

L3) Social Citizenship Education

Citizenship Education is concerned with the social relationships between people. In this sense, it is a central element to a Humanities Curriculum but also to a sustainability education regarding Nature.

In the current time we live, the question of social citizenship could be said the most prominent one of our era as it addresses issues of what it may mean to be an individual member of a Nation or indeed the World. It is a question that spans the globe, encompassing social connections between all the peoples, ethnic groups and nations. It can also be about the social realities within one country as well as our inner relationship to the natural world.

Due to this, citizenship education is a topic that can appear in both the **human & natural geography** and the **history** curriculum as well as occasionally as a subject in its own right.

Citizenship Education and the Threefold Social Organism

In Britain, the recent provision for citizenship education had its starting point with the UK white paper “Excellence in Schools” (1997). This led to the so-called “Crick Report”: “Education for Citizenship and the teaching of Democracy in Schools” (1998) and the Statutory framework “Citizenship – the National Curriculum for England” (2000) (www.nc.uk.net).

The latter of these became law in 2002.

Will make a connection to Steiner’s ideas of society and social education.

What is Citizenship Education and their connection to Political Philosophies?

One of the difficulties of citizenship education is that its nature is often determined by the political ideology of the time. This means that, whoever is in power, determines the curriculum for citizenship. This means that what counts as a good citizenship education can change over time; which leads to this problem:

“there is **no consistent** framework... Citizenship Education is concerned with young people’s **understanding of society** and, in particular, with influencing what pupils learn about the social world”. Kerr, D (1999): *Re-examining citizenship education: the case of England*, NFER, p. 1.(My emphasis).

It is this variability of political ideologies that make the curriculum for citizenship education difficult. This is not just because of the variation within one country, but also between countries. Each country has its own variety of politics and social form which makes mutual global social understanding a challenge for the citizenship education of any given country.

The Question of Social Indoctrination

Within the UK, this manifests as a polarity between conservative and labour approaches to citizenship education:

“The ‘term active citizenship’ was part of a wider **Conservative** philosophy based on the privacy of rights and the responsibility of the **individual** over the state”... “The new **Labour** Government... has championed a **communitarian** rhetoric with an emphasis on ‘civic morality’. This is part of the **wider philosophy** of ‘new Labour’, as ... Based on the civic responsibilities of the individual in partnership with the state... Heralded as a much needed antidote to counter the harmful effects of rampant individualism”.

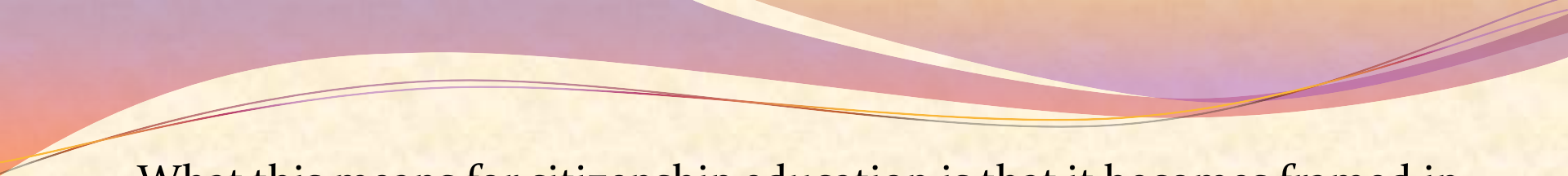
Kerr, D (1999): *Re-examining citizenship education: the case of England*, NFER, p. 3. (my bold)

It is evident from this that citizenship education can become a form of **social indoctrination** – what counts as a good social citizen or a good society is then defined by the party in power in accordance with its own ideology. Young people then are educated and grow up into a society which then interprets “the good” as being a specific party view point. This can lead to social misunderstandings between the people of one country as well as between countries.

What this can mean in terms of fundamental concepts is depicted in the next slide:

The Traditional Political Model: are the Political Ideologies genuine opposites?:

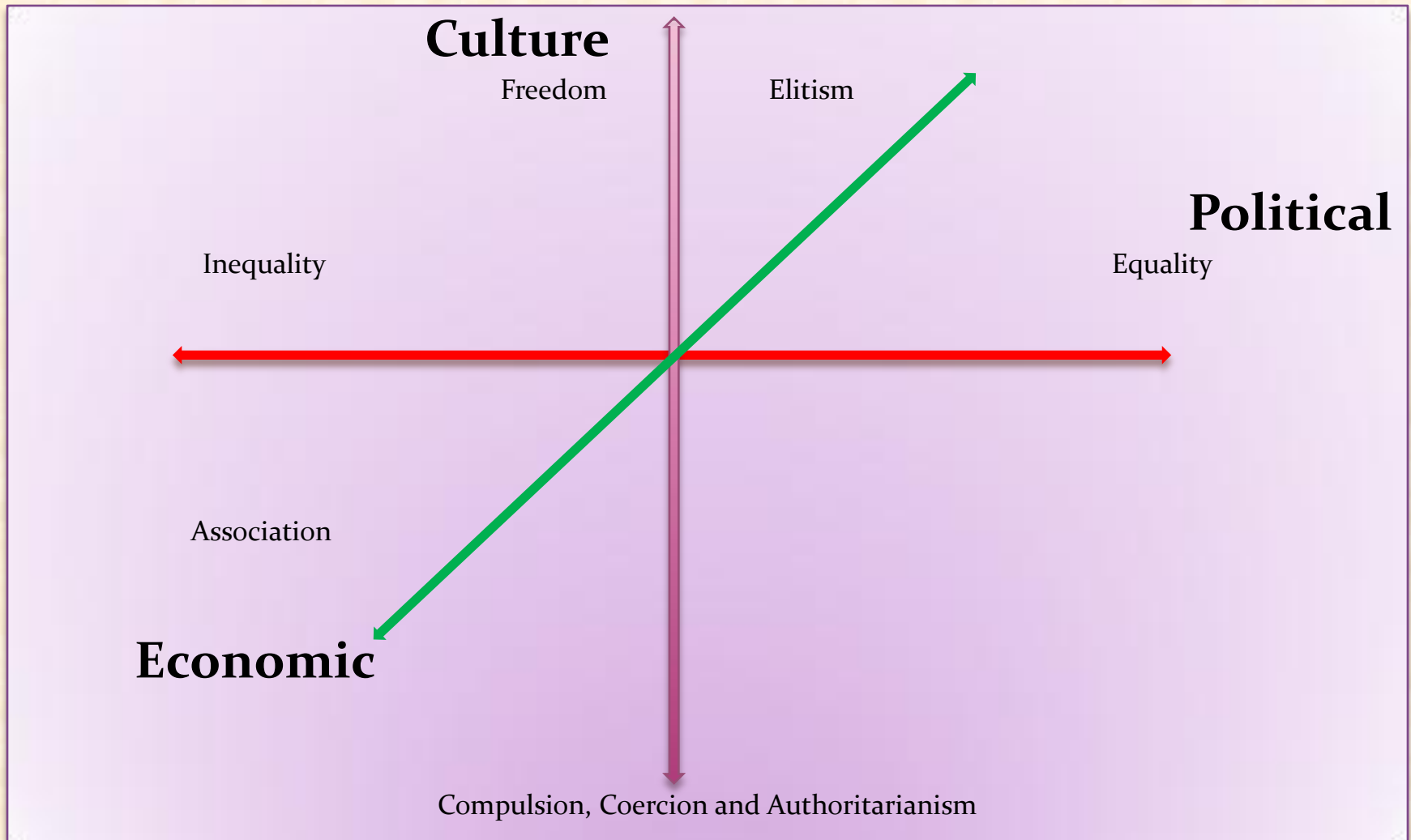
Left	Third Way Politics	Right
Old Labour		Conservative
Communitarian		Individualistic
Universal Equality		Universal Liberty
“Social Citizenship”	“Active Social Citizenship”	“Active Citizenship”




What this means for citizenship education is that it becomes framed in terms of either the concept of either individualism or communitarianism. Associated with these is the universal applicability of liberty or equality respectively. Being a good citizen then becomes defined in one or the other of these concepts. Third Way politics merely adds the two together but does not form a whole. Young people who are then taught about citizenship, nationally and globally, may then be presented with the changing vagaries of political ideologies as they oscillate over the life time of the children.

The problem then is how the present the question of citizenship to young people that is based on social realities rather than political ideologies. The following slide represents a beginning to such an approach based on the social philosophy of Rudolf Steiner:

Steiner's Social Model and the balancing of genuine opposites:





One of the main problems with the traditional models of social concepts is that they are often presented as opposites. For example, individual freedom, or individual liberty, is construed as being an irreconcilable opposite to equality. Clearly, as free standing concepts, they are not in opposition, but within the concept of economics they can come into conflict.

The question is: does not the domain, or sphere, of the social realm make a difference in how one understands these? From the perspective of the social threefold concept it certainly does. The above diagram shows what the real opposites are in the context of the three spheres: freedom is the opposite of compulsion, coercion and authoritarianism in the cultural sphere; equality is the opposite of inequality in the political / legal / rights sphere; elitism is the opposite of association in the economic sphere. It is the understanding and education of these polarities that can become the bedrock of social citizenship education in the context of Steiner / Waldorf School. The goal would be to help a young person's social understanding in terms of these fundamental concept and how they interface with the three spheres of the social realm. This may be done on a national and global level in both the contemporary situation as well as over time. Hence there is an intimate connection to the geography and history curriculum.

Can Citizenship afford to be neutral?

One of the questions that can arise is that of neutrality. As has been indicated, different political parties have different interpretations as to what citizenship education should be. The question is: are Steiner's views neutral:

"It is not possible to discuss the situation further unless we recognise the social organism in its three aspects: **socialism in the economic life, democracy in the life of rights, and freedom or individuality in the cultural life.** That is, in truth, the only salvation for mankind". Steiner, R (1919/97): *Education as a Force for Social Change*, Anthroposophic Press, GA 296, online pdf. p. 9/10. (My bold)

Living in a western democracy, Steiner was not only aware of its positives, but also its negatives. He was committed to the concepts of freedom in the cultural sphere, and also to democracy and equality in the political / legal / rights sphere. However, his preference was for socialism in the economic sphere. Some words of caution are needed here. Steiner was living and writing in an age when unrestricted individualistic capitalism had brought suffering to many of the working classes whilst it produced great wealth for the few. His economic position is that of associations and "brotherhood" where products, incomes and needs are mutually determined by those concerned not by so-called market forces, which in reality he saw as a disguise for the desires for wealth of the few. At the same time, he did not subscribe to central planning and control as in the then emerging Soviet Union. For him, it should be the specific associations of producers, distributors and consumers who should determine economic relationships and not the political state. His view was that the latter's role was to regulate work rights but not the economy itself. More details about this can be found in his "Towards Social Renewal" and "The Social Future".

In terms of social education, his aim was to introduce children into the social spheres and their social principles:

“Adults will have to live in a social organism which, in regard to the economic aspect, will be social; in regard to the government, democratic; and from the spiritual [cultural] aspect, liberal, free. ***The great problem of the future will be that of education.*** How will we have to deal with children so that they, as adults, can grow into the **social**, **democratic**, and **spiritually** [cultural] free areas of living in the most comprehensive way?” Steiner, R (1919/69): *Education as a Social Problem*, Anthroposophic Press, (p. 12)(My emphasis).

It was an introduction not only into the fundamental concepts of the social, the democratic and cultural, but, as we will see, to develop the dispositions & values as well as the skills for the social life that were important to him.

In terms of the three primary sphere and their principles the following may be of value:

Contexts of Social Education

Cultural



**Individualistic /
Free**

**Political / Legal /
Government /
Rights Life**



Democratic

Economic



Social

Citizenship Education as a Learning Process

As a point of interest, The UK centred “Crick Report”: *“Education for Citizenship and the teaching of Democracy in Schools”* (1998), p. 45, makes recommendations that also go beyond the mere transmission of concepts and takes a three dimensional approach to learning:

- 1) concepts and knowledge, but also
- 2) values and dispositions,
- 3) skills and aptitudes.

One may sense in this an attempt to transcend the merely thinking based approach to include feeling and will elements which also can be found in Waldorf education. This is particularly salient in the context of social education as the reality of the social life is not just about social concepts, although they are important, it is also about social feeling and social action.

The following slide shows more specifics regarding citizenship education with the three types of learning process highlighted above.

**KEY CONCEPTS
KNOWLEDGE AND
UNDERSTANDING**

**VALUES
AND
DISPOSITIONS**

**SKILLS
AND
APTITUDES**

Democracy and Autocracy

Co-operation and Conflict

Equality and Diversity

Fairness, Justice, The Rule of Law

Rules, Law and Human Rights

Freedom and Order

Individual and Community

Power and Authority

Rights and Responsibilities

Parts of the Crick Report were taken up in the National Curriculum: “*Citizenship – the National Curriculum for England*”. In Key Stages 3 & 4; Knowledge and Understanding introduced but very little of values and dispositions or skills and aptitudes.

Moreover, there is no connection made to child development question.

Steiner's Social Philosophy and Social Education

Steiner attempted not only to **transcend** but also **integrate** the usual social philosophies in terms of learning processes. In this respect, he had much in common with the modern researcher Kymlicka, W (2002): *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, “Citizenship Theory”, who described two levels to social life:

- 1) Structural
- 2) Virtues / Moral dispositions.

The following two slides show, first how the two major socio-political philosophies interconnect the structural and the dispositions; secondly, how in the context of Waldorf Education, certain polarities may be explored concerning the social life.

Neo-liberalism (extreme interpretation)

1) Structure:

Cultural / Political /Economic:

Freedom in all Spheres

2) Virtues:

Cognitive: personal opinion

Affective: self –interest

Conative: own action

Socialism (extreme interpretation)

1) Structure:

Cultural / Political /Economic:

Equality in all Spheres

2) Virtues:

Cognitive: social opinion

Affective: sympathy for the
Other

Conative: act for the other.

Critical Educational Contrasts: A possible framework for Steiner based Citizenship Education:

1) Structural

Cultural:

Freedom vs Authoritarianism /
Coercion / Compulsion

Political:

Equality vs Inequality

Economic:

Communitarian vs Libertarian

2) Virtues

Cognitive (Thinking)

Independent Judgement vs
compulsions / coercion

Affective (Feeling):

Sympathy vs Antipathy

Conative (Will):

Skill vs Ineptitude