in schools. However, the report also highlighted failures: to provide real opportunities for active pupil engagement; to appreciate wider aims and purposes; and to map the potential contribution of all subjects to exploit professional collaboration and networking (O’Connor and Niens, 2009, p.12).

The status issue is a significant barrier. Arguably, by placing citizenship education at key stage 3 (aged 11-14) within the Learning for Life and Work area of study as a strand alongside Personal, Social and Health Education and Employability, it became identified as on the fringe of the curriculum. The original intention was to position it in Environment and Society in relationship with history and geography, two subjects with which it has clear knowledge links. O’Connor and Niens (2009, p.11) point to the positives of drawing on a committed teacher base from a wide range of backgrounds, including the creative arts, but this can also result in reluctant conscripts with little aptitude for the challenge. It is argued that a deficit in teacher knowledge has led to a corresponding lack of rigour in student learning (McCully and Emerson, 2014). The Education and Training Inspectorate report that the expectations, generally, in relation to inter-connected learning have yet to be realized and citizenship education has not become the fulcrum for inter-disciplinary work that was initially envisaged (CCEA, 2007). Consequently, the potentially close relationship between history and citizenship has not been fully explored.

   NIC History seems well positioned to interact positively with Local and Global Citizenship education. While its revised 2007 incarnation continues to promote the expectation that aspects of contemporarily relevant Irish history will be studied in depth it has both freed up content selection to encourage innovative choices and has significantly strengthened its extrinsic objectives to prepare young people to be ‘contributors to society’ (CCEA, 2007). For instance, in pursuit of this, students are required to investigate: how history has affected personal identity, culture and lifestyle; how it has been selectively interpreted to promote stereotyping; how it has been used and abused to justify particular views and actions; and, how historical figures have behaved ethically, or unethically, in the past. Yet positioned against Davies’s three indicators the picture is mixed.  First, there is little evidence that citizenship and history teachers plan together to map and exploit the obvious knowledge conduit between them. Second, more positively, history teachers, despite limitations in practice, do endeavour to inculcate their students in the process of critical and discursive thinking and are conscious that these attributes have utility beyond the history classroom. Third, with reference to skills of participation and responsible action, some departments have used the freedom of the new curriculum to align their subject content to aspects of the past, like the US Civil Rights movement, that illustrate human agency to effect change – and, particularly in the context of World War One, interesting work is emerging which explores different community perspectives on remembrance and commemoration. However, the explicit linking of past with present to explore contemporary relevance is only slowly developing.

The lack of symmetry features at both primary and secondary levels. In primary history pupils are unlikely to meet political ideas in any shape or form (McCully and Waldron, 2013). In history, generally, not enough emphasis is placed on content areas which exemplify the evolution of democratic government and practices and, indeed, students are more likely to encounter democratic inadequacies as illustrated by the Weimar Republic and the Northern Irish state 1921-72. As critical historical study this is healthy but it is also important that students are motivated by those in the past who have pursued the common good (Barton and Levstik, 2004). Although there is no obligation to do so, schools usually restrict themselves to national and European topics, rarely exploring aspects like the legacy of empire, thus limiting the contribution history might make to the global dimension of citizenship. In the other direction, the citizenship curriculum, influenced by the legacy of conflict, concentrates on issues of equality and social justice, and the causes, implications and prevention of sectarianism and racism. Students are encouraged to express views and even take forms of direct action but there is little attention paid to the structures and dynamics in which formal politics operates. In England the Crick Report insisted that the citizenship programme had a ‘political literacy’ strand. Crick defined this as ‘pupils learning about how to make themselves effective in public life through knowledge, skills and values’ (QCA, 1998). As Wrenn (in Arthur et al., 2001, pp.70-87) points out, to become an effective citizen you must go ‘beyond knowledge’ to understand that knowledge in action. The omission of a similar strand in the Northern Ireland has had two unfortunate consequences. It was a lost opportunity to demonstrate citizenship’s rigour to a sceptical audience and it removed obvious common ground where history and citizenship might complement each other.

Thus, despite the clear need for Local and Global Citizenship in a still fractured society its position in schools remains precarious. Potentially, a stronger alliance with history could boost its standing and give its teachers renewed confidence – and provide history teachers with a clear rationale for relevance. Two recent projects, *Facing History, Shaping the Future* and *Teaching Divided Histories*, both dedicated to addressing societal differences through reference to the past, have appealed to both history and citizenship teachers. Both have succeeded in galvanising (sometimes) cautious practitioners into innovative risk-taking, particularly related to issues associated with the more recent contentious past. Both projects have history and citizenship dimensions. Yet neither initiative has explicitly articulated the respective contributions of each, thereby potentially fudging the disciplinary procedures of history with aspects of moral education and prejudice reduction. This risks ‘presentism’, making sense of the past through the present (Lee and Shemilt 2007), or as Wrenn (Arthur et al., 1999, p. 103) warns,

As soon as we start trying to use history to engineer a change in pupils’ values and attitudes, and get them to arrive at a pre-determined conclusion, it stops being history and becomes something else.

Much work is required if history in Northern Ireland is to effectively complement the work of citizenship education as envisaged by Lee and Shemilt (2007). On the one hand, history has not faced up to its obligation to inform contemporary debate. On the other, citizenship has not been direct enough in developing young people’s political consciousness.

*Citizenship Education in the Republic of Ireland*

Similar to history education, and to experiences in Northern Ireland, questions around citizenship and citizenship education in the Republic of Ireland were given urgency by the social and political events of the 1990s and early 2000s which generated a discourse of inclusion and respect for diversity with regard to historic divisions and to the adoption of interculturalism as the state’s educational response to more recent patterns of migration. Unlike Northern Ireland, the Republic already had a tradition of civic education as part of the formal curricula from the mid-1960s which was influenced by the modernization agenda and by Ireland’s growing engagement with Europe. Predicated on the conflation of Catholic virtue with the ‘cultivation of good habits’ and dutiful citizenship, however, the focus of Civics at primary level continued to be predominantly national and fundamentally theocratic (DoE, 1971, p. 115; Waldron, 2004). At post primary level it was led by values such as ‘civic responsibility, moral virtue and adherence to the law’, although strongly allied in practice with Religious Education (Gleeson, 2008).  While it remained a required subject, the 1970s and 1980s saw a decline in interest in civic education, a decline that was halted to some extent by the introduction of Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) as part of the post primary curriculum in the mid-90s.

CSPE has been a required course at Junior Cycle level since the introduction of the new syllabus in 1996. Beyond that, it lingers for one more year as part of Transition Year, before giving way to the exam-oriented senior cycle programme. The current programme puts forward a view of ‘active participatory citizenship’ informed by the following seven concepts: rights and responsibilities; human dignity; law; development; interdependence; stewardship and democracy (DES/NCCA, 2005).  The idea of participation is given a concrete value through the action project, which students are required to complete, and which is awarded sixty per cent of the marks in the Junior Certificate examination. In addition, active learning methodologies are seen as integral to the subject (DES/NCCA, 2005, p. 7).

While seen historically as low status, CSPE has been characterized as offering ‘scope and hope’ for citizenship education, despite its continuing marginal status and lack of adequate resourcing (Jeffers, 2008). On the other hand, Jeffers (2008) criticizes its failure to engage with issues of power and notes also the tensions inherent in promoting citizenship across the curriculum in a system which privileges subject disciplines and teacher autonomy. Others have commented also on its ‘Cinderella’ status within the curriculum (Bryan and Bracken, 2011, p. 23; Gleeson, 2008) and on its failure to problematize state policies in relation to the global South (Finlay, 2006). In terms of identity, it has been described as seeking to construct a post-national identity with a strong European dimension (Keating, 2009; O’Connor and Faas, 2012). For Keating (2009) the view of Europe embodied in CSPE is geographically limited, ahistorical and with little that would support the development of affective ties. Indeed, it is notable that beyond a single mention of ‘origins’ with regard to communities (DES, 2015a, p. 12)  the CSPE syllabus does not acknowledge any relationship between history and citizenship apart from general statements recognising the contributions of other subjects .

This failure to articulate structural links is not confined to citizenship. As outlined below, the Junior Cycle is in a process of transition with a new ‘rebalanced’ history curriculum scheduled for introduction in 2019 in the final wave of reform of the curriculum.  The syllabus which operates currently, and has been in place for a number of decades, eschews any engagement with issues of identity and, while it justifies its inclusion of Irish history by reference to the ‘importance of education for citizenship and of developing an understanding of contemporary life in Ireland’ (DES, 2015b, p. 2) there is no reference to citizenship thereafter. Rather, it focuses on introducing ‘young people to the job of the historian’ (p. 2) and the values and attitudes it seeks to develop are predominantly within that domain.  Thus, while referencing citizenship and acknowledging the importance of linking the past and the present, the current syllabus offers little beyond a disciplinary focus.

The recent reform agenda within education in the Republic has included a re-envisioned curriculum framework at Junior Cycle. Similar to the ‘Big Picture’ approach associated with Northern Ireland, the new framework has been generally hailed for its re-orientation away from a subject-centred curriculum to one focused on student learning outcomes and from a systemic preoccupation with summative assessment through national terminal examinations, towards a more school-based holistic assessment for learning approach. The reforms have not been well received in all instances, most notably for this chapter, in relation to the proposal to remove history and CSPE from the list of core or mandatory subjects. While history can still be selected as an optional subject or can become the focus of a range of ‘short courses’ that have been incorporated into the framework, the decision has been strongly contested by history teachers and by professional historians who have campaigned politically and in the media for its reinstatement as a compulsory subject.  Similarly, CSPE has been reconceptualized as belonging to the range of short courses which are no longer examinable through state examination, a move that will likely lead to a further lessening of its status within schools.

Paradoxically, at senior level, one could argue that the fate of citizenship and its relationship with history is more positive. Current plans to introduce Politics and Society as a subject at senior level will see the space for citizenship extended, and, while history at Senior Cycle is strongly disciplinary in its orientation, it is the syllabus which most explicitly references the wider social purpose of history. Its aims, for example, include specific sections on ‘preparation for life and citizenship’ which reference critical thinking, positive values and an appreciation of societies past and present and an ‘informed and critical awareness’ of ‘historical inheritance’, (DES/NCCA, 2003, p. 3). These are expanded on in the objectives to specify the historical skills and dispositions involved (p. 4). Despite these references however, there is little recognition of the links between citizenship and history evident in the post primary curricula of the Republic of Ireland.  Similar to Northern Ireland, Davies’s trilogy of connections outlined earlier remain largely unrealized. The potential of history to contribute to conceptual understanding and knowledge and to promote insight into human agency remains implicit in a ‘cornucopian’ history syllabus (Arthur et al., 2001; Lee and Shemilt, 2007). In addition, the evidence suggests that the kinds of inquiry-oriented and deliberative teaching approaches that can contribute to citizenship education are not yet embedded in practice (McCully and Waldron, 2013). From an identity perspective, despite the focus on multi-perspectivity and on multiple identities in both curricula, identity within citizenship is ahistorical and unproblematized. Does primary education fare any better?

Premised on a social constructivist epistemology underpinned by the ideology of child-centred education, the current Primary School Curriculum has been identified as facilitating intercultural and rights-oriented practice (Ross and Faas, 2012; Ruane, Horgan and Cremin, 1999). Informed by an ethos of civic republicanism, it is explicitly values-based and values and dispositions such as respect for diversity, the promotion of equality and social justice and solidarity with others are evident across the curriculum. The curriculum also recognizes its role in identity construction across a range of intersecting identities, and to children’s development as ‘citizens of a global community’ (NCCA, 1999b, pp. 26, 27).

Citizenship education itself is located within Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as part of a broader strand entitled ‘Myself and the Wider World’. Its aims reveal its civic republican roots, focusing on the development of social responsibility, commitment to active citizenship and appreciation of democracy as a mode of living (NCCA, 1999c, p. 9).  Although acknowledged for its focus on children’s engagement in democratic processes, its commitment to equality-related values and issues and its recognition of multiple identifications, SPHE has also been criticized for its overarching conceptualization of children as duty bearers with regards to the rights of others rather than rights holders, and for offering a narrow conceptualization of children’s participation which does little to challenge traditional adult-child power relations (Waldron et al. 2014). In addition, while it is fair to say that it supports the idea of multiple identities those identities are largely ahistorical and devoid of any critical focus.

In practice, citizenship education at primary level is seen as limited by the constraints of the system, which include lack of resources (including time), large class sizes and teacher dependence on textbooks (NCCA, 2008). Research has also found Irish primary teachers to have low levels of knowledge regarding human rights and, consistent with the curriculum itself, a tendency to prioritize responsibilities over rights (Waldron et al, 2014). In addition, and similar to systems elsewhere (Mejias and Starkey, 2012), the education system in Ireland is highly dependent on external agencies, both state sponsored bodies and non-governmental organisations, for citizenship-related programmes and initiatives (Hammarberg, 2008). This dependence explains to a large extent the influence of award-led competitive programmes within the system which can serve to separate citizenship education from children’s everyday learning and militate against its integration with other curriculum areas despite its commitment at curriculum level to a whole-school, cross-curricular approach (Waldron et al., 2014).

The curriculum supports the integration of SPHE with ‘relevant subject areas’ and structurally it shares a strand unit on environmental care with both science and geography at curricular level (NCCA, 1999c, p. 11). Yet, despite an explicit focus on identity construction at personal, local, national, European and global levels, history is largely unreferenced. More mention is made of history in the Teacher Guidelines where history is identified as contributing to the development of empathy, understanding change and what shapes communities, investigating the contributions of diverse groups to society and looking at self and family (NCCA, 1999d, p. 38). The exemplars outlined, however, locate history very firmly within a local context (p. 49). Similarly, when integration is viewed through the lens of the Primary History Curriculum, citizenship is explicitly mentioned only in the footnotes and only in relation to the local dimension of citizenship.

There is a consistent failure across both curricula to explicitly link history and citizenship education, except where local history is concerned. Within the history curriculum itself, serious attention is given to the role of history in enabling children to link the past and the present; understand the historical contribution of diverse groups; recognize different perspectives; respect different traditions; recognize that people belong to multiple communities and have a range of identities (NCCA, 1999d, p.13). It emphasizes the role played by history in:

… cultivating open, questioning attitudes to the beliefs, values and motivations of others, a tolerance towards various ethnic, cultural, religious and social groups, a sense of responsibility for the preservation of heritage, and a sense of local, national and European and global identity. (p. 78)

In the Guidelines, history is seen as ‘fostering local, national and European identity’, a critical awareness of Irish and European heritage and a ‘sense of citizenship’ (NCCA, 1999e, p. 29). Yet, SPHE remains unreferenced within both documents except in so far as it relates to personal and local history.  Despite a shared concern with identity construction and with understanding how society works, history and SPHE, at the level of curriculum, occupy two parallel paths with very few structural connections between them.

**Parallel paths, failed connections and unrealized potential**

Curricula, north and south, espouse democratic citizenship programmes yet in neither instance has the relationship between this and history teaching been adequately articulated. Indeed, while curricula in general recognize the extrinsic aims of history education, and provide also for fairly robust citizenship education programmes, neither provide the kinds of structural links between history and citizenship that are required if education is to meet the challenges posed by the complexity of post-conflict, multi-cultural contexts. While there are similarities in the challenges faced by both jurisdictions, their divergent educational pathways over much of the twentieth century, coupled with differences in their experiences of and responses to conflict, mean that the sites of disjuncture between history and citizenship at curricular level are not identical.

You could argue that the relationship between history and citizenship in NI betrays elements of all three of Lee and Shemilt’s (2007) relational models. In terms of its conceptualisation, the NIC supports the complementary model. Its architects envisaged that pupils would learn by making connections across subject boundaries and by developing sets of generic skills which could make sense of common themes. So far, those subject borders have remained resolutely intact and any hope that a history/citizenship collaboration might be a catalyst for change has yet to materialize. Differences in status and the continued compartmentalising of knowledge by hierarchy of importance work against a more holistic view of the curriculum despite its designers’ intentions. In practice, then, the cornucopian model seems dominant. There are outstanding history and citizenship teachers who warrant Skilbeck’s title (1973) as ‘change agents’, especially in the context of a transitional Northern Irish society. However, even these practitioners usually choose to work in one area or the other, thus limiting the potential for young people to develop a criticality which challenges political orthodoxy, be it at a local or global level.  For some community relations practitioners (usually from a non-history background) on the other hand, the subject is seen as a ‘carrier’ and social utility is prioritized at the expense of the discipline. This approach is often encountered in non-formal youth and community work and, as indicated, recent history curriculum focused projects funded through ‘peacebuilding’ sources feature individual attitudinal change strongly in their intended outcomes (FHSTF, 2015; Nerve Centre, 2015).

Despite the acknowledgement of the relevance of history to citizenship education at primary level in the Republic, the structural links never stray beyond the surface. Where links are explicitly identified they reside at the local level only, placing national, European and global citizenship in a curiously free floating, ahistorical and decontextualized space. Similarly, at post primary level, there is little to connect history and citizenship other than isolated references that generally fail to move beyond the level of platitude. The newly imagined Junior Cycle framework adopts a similar ‘Big Picture’ approach to that of the NIC and may in the future support more boundary-crossing between subjects. Currently, however, given the lack of connectivity between history and citizenship education in both primary and post primary curricula, it seems that in the Republic the relationship between them conforms at best to the cornucopian model; the potential of history to contribute to citizenship is never realized while citizenship fails to engage with the historical roots of current institutions, structures and identities.  This is problematic from a number of perspectives, some of which have a stronger resonance with the NI context than others.

Firstly, and reminiscent of Davies’s dimensions of knowledge and action (Arthur et al., 2001),  the failure to connect young people’s historical learning with their understanding of democratic structures, institutions and modes of living compromises their understanding of how democratic change (or its opposite) occurs, and the role of human agency in effecting change.  It is possible also that these failures to recognize the interdependence of subjects at post primary level have contributed to their diminished and diminishing status. For CSPE, similar to the context in NI, the failure to anchor it more securely in related knowledge-bearing subjects such as history could have contributed to its current low status and its ‘demotion’ within the reformed Junior Cycle Framework. Likewise, the failure to articulate a broader social purpose for history at post primary level may have made the current reforms easier to contemplate. If historical literacy is not conceptualized as an important component of education for democratic citizenship, then it becomes one academic subject among others, several of which are more in tune with a neo-liberal state agenda that prioritizes the instrumental relationship between education and economic growth.

Secondly, there is evidence in the RoI curricula of a shying away from issues of identity. While it is possible that this stems from an understandable fear of reinforcing or rejuvenating older narratives, the consequences are a failure to problematize identity within history and an ahistorical view of identity in citizenship education. Thus, identities, whether multiple or not, are seen as having either benign roots or appearing fully formed in the present. In the ‘emerging from conflict’ context of Ireland, there is an evident need to re-examine aspects of contested historic identities. In the context of evidence which suggests that children in Ireland are constructing identity-based views from a young age (Waldron and Pike, 2006; Connolly, 1998), providing opportunities for sustained and critical engagement with those identities would seem advisable.

Finally, while the impetus towards multiple identifications and perspectives is evident in history and citizenship curricula north and south, it is questionable whether such multiplicity takes sufficient account of communities beyond the traditional unionist and nationalist divide or whether, in the context of globalisation, enough attention is given to issues and questions which pertain to all of humanity in the twenty-first century.

**Concluding thoughts: From shared histories to big histories**

Recent decades have presented serious challenges to historic identities in Ireland and the idea that there is a shared understanding of events within any one community is itself open to question. Also, limiting the focus to those communities traditionally associated with conflict begs the question as to whether either jurisdiction continues to conform neatly to this duality. While acknowledging the need to continue to engage with the post-conflict context of historically divided communities, this is no longer a sufficient recognition of the plurality of communities on the island, some of which can themselves lay claim to deep historical roots and others which present as more recent. Furthermore, confining the discussion to historic communities and historic divisions foregrounds the ideology of nationalism while masking other equally problematic ideologies such as those relating to class, gender, ethnicity and global capitalism.  At the very least, we need to be moving towards a conceptualization of history education such as that proffered by Nordgren and Johansson (2015). Building *inter alia* on the work of Rüsen (2005) on historical consciousness and Byram, Nichols and Stevens (2001) in relation to intercultural competence, they present a model for intercultural historical learning which moves beyond the national space, even where that space is conceptualized as multi-cultural, to consider meta-narratives such as migration and to ‘decentre’ and reframe curricula away from western-centric definitions of what is historically significant.

Also, given the existential threat posed by climate change, the economic and political dominance of transnational corporations and supranational organisations and the continuing structural inequalities which characterize global relations is there a possibility that in focusing on the ‘local’(even the re-imagined ‘local’ of plural identities), history education is in danger of missing the big picture? At the very least, it could be argued that neither jurisdiction provide sufficient opportunities for developing an understanding of the historical roots of inequalities of wealth and power between the global North and South; yet such understanding is critical to the recognition of the responsibility of the global North in creating such inequalities in the first instance and the ongoing complicity of Northern citizens in maintaining them. While such engagement is necessary, however, it is probably not a sufficient response to contemporary global issues.  Writing in 1991, David Christian characterized historical scholarship as ‘fragmented and parochial’. Submerged in the detail of archival study, it needed to ‘search for larger meanings in the past’ (p. 227). Christian made the case for ‘big history’ which sees ‘the appropriate time scale for the study of history’ as ‘the whole of time’.  Such a time scale allows for ‘very large questions’ to be asked, questions which place our relationship with the planet and with other living things at the heart of historical investigation. While the decades between Christian’s article and now have seen a growth of interest in environmental history and the history of climate change, questions relating to humankind’s relationship with the earth remain on the margins of historical scholarship and history education.

In a recent article, Kate Hawkey argues for ‘a new look at big history’ (Hawkey, 2014). While reluctant to extend the historical timeframe to include the ‘big bang’, and cognisant of the constraints posed by state curricula, Hawkey (2014) places human relations with the planet at the centre of historical study and articulates the ‘need for a more porous boundary between natural and human factors in historical explanations’ (p. 167). While Christian’s own Big History Project , networks such as Rescue!History and the Integrated History and Future of People on Earth(IHOPE) project suggest that interest in ‘big history’ is growing, few would argue that its pace is commensurate with the urgency of its project. There is a strong argument, then, that while the shift in focus from a history education narrowly focused on a desired national identity towards one that is more open, critical and plural is a welcome one in the context of post-conflict Ireland, by maintaining a ‘local’ as opposed to a ‘global’ focus it falls short of what is required to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

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