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# What is citizenship? A comparison of representations from Turkey and old and new EU countries[1]

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*Abstract*

*In this paper we discuss the findings of a research project in which 100 trainee teachers (42 males, 58 females) in Turkey, exactly the same number of trainee teachers in a new EU country, Hungary, and in two old European countries, England and Spain provided data through the use of the Associative Group Analysis ( AGA ) technique (Szalay and Brent 1967) about their understandings and perceptions of 'citizenship'. A comparative work like this is much needed as several studies proved that there is a significant difference in the meaning attributed to citizenship in different societies (Lee& Fouts, 2005; Ross et al, 2006; Davies & Fülöp, 2010). Most of these studies were carried out with teachers, but there are relatively few exploring the ideas of a younger generation, the future teachers. It is important to investigate the perceptions of trainee teachers whose thinking is, simultaneously, reflective of the ways in which citizenship is currently perceived and also illustrative of what will happen to the nature of citizenship and citizenship education in the future. It is particularly important to investigate the notions of citizenship among Turkish teachers-to-be because the membership of Turkey in the European Union has become a major controversy of the ongoing enlargement of the European Union. To compare these notions to trainee teachers from a country that joined the EU less than a decade ago (Hungary) and from two 'old' member states (England and Spain) may point to issues that can be later the basis of discussions and a formation of an integrated view what citizenship may mean in the United Europe. Our results, based on categorisation of the associations to the word 'citizenship' show several similarities, but meaningful differences as well, that will be highlighted and discussed in the paper.*

*Key words: Citizenship, Trainee teachers, Representation, Cross-cultural comparison*

## Introduction

Several studies proved that there is a significant difference in the meaning attributed to citizenship in different countries and contexts (Lee& Fouts, 2005; Ross et al, 2006; Fülöp et al, 2008; Acun et al, 2009; Davies & Fülöp, 2010). The meaning of citizenship is partly a

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social construct that is the result of individual cognition, social interaction in the development of conceptual knowledge around it and social and political processes (Fouts and Lee, 2005). In this respect the concept of citizenship is not static but is dependent on individual and societal situations. Diverse approaches and perspectives may result diverse understanding of the concept. Therefore an investigation into the different representations of this concept in culturally and historically diverse European nations, and a particular group of young adults, future teachers, may be able to reveal the actual result of such a dynamic interrelationship.

Teachers' perceptions and beliefs clearly have an impact on their actions and so teachers' actions are likely to have an impact on the students' way of thinking. Teachers have the task to produce "good" citizens, but this task is difficult if there is a lack of clear meaning to the term. Therefore most of the studies about the notion of citizenship and the 'good citizen' were carried out with teachers. There are only a few exploring the ideas of a younger generation, the future teachers (Fülöp et al, 2008; Davies & Fülöp, 2010). To ask what citizenship means from future teachers has a high significance as the nature of the citizenship definition 'chosen' by them will direct their future efforts as teachers. How future teachers view the importance of the elements of the curriculum, how comfortable they will feel in teaching the material and how they model values and ideas expressed in the curriculum are crucial issues (Crippin, 2009; Acun et al, 2009). In other words, it is important to investigate the perceptions of trainee teachers whose thinking is, simultaneously, reflective of the ways in which citizenship is currently perceived and also illustrative of what will happen to the nature of citizenship and citizenship education in the future (Davies & Fülöp, 2010).

In previous studies English, Spanish and Hungarian trainee teachers' representation of citizenship were compared and the results reported. This paper adds to Turkish trainee teachers' data to this comparative endeavour. It is particularly important to investigate the notions of citizenship among Turkish teachers-to-be because the membership of Turkey in the European Union has become a major controversy of the ongoing enlargement of the European Union. According to many, as a country waiting to enter the EU, Turkey is still struggling to develop a democratic tradition comparable to that of other Western European countries (Crippin, 2009).In addition to this Acun at al (2009) in their study with British and Turkish student teachers showed that neither of these groups consider Turkey an integral part of Europe. Therefore the present comparison of Turkish trainee teachers' representations of citizenship with trainee teachers from a country that joined the EU less than a decade ago (Hungary) and from two 'old' member states (England and Spain) may point to issues that can be later the basis of discussions and a formation of an integrated view what citizenship may mean in the united Europe.

**The Turkish scene**

The teaching of citizenship and human rights has been a standard feature of Turkish education since the foundation of the Republic in 1923 (Crippin, 2009). Turkey as a democratic nation considers citizenship education as fundamental in creating active,

informed citizens. "The Education of the Human Rights and Citizenship" course has been inserted into the curriculum of public primary schools in Turkey since the 1998-1999 academic year (Acun et al, 2009). But since 2005 at the elementary level human rights, democracy and citizenship are taught in an interdisciplinary way and are integrated into all elementary courses especially those in life skills and social studies. At seventh and eights grades this becomes a one semester long separate subject, called 'Citizenship and Human Rights Education' (Aksit and Sands, 2006). At the high school level an elective course is offered in this area (Crippin, 2009).

To prepare teachers to deliver courses on citizenship the Higher Education Authority created two courses to be given in undergraduate teacher education, and it was compulsory to take for teachers-to-be. Beginning in 2009-2010 this course is required only for social studies teachers. There are many other programmes outside the formal teacher training e.g. the Education for Democratic Citizenship programme, the History Foundation reforming the social studies and history textbooks to reflect better human rights concerns, the Istanbul Policy Center, that runs in-service seminars for teachers on democratic citizenship education among others (Crippin, 2009).

Acun et al (2009) in their previously mentioned study also investigated Turkish and British student teachers' perceptions of Turkey's place in the European Union and of what it means to be 'European'. The most striking difference in opinion was about the impact of being part of the EU on Turkey and Britain. British participants worry less about losing their national identity because of the EU, they focus more on democracy, social justice, global citizenship and human rights. However, Turkish student teachers place a strong emphasis on national identity and Turkish citizenship and expressed the opinion that while joining the European Union would be beneficial in an economic and political sense, they had the feeling that it would produce harmful effects in cultural, social and religious sense and would threaten Turkish national identity.

**The Hungarian scene**

After the political changes of 1989, in Hungary, a post-socialist country, there is a deep distrust in political institutions and citizenship education has been connected with the fear of indoctrination and teachers and parents alike are suspicious and resist any kind of education that is related to an ideology, as it is against the individual's right for freedom (Fülöp, 2009). Another difficulty related to citizenship education is that a democratic society requires active citizenship. But there is no consensus in the Hungarian society about what type of man would be needed to be a good citizen. Because of all these there is no official, compulsory citizenship education in the Hungarian school and a certain resistance towards its introduction as a separate school subject. Currently citizenship education is hidden in the curriculum of different school subjects e.g. history.

**The English scene**

In England the status of citizenship education is profoundly different. As a consequence of the Crick Report (1998) that described that secondary school children were non-interested in citizenship, and were characterized by a kind of political apathy, citizenship education has become a National Curriculum subject. From September 2002 it was gradually introduced into secondary schools on a compulsory basis for pupils aged 11-16. The main goals are to increase the social and moral responsibility, the active participation in local communities, and the improvement of political culture (Fülöp, 2009; Davies & Fülöp, 2010).

**The Spanish scene**

Citizenship education in Spain has been introduced as a compulsory element of schooling relatively recently. The Education Act of Education, LOE, 2/2006, May 3 requires that in Primary and High School students should be prepared for the active practice of citizenship and to show respect for human rights. These objectives are to be met by including a specific subject titled *Citizenship Education and Human Rights*. This Act outlines the 'minimum contents' of the subject. These contents are concerned broadly with conflict and cooperation among groups (e.g. family, school, friends, community) and the rights and duties of each person within each group, identifying the diversity and rejecting discrimination that is necessary for the promotion of a democratic society. The minimum contents for primary schools are divided into 3 main parts: individuals and interpersonal relationships; life in the community; and, living in society. The minimum contents for secondary education are divided into 5 main parts: diversity; interpersonal relations and participation; the duties and rights of citizens; democratic schools in the 21st century; and, citizenship in a global world (Fülöp et al, 2008).

**Goal of the study**

Education of citizenship is currently not a separate school subject in Hungary and Turkey, while it has been introduced to schools both in England and Spain in the last decade. The four countries have different history with democracy, England being considered the cradle of it, Spain having a long lasting dictatorship and Hungary having the communist regime for about forty years in the 20th century, while Turkey as a democratic country since 1923 still struggles to establish a democracy comparable to Western Europe.

The goal of the present study is to investigate if there are differences in the way the future generation of teachers represent citizenship in these countries with very different historical background.

**Methods**

Our sample consisted of 400 student teachers with an equal number of males and females in the four national samples. See Table 1 below:

**Table 1. The sample**

|  | Turkish | Hungarian | Spanish | English |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Male** | 42 | 42 | 42 | 42 |
| **Female** | 58 | 58 | 58 | 58 |
| **All** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

Instead of a questionnaire or an in-depth interview, we decided to use a different method in this study, the so called AGA technique (Associative Group Analysis) developed by Szalay & Brent (1967). This technique is based on free associations and it is a non-reactive method i.e. it measures perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs without directly asking the participants to identify these characteristics, thus it is able to get closer to the subjective meaning of a concept, that is not under the control of conscious effort to meet social expectations or norms.

The basic procedure in using AGA is to obtain free word associations and compare the results between different groups of respondents. A stimulus word is given (a 'theme'), and respondents independently write as many free associations as they can in one minute. Analysis of the associations is achieved by scoring the responses indicating the weighted order of their occurrence. Earlier responses are seen as more closely associated with the stimulus word and to carry more meaning, therefore they get higher scores. The weightings assigned to responses beginning with the first in the sequence are: 6 (first), 5 (second), 4 (third), 3 (fourth), 3 (fifth), 3 (sixth), 3 (seventh), 2 (eighth), 2 (ninth), 1 (tenth and others). This was followed by categorisation when words with similar meaning were put together to form a category. Then all the weights within a category were added and it was calculated how many percent of the sum of all the weights of all the associations words in a given category contain.

In a previous publication a three country comparison was presented (Fülöp et.al, 2008). This paper extends the analysis to a fourth national group, the Turkish teachers-to-be.

**Results**

There was a difference in the number of associations among nationalities, as the ANOVA test showed ($F(3,396)=16.453$; $p=0.000$). According to the post-hoc LSD test, the English gave the fewest associations (mean=5.6; SD=2.19) which not differed significantly from the Spanish outcome (mean=5.8; SD=2.54). The third in ascending order was Hungarians (mean=6.6; SD=2.73), who differed from the Spanish significantly ($p=0.019$). Turkish gave the biggest number of answers (mean=7.8; SD=2.22) which was significantly more than the

Hungarian answers (p=0.001). So, the order of nations based on average number of associations is: English ≤Spanish < Hungarian <Turkish.

**Table 2.Descrpitive statistics of average number of associations per nationality**

| Nationality | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 100 | 5,62 | 2,192 | 1 | 11 |
| Spanish | 100 | 5,79 | 2,540 | 1 | 13 |
| Hungarian | 100 | 6,60 | 2,727 | 1 | 15 |
| Turkish | 100 | 7,78 | 2,223 | 3 | 11 |
| Total | 400 | 6,45 | 2,568 | 1 | 15 |

Significant gender differences could be observed in the English (F(1,97.405)=8.955; p=0.004) and Turkish (F(1,98)=16.801; p=0.000) sample. In both cases females (English=6.1 (±2.31); Turkish=8.5(±1.98)) gave significantly more associations than males (English=4.9(±1.81); Turkish=6.8(±2.43)).

**Table 3 . Descrpitive statistics of average number of associations per gender**

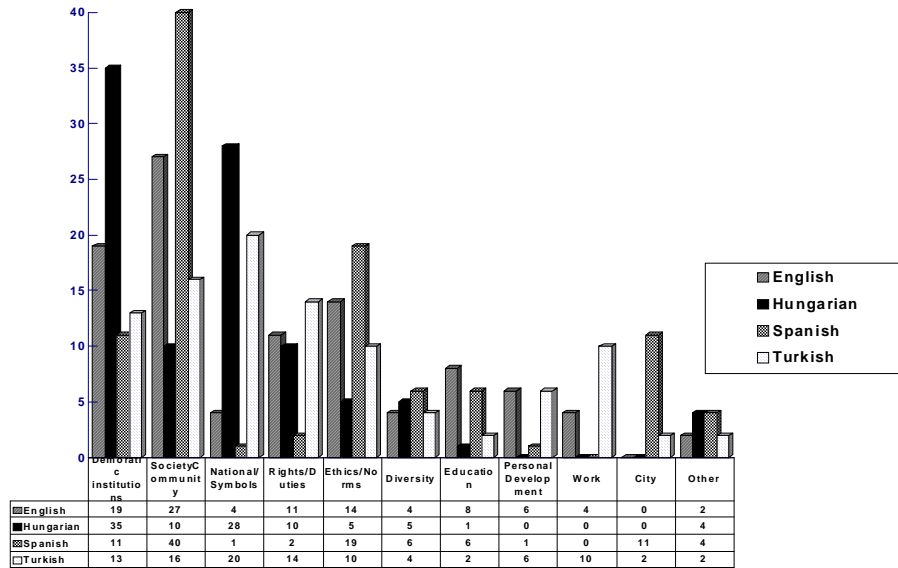| Nationality | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | male | 42 | 4,90 | 1,805 |
| | female | 58 | 6,14 | 2,313 |
| Spanish | male | 42 | 5,74 | 2,237 |
| | female | 58 | 5,82 | 2,765 |
| Hungarian | male | 42 | 6,86 | 2,893 |
| | female | 58 | 6,41 | 2,609 |
| Turkish | male | 42 | 6,79 | 2,181 |
| | female | 58 | 8,50 | 1,976 |
| Total | male | 169 | 6,07 | 2,429 |
| | female | 231 | 6,72 | 2,636 |

The categorization of the associations resulted in altogether 12 categories. Among those 11 were present in all four groups (see Table 4), while a separate Turkish category was called 'Anti-democratic'

**Table 4. Description of the semantic categories for the concept of citizenship with their most frequent associations**

| Category | Associations |
|---|---|
| DEMOCRATIC INSITUTIONS | Politics, law, justice, citizen, government, voting, state |
| SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY | Society, community, community awareness, environmental protection, religion, social responsibility , team work, cooperation, 'the ones we love' |
| NATIONAL  AND NATIONAL SYMBOLS | Nation/national, Turkish, Hungarian, British, homeland, national flag, country, Ataturk |
| RIGHTS AND DUTIES | Duties, rights, responsibilities, obligations |
| ETHICS, NORMS AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES | Democracy, respect, morals, ethics, loyalty, equality, freedom |
| DIVERSITY/ GLOBAL | Culture, global, tolerance, foreigners, immigrants, multiculturalism |
| EDUCATION AND SCHOOL | PSE, PHSE, education, child |
| PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS | Skills (social, life etc.), development, growing up, self-improvement |
| WORK/ECONOMICS | Careers, work and work experience, money, economics |
| CITY LIFE | City, town, buildings, urban zone, city bus |
| OTHER | Words that did not fit any category e.g. lawn-mowing, yellow, warm etc. |

The distribution of words among the different categories in the different national groups can be seen in Figure 1.

<figure>

**Figure 1.**
**English, Hungarian, Spanish, Turkish data**
**(percentages)**

| | Democratic institutions | SocietyCommunity | National/Symbols | Rights/Duties | Ethics/Norms | Diversity | Education | Personal Development | Work | City | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 19 | 27 | 4 | 11 | 14 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| Hungarian | 35 | 10 | 28 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Spanish | 11 | 40 | 1 | 2 | 19 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 11 | 4 |
| Turkish | 13 | 16 | 20 | 14 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 2 | 2 |

</figure>

The distribution of associations among the joint categories was different in all groups, however showed some similarities across groups as well.

The Turkish respondents associate with the word citizenship mainly words that fall into the 'National and national symbols' category (20%). The words with the highest loadings are Atatürk (54), homeland (50), nation (44), unity (41) and flag (38). The second biggest category is 'Society and community '(16%). The associations with the biggest loadings are humans (58), community (52), the ones we love (*sevdiklerimiz,* 49), togetherness (28), our environment (24), fraternity (22). While 'Rights and duties' was only the third biggest category (14%, ), some words that fell into this category had the highest loadings in the whole pool of words, namely rights (96), tax (81) and responsibility (55). 'Democratic institutions' (13%) also contained some high loading words like law (66) and justice (60). The most prominent words within the category 'Ethics/norms and Democratic values' (10%) were equality (39) and freedom (30). In 'Work and finances' (10%) the word money got the highest loading (55). 'Personality development' (6%), 'Diversity' (4%), 'Education' (2%), 'City' (2%) and 'Other' (2%) contained less than ten percent of the associations. The separate Turkish category, 'Anti-democratic' gathered only two percent of the words as well and words like *pressure, being exploited*, exploitation, preferential treatment, bribe fell into this category.

The biggest Hungarian category was 'Democratic institutions' (35%) and the highest loading word among all associations, justice (124) fell into this category. Other words with high loadings were country (75), law (58), voting (47) and state (40). The second biggest category was 'National and national symbols' (28%) and the second and third highest loading words in the whole pool of associations can be found here: homeland (93) and Hungarian (87). Other high loading words in this category were nation (71), love of one's country (49) and patriotism (30). These two categories altogether covered more than half of all the associations (63%) to the word citizenship. Two other categories that contained ten percent of the associations each were 'Rights and duties' (10%) and 'Society and Community' (10%). In the category 'Rights and duties' the highest loading words were duties (65) and rights (63), in the 'Society and community' category there were no words with high loadings, the highest was society (30). Other categories like 'Ethics, norms and democratic values' and 'Diversity' and 'Education' contained only a small proportion of the Hungarian associations (5% ,4% and 1% respectively). Hungarian future teachers did not associate the word citizenship with 'Personal development', 'Work' and 'City' at all.

The majority of English associations (75%) fell into four categories, 'Society and community' (27%, society: 92; community: 46, religion: 36), 'Democratic institutions' (19%, politics: 119; government: 40; laws: 37), 'Ethics and norms and democratic values' (14%, respect: 42; democracy: 32) and 'Rights and duties' (11%, responsibility: 77; rights: 74). 'Education' (8%), 'Personal development' (6%), 'Work' (4%), 'Diversity' (4%) and 'National symbols' were categories that contained only a small proportion of the associations.

Almost half of the Spanish associations were categorized as related to 'Society and Community' (40%) and the words with the highest loadings were living together (119), cooperation (71), society (68), people (55), social needs (54) and solidarity (53). The second biggest category 'Ethics and norms and democratic values' (19%, ) had the highest loading word among all associations, respect (169). Two other bigger categories were 'Democratic institutions' (11%, citizen: 106), and 'City' (11%, city: 151; town:44). All other categories contained less than ten percent of the loadings: 'Diversity' (6%), Education (6%), 'Other' (4%), 'Rights and duties' (2%). Only one percent of all association loadings fell into the 'National and national symbols' category and there were no associations within 'Work' and 'Personal development'.

Citizenship is associated with 'Society and community', 'Ethics norms and democratic values' primarily among the Spanish respondents while associations related to 'City' appeared almost exclusively among the Spanish respondents. Citizenship is associated with 'Democratic institutions' primarily among the Hungarians and with 'National and national symbols' among the Hungarian and Turkish future teachers. Citizenship is connected with 'Rights and duties' and almost exclusively with 'Work' by the Turkish.

**Discussion**

In the present study it was found that while there is a considerable overlap among the categories, - a sign of a large degree of similarities -, still citizenship has a different representation among future teachers in Turkey, Hungary, England and Spain.  It is the degree of emphasis and salience of certain type of concepts that differentiates the representations rather than a totally unique set of ideas that determine the categorization.

The concept of citizenship may contain more formal aspects, that are more related to the nature and purpose of the state and more informal aspects i.e. values and beliefs about the nature of people relating to each other as members of the same society.  There is a tendency nowadays that the notion of citizenship moves from the more formal and classical concepts like rights and obligations towards more informal and liberal concepts like social responsibility towards the collective (Fouts and Lee, 2005).There is also a tendency to move from the more conservative national/nationalistic concepts (patriotism, national symbols such as flag or national anthem) towards more post-national concepts (Fouts and Lee, 2005).

Spanish and English future teachers connect citizenship mainly with informal aspects, like people living together, cooperating and respecting each other, which are associations within the category 'Society and community' and indicate social concern characteristics.
Citizenship as relationship among people is also a salient representation among the Turkish respondents. On the other hand, Hungarian future teachers emphasize the formal aspects most, referring to democratic institutional aspects of citizenship while having associations related to social and community concerns are the least frequent and weighted in this group among the four. As a formal aspect, 'Rights and duties' is the most important way, out of the four of thinking about citizenship among the Turkish future teachers out of the four.

For the Spanish and the English respondents associations related to the nation and national symbols, patriotic concerns were peripheral, reflecting a 'post-national' conceptualization, while for Hungarian and Turkish respondents they occupied a significant proportion of the associations.  The significant role of Atatürk, the founder of the modern Turkish Republic, in establishing democracy in the Turkish society is reflected in the amount of associations referring to him.  In Gündogdu et al's (2009) research the teachers whom they interviewed about democracy etc. proudly stated that the school is fully committed to principles and ideas of Atatürk.

England and Spain are multicultural societies, however Hungary is a relatively homogenous country and in Turkey the notion of a multicultural society is not promoted. While there is cultural and religious diversity in Turkey these are just starting to be officially recognized and there is no significant external immigration to the country (Crippin, 2009). While associations related to diversity were not prevalent in any respondent groups, a strong national identity concern did not appear in the explicitly and openly multicultural societies, indirectly indicating a more inclusive attitude. The English results are reinforcing the outcome of a previous study in which English teachers considered patriotism the least important quality of the good citizen among 13 different characteristics and very strongly

identified with the idea of the good citizen expressed in an active concern for the welfare of others (Davies, Gregory, Riley, 2005).

This Turkish and Hungarian perception of citizenship would be an example of Heater's national model of citizenship (1999) in which identity is tied to the state, while the English and Spanish notion, not referring to nationality and national symbols, indicates a more flexible and inclusive notion.

These differences indicate a more traditional/classical citizenship concept among the Hungarian, a somewhat mixed concept among the Turkish (both formal and informal aspects are salient) and a mainly liberal/informal concept among the Spanish. The English future teachers representation of citizenship is post-national in nature, but otherwise their associations are distributed among the different categories in a more even way than in the other three groups, indicating a wide and most encompassing representation of the concept of citizenship.

Future teachers will face in daily work immediate citizenship issues, and they are the ones who will implement citizenship curriculum in the future. Their representation of citizenship is insightful for policy makers and also to those involved in teacher education. As the results of this investigation show the representation of the concept of citizenship is different among all four countries. While the English and Spanish indicate a more informal and post-nationalistic concept, the Turkish and the Hungarian a more formal and classical approach, but they all show a unique pattern that can be connected with historical, cultural and educational differences.

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