

“The children don’t have any idea”: How case studies of controversy can help build democratic habits of mind

“Los niños no tienen ni idea”: La forma en que los estudios de caso pueden contribuir a la formación de hábitos de pensamiento democráticos

“As crianças não tem a mínima idéia”: A forma em que os estudos de caso podem contribuir à formação de hábitos de pensamento democráticos

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Abstract

This article explores the pathways and challenges to strengthening civic education in nascent democracies. I first provide a rationale for employing controversial issues as a way of achieving this end, especially when used in conjunction with reflective thinking. Then, by drawing on three recent studies, I cinch together the cross-cultural contextual features of school experiences and provide an emergent typology for researchers and policy-makers in other contexts as they work to explore conscious and deliberate treatment of controversial issues in unique settings.

Key words author

Controversy, civic education, democratic citizenship education, reflective inquiry.

Key words plus

Civics, civic education.

Transference to practice

Positioning students to engage normative controversies requires reconceptualizing curriculum towards civic aims. The consistent use of controversy requires situating students in a constructivist ontology and student-centered environment in order to bring about substantive deliberation, discussion, and reflective inquiry. In addition, the pedagogy involved in exploring controversial issues requires active, meaningful, challenging, and integrative strategies that allow for rational contestation of multiple points of view, perspectives, sources, and ideological frameworks. In short, the instructional enactment of controversial content needs to be decidedly democratic.

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Palabras clave descriptor

Educación cívica, educación ciudadana.

Palavras-chave

Controvérsia, educação cívica, educação democrática cidadã, pesquisa reflexiva.

Palavras-chave descritor

Educação cívica, Educação cidadã.

Resumen

Este artículo explora los caminos que hay que seguir y los desafíos que hay que enfrentar para fortalecer la educación cívica en las democracias emergentes. En primer lugar, se presenta la idea de emplear temas polémicos como una manera de lograr este objetivo, en especial cuando tales temas se trabajan en conjunto con el pensamiento reflexivo. Luego, apoyados en tres estudios recientes, se entrelazan las características culturales y contextuales de las experiencias escolares y se presenta una tipología emergente dirigida a investigadores y a encargados de formular políticas en distintos contextos para que exploren la forma de tratar de manera consciente y deliberada temas polémicos en entornos especiales.

Transferencia a la práctica

Para poner a los estudiantes en posición de abordar controversias normativas, se requiere reconceptualizar los currículos hacia objetivos de carácter cívico. El uso sistemático de controversias exige ubicar a los estudiantes en una ontología constructivista y en un ambiente centrado en el estudiante, para lograr así la deliberación sustancial, la discusión y la investigación reflexiva. Además, la pedagogía implicada al explorar los temas polémicos requiere estrategias activas, significativas, desafiantes e integradoras que permitan respuestas racionales de distintos puntos de vista, perspectivas, fuentes y marcos ideológicos. En resumen, la enseñanza de contenidos polémicos necesita ser, en definitiva, democrática.

Resumo

Este artigo explora os caminhos que devem ser seguidos e os desafios que há que enfrentar para fortalecer a educação cívica nas democracias emergentes. Em primeiro lugar, apresenta-se a idéia de empregar temas polêmicos como uma maneira de atingir este objetivo, especialmente quando tais temas trabalham-se em conjunto com o pensamento reflexivo. Depois, apoiados em três estudos recentes, entrelaçam-se as características culturais e contextuais das experiências escolares e apresenta-se uma tipologia emergente dirigida a pesquisadores e a encarregados de formular políticas em distintos contextos para que explorem a forma de tratar de maneira consciente e deliberada temas polêmicos em contextos especiais.

Transferência à prática

Para por os estudantes em posição de abordar controvérsias normativas, requer-se redesenhar os currículos para atingir objetivos de caráter cívico. O uso sistemático de controvérsias exige colocar os estudantes em uma ontologia construtivista e num ambiente centrado no estudante, para assim conseguir a deliberação substancial, a discussão e a pesquisa reflexiva. Além disso, a pedagogia implicada ao explorar os temas polêmicos requer estratégias ativas, significativas, desafiantes e integradoras que permitam respostas racionais de diferentes pontos de vista, perspectivas, fontes e marcos ideológicos. Em resumo, o ensino de conteúdos polêmicos precisa ser, definitivamente, democrático.

Introduction

The purpose of civic education is often linked to the participation of citizens in activities directed toward the public good and the protection of individual rights. Although this purpose is largely unassailable, too often we neglect the antecedent conditions necessary for this sort of engagement. For example, students often view citizenship, as applied, in political rather than social frameworks (Chiodo & Martin, 2005). Education is certainly culpable in this overemphasis, for it can easily focus on certain elements of civic competence, including knowing how the government works, in terms of institutions and processes. Knowing these facts and concepts is certainly important and, after all, testing this sort of knowledge is much easier than appraising the type of decision-making and thinking skills students develop. Yet, although there is little disagreement about the trinity of what civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions are of most worth (Center for Civic Education, 1991), too often these lack synergistic unity in education, and in particular, within developing democracies. Too often, thinking processes and exposure to contested issues are many times disjointed from students' real life experiences. Instead, axiomatic platitudes about good government and civic life fill the curriculum. Given this recurring problem, I present a case for civic education through *controversy* as a way to systematically achieve the aims of civic education from nascent to established democracies and contexts in between.

If we think of democracy and education as unified and lived within schools, then the focus becomes what John Dewey (1916) referred to as "associated living" and "conjoint communicated experience" (p. 87), which very much depends upon unencumbered discussion, weighing possibilities, marshaling reflective thought, and developing tolerant dispositions. In short, we need to ensure ample focus on educating students to make informed and reasoned decisions (Center for Civic Education, 1991; NCSS, 1994). Ultimately this activity *is* democracy as well as education that develop the rights, freedoms, and responsibilities (the ends that civic education typically maintains). To get there we need to draw on contemporary issues that are relevant, meaningful, challenging, and normative (these constitute the material from which associated living is realized). Therefore, this article does not address the skills of debate nor the civic dispositions we aim toward, but rather focuses on controversy as a curriculum bit that provides direction for the knowledge, skills, and dispositions which, when realized, reduce conflict, foster understanding, develop respect among ethnicities, and make clear the value and necessity of variation and diversity in a society (Hess, 2008).

Addressing controversies in democratic education requires a particular kind of thinking. Dewey (1933) defined this thinking as *reflective*, which entails the "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 9). It is a process that seeks to resolve a problem and reach a resolution, whereby any data, inference, or belief that does not aid in the resolution of the problem is jettisoned in favor of that which does. The end goal controls ideas pragmatically and it is rooted in a state of doubt—a "felt difficulty," perplexity, or some "cerebral itch" that demands resolution—(p. 6). If there is no question or felt difficulty, students will act according to habit. Dewey referred to these thoughts as assumptions that develop unconsciously and become a "part of our mental furniture" (p. 7). These inherited and settled beliefs become legitimized as sources of knowledge not subjected to reflective thought.

Article description | Descripción del artículo | Artigo Descrição

Much of this article initially served as a workshop paper during the Irmgard Coninx Stiftung's 9th Berlin Roundtables on Transnationality (2008). The author would like to thank the participants of that workshop, as well as the anonymous reviewers of *Magis*, for their insightful feedback and suggestions.

Beliefs of this kind, including assumptions about homosexuality, foreigners, divergent religious beliefs, and the Holocaust, need to be revisited within the context of schooling. They need to be evaluated and interrogated so as to problematize the source of belief with knowledge and the experience of humanity. With the influx of new information and perspectives, beliefs can give rise to questions inimical to Manichean assumptions and students can reconstruct beliefs on the basis of evidence and reason.

In many post-totalitarian societies, both contemporary issues and history are replete with topics which citizens have not subjected to reflective consideration. Employing this method of intelligence is no doubt a threat to authority, political and otherwise (Hoyt, 2006), for it ties content with civic skills which include thinking critically and constructively about issues and conditions as well as identifying, analyzing, and evaluating phenomena, positions, and stances (Patrick & Vontz, 2001). By drawing on a series of studies conducted in post-totalitarian countries, this paper offers an emerging typology of factors which serve to both minimize and advance the release of controversial topics and histories in nascent democracies. This typology is presented as a tentative heuristic to help us leverage controversies more effectively in order to achieve understanding and respect among different ethnic and social groups in divided societies, as well as develop a wide-range of democratic habits and commitments.

A rationale for controversy

Democratic societies require citizens who can make judgments about controversial issues (Engle & Ochoa, 1988). These judgments, which often involve contemporary public concerns, pay a democratic dividend by increasing civic participation, critical thinking skills (Torney-Purta et al., 2002), interpersonal skills, and political activity (Hess, 2008). They also elevate interest in current events, social studies, social issues, and increase the development of tolerance (Harwood & Hahn, 1990; Goldenson, 1978; Curtis & Shaver, 1980; Remy, 1972). Students themselves have generally positive attitudes toward these discussions and think that they are important (Hess & Posselt, 2002).

Controversies within curriculum constitute a normative anchor within citizenship education, and the degree to which controversies and closed areas are subjected to reflection has profound implications for the vibrancy of a democracy. Through controversies, students can broach difficult issues and work toward their resolution (Fluckiger & Wetig, 2003), including the "normative possibilities" that flow from conflict (Ettlinger, 2004), which in turn releases opportuni-

ties for social change beyond local communities. In addition, opening heretofore closed areas and entering into polemical discussions helps to make political issues become meaningful and relevant for students (McGowan, McGowan & Lombard, 1994). Students who engage in discussions involving controversial issues are also well-positioned to become agents of change. These students can actively engage in normative decisions, which also advance the process of recognizing, celebrating, and embracing diversity among and within groups (Crossa, 2005).

In a pluralistic democracy, the means of education has significant implications for developing skills and dispositions that perpetuate free, active, and harmonious social life. Alan F. Griffin's (1942) seminal work highlighted the importance of students engaging in judgments concerning societal values and evaluating how standards, which some perceive as established and uncontested, originate and are perpetuated. As our society continually renegotiates the degree to which students will rationally grapple with closed and gray areas, we are also shaping the larger enterprise of education as fostering democratic or totalitarian attitudes (Hunt & Metcalf, 1968). In the former, students require the chance to deliberate on controversial matters (Parker, 2003; Ross & Marker, 2005), but the current and often narrow focus on content knowledge is often divorced from controversial topics, leaving little room for experiences to develop that contain considerations for the common good. In addition, teachers' perceptions of controversy as situated within their sense of academic freedom and school contexts very much determines their willingness to address controversies in their social studies classrooms (Misco & Patterson, 2007). If left unchecked, a departure from value-based societal problems will leave subject areas isolated and removed from their social bearings, thereby compromising their utility (Dewey, 1938).

Case studies of controversy: Romania

Understanding Romanian Holocaust education as a controversial topic fits within the established line of inquiry and literature on the challenges and opportunities for authentic, complicated, and substantive Holocaust education in Europe with the end goal of fostering democratic citizens (Misco, 2008). After the fall of communism, Romanian society largely failed to address responsibility for the fate of Romanian Jews and Jews murdered by Romanians in the Ukraine (Weinbaum, 2006). As late as 2003, the official narrative denied that the Holocaust occurred in Romania (Fleming, 2006) or that the Holocaust affected Romanian Jews, yet at least 250,000 Jews were murdered

under Romanian leadership. The communist and post-communist historiography often treated ethnic Romanians as the victims of the Holocaust, rather than the perpetrators, which deflected guilt (Kenez, 2006) and minimized the need to confront history. Textbooks included exculpatory passages that claimed Romania was one of the few places where the final solution did not occur, mainly due to the lack of native cooperation. One communist source even asserted that Romania saved Jewish lives en masse (Cioflanca, 2004).

As a result of strong communist, nationalistic, and xenophobic currents in Romanian society, this silenced history was prolonged for decades (Ioanid, 2000). The recent historical work on the Holocaust in Romania has only recently prompted educational initiatives, which explains the limited knowledge most Romanians have of the Holocaust (Wertsman, 2004) and the dearth of empirical studies on what is actually taught in schools. According to a report furnished by the Romanian government, school children now have compulsory Holocaust education (Task Force, 2004), yet the degree of depth, types of instructional strategies, and specific content addressed is largely unknown.

After the war, communist historiography tended to aggregate the victims of fascism, downplay anti-Semitism, and avoid the plight of any ethnic minority. References to the Holocaust were not tolerated and a comparative approach evolved that served to minimize victims and political decisions of that time (Friling, Ioanid & Ionescu, 2005). The nature of the tragedy helped produce a "chain of silence" (Rotman, 2003, p. 205) among victims and bystanders. Until 2003, the official Romanian response was denial of both general complicity and even the admission that Romanian Jews were killed at all. There was no guilt or blame for Romanians concerning Jews, if even acknowledged. Instead, Romanians were construed as heroes and the Jews were blamed for their deaths (Weinbaum, 2006). Although communist leaders were initially averse to Antonescu and his regime, they never gave attention to the victims (Rotman, 2003) and Antonescu was largely portrayed as a hero in history texts (Wertsman, 2004). He had, after all, saved the Jews (Pippidi, 2004) and was disassociated with "Nazi ideology and crimes" (Shafir, 2004:83). Moreover, a strong sentiment existed that Jews caused damage to Romania and brought communism to Romania (Pippidi, 2004). Romanians replaced Jews as the chief victims of Nazism under communism (Cioflanca, 2004) as atrocities were minimized, exceptionalism propagated, Antonescu rehabilitated, and negationist historiography dominated the discourse (Cioflanca, 2004). Conscious avoidance of the Holocaust during communism, and even after 1990, included many distortions of the past and attempts to "hide the facts" (Friling et al., 2005:12).

More contemporary memory of the Holocaust still tends to "explain away" historical wrongs, including bystander participation (Shafir, 2003a:177). Shafir (2003a) noted that memory, in its collective form, is quite selective because we forget what we do not care to remember and when historical evidence suggests guilt, we often engage in its deflection. But Romania was exceptional in its degree of Holocaust involvement, which makes governmental claims into the 21st century that the Holocaust did not occur in Romania (Fleming, 2006; Oisteanu, 2005; Shafir, 2004; Wertsman, 2004) all the more shocking. The historical narrative generations of Romanians encountered, until very recently, was based on myths interwoven with facts (Weinbaum, 2006). For 50 years, knowledge of the Holocaust in Romania was not part of educated adults' consciousness and the current misunderstanding of this history is very much the result of conscious manipulation that shaped collective memory into today (Rotman, 2003).

Although educational initiatives have recently abounded, the physical violence, vandalism, and societal prejudices across Eastern Europe are only the "tip of the iceberg of unresolved Holocaust issues that continue to cast their ominous shadow over Jewish life in Eastern Europe" (Zuroff, 2006:15). Transforming social life to one of tolerance and non-discrimination has been slow, which is why rejecting "the other" is still omnipresent in many aspects of some societies. The persistence of attitudes that "Hungarians want to tear apart Romania, the Roma can't integrate society, homosexuals are freaks of nature, and Jews rule the world" are beliefs held by too many Romanians—each of which represents a threat to the stability of Romania's democracy (Moraru, Popa, Toba & Voicu, 2003:108).

One significant advantage that Romanian history and social studies education enjoys is a large degree of teacher autonomy. This autonomy is manifested in numerous ways, all of which contain the potential for releasing coverage and discussion of controversial issues, such as the Holocaust in Romania. Teachers now have the option to use the textbook of their choosing and an array of textbooks for history are available at numerous grade levels. Unlike some other post-communist societies, for the past five years the Romanian Ministry of Education has been very interested in and supportive of Holocaust education. In many respects, according to one history inspector, this has been "the priority" of the institution. The Ministry has contributed significant resources to help teachers engage in training sessions on the Holocaust and travel to Yad Vashem for refined workshops on Holocaust education and it has put into place incentives that reward those who take part in these experiences.

Yet, a pervasive and fundamental challenge to unearthing controversial issues of this kind is time. Simply put, the bulk of Romanian students receive a paucity of instructional time devoted to social studies topics. First, the mandatory educational system is K-10, which limits the exposure of some students to the rich curriculum available in the 12th grade. But the main barrier stems from the one class per week that students have in history. Although civic education is compulsory in grades 3-8, and history in grades 4-12, less than one hour per week of instructional time inhibits the investigation of contested, complicated, and ill-structured historical narratives. This challenge is exacerbated by the topical selection of each year's curriculum. For example, grades 9 and 10 are a mix of national and world history, grade 11 is the 20th century, and grade 12 is national history in a European context. Given the numerous and laudatory examples of what to teach and how to teach about the Holocaust, which Yad Vashem and the International Task Force on Holocaust education suggest (Task Force, 2004), it is quite difficult to comprehend exactly how a teacher would teach the topic in a garden variety history course given the demands of other content. Presenting individual narratives, dilemmas, choices, and nuances of victims, perpetrators, bystanders, and rescuers, approaches these agencies endorse, are largely chimerical outside of the optional Holocaust course.

Similar to teachers, many students bring impoverished understandings of the Holocaust into Romanian classrooms. Many are armed with information derived from the internet, including websites dedicated to legitimate as well as apocryphal knowledge. A number of teachers I interviewed indicated that students will "not know anything" about the Holocaust unless their families have personal experiences that are discussed at home or if they initiate their own research. Although the matriculation exam at the end of high school includes history, it deliberately does not address the Holocaust, precisely because, as teachers in Iasi indicated, it is "a delicate topic." This delicacy was also true in the communist period, which raises questions about the degree to which these topics are actually taught, if they are not tested. Moreover, students can even opt out of the history component of the exam altogether and select another topic. Teachers are still officially required to teach about the Holocaust, but there are no mechanisms in place to ensure coverage. As of 2007, Romania does not have educational research tools in place to determine students' understanding of Holocaust history (Misco, 2008).

Although numerous challenges and contextual obstacles undermine quality history education in Romania, one recurring theme among all respondents is that instruction very much depends on the teacher,

which speaks to the earlier strength of teacher autonomy, but this sort of freedom can work both ways. For example, even though Antonescu is listed in the programs of study, and the textbooks have multiple perspectives of his leadership, teacher discretion can ultimately have a very strong impact on the way in which the controversy is framed.

Finally, when asked if parents assert resistance to the Holocaust, Antonescu, the communist-era, or other controversial issues in the classroom, the bulk of respondents cited a great deal of indifference among most parents. As one teacher indicated, "there are many parents who are not interested; they are indifferent to what students learn in school; they are more interested in immediate results." Similar to other societal contexts, the private benefits of education, namely the content mastery their children can demonstrate for tangible benefits such as advanced education, are the primary focus of what parents demand (Misco, 2007a). Although some might be interested in the debates as couched within the media, specifically the history debates, their "own bad knowledge about the history of Romania, under the communist regime" fails to incite rejection. They may question what is being taught, but they do not engage administrators or teachers to influence content goals.

Case studies of controversy: Latvia

Another country currently involved in renegotiating its past is the Republic of Latvia (Misco, 2007b; 2007c). Although Latvians do not publicly contest the Holocaust, public discourse remains uniformed and sometimes hostile about what took place (Zisere, 2005). Prior to 1990, Holocaust historiography was limited to Western sources, which contained few perspectives (Feldmanis, 2005). Often, apocryphal Soviet sources placed blame on anti-Semitic Latvians (Ezergailis, 1996) and tended to downplay the loss of Jewish life. Yet, the murder of Jews during Nazi German occupation was the gravest crime and tragedy in Latvia's modern history (Erglis, 2005; Stranga, 2005). The Holocaust in Latvia resulted in the death of over 70,000 Latvian Jews, as well as 20,000 Jews from other territories. At first glance, a reader of history might assume that as a result of occupation, Nazi Germany alone committed these heinous acts. Or, because propaganda from that era has endured into the present day, others might assume that Latvia was a collaborationist and anti-Semitic country which willingly participated in genocidal acts independent of German involvement (Viksne, 2005). But the history of the Holocaust in Latvia is extremely complicated, which involved numerous responses among Latvian

individuals and institutions within the context of multiple occupations.

Latvian teachers offer unique explanations for this historical silence. Although some Holocaust curriculum resources are already available to teachers, including 32 new lessons produced during the recent curriculum development initiative "Teaching the Holocaust in Latvian Schools Project" (Misco, 2007b), a wide variety of forces undermine the enactment of these and other lessons. As a result of surveying and interviewing Latvian teachers I found seven emergent categories in response to this issue: instructional time, comfort levels, exams and standards, history as a closed area, victimization, lack of knowledge, and collaboration.

Over 70% of teachers surveyed claimed to teach two or fewer periods about the Holocaust each year. In comparison, 88% of these teach about the Holocaust *as it occurred in Latvia* in two or fewer periods. These differences ultimately reveal how limited instructional time is on this topic, especially when we consider the 40 minute length of class periods. Of 44 respondents, only 3 deviated from the consistent barriers of limited lessons available for instruction, lack of time, a set curriculum, and the need to adhere to external syllabi, national exams, and national standards. Not surprisingly, almost all of the respondents suggested that these features tend to infringe on teacher autonomy. The Ministry's interest in testing, standards, and assurance of content knowledge therefore confounds the introduction of enriching materials that capture the complexity of the Holocaust. The power of standards, set curricula, and high-stakes exams also intensifies in the ninth and twelfth grades. At that stage, although the Holocaust fits within standards, pressures related to the national exam held at the end of the academic year serve to marginalize deep investigations into Holocaust history. Teachers also cited the lack of "different people" in the regions as one reason why the topic sometimes lacks coverage. One teacher indicated that "we do not have Jews in our area; people do not talk about this topic very often." Others felt that conversation about Holocaust education started to become a topic in concert with accession to the European Union (EU).

An additional source of this historical silence is victimization. The deportation and murder of Latvians in 1940 and 1941, as well as the suffering Latvia endured during 50 years of Soviet occupation is a form of comparative trivialization (Shafir, 2003b). Because the deportation or murder of 30,000 Latvians never resulted in a trial or war crime tribunal, many Latvians feel that their suffering received short shrift. Moreover, the interest of international institutions and individuals in the Latvian treatment of the Holocaust has had an

exasperating effect, making Latvian suffering at the hands of the Soviets a preferred topic.

Additional issues that serve to minimize teaching, learning, and talking about the Holocaust are lack of knowledge and apathy. Although apathy can certainly be tied to Latvian victimization, whereby concern for those other than Latvians is diminished, it also stems from ignorance on the topic. Lack of knowledge about the Holocaust, which was promulgated during the Soviet era and still influences generations of Latvians, has only diminished partially. One prominent educator noted that "because teachers know little about something, they don't talk about it. This is the case in Latvia; silences due to lack of knowledge. Silence for decades." After years of work with schools, one teacher noted that: "I saw it clearly that children don't have any idea."

Case studies of controversy: Kyrgyzstan

Social education in present-day Kyrgyzstan fits within citizenship transmission (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977) and morality of custom (Dewey, 1960) models. In a recent study (Misco & Hamot, 2007) Kyrgyz educators overwhelmingly considered virtues, behaviors, and dispositions as the defining attributes of morality as situated within their civic educational system. Incipient individualism, selfishness, and economic gain seemed to be major problems in Kyrgyz culture that challenge their changing vision of civic education, though these issues are not squarely addressed in classrooms with the rigors of reflective thinking nor a wide breadth of diverse perspectives. In short, students in Kyrgyzstan lack exposure to normative issues found in controversy.

The ambiguous nature of moral education in Kyrgyzstan and its overwhelming lack of support are unfortunate, given its fulcrum role to build community, sustain civil society, and improve the quality of life in any democratic society, whether it is new or established. These educators want to hold back the tide of individualism and the drive for personal wealth that is permeating their developing democracy, and they are frustrated with their failed attempts in this process. The stated roles played by religion, state, community members, and parents in moral upbringing demonstrates Kyrgyzstan's unique situation in this regard. For example, previous studies conducted in Japan (Misco, 2004) indicate demonstrable state and family influences relative to moral education outside of the teachers' instructional authority. In Kyrgyzstan, with no directives from any of the institutions that normally compete for influence, teachers truly have *carte blanche* and as a result rely on what was learned and

practiced during the Soviet era or revived from their cultural past, even if it is disjointed from the reality their students' experience today. As a result, they allow sectarian beliefs unfettered access to students in arguably the most important class of the school day. Also, the quality of civic education a student will receive seems directly proportional to the quality of the teacher's pedagogical content knowledge, relative to moral undertakings.

The problem of individualism is one that many liberal democratic societies face. Democratic societies such as the United States have also seen the common good "give way to the common greed" (Lasley & Biddle, 1996) and the expurgation of a selfless and communal morality. Public education in Kyrgyzstan, as in the United States, has attempted to counter this trend with a renewed commitment to moral education in the form of virtue and value transmission, or character education through *lyman* and *Vospitatelnyy Chas*. The problem is that attending to individualism and selfishness with isolated, declarative moral facts often exacerbates the problem. Normative issues are thus silenced controversies as platitudes take their place in the school day. Unfortunately, the absorption of these facts and truths of morality is "so exclusively an individual affair that it tends very naturally to pass into selfishness" (Dewey, 1900:15) and a general compliance with imposed moral systems.

Morality of custom (Dewey, 1960), which is generally the tenor of character education programs listing virtues and vices, requires adhering to societal guidelines without thought or deliberation. When parents, teachers, and the state ultimately compel students to blindly accept ethical codes, they erode occasions for doubt and assume a linear progression ignoring complex questions. By relying on custom and traditions without entertaining the prospect of change, societies not only fail to progress, but also fail to keep pace with new experiences that continually shape and alter our consciousness and values. The morality of custom, which once acted as a pervasive social adhesive and made people aware of their reciprocal relations, no longer corresponds to modernity or post-modernity. In a sense, inculcation of unquestionable customary morality works against the development of democratic citizenship through a relevant moral education that addresses controversies situated in normative terrain.

Conclusion & emerging typology

Michael Shafir's (2003a; 2004) work on selective and deflective negationism, as well as comparative trivialization (2003b), provides a helpful heuristic for

understanding the ways in which controversial topics and histories are avoided in post-totalitarian European education. But the purpose of this paper is to build a tentative typology for *addressing* controversy in those kinds of settings. As such, these are emergent and tentative offerings, focusing primarily on what teachers can do, and they should be built upon with subsequent grounded understandings from other studies (Misco, 2007d).

Based on these case studies, the themes of ignorance, instructional time, and teacher prerogative cinch together the main challenges and pathways to addressing controversy. Ignorance includes the apathy among students and teachers, the lack of teacher trainings in some contexts, and lack of parental involvement. Unfortunately, ignorance is often self-perpetuating and ill-structured for enrichment and remediation. The second theme, instructional time, is much more palpable and pregnant with remediation possibilities. Instructional time includes curriculum imposition, such as standards, testing, curriculum mapping, and national syllabi. The third theme, teacher prerogative, is also solution-oriented in terms of autonomy, including content materials and instructional strategies. In short, educational institutions –especially ministries of education– need to provide more teacher autonomy, fewer impositions, and professional development opportunities that allow teachers to have positive experiences with the content and pedagogy of controversial issues. Once this is established, the ministries need to protect teachers' time and allow the seeds of doubt and reflection to grow. Only then will the slow and methodical generational endeavor of addressing controversial histories and contemporary problems ascend to the curricular position they require to develop and sustain a tolerant, equitable, and vibrant democracy.

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