The politics of citizenship education in Chile


Abstract

This chapter reviews citizenship education in Chile as a national public policy vis-à-vis the international academic and political debates in the field. Chile’s citizenship education policy appears highly conditioned by successive paradigmatic experiments – progressive education (1930–1950), Christian democratic reformism (1964–70), socialist revolution (1970–73), and authoritarian and neoliberal (1973–90). Since 1990 civic education policy in Chile has tried to update to the international paradigm on citizenship education, conditioned in this attempt by a long transition to democracy and the recent appearance of a student social movement agitating for a shift away from neoliberal educational policies. As a result, Chile has partially adopted international standards in its citizenship education curricular guidelines, with some notable omissions such as the ideas of global citizenship and multiculturalism. Actors’ interests and preferences, as well as normative ideas and debates, are ubiquitous; therefore, no adversarial or deliberative approach by its own could explain citizenship education as a public policy. Instead, the analysis provided in this chapter applies an institutional perspective that integrates the adversarial and deliberative approaches into a long-term process that defines institutional development, historical legacies, and social and political context.

Keywords

Citizenship education; Public policy; Politics; Chile.