

# **Pupils' Understandings of Citizenship.**

## **Approaching Citizenship Through the Lens of Justice**

Workshops With Pupils In Primary  
Schools In Greece



**Ioanna Noula,  
University of Thessaly, Greece**

# Why here? Why now?

## SOCIAL FABRIC AT RISK

- economic crisis
- ⇒ financial impoverishment
- ⇒ lack of perspective
- ⇒ social depression
- ⇒ disdain for traditional and cosmopolitan values
- ⇒ xenophobic rhetoric from the side of politicians  
(economic globalization and human mobility as the “Pool of Siloam” for the sinful past of the Greek state )
- ⇒ racist everyday discourses of people who are violently imposed a new harsh reality
- ⇒ appalling acts of the extremist group of Golden Dawn

# Fitting Justice

cosmopolitan approach to citizenship that urges the recognition of belonging to a common humanity (Osler&Zhu 2011) (Banks 2011)

- ⇒ justice as fairness Vs. justice as the rule of Law
- ⇒ **R**edistribution, **R**ecognition, **R**epresentation
- ⇒ obstacles to parity: economic cultural and institutional (equal representation in the society) (Fraser, 2008)

# Justice

## Occupy movements:

- challenge to injustices linked with the effects of market driven policies
- dimensions:
  - i. cultural (oppose the culture of individualism which is wedded to a neoliberal logic)
  - ii. social (expression against the collapse of the social state)
  - iii. political (an embryonic form of political participation)

# Research Questions

- How do children in primary education construct the concept of citizenship?
- How do children in primary education perceive otherness?
- What is the extent of children's knowledge on current affairs?

# Using the Element of Conflict

- interconnected topics
- examining multiple identifications

# Participants

## Selection Criteria:

- pupils' socio-economic and ethnic background
- urbanization of the school
  - × **urban school** (in an underprivileged area of the city: 62% Roma pupils)
  - × **suburban school**
  - × **semi-urban school**
  - × **rural school** (large majority of pupils of non-Greek ethnic background: 7/10)
  - × **private school**

# Workshops

## 1<sup>st</sup> part: discussion/Conflict Dialogue (Bickmore, 2012)

- a power-point presentation
- conflict dialogue: discussion on issues that raise controversy and whose subjects interconnect as they apply on different levels of human activity (personal, local, national, regional etc.)

i.e. : exam cheating, unemployment, sit-ins, strikes,immigration



# Workshops

## **2<sup>nd</sup> part: Reflexion (shaping arguments)**

- pupils working in groups reflect on the discussion and give their opinion on one of the topics, formulating more concrete arguments with the use of vocabulary related to the concept of citizenship

## **3<sup>rd</sup> part: Posters (raising awareness)**

- depiction and further illustration of pupils' arguments and their perceptions of the political

# Findings

## citizenship:

- context related
- emerging from the concept of otherness

## otherness:

- the immigrant / refugee
- the state

# immigrant / refugee

IMMIGRANT /REFUGEE	<i>schools</i>	RURAL SCHOOL	SEMI- URBAN SCHOOL	URBAN SCHOOL (under-privil.)	SUBURBAN SCHOOL	PRIVATE SCHOOL
<i>repertoires</i>						
<b>better life</b> (pursuit of better life standards)		✓				
<b>better life</b> ("smart decision")				✓	✓	✓
<b>rights</b> (social rights)		✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>rights</b> ("right not to be exploited")			✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>sorrow</b> ("effect on psychology")			✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>racism</b> (they are illegal, brown, rich etc)					✓	
<b>public space</b> (exclusion)					✓	✓
<b>poverty</b>			✓	✓	✓	✓

# state

STATE	<i>schools</i>	RURAL SCHOOL	SEMI-URBAN SCHOOL	URBAN SCHOOL (under-privil.)	SUBURBAN SCHOOL	PRIVATE SCHOOL
<i>repertoires</i>						
administration		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
sovereignty			✓			
superiority			✓	✓	✓	
identification with the state						✓
pursuit of financial benefit by those in power					✓	

# Discussion

- **Immigrant/Refugee:** denotes citizenship as belonging and citizens' identification with the state as a national entity (context dependent concept)
- **State:** signifies otherness as one's alienation from the political life
  - association of the concept of the state to the concept of "superiority"
    - ⇒ limited perspective with regard to participation and personal initiative
- **Public space:** constitutes the field of public negotiation and participation in political life (vindication of social rights) / sets the boundary between the citizen and the non-citizen

# Conclusion

## CITIZENSHIP

- **exclusionary:** bounded to the approach of the citizen-national
- **a-political**
  - ⇒ reproduction of the existing relationship between the citizen and the state (citizen: withdrawn from the public space / political: monopolized by the state )
  - ⇒ problems for democratization

Ioanna Noula  
PhD candidate, Citizenship Education  
University of Thessaly  
[ioannanoula@yahoo.com](mailto:ioannanoula@yahoo.com)

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