# education for citizenship
## the Argentine case in comparison

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ABSTRACT

This article considers how Argentina produces its citizens following its transition to democracy in the early 1980s. We ask how the schooling system is preparing the next generation to participate in the democratic political process, and the responsibilities of nation building in a world that has become more politically and economically entangled. The study reported here engages in content analyses of 1990s education law, curriculum standards and textbooks used in Argentina's schools.

KEYWORDS *Argentina, citizenship, comparative analysis, education reform, globalization, political socialization of youth*

## introduction

Linked with the rise of the modern nation‑state has been the actively created and maintained social role of the *citizen*. A long recognized key element in the creation of stable nation‑states has been the state's ability to socialize youth into the role of citizen through a process of mass schooling (Benavot et al., 1991; Boli et al., 1986; Meyer et al., 1992). This article considers how Argentina produces its citizens following its transition to democracy in the early 1980s. We ask how the schooling system is preparing the next generation of youth to participate in the democratic political process and is instilling responsibilities

for nation building in a world that has become more politically and economically entangled.

In Argentina the idea of citizenry and people's political leverage vanished with the democratic discontinuities that many countries experienced during the 20th century. It was not until the third wave of democracies (Huntington, 1991) that the concepts of citizenship and democratization were recovered. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the return to civilian rule in many Latin American and Asian countries during the 1980s and 1990s led to a world-wide revival of political and economic liberalization. In the political realm, the emphasis was on democratization.[1] It was believed that the lack of both citizen participation and a strong civil society was not compatible with democracy and the politics of globalization (Almond and Powell, 1996).

In countries where democratic institutions were not at stake, the tone of national politics changed during the second half of the 20th century. In the USA, for example, politics moved away from community issues and small-group ties. Advocacy groups representing the interest of the disfranchised proliferated, as did groups fighting and speaking for broader causes such as gender issues, environmentalism, and human and social rights (Berry, 1999; Dionne, 1998; Ladd, 1996; among others). Claims of the disappearance of civil society and the decrease of individual political participation questioned the health of long-standing democracies (Galston and Levine, 1998; Putnam, 1995a, 1995b).

For both democratization and civic involvement purposes, the concepts of civil society and political participation have experienced a significant revival in the social sciences in the past decade (Cohen and Arato, 1992; Diamond, 1997; Hall, 1995; Fukuyama, 1995; Muller and Seligson, 1994; Putnam, 1993, 1995a, 1995b; Verba et al., 1995). This revival influenced policymaking world-wide and was widely adopted into the policy discourse of regional, national, intergovernmental and multilateral organizations. For example, both the 1994 and 1998 Summit of the Americas addressed these points. Among the key themes in both meetings were: education, the strengthening of democracy, civil society and citizenship, economic stability, progress towards social justice, and trade liberalization policies for hemispheric integration (Feinberg and Rosenberg, 1999).

In the context described above, it is not surprising to see a revitalization of civic education instruction world-wide to create a broad-based political culture to accompany structural reforms. Although the conventional wisdom of the past 40 years neglected the role civic education plays in overall civic formation, renewed attention to some sort of civic instruction is part of another world-wide trend in education. Today, once again, education is seen around the world as a means for nation building and conflict reduction, particularly in societies that are transitioning towards

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democracy, consolidating their democratic systems, or experiencing ethnic and religious strife.

Using a qualitative method, this article discusses how this global institutional trend influences education for citizenship in Argentina.[2] We look particularly at the following points: (1) how are meanings of citizenship constructed in the new Argentine education law? (2) How do the existing core curriculum standards for Ethics and Civic Education and Social Science (*intended curriculum*) contribute to civic education in basic general education? (3) How are the meanings of citizenship constructed within those standards? Lastly, the article engages in a discussion of the image of the *civically educated person* portrayed in textbooks used for instruction in *educación general básica* (basic general education, [EGB]).[3]

## civic education and the state of the field

Following the civic culture tradition that stressed the role of individual democratic attitudes and civic values as important determinants in political participation (Almond and Verba, 1963), studies on political socialization were conducted in the 1960s and 1970s. Early works on political socialization have seen a process as a means by which youth adopt and internalize the political and civic attitudes of older generations (Easton and Dennis, 1969; Jennings and Niemi, 1974). These initial studies were mainly concerned with the role of political socialization for national democratic stability during the post-war and Cold War years and as a source of support for the western democratic political system.

This line of research, however, soon lost support in the academic world due to the attention placed on conflict, contention politics and democratic discontinuities, and skepticism about the possibility of socializing political behavior and civic attitudes (Langton and Jenning, 1968). Many studies conducted during the late 1970s and 1980s showed the effects of civic education on students' civic attitudes and future voter turnout behavior to be non-significant (Denver and Hands, 1990; Galston, 2001; Leonard, 1999; Niemi and Junn, 1998). Indeed, it was shown that after controlling for socio-economic background, education had less effect on political participation than age (Strate et al., 1989; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980).

In conjunction with the decline in voter turnout, political knowledge, and the political apathy of adults and youth, recent studies on civil society and social capital revived the interest in political socialization. Rooted in the civic culture tradition, social capital and civil society research suggest that social interactions have positive effects on the social development of citizenship and on the functioning of political institutions (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000).[4] In a similar line of analysis, a growing body of literature on political socialization suggests that core civic values and political attitudes are

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received at an early age in the context of family experiences, community and school involvement, and through the exposure to civic education, which in turn may have an effect on future likelihood of voting (Conover and Searing, 1994; Flanagan, 1998; Flanagan and Gallay, 1995; Galston, 2000, 2001; Hahn, 1999; Jenning, 1996; Neimi and Hepburn, 1995; Sears and Valentino, 1997; Stolle and Hoogle, 2002; Tilly, 2002; Torney-Purta, 1994; Torney-Purta and Schwille, 1996).

This line of reasoning suggests that students' civic knowledge – a generalized social trust in government and public officials, high levels of tolerance and familiarity with the operation of democratic institutions – can strengthen democracy by promoting liberal universal values and subsequently democratic institutions. At this point, it is pertinent to ask if this assumption can be drawn from studies that neglected broader international and national policy implementation characteristics that influence students' political socialization, particularly about the implications for a world system made up of national societies that are becoming more alike (Baker and LeTendre, 2005).

One of the key processes in the rise of the modern nation-state has been the use of publicly funded mass schooling to create and promulgate what is referred to as 'founding myths of the nation-state' and, in turn, to further institutionalize geo-political units as nations (Anderson, 1991; Meyer, 1980; Meyer and Hannan, 1979; Ramirez and Rubinson, 1979). These historical accounts become part of the civics, history and social studies curricula of national schools and then it is assumed that the schooling process instills these in students. The process here is thought to include the schooling of the idea of a citizen of a nation-state with a specific national history and regime type, as well as a legitimate connection of the particular state to the overall institution of nations.

Citizen production was certainly a central concern during the origins of the modern nation-state during the 19th century, and now as new regions of the world move towards democracy and independent nationhood in a world context that praises universal values that include democracy, civil society, citizenship and social justice, the discussion of citizenship production remains as crucial as ever for functioning democratic polities. This is especially true for emerging democracies or transitional nations such as Argentina where the role that *imagined communities* (Anderson, 1991) plays in developing youth into citizens through the process of mass schooling is critical to the understanding of citizenship and nation building in a global era.

Little is known about the political socialization of youth in Latin America (Torney-Purta, 2000). Although the topic of civics education has developed some research literature in Argentina, the existing studies are limited to changes in civic education after the last authoritarian regime (Belderrain, 1997; Carbone, 2001); the inclusion of human rights issues in the content of the

civics' curriculum (Braslavsky et al., 1995; Dussel et al., 1997); the review of recent curricular reforms particularly regarding the content of ethics and character education in EGB (Alonso et al., 1996; Gvirtz, 2002; Narodowski, 1996); education and nationalism (Escudé, 1988), the drawbacks of civic education in Argentina (Vanossi, 2001), and the use of newspapers in the teaching of political information and democratic values in a new democracy (Morduchowicz et al., 1996).

No study was found that addresses the type of citizens the 1990s Argentine reform fosters and how it is portrayed in the textbooks used for instruction. Moreover, previous studies have not closely examined the impact that the fusion of world-wide culture with local implementation has on the civic education curriculum and instruction in Argentina.

## descriptive results of the CIVED study: what do students learn world-wide?

There is little empirical research that identifies how the transmission of sociopolitical and civic ideas has occurred through global institutions such as schools. Descriptive results of the 1999 CIVED are used to place our discussion in a wider context.[5] Although Argentina administered the CIVED questionnaires to the participating students and schools, the results are not publicly available. Yet the CIVED outcomes we present here are of significance for Argentina since more than half of the participating countries recently made the transition to democracy.

We use these data to look at the general content of civic instruction in the CIVED participating countries. The focus here is on the formal school curriculum and the opportunities schools provide for the instillation of global civic awareness among the youth. Although a complete assessment of youth political development among countries is out of the scope of this study, we engage in interesting analyses that trigger future discussion of what civic instruction is and should entail. Particularly, we look at what students learn in civic-oriented classroom instruction. To answer this question we look at the following teachers' responses regarding: (1) important events in the nation's history; (2) cultural differences and minorities; (3) different conceptions of democracy; (4) international problems and relations; and (5) different or comparative political systems.

Figure 1 shows the degree of opportunity provided to students to learn selected civic education topics. In this figure, on average, teachers report considerable student learning opportunity for important events in the nation's history. Teachers also report slightly more than little student opportunity to learn other topics ranging from cultural differences to different political systems. These results suggest that students receive more instruction related

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**figure 1** student opportunity to learn civic education. International teacher responses, IEA civic education study 1999
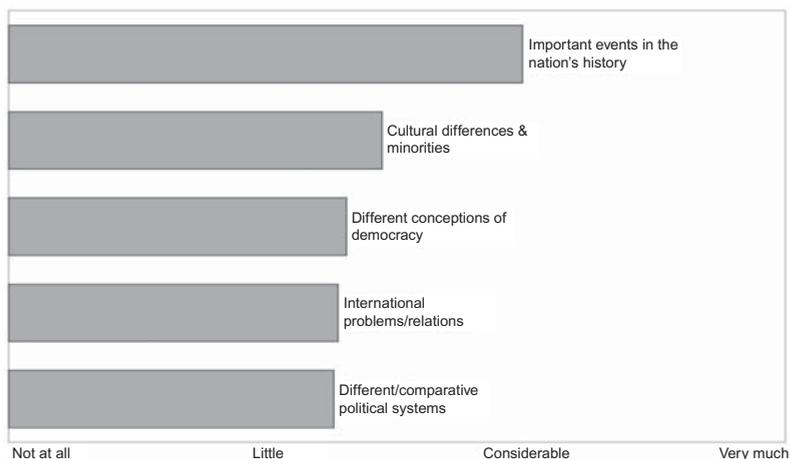


to national identity and the accompanying civic values than in cultural differ-ence and minorities, different systems and international issues, topics that seem critical for students' awareness about different global views.

It is with this context in mind that we consider what students learn through the curriculum in Argentine schools. How well informed is the Argentine youth regarding ideas of citizenship? Would this information allow them to participate effectively in the political process and nation-building in a world that has become more economically and politically entangled? Are they being trained to support universal democratic values? Do they value social justice, and universal social and political principles that help them in the future to participate in civil society and make the transition into democratic adulthood?

What students learn in the classrooms in Argentina is a result of curricular regulations that are determined by various agencies of curricular definition (national and provincial governments and the school institutions themselves). These agencies have different powers and responsibilities for curriculum policy design and make use of certain policy tools that define the goals, contents and results of educational processes. The tools for curricular imple-mentation include but are not limited to the following:

(1) The policy of curricular definition (and of general government of the educational system), which marks the tasks for each level in the decision-making process about the objectives and contents of education.
(2) The documents and curricular materials per se (their organization and contents), as principal ways of representing the official curricular policy.
(3) The policy of textbook circulation, that is, the control over one of the most

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important means of representation (together with curricular documents) of the objectives and contents of education. (Gvirtz, 2002: 453)

Consequently, in the followings sections, this article engages in analyses of these tools of curricular design and implementation. First, we discuss the most recent educational reform that introduced a new curricular governance and design. Second, we focus our attention on the law and the new curricular standards. Third, we compare the content of the curricular standards for Social Science and Ethics and Citizenship Education with textbooks used for instruction in EGB schools during the beginning of the 1990s reform process.

## Argentina's educational reform

In the early 1990s, following the global pattern stated above and through a reform initiative centered on President Carlos S. Menem, his cabinet and technocrat advisers (Astiz, 2004), the Argentine government began the process of education transformation, as education reform is referred to in governmental documents.[6] In 1993, the *Ley Federal de Educación* No. 24195 (federal education law [LFE]) passed congress. Besides regulating the distribution of responsibilities between the central and subnational governance levels, the LFE introduces a curricular reform and a new schooling organization, which consists of a three-level system of one-year compulsory initial education, a nine-year compulsory EGB divided in three cycles, the first one running from grade 1 to 3, the second from grade 4 to 6, and the third and last cycle of grades 7 to 9, and a three-year optional high school education (*polimodal*).

In contrast to previous models, this reform advances democratization by fostering local sovereignty and increasing responsiveness to the needs of diverse communities. Consequently, the reform process involved the delegation of some decision-making responsibilities such as management, curricular adjustment and service delivery to the new provincial education systems and the schools themselves. However, the central government kept control as policy maker, coordinator and controller of the overall educational design (LFE, Art. 2). Some other responsibilities maintained at the central level were national testing and system evaluation, the design of core curriculum standards for the whole country, compensatory education programs, and technical assistance to the provinces and schools (LFE, Art. 51).

The general education policy framework takes into account the following principles: (1) the strengthening of national identity while respecting local, provincial and regional idiosyncrasies; (2) the consolidation of a republican, representative and federal democracy; (3) the provision of equal opportunities for all inhabitants, avoiding any type of discrimination; (4) the equitable distribution of education services to provide the best possible quality education and results, the inclusion of persons with special needs; (5) the removal of every

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negative stereotype from instructional materials; and (6) the promotion of the necessary conditions for pluralistic and participatory learning (LFE, Art. 5).

According to the LFE the national administration is responsible for the elaboration of the *contenidos básicos comunes* (core content standards [CBC]). Curricular standards were the result of several accords between the *Ministerio de Cultura y Educación de la Nación* (National Ministry of Education and Culture) and the *Consejo Federal de Educación* (Federal Education Council). All Argentine provinces are represented in the federal council. These core content standards provide evidence of a general agreement of the principles listed above and of the relevant minimum content knowledge, skills and attitudes that all students in Argentina should achieve.[7]

Curricular standards provide each province with a minimal framework within which each provincial system should develop its specific curricular standards. Also, enough freedom ought to be given to each school for curricular adaptation, which should be in accordance with the *projecto educativo institucional* (Institutional Educational Project [PEI]) of each school. Basically, the role of the school is to put into practice the sets of national and provincial objectives, contents and skills being better suited to respond to the needs and expectations of each school community.

This curricular management model allows for a shared responsibility at the national, provincial and school levels in curricular governance and content; a model that moves away from a centrally regulated, administered and designed curriculum (Gvirtz, 2002). This change seems more appropriate for the democratization demands of the period and promotes a more accountable educational system. Therefore, while the curricular management model allows for diversification of goals and content, it guarantees a set of minimum educational goals, knowledge and skills common to all people in Argentina to be assessed through a national testing and an evaluation system.

Concomitant to the decentralization of curriculum design and management, an evaluation system of education quality was put in place (LFE, Arts 48, 49, 50). The objectives of this evaluation system are meant to provide information about the quality of the education service provided, to supervise the progress and achievement of the education reform, to oversee student achievement, the quality of teacher training and to assess if curricular adaptations have been made according to diverse needs and social demands of the educational communities being served. In general terms, the assessment system is centrally organized to monitor and control both progress and results of the educational transformation process within the frame of the more decentralized curricular management system.

All the changes promoted by the educational reform are intended to improve the quality of the education provided, but what is the *educated person* that the reform envisions? To answer this question, we engage in content analyses of

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the education law and the new curricular standards, and compare the content of the core curriculum standards for Social Science and Ethics and Citizenship Education with textbooks used for instruction.

## results

By and large, following world-wide trends, both the national law of education and the curricular standard for Ethics and Citizenship Education and Social Studies attempt to define the *educated person* as a member of the Argentinean community but also of the world. This outcome, which is in line with the CIVED case study results (Torney-Purta et al., 1999), shows how countries around the world are adopting content and schooling practices of a world culture that emphasizes the key role that education for democracy and global citizenship has for strengthening democratic polities world-wide.

However, a closer look at the CBC and their implementation in the textbooks analyzed tells a very different story. The empirical data provide account of some sort of decoupling between the intentions of the LFE and CBC (intended curricula) and the image of the *educated citizen* portrayed in the textbooks. We suggest that this decoupling highlights how the intersection of a global ideology and national adoption, the latter determined by how the Argentinean citizen is 'locally imagined', uniquely define what students end up learning through the textbooks studied. Following, we discuss these issues in detail.

## federal education law

The values supported by the law indirectly depict the kind of individuals that reform promotes. Since the law describes and prescribes how education must be, it conveys a certain vision and offers a particular version of the future civic prospect and morality. Although we briefly comment on other articles of the law, the analysis centers on article 6 because it clearly describes the kind of person the school should educate. Article 6 states that:

> The Argentine education system will promote men's and women's comprehensive and continuous education; [an education] that will foster national identity under regional, continental and universal worldviews. [This education] will allow men and women's individual fulfillment according their cultural, social, ethic, aesthetic, and religious capabilities and guided by the values of life, freedom, [common] good, truth, peace, solidarity, tolerance, equality, and justice. [Education will allow men and women] to develop the capacities for elaborating their own life project that [is a] result of existential decisions; [an education that will help to develop men and women as] responsible citizens, critical protagonists, creators and change-makers of society, [and] defenders of democratic institutions and the environment. (LFE, Art 6)

In the first sentence, by contextualizing men and women in the local sphere but appealing to national identity and continental and universal worldviews,

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the law situates the individual into the process of globalization. From the second phrase on, the description of men and women incorporates liberal democratic values and viewpoints. The idea of a society composed of individuals who posses the freedom to fulfill themselves is clear in article 6, which defines education as a mean to allow men's and women's individual fulfillment but as members of a democratic system.

We should note here that although the principles that guide education policy advocate the inclusion of students with special needs, article 6 does not mention the educational fulfillment of special needs students. Indeed, a different chapter of the law sets the regulations and provisions that apply for students with special needs, while it is mute in regards to citizenship education. Moreover, this chapter delegates to the appropriate and specialized personnel the educational process of students with disabilities, and the adaptation of curriculum, materials, school organization and school buildings to that effect (LFE, Art. 29). Clearly, this point raises an important contradiction in the law. On the one hand, the LFE advocates for inclusion and diversity, but on the other it itself discriminates against students that are different by excluding them from the *ideal type of citizen* the education system should educate.

In the following section of this article we discuss how these ideas and concepts of the *civically educated person* are materialized in the curricular standards developed by the National Ministry of Culture and Education.

## curricular standards for *education for citizenship* and *social studies*

Although the law does not specify instruction of civics among the goals of EGB, the EGB program includes subjects that in one way or another address education for citizenship. Albeit contradictory, students in EGB schools do have a subject area called Ethics and Citizenship Education. Indeed, the standards for both Ethics and Citizenship Education and Social Studies include content knowledge associated with education for citizenship. The reason for this contradiction may lie in the fact that the CBC was approved after the LFE passed congress. The first edition of the CBC became public in 1995.

In order to analyze the *ideal educated person* promoted by the education reform within the curriculum, we decided to focus on the core contents for Ethics and Citizenship Education and Social Studies based on the assumption that these content standards will make explicit the characteristics the *ideal educated person* should have.

The curriculum for Ethics and Citizenship Education divides the list of contents to be taught in five different sections. The first section focuses on general psychological processes, basic sociability, individual identity and gender roles. The second section addresses the values schools should teach.

Among those values are: the values of the family and the education community; respect for oneself and others; and the idea of freedom, responsibility and common good. The third section focuses on society and social norms, being the national constitution the fundamental norm covered. Other contents to be covered include general rights and responsibilities in a democratic polity, universal human rights, solidarity and social justice. These topics are covered in all general education cycles in this subject area, but depth, specificity and complexity of these contents vary by grade level.

For example, it is in the second cycle of the EGB that students should start making connections and explain the relationship among these concepts. Students should begin understanding the relationship between Argentina's history, democracy and human rights. In the third cycle, conversely, students should address more specifically and reflect about the historical development of Argentina's democratic institutions, the Constitution and its amendments, the distinction among political, social, cultural and economic rights, and the rationale and need for human and universal rights. It is in this cycle as well that students should make the connection between negative stereotypes, discrimination, including discrimination against women and 'handicapped' individuals,[8] and the violations of human rights. This is of particular importance for the Argentinean society after the ideological persecutions and violations of human rights committed during the last authoritarian regime (1976–1983).

The fourth section of the standards for Ethics and Citizenship Education, focuses on the development of logical, reflective and critical thinking skills, the enhancement of creativity, and morality. Finally, the section on attitudes focuses on ethics, social development, scientific and technological discovery, and the development of language and communication skills. The content of these last two sections are procedural and are meant to be achieved through the learning of the specific contents covered in the first three sections discussed above.

The Social Science standard subsumes and expands the contents of Ethics and Citizenship Education for general education. Topics that are covered in more detail include: social groups and social organizations throughout time and space; political social and economic activities; the difference between rural and urban environments; and the definitions of culture, cultural diversity and recent immigration. Particularly, for grades 5–9 the content of Social Sciences addresses colonialism, and the conquest of the American Continent; the encounter of different civilizations: European, and aborigine or native; the relationship between the center and periphery, particularly between Buenos Aires and the provinces; and the history of Argentina's social, political and economic organization but in the context of Latin America, the *Mercado Común del Sur* (MERCOSUR), the American Continent and the world. Additionally, students should analyze and compare other economic and political systems.

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It seems appropriate to say that the contents of Ethics and Citizenship are more in line with national and individual spheres of knowledge while the Social Science curriculum situates Argentine students within the world. Individuals do not operate in isolation nor do they operate only in the context of the family, school, neighborhood or nation; they are part of a global system of ideas, economy, politics, religion and culture.

However, after a deeper review of the common curricula, a few important considerations are observed. First, to our surprise, we could not find the term 'citizen' in the whole list of contents, and the word 'citizenship' appears only once in each of the content lists. This is an interesting paradox since one of the subject areas is indeed Ethics and Citizenship Education. Assuming that the rationale for this omission is one of inclusiveness, particularly to include those students who are not Argentinean citizens but attend Argentine schools, or to situate students in the global sphere, still the only way individuals can exercise one of its fundamental rights in a democratic polity is by being part of the body politic of a specific nation-state. This action requires one to be a formal citizen of a nation.

Second, the lack of specificity regarding some contents is a characteristic of the analyzed curricula. For example, students have to be aware and respectful of other values, different from the universal values, but they only must commit to the universal values adopted by *the Argentinean community*. Thus, what are the *other values* they should respect? At the same time, they need to accept diversity; diversity that the expression *the Argentinean community* limits. This clearly shows the tension between instilling an Argentinean national common identity in a world that is advancing common universal values and multiculturalism.

Moreover, regarding discrimination, different ways of discriminating against people are explicit – for example, discrimination based on race, religion, gender – however, except for women and students with disabilities, the contents of the CBC covered do not name the people who are being discriminated against in the Argentinean context. By omitting to name the victims of discrimination, the curriculum not only works against its goal of teaching about discrimination, but it also fails to challenge the hegemonic and historical representation of the Argentinean population as a homogeneous society. Including social discrimination is a very positive contribution of the 1990s curricular reform and an important step forward in a society with deeply rooted historical problems with racism. However, the lack of specificity and the omission of the linkages with political and economic aspects of discrimination, undermine students' capacity not only to become critical protagonists, but also change-makers of society, as the law proclaims.

Beyond the lack of precision in the content or its ambiguity, another common characteristic of the curricula analyzed is the fact that the producers

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and audience of the curriculum are not explicit. Different strategies are used to keep this pseudo *anonymity* along the curricula, such as the use of the reflective form 'se' and passive voice. The ambiguity of the texts in terms of the agent and the audience might be related to the process of curricular decentralization we explained in a different section of this article. In theory, the CBC is a framework, a resource for the provincial Ministries of Education to construct their own curriculum.

While the provincial curricular adaptation and design were in process, training programs for schoolteachers, principals and supervisors of different provinces were developed by the National Ministry to facilitate the transition from the old system to the new. However, those programs were based on the CBC and explicitly used them as resources. In this way, according to Narodowski (1996: 101):

> The CBC is not a space for basic reference, but became a contradictory version of a Single National Curriculum. In other words, what should be a general guideline became a specific mandate: the cbc became the CBC, with capital letters.

Consequently, the ambiguity in terms of who does what, and the vagueness in content was deemed to create a space for the provinces and schools to include specific contents relevant to their region and community. But the fact that the CBC became the norm makes it very difficult to see how some of the characteristics of the educated person listed in article 6 of the law are going to be achieved through a curriculum that was meant to represent minimum common expectations. This situation goes against the principles of localism and decentralization that both the curricular and educational reforms were committed to. Again uniformity and centralization seem to win while reinforcing the foundational informal organizational characteristics by which the Argentinean nation was built.[9]

## analyses of textbooks

In Argentina, textbooks play an important role in school instruction. According to Greenberg (1997: 75) 'the use of textbooks constitutes 60 percent of class time'. In most of the cases, teachers choose the text they want their students to use and the expectation is that parents will buy them. Soon after the CBC became public in 1995, teachers were pressured to implement the new curricular mandate. Thus, teachers made sure that the textbooks they chose for instruction included the new curricula. Consequently, textbooks became a central tool in the implementation process of the curricular reform.

Also, since it took a while for the provinces to adapt national curricular standards and to design their own curricula, books became the mediators between the new curricular mandate and implementation at the school level. In addition, due to the lack of provincial curricula teachers used the textbooks as

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their curricular reform guideline (Gvirtz, 2002). It is worth noting, that towards the 1990s the National Ministry of Education 'ceased to have the right to supervise and decide which type of [textbooks] could or could not be used in schools' (Gvirtz, 2002: 463) Textbook production and distribution were basically left to publishers and the dynamics of the market; resulting in serious implications for curricular implementation. Because of the crucial role textbooks have in the reform adoption process they are an excellent source to explore the ways in which images of the educated person are presented through them to students.

In this section of the article we analyze how the contents of Social Science and Ethics and Citizenship Education are covered in social science textbooks. The rationale adopted to look specifically at social science textbooks is that they are more likely to be used for instruction than the Ethics and Citizenship Education books (interview with publishers). In addition, Social Science textbooks cover some of the content of the Ethics and Citizen Education standard and consequently are more likely to be chosen by teachers as required teaching material for Ethics and Citizen Education as well. For these reasons, the sampling of texts analyzed here includes social studies textbooks for the three cycles of EGB in Argentina.[10]

Since many publishers produce books for EGB, we chose those books from the best selling presses. According to the *Cámara del Libro* (the publishers association) the best selling publishers for EGB books are Aique, Estrada, Kapelusz, and Santillana. Following Nines (2001), we created an 'archeology' of representations presented in the texts. This comprises an archive of statements (texts and graphics) about 'the educated person' presented in the texts. To select the section of the books included in the archeology, we randomly selected a double-page lesson from each book, including when appropriate, photos, cartoons and paintings.

Using Fairclough's (2001) model of critical discourse analysis, we study the features of vocabulary, grammar and structure of text. For the analysis of illustrations, paintings, photos, cartoon-like images, graphics and maps we adopt Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) model for reading images. After analyzing the randomly selected lessons in each textbook, we analyzed a specific topic that is cross-listed in the standards of both Ethics and Citizen Education and Social Studies for the three cycles of EGB.

The first textbook we analyzed was Santillana's first grade language, science, social sciences, and technology book entitled *Cuentacosas* (an invented word that means storytelling). The second textbook we studied was Estrada's *Social Sciences for Fourth Grade*. The third textbook we analyzed belongs to Kapelusz (entitled *Society, Space, Culture. Argentina, Latin America*). This textbook is for the third cycle of the EGB. We explore the ways in which the texts incorporate the contents detailed in the CBC for both Social Science and Ethics and

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Citizenship education. Particularly, we looked at those topics that overlap and are incorporated in the Social Science curricula for the three cycles of the EGB.

### *Cuentacosas*

The lesson we analyze in this book addresses the following content standards for Ethics and Citizen Education: the family, family roles and gender roles. The skills students should develop through this lesson are: the description of the family and the differentiation between feminine and masculine roles. The values featured in this lesson are both family and school values. Also, students should be exposed to the norms of the group. The skills students should achieve are the explanation of everyday life situations related to the family and groups of friends. The above listed contents of Ethics and Citizenship are cross-listed with the following standards for Social Studies: individual and communal memory, and personal and family history. The skills that students should achieve are: the distinction between facts in the past and the present and contrast between ways of life in the present and social conditions in the past.

To address these standards, the lesson describes different families (it moves away from the traditional nuclear family) and roles within families. It also invites students to reflect on the distribution of tasks among family members and to search for information about the distribution of tasks in their grandparents' families. Regardless of the text's apparent open approach to the distribution of tasks, it reproduces a stereotypical representation of women.

For example, on page 115 the lesson states that '[c]urrently, parents work outside the house and share housekeeping tasks'. Following this description there is an exercise in which students need to link the drawings of different family members with those representing the distribution of household responsibilities. The illustration representing the 'cooking' responsibility shows a drawing of a pink blouse with white dots slicing tomatoes. Another drawing pictures just hands on a blue shirt fixing an iron. Even though this lesson states that household chores are shared by mothers and fathers, the use of a pink shirt and a blue shirt in the drawings can work as a cue for the student to associate tasks and colors with gender representation.

The message of the drawings and the lesson contradict each other. On the one hand, the vocabulary of the lesson that differentiates work from household responsibilities states that parents share those chores. On the other, the illustrations associate housekeeping chores with women. By associating housekeeping chores with women and implying that those are not considered work, the text also reproduces a stereotypical representation of women.

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### Social Sciences for Fourth Grade

We study a double page lesson in chapter 8, entitled 'The City of Buenos Aires' (pp. 76–7). This lesson focuses on the history of Buenos Aires, the capital city of the country. The lesson relates to the following contents of Ethic and Citizenship education: identity formation and belonging to a group and a history. Also, it addresses issues of discrimination. The concepts analyzed are: the right to not being discriminated against for reasons of religion, race, gender or ideology. These topics are cross-listed with the Social Science standards. Regarding the Ethic and Citizenship section on skills and attitudes, the objective of this lesson is to instill 'the development and appreciation for students' individual culture, sense of belonging and national identity and respect for diversity as a possibility for personal enrichment'. This lesson, however, creates a hierarchy determined by socio-economic status, race, ethnicity and place of residence.

The lesson describes the limits of Buenos Aires in 1850, and shows illustrations of two houses at the time: a *rancho* (a poorly constructed house usually belonging to country workers) and a *casco* (the main house in a *hacienda* – plantation). The illustration of the *rancho* shows a group of people whose skin is black and whose features are indistinguishable. Adults seem to be working while children seem to be playing. The picture of the *casco* on the other hand, shows a group of adults conversing or walking while children are playing; all with clear facial features. The lesson shows two more photos of other houses that belonged to wealthy families, which are currently a park and a school, respectively. Underneath the pictures the captions mention the names of the owners and a short story about them. Unlike the characters of the *rancho* drawing, who are not identified, these people have faces, names and a history.

This lesson associates poverty, work and anonymity with black individuals while wealth, leisure and a history to people of European descent. Although these lessons may well represent the situation at the time, they fail to provide background context and supplemental information to allow students to understand the past and question these dichotomies. We explored this fact throughout the whole book and find that there are more faceless and history-less people in the book's pictures, which in the majority are aborigines, immigrants and working-class individuals. Due to the particular way in which the contents are addressed in the analyzed lesson, we looked at a different lesson in the book. The goal of the following lesson is to address contents related to respect and understanding for other identities different to the mainstream.

Chapter 10 of Estrada's book is entitled '[w]e are many and different'. The lesson covers diversity, discrimination and prejudice through a classroom situation. It presents a cartoon where conflict arises between the majority of the students in the class and a boy who happens to be Korean. In the story presented, classmates discriminate against the Korean student and do not want

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to work with him because he does not speak Spanish very well. Throughout the lesson the definitions of discrimination and prejudice are provided.

Even though the text does not give the Korean character a voice to defend himself and to act against discrimination, it gives him a name and a history, he is a recent immigrant. It seems that the lessons in the book teach about discrimination and respect for different identities, but the book discriminates against different identities or undermines diversity when covering general topics, as described above.

### Society, Space, Culture. Argentina, Latin America

In this book we analyzed two lessons the goals of which were to reflect on discrimination, ethnocentrism and human rights, contents of Social Science and Ethics and Citizenship Education.[11] The first lesson is entitled '[t]he women'. The lesson describes the 1979 United Nations' (UN) Convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and its late adoption in Argentina. The lesson offers several examples of changes implemented in Argentina to provide leadership opportunities for women in politics such as quotas for congressional representation. According to a law passed in the late 1980s, 30 percent of the candidates running for congress should be women.

The second lesson addresses issues of discrimination and is called '[w]e are also the others' (p. 258). It provides a historical description of the evolution of Argentina's national identity and citizenship through the expansion of political and social rights. In its historical description, the lesson links these processes to the different waves of immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries. Also, the lesson addresses current practices that are a result of globalization such as the exchange of products, information and technologies, such as the use of the Internet. It emphasizes that globalization offers more plurality but leads to more conflict. These conflicts arise as a consequence of the lack of respect for others, fanaticism and absence of solidarity. In general, the text neither defines discrimination nor provides specific examples in which that happens within the Argentine context. It only mentions how different countries have moved in the direction to democracy, defended human rights and opposed any kind of discrimination. In short, the lesson stresses the embeddedness of the Argentinean nation in wider cultural meanings and economic contexts.

Both lessons addressed in this textbook do a historical description of the topics covered. They choose an international perspective, making connections between international arenas such as the United Nations or the global economy. The lesson on women's issues refer to women as if the authors of the book were not women, although paradoxically five out of 15 are. In the

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lesson on 'the others', the authors excluded themselves from 'the others' category they write about. The informative and impersonal tone of the lesson does not make room for students' opinions regarding these issues. No questions lead to critical analysis, a skill students in this education cycle ought to master for both Ethics and Citizenship Education and Social Sciences. We should note here that the chapter that includes these lessons is the only chapter from the whole book that does not include activities or a work project for the students to review the information and establish connections among the ideas developed within the chapter.

## discussion

Citizen formation in a world of global change it is not an easy task. Yet the requirements of nation building in a democratic polity are the principles of individual freedom, political rights and social rights incarnated primarily in the idea of *citizen of a nation.* However, it is particularly the concept of national belonging, which seems to be losing a central role under the new world order. As countries become integrated into subsystems of greater scale (for example, the European Economic Union, North American Free Trade Agreement), world societies are now based on a new concept of citizenship that bridges local, national and global political spaces (Meyer, 1980). Rights previously seen to be inherent only in national citizenship such as political participation and human rights have become claims of the world (Ramirez et al., 1997).

Much of a nation's legitimacy within the global community is the result of meeting internationally recognized standards for democratic nations. Having a well-informed and participatory citizenry, a strong civil society and a state that guarantees state–society interactions are democratic values acclaimed the world over. The national quest for legitimacy of this sort leads to nation-state isomorphism, particularly in terms of recognized values and policies (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). However, neo-institutional scholars also recognize that the achievement of these world-acclaimed standards does not occur in an environment free of conflict. Indeed, conflict arises through the process of policy implementation (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Meyer and Rowan, 1978), a process in which decoupling between policy purpose and policy implementation is common since policies are often modeled on external goals (Meyer et al., 1997). This is precisely what we found in our study.

Our findings identify the challenges that the implementation of this new model of citizenship – through schooling – faces world-wide and particularly in certain environments such as in Argentina. The analysis presented here illuminates the dialectics between the global and the local as well as the many local tensions and contradictions that come with the implementation of globally accepted norms. These tensions and contradictions can be related to

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the role Meyer et al. (1997) believe the technocratic leadership plays in the diffusion and enactment of world cultural scripts. Both the LFE and the CBC were designed by an interdisciplinary technical group embedded in the world culture described in the first sections of this article. Some of these contradictions and tensions are highlighted below.

First, our findings shed light on some inconsistencies that arise from the implementation of a globally attuned curricular governance and design. The efforts taken at the national level with the LFE and the core curriculum standards may have been considered building blocks in longer-term improvement efforts, but the urgency for implementation obstructed those goals. Consequently, what was meant to serve as a guideline and a set of minimum educational goals, knowledge and skills common to all students in Argentina to be enhanced by the provincial administrations and schools, became a sort of universal mandate adopted by textbook producers and used by teachers in their daily instruction. Thus, the ambiguity in terms of who is responsible for what in the process of curricular implementation at all levels, and the vagueness or omission of some contents observed in the CBC and textbooks analyzed.

Second, we highlighted some inconsistencies within the LFE and also among the law, CBC and textbooks. It seems that the reforms intended by the LFE were eroded in the next levels of curricular implementation and design. For example, while the law strives for inclusion of students with special needs, the CBC do not even mention the concept of inclusion or integration, neither in the classroom nor in Argentine society. Only one of the books has a lesson that describes changes in some facilities for individuals with special needs. People with special needs are not included in the illustrations or texts in two of the three books analyzed. When this population is indeed mentioned, they are portrayed in cartoons. Usually, cartoons distort reality and fail to accurately represent and respect people and their different abilities. Although contradictory, this example represents the double bind in which the LFE is caught. On the one hand, the law advocates the inclusion of students with different abilities, and on the other, these students are not the responsibility of the school or society as a whole but of specialized personnel.

Similarly, the LFE advocates for non-discrimination but only two standards of the CBC for general education address this issue. Textbooks, on the other hand, teach about non-discrimination and respect for different identities in the lesson that is specifically dedicated to this topic, but they discriminate against different identities or undermine diversity when they write about other and more general topics such as the historical evolution of the city of Buenos Aires. The book for the third cycle addresses in particular discrimination against women and children with special needs. Racial discrimination is covered in historical terms, specifically during the 1940s and 1950s, as if race discrimination was a problem of the past.

Similar to the results of the 1999 CIVED study, the textbooks analyzed offer a good opportunities for learning important events in the nation's history, but very few opportunities for learning other topics ranging from cultural differences to different political systems. The Social Science textbook for the third cycle dedicates 64 pages to national history events, three pages to cultural difference, and two pages to dictatorship and democracy. The Social Science book for the second grade dedicates 19 pages to national history events, three pages to cultural difference and no lesson addresses other international issues. Not surprisingly, the book for the first cycle includes only one page on cultural differences.

Besides reproducing discriminatory attitudes, the texts analyzed in the books do not contribute to exploration and critical analysis of the historical tension between Buenos Aires and the provinces. Usually, the textbooks' representation of Argentina is based upon and assumes a Buenos Aires-centric view. For example, while the text refers to the country as whole, photos, characters and captions refer to places in Buenos Aires. Moreover, while the books include a chapter particularly about Buenos Aires, the other provinces and regions of the countries are clearly underrepresented. Buenos Aires is portrayed by two of the three texts analyzed as 'the' place of reference and consequently reinforces the long history of Buenos Aires as the political and cultural center of the nation.

Consequently, the CBC and textbooks link Argentina's youth to an imagined community that definitively preserves the status quo. Schooling institutions are framed to guarantee citizens' rights and political participation in an effort to institutionalize the result of previous social and political practices characteristics of Argentina's nation-building process (Oszlak, 1982). Ultimately, then, individual citizenship conferral via mass schooling benefits national-level institutions because it engenders individuals' support and assimilates them into the collective institution without disrupting it.

Although this scholarly study contributes important results, we also recognize its limitations. No generalization can be made from the analyses of textbooks provided here. Moreover, to say that the curriculum exclusively determines students' civic development to the exclusion of other influences is problematic. There are a multitude of non-schooling forces at play that might influence students' knowledge and skills. Future studies shall illuminate how all these socialization agents play a role in schooling and the education of youth and the interplay between the curriculum and agency in schooling. However, what our study shows is that the textbooks as a primary source for instruction can have a negative impact on students' political socialization and should be the subject of careful analyses.

## notes

1. *Democratization* is the process that involves the 'movement from authoritarian to democratic forms of rule' (Sorensen, 1998: 1). It is known that this process has different phases (*background condition*, *preparation phase, decision phase, and consolidation phase* (Rustow, 1970 in Sorensen, 1998), which most often overlaps in the real world. It is after the establishment of the democratic rule – decision phase – that the ideas of participation and civil society play an important role to further democratic development. As Sorensen (1998: 39) suggests, '[i]t is important to realize that the phases outlined here are not necessarily negotiated in a smooth, and linear manner'. Moreover, not every regime change will necessarily pass through all these stages and with the same outcome. For further information about this topic, see Dahl (1971).

2. The work reported here comprises the content analysis of national legislation, policy documents, common curricular guidelines and textbooks used for instruction in Argentina. Also, descriptive statistics of the International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement (IEA) Civic Education Study (CIVED) are used for contextualization purpose.

3. EGB includes grades 1–9.

4. According to Putnam (1993) social interaction can be either formal or informal networks of civic engagement, generalized trust and norms of reciprocity.

5. In this study, approximately 90,000 14-year-old students in 28 countries were administered civic education and background questionnaires (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). The countries represented were: Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, the UK, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong (SAR), Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA. Questionnaires also were administered to teachers and school principals. The content domains covered in the survey were identified by national case studies during a first phase in 1996 and 1997, which are democracy; national identity; and social cohesion and diversity. Specifically, the data contain valuable information regarding students': (1) knowledge of democratic principles; (2) skills in interpreting political communication; (3) concepts of democracy and citizenship; (4) attitudes related to trust in institutions, the nation, opportunities for immigrants and women's political rights; and (5) expected participation in civic-related activities. Finally, the survey included students' perceptions of classroom climate and their participation in youth organizations (IEA Civic Education Study, 2003).

6. Ministerio de Cultura y Educación de la Nación, Resolución 2165, Buenos Aires, Noviembre 1990.

7. National experts in the specific subject area participated in the development of curricular standards. The list of participants, professional expertise and involvement can be found in the CBC 1995 publication.

8. 'Handicapped individuals' is the phrase used in the content standards list.

9. Although formally a federal country, Argentina can be characterized by a long standing and strong informal Unitarian system. For further information on this topic see Manzetti (1993) and Veliz (1980).

10. In order to sample the whole range of textbooks for mandatory education, we selected books for the first grade of each cycle: first, fourth and seventh grades.

11. The standards for Ethics and Citizen Education focus on discrimination against women, handicapped people, and others, as a form of violation of human rights.

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