

Teachers' and parents' perspectives on citizenship education in Turkey: Consensus and disagreements

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Abstract

Citizenship education (CE) in Turkey holds a pivotal role in shaping the civic consciousness of forthcoming generations. This study employs Q methodology to analyze the perspectives of teachers and parents regarding CE in Turkey, examining their viewpoints in the context of the political structure. The research reveals both consensus and disagreement among teachers and parents. Despite significant differences between teachers and parents, a consensus emerges on the importance of reinforcing national identity through CE. Moreover, there is a prevalent perspective on citizenship that exhibits limited tolerance for differences. The perspectives identified in the study reflect the political polarization present in Turkey. Some perspectives adopt a nationalist understanding rooted in Islamic foundations, influenced by the political power in the country, while others adhere to a secular nationalism based on the principles of Kemalism. These findings underscore the necessity for all facets of CE to embrace a more comprehensive perspective that promotes tolerance and democratic values.

Keywords

citizenship education, consensus, disagreements, parent, teacher, Turkey

Introduction

Citizenship education (CE) is primarily shaped by legal regulations and the evolving fundamental aspects of socio-political contexts in the broader understanding of citizenship. While the concept of citizenship traces its roots back to ancient Greece, the formulation of citizenship laws is a relatively recent development, diversifying over time. Preceding the nineteenth century, allegiance typically aligned with an ethnic group or feudal lord. However, with the advent of nation-states in the nineteenth century, the focal point of allegiance shifted toward the nation. Membership in a nation-state is now contingent upon citizenship laws, which confer legal rights along with privileges and responsibilities, setting members apart from others (Imam and Kpodar, 2021). From a historical standpoint, citizenship acquisition can occur either through birth within the country's territory (*jus soli*) or by descent from parents (*jus sanguinis*). Nation-states have commonly emphasized the transmission of

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citizenship through blood (from parents to children) using *jus sanguinis*. This approach often underscores a specific ethnic or ancestral connection, potentially excluding individuals lacking this connection from citizenship rights.

The conventional model of CE, originating in nation-states and particularly evolving from the era of the French Revolution, embraces an uncritical methodology with the intention of cultivating individuals compliant with the established system. This approach, highlighted by Althusser (1971), delineates CE as a model that seeks to instill the prevailing ideology of the state into the minds of children, rather than fostering an inclusive and critical mindset. Courses like CE are purported to be vehicles through which the state promotes an educational perspective designed to produce obedient individuals. As noted by Heater (2004), CE is frequently entwined with and presented within the realms of national history, geography, and religious and moral studies. This strategy aims to enhance students' connection with their national identity and instill specific values by foregrounding national objectives. During this period, many Western democratic nation-states adhered to an assimilationist approach in CE (Banks, 2004).

Despite the exclusionary paradigm of citizenship and education, global challenges, particularly war, transnational migration, human rights violations, and social injustice, have amplified the ideals of inclusive citizenship. The devastations wrought by the Second World War prompted the international community to shift its focus toward human rights and peace. Post-war declarations, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, prioritized the safeguarding of universal human rights. Following the war, significant migratory movements occurred, with substantial numbers of people from Asia, Africa, and the West Indies moving to the United Kingdom. Starting from the late 1960s, countries like Canada, Germany, and France witnessed a surge in racial, cultural, linguistic, religious, and ethnic diversity as thousands sought economic opportunities (Banks et al., 2005).

The ethnic revival movements of the 1960s and 1970s in numerous nation-states strongly challenged assimilationist and biologically deterministic notions of citizenship. Consequently, the freedom and right to express one's identity have become ideals in the social and political life of many democratic nation-states, although they have yet to be fully realized. As democracies evolved post-1970s, global efforts by institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe (CoE) played a pivotal role in strengthening human rights education worldwide (Russell and Suarez, 2017). Many countries, particularly those in the so-called 'new world' regions with significant immigrant populations, have tended to adopt a *jus soli* approach, granting citizenship to individuals born on their territory. This approach forms the foundation of an 'inclusive system', facilitating the assimilation, naturalization, and integration of newcomers and their offspring (Imam and Kpodar, 2021). Contemporary citizenship literature, much of which emphasizes the international context, has robustly supported the notion of inclusive citizenship. This perspective challenges the exclusionary tendencies of citizenship, advocating for concerted efforts to fulfill its inclusive promise (Kabeer, 2005; Lister, 2007). The conceptualization of the nation-state need not be in conflict with the idea of inclusive citizenship. In these states, unity can coexist with the preservation of diversity. The structural inclusion of citizens from various races, ethnicities, cultures, languages, and religious groups is essential within the nation-state. Their experiences, aspirations, and dreams should be reflected in the national culture, allowing them to develop profound and meaningful commitments (Banks et al., 2005).

As the understanding of citizenship has evolved toward a more inclusive stance, citizenship education curricula in diverse countries have undergone restructuring. Initially geared toward cultivating obedient individuals with loyalty to the national state through an exclusionary approach, CE later shifted its focus to political and social participation, adopting a more inclusive approach, especially in democratic societies. It came to be perceived as the key to addressing societal challenges. Furthermore, the growing lack of civic awareness, understanding, and political engagement

among young people has elevated the demand for CE. Numerous international reports and studies have brought attention to the disconnection of young individuals from politics, citing their limited knowledge and interest in the political systems of their respective countries (Crick, 1998; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Euyoupart, 2005; Park, 2004; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Consequently, particularly in the late 90s and early 2000s, many countries aimed to implement significant reforms in schools and curricula, with a specific focus on CE. Crick (1998) highlighted three elements deemed essential for an effective citizen, all of which are incorporated into the English citizenship curriculum: social and moral responsibility, community involvement, and political literacy. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) classified citizens into three categories: personally responsible citizens, participatory citizens, and justice-oriented citizens. Personally responsible citizens are characterized by adherence to rules, emphasizing individual responsibility. Participatory citizens prioritize social engagement and active participation in civic activities. On the other hand, justice-oriented citizens adopt a more inclusive approach, addressing the underlying causes of societal injustice and advocating for systemic and structural changes that can contribute to a more democratic and just citizenship (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004: 240).

In the 2012 Eurydice report commissioned by the Council of the EU, the primary aim of CE is articulated as empowering young individuals to become active citizens who contribute to the well-being and development of the society they inhabit (Eurydice, 2012). Presently, the foundation of ideal CE appears to extend beyond mere social and political participation to encompass inclusive values (such as human dignity, justice, and freedom) and skills (including questioning, digital literacy, and problem-solving), thereby emphasizing global CE. Osler and Starkey (2018) underscore the pressing need to instill teachings on human rights, solidarity, peace, and security in Europe, particularly in light of recent surges in far-right discourses. CE is expected to address global challenges, including widespread immigration, growing hostility toward various societal groups, ethical concerns in digital environments, hate speech, xenophobia, and intolerance. While the Council of the EU's 2012 report on CE concentrated on fostering political literacy, critical thinking, solidarity, and active participation, the 2017 Eurydice report underscores the significant challenges that Europe has recently encountered. The report identifies violent extremism and a lack of trust in democratic processes as the foremost threats to peace, democracy, freedom, and tolerance. It highlights the crucial role of CE in addressing these challenges, emphasizing its responsibility in promoting mutual respect and fundamental values (Eurydice, 2017).

Kymlicka (2001) has consistently underscored the significance of multicultural CE, contending that it should extend beyond knowledge about political institutions and constitutional principles to foster an understanding of individuals who differ from us in terms of race, religion, class, and more. Similarly, Osler and Starkey (2018) assert that fixating on the nation-state is misguided, advocating instead for 'universal citizenship education' that prioritizes the skills needed for coexistence in diverse communities. However, this shift toward universal goals in CE has heightened tensions in numerous countries, including democratic ones. The conflict arises from policymakers' efforts to cultivate a citizenry loyal to the system and accepting of national identity through the citizenship curriculum. Simultaneously, educators stress the importance of tolerance toward diverse groups, freedom, encouragement of critical thinking, and the ideal of global citizenship. This has created a significant area of tension. Turkey, too, has grappled with these fluctuations in its quest for a clear direction in CE in recent years.

CE in Turkey

In the Ottoman Empire, a monarchy without a concept akin to contemporary citizenship prevailed. Individuals subject to the sultan were referred to as '*tebaa*'. The multinational structure

of the Ottoman Empire underwent a transformation with the founding of the Republic of Turkey 100 years ago by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Atatürk hereafter) following its collapse. The proclamation of the Republic in 1923 marked a departure from the Ottoman Empire's prevailing approach (Kuş, 2020). In the construct of Turkish citizen identity, 'modernity' and 'patriotism' emerged as fundamental elements. The concept of citizenship underscored the interplay between nationality and nationalist identity, along with considerations of nation-building. Notably, this new definition of the nation excluded factors such as religious affiliation. Numerous reforms were implemented to secularize and modernize traditional-Islamic elements while Turkifying diverse identities in the region (Çağaptay, 2002). Throughout the Republican era, diverse efforts converged to forge a new nation, culture, and citizenship (Keyman, 2008). During this period, concerted attempts were made to sever historical and social ties with the Ottoman Empire and Islam. The new Republic placed significant emphasis not only on establishing a national and secular state but also on creating a cultural and social structure in harmony with these characteristics (Keyman and İçduygu, 1998: 176).

The nationalist and secular conception of citizenship, established as the official state policy in the initial years of the Republic, underwent substantial changes between 1950 and 2000. From the 1950s onward, a growing influence of religion led to the increased prominence of Islamic elements within the framework of citizenship identity. The coups and coup attempts in Turkey since the 1970s played a pivotal role in shaping the content and orientation of CE. The escalation of militarist discourses, particularly in the post-coup periods, was discernible in textbooks following the 1997 coup. However, the militarist discourses, which surged in the post-1980 period and peaked after 1997, saw a significant decline with the EU harmonization laws enacted after the 1999 Helsinki Summit (Sen, 2018).

The Justice and Development Party (JDP), led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which assumed power in the early 2000s, implemented significant changes in the education sector as part of its European Union membership policy during its initial term, restructuring CE. In this period, the militaristic understanding of citizenship was abandoned in favor of an interdisciplinary approach that emphasized national values while seeking to highlight citizenship skills and universal values. However, following the JDP's strengthened position after the 2011 elections, there was a notable shift in both the understanding of citizenship and education, marked by a swift transition from an ethno-secular citizenship model to Islamic nationalism. Turkey has become a strong example of increasing ethno-religious nationalism since the ruling JDP formed an alliance with the Nationalist Movement Party in 2016, and the recent education reform in 2018 was transformed in line with the expectations of the ideological beliefs in power (Sen, 2022).

Problem statement

Despite undergoing name changes from the final years of the Ottoman Empire to the present day, CE has consistently undertaken a crucial mission in each period. Originally designed to foster unity and solidarity in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire, the focus of this course shifted toward the construction of national identity in the early years of the Republic of Turkey. Later, it became closely aligned with the prevailing political ideologies of different periods. While the curriculum content of CE began to diversify during the European Union accession process in the late 1990s, it became more directly influenced by global developments in the early 2000s. However, this evolution has given rise to a tension between the construction of national identity and the promotion of global CE. Historically, central governments have determined all CE curricula in Turkey, playing a pivotal role in shaping the citizenship consciousness of future generations within the education system. While many studies have focused on the CE curriculum, the perspectives of teachers and

parents, along with their priorities and support, are equally crucial dynamics. Parents, particularly, may seek to impart their values and norms, especially on sensitive topics, in their children's education, influencing teachers' discourse and classroom orientation. In a subject like CE, parents' preferences and opinions may be a source of concern for teachers. Several studies have examined the formal dimensions of concepts like citizenship, CE, and global citizenship from the standpoint of teachers (Osler, 2011; Patterson et al., 2012; Rapoport, 2010; Sen, 2023; Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). Nevertheless, research exploring parents' conceptualizations of CE and making comparisons with teachers' viewpoints is notably scarce. This study centered around two primary research questions. The first one explored the priorities and perspectives of teachers and parents regarding CE. The second research question investigated the consensus and disagreement among parents and teachers concerning CE. The research is significant for providing multiple perspectives from different groups on CE in Turkey.

Methodology

Research design

This study utilized Q methodology to explore the perspectives of teachers and parents on CE. Q methodology is employed to investigate human subjectivity, particularly examining the viewpoints of specific groups within specific contexts (Watts and Stenner, 2012: 54). The strength of Q methodology lies in its ability to discern whether participants' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs can be associated under broader themes, thereby revealing common ideas among participants. Furthermore, it facilitates the sorting of these ideas in order of priority (Brown, 1996). Q methodology proves advantageous by enabling the identification of whether the research group aligns on a common ground concerning a particular issue and, if so, in what direction, while also allowing for the prioritization of common ideas. In the Q method, items are presented to respondents, and through principal component analysis, attempts are made to group respondents based on their responses. In essence, the factors mentioned in the Q method represent groups with similar opinions. This technique empowers the researcher to identify, comprehend, and categorize individual perceptions and opinions, subsequently clustering groups of people based on their commonalities and differences (McKeown and Thomas, 1988).

Qsort design

In the Q-methodology employed for this study, a crucial consideration was the selection of statements for inclusion. Before formulating the Q sentences in the structural design, an analysis of different CE approaches was conducted. Subsequently, 29 statements were crafted, encompassing both the traditional nation-state understanding of CE and the democratic CE developed since the 1990s. Drawing from the literature, five primary statement structures were established, addressing *national identity* (S1, S9, S4, S8, S7, S11), *community involvement/social responsibility* (S5, S2, S10, S23, S19), *political literacy* (S17, S21, S24, S27, S18, S22, S6), *civic skill* (S12, S25, S28, S20, S15, S16), and *global democratic values* (S14, S26, S29, S3, S13). In the initial phase, participants were instructed to categorize the statements in the Q-sort series into three groups: 'Disagree', 'Neutral', and 'Agree' within the digital platform (see Figure 1). Following this, participants were tasked with placing these statements in the Q-sort array in the digital environment, arranging them in order of importance. The Q-sort process entails participants evaluating each statement in relation to every other statement, providing a reflection of the individual's worldview on the topic (Brewer et al., 2000).

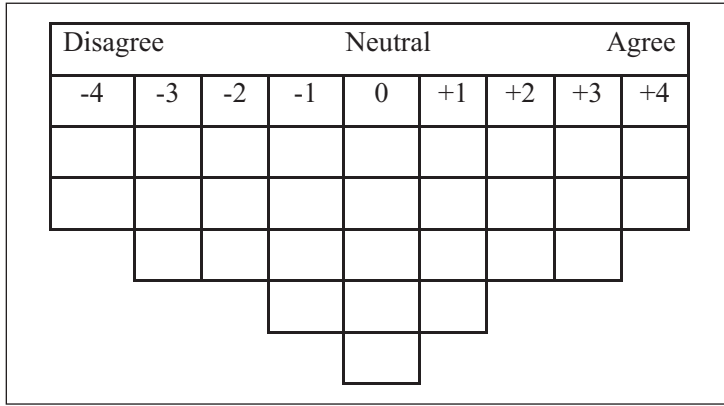


Figure 1. Q-sort Board.

Sample

The study participants were drawn from two pivotal stakeholders in CE beyond the formal curriculum: teachers and parents. The initial cohort comprised 35 volunteer parents whose children were enrolled in CE courses. Participant recruitment followed a dual approach: individuals with at least one child enrolled in CE were identified, and subsequently, those individuals voluntarily expressed their willingness to partake in the study. These parents, residing in Kırşehir, a small city in Turkey, generally exhibited a middle socio-economic status and engaged in diverse professions, encompassing occupations such as laborer, nurse, policeman, housewife, tradesman, and academician.

The second group comprised 35 teachers responsible for teaching CE within schools. The selection criteria for these teachers included teaching the citizenship course and engaging in volunteer work. This group comprised both classroom teachers and social studies teachers teaching citizenship within the same city center. In Turkey, classroom teachers are responsible for teaching students from the first to the fourth grade of primary school. The citizenship course, specifically, is taught by classroom teachers in the fourth grade. Within the study, there were 19 classroom teachers, all of whom taught the fourth grade in the city center, with teaching experience ranging from 11 to 25 years. Unlike primary school, CE is not presented as a distinct course in secondary school. Citizenship-related topics are integrated into the social studies curriculum for fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. Consequently, 16 social studies teachers were involved in this research, each having a minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 21 years of teaching experience. Each teacher was affiliated with a single school, and the interview process was conducted in-person with all participants, with each session lasting an average of 25–30 minutes.

Data analysis

The statements in the Q string of parents and teachers were quantified and transferred to Microsoft Excel. Each statement contains a value between +4 and -4. Firstly, the data of the parents were transferred to the ‘Ken Q Analysis’ software and analyzed. After the Q-samples were sorted, the Q-samples were correlated and subjected to factor analysis using the principal components method. The factors were then rotated using varimax criteria to discover the factors with significant loadings. Each of the factors represents a theoretical template derived from the placement of statements or elements.

Table 1. Eigenvalues and explained variance of factors.

	Parents			Teachers	
	F1	F2	F3	F1	F2
Eigenvalues	12.074	6.8302	2.6141	18.439	3.685
% explained variance	36	20	8	53	11
Cumulative % explained variance	36	56	64	53	64

Respondents loading significantly on a factor have similar views on the topic under investigation (Brewer et al., 2000). In the Q method, discriminative statements describe the uniqueness of each factor. A distinctive statement for a factor means that its value on that factor differs significantly from its value on any other factor. The statements that most reflected each factor were reviewed and the three perspectives of parents were labeled as ‘*national identity based on religion*’, ‘*political literacy and national identity*’, and ‘*national identity based on Kemalism*’. Secondly, the data related to teachers were analyzed with the same method. The two perspectives of teachers were labeled as ‘*semi-democratic citizenship*’ and ‘*citizenship based on national identity*’.

Findings

Parents perspectives

As shown in Table 2, the analysis identified three different views of parents. These three perspectives explained 64% of the variance (see Table 1). The three perspectives: (1) ‘*national identity based on religion*’ (2) ‘*political literacy and national identity*’ (3) ‘*national identity based on Kemalism*’. The statements that distinguish each perspective and the characteristics of the participants who identified each perspective will be emphasized below.

The first perspective, ‘*national identity based on religion*’, accounts for 36% of the variance between the rankings. There are 14 parents in this perspective. Parents with this perspective primarily argue that the main purpose of CE is to raise individuals with strong national and patriotic feelings and to strengthen the spirit of solidarity with their nation and to gain religious values by providing religious knowledge (see Appendix Table A1 for the statements defining this perspective). This perspective differs from the other perspectives by focusing on the importance of religious knowledge and values. Participants attributed to Perspective 1 agree most with the statements Promoting students’ national and patriotic feelings (S1) and promoting religious values by providing religious information (S7). They were undecided about the statements related to democratic values (S29), co-operation with others (S28) and combating racism (S3). The statements with which they least agree are items related to political participation (S18), learning political concepts (S22) and learning the functioning of institutions (p24). These participants generally believe that the main purpose of CE at school is to form a national identity and to teach religious values to children.

The second parental perspective, termed ‘*political literacy and national identity*’, elucidates 20% of the observed variance and is embraced by 8 parents. Distinguishing itself notably from other perspectives, this outlook emphasizes the importance of political knowledge to children (See Appendix Table A2). Respondents affiliated with Perspective 2 exhibit the highest concordance with statements addressing teaching about the Law and the Constitution (S17), teaching basic concepts related to politics (S22), and teaching information about election and electoral systems (S6). Conversely, parents in this perspective express the least agreement with statements related

Table 2. Statements and factor scores.

No.	Statements	Q sort value				
		Parents			Teachers	
		p1	p2	p3	p1	p2
1	Promoting students' national and patriotic feelings	4	4	4	4	4
2	Promoting taking responsibility as a member of society	3	0	2	2	0
3	Teaching effective strategies to combat racism and xenophobia	0	-1	-3	-1	-3
4	To strengthen the spirit of solidarity with the nation	3	2	2	4	3
5	Encouraging participation in the local community	-2	0	0	-1	1
6	Teaching information about election and electoral systems	-2	3	-1	-3	2
7	Promoting religious values by providing religious information	4	-3	-4	-2	-4
8	Promoting citizenship based on Atatürk's principles and reforms	-2	3	4	2	4
9	Promoting citizenship with national values (nationalism, patriotism)	3	1	3	3	3
10	Promoting respect for and protection of the environment	2	0	0	3	0
11	Teaching the importance of national days(19 May,29 October)	-1	1	2	0	3
12	Promoting students' critical thinking and independent thinking skills	1	0	1	1	-1
13	Promoting tolerance toward migrants and minorities	-3	-1	-3	-3	-3
14	Promote respect for other people, different cultures and different religions	1	-1	1	3	-3
15	Teaching to behave effectively and responsibly in digital environments	0	-2	-2	-1	-2
16	Promoting students to think scientifically	1	0	0	0	0
17	Teaching information about the law and the Constitution	-1	4	-1	-2	2
18	Encouraging future political participation	-3	-1	-1	-2	0
19	Encouraging democratic participation skills	-1	-2	1	0	0
20	Teaching to resolve disputes peacefully	0	-3	-1	0	-2
21	Teaching the rights and freedoms he/she has as a citizen	2	2	3	1	1
22	Teaching basic concepts related to politics	-4	3	-3	-4	2
23	Encouraging contribution to the solution of social problems	2	-3	0	1	-1
24	Teaching the functioning of local government, central government and other institutions	-4	-2	-2	-3	0
25	Teaching ways to communicate effectively and constructively with others	-1	-4	0	0	-2
26	Teaching respect for the principle of justice and human rights	1	1	3	1	1
27	Teaching information about the government and other political institutions	-3	1	-2	-4	-1
28	Encouraging co-operation with others	0	-4	-4	-1	-4
29	Promoting democratic values (justice, equality, respect for human dignity)	0	2	1	2	1

to learning to contribute to the solution of social problems (S23), promoting religious values by providing religious information (S7), and acquiring skills in effective communication (S25). Parents aligned with this perspective generally contend that the principal aim of CE is to furnish political literacy alongside cultivating national identity.

The third perspective, identified as '*national identity based on Kemalism*', accounts for 8% of the variance across types. Participants subscribing to this perspective primarily concur with the statement advocating for the cultivation of individuals dedicated to Atatürk's principles and reforms

Table 3. Consensus and disagreements statements for three perspectives.

Consensus statements	P1	P2	P3	Disagreements statements	P1	P2	P3
S1. Promoting students' national and patriotic feelings	4	4	4	S7. Promoting religious values by providing religious information	4	-3	-4
S21. Teaching the rights and freedoms he/she has as a citizen	2	2	3	S22. Teaching basic concepts related to politics	-4	3	-3
S12. Promoting students' critical thinking and independent thinking skills	1	0	1	S17. Teaching information about the law and the Constitution	-1	4	-1
S24. Teaching the functioning of local government, central government and other institutions	-4	-2	-2	S8. Promoting citizenship based on Atatürk's principles and reforms	-2	3	4
S13. Promoting tolerance toward migrants and minorities	-3	-1	-3	S6. Teaching information about election and electoral systems	-2	3	-1

(S8). Additionally, teaching respect for the principle of justice and human rights, as well as instructing on the significance of national days, garners agreement from parents in this perspective (See Appendix Table A3). Notably, this group diverges entirely from the first perspective by dissenting with the idea of imparting religious values through religious information (S7). Parents in this perspective prefer a national identity grounded in Kemalism within CE and contest the incorporation of religious knowledge and values into CE.

Across all three perspectives, a consensus emerges on certain key statements within the domain of CE (See Table 3). The most universally agreed-upon statement pertains to the purpose of CE, particularly in its role in fostering a national identity. Additionally, there is a shared perspective among parents that CE encompasses the teaching of rights and freedoms, affirming a commonality in this regard. Furthermore, all perspectives converge on the idea that CE plays a role in instilling tolerance toward immigrants and minorities, although this consensus seems to be accompanied by a degree of reservation or disagreement.

However, a lack of consensus is evident on certain pivotal statements. Notably, the statement asserting that CE teaches religious values by providing religious information reveals a stark divergence among the perspectives. While Perspective 1 strongly aligns with this statement, Perspectives 2 and 3 express resolute disagreement. Likewise, there is a notable divergence on the statement concerning the teaching of basic political concepts, with only Perspective 2 endorsing this idea, while Perspectives 1 and 3 dissent. A significant point of contention lies in the statement related to Kemalism. While Perspectives 2 and 3 strongly support the notion of raising individuals committed to Atatürk's principles and reforms, Perspective 1 stands in disagreement with this perspective. These disparities underscore the nuanced and multifaceted nature of parental attitudes toward the objectives and content of CE.

Teachers perspectives

The analysis has revealed two distinct perspectives among teachers, collectively accounting for 64% of the observed variance. These perspectives are identified as (1) '*Semi-Democratic Citizenship*' and (2) '*citizenship based on national identity*'. The first perspective, characterized as '*Semi-Democratic Citizenship*', encompasses 53% of the variance and is embraced by 26 teachers. Teachers aligned with this perspective prioritize expressions that emphasize the core objective of CE as democratic citizenship. However, teachers in this perspective do not adopt an inclusive understanding of citizenship.

Table 4. Consensus and disagreements statements for two perspectives.

Consensus statements	PI	P2	Disagreement statements	PI	P2
S1. Promoting students' national and patriotic feelings	4	4	S14. Promote respect for other people, different cultures and different religions	3	-3
S4. To strengthen the spirit of solidarity with the nation	4	3	S6. Teaching information about election and electoral systems	-3	2
S13. Promoting tolerance toward migrants and minorities	-3	-3	S17. Teaching information about the law and the Constitution	-2	2
S16. Promoting students to think scientifically	0	0	S10. Promoting respect for and protection of the environment	3	0

Some statements contradicting democratic CE find consensus with the second perspective. Among the most favored statements by teachers in this perspective are those addressing respect for different cultures/religions (S14), the teaching of democratic values (S29), and fostering respect for the environment (S10) (See Appendix Table B1 for statements defining this perspective). Conversely, teachers in this perspective exhibit the least agreement with statements related to knowledge about government and other political institutions (S27), understanding elections and electoral systems (p6), and the impartation of religious values through religious information (S7). This perspective underscores the belief that CE should primarily encompass the promotion of respect for diversity and democratic values, while excluding the teaching of religious values.

The second perspective, termed '*citizenship based on national identity*', explains 11% of the variance. Teachers adhering to this perspective predominantly advocate that the principal aim of CE should be the cultivation of national identity. The statements most concurred upon by teachers in this perspective are those related to nurturing individuals with strong national and patriotic sentiments (S1), instilling national values (S9), and promoting Kemalism (S8). This perspective diverges from Perspective 1 on these statements. Teachers in Perspective 2 wholly reject statements related to gaining religious values through religious information (S7), combating xenophobia (S3), and fostering respect for differences (S14) (refer to Appendix Table B2). These teachers contend that CE should prioritize the development of national identity and values, excluding the incorporation of religious teachings.

In both perspectives identified among teachers, a noteworthy consensus emerges on certain key statements related to CE (see Table 4). The statement asserting the aim of CE to provide national identity garners unanimous agreement in both perspectives. Additionally, there is shared sentiment across perspectives in rejecting the notion of teaching tolerance toward immigrants and minorities, reflecting a consistent viewpoint among teachers. Notably, teachers in both perspectives exhibit a neutral stance regarding the objective of fostering individuals with scientific thinking, emphasizing a common ground in their assessments of this aspect of CE.

However, a lack of consensus is evident on several pivotal statements. Foremost among these is the statement regarding 'Teaching respect for other people, different cultures, and religions'. Teachers in the first perspective staunchly support this statement, while those in the second perspective express disagreement, revealing a substantial divergence in their views on this aspect of CE. Further discrepancies arise in the perspectives' responses to specific statements. Teachers in the first perspective strongly disagree with the statement about teaching knowledge about electoral systems and the constitution, whereas teachers in the second perspective express agreement. Additionally, teachers in the first perspective strongly support the statement about protecting the environment, while those in the second perspective remain undecided about this particular aspect. These divergent responses underscore the nuanced nature of teachers' perspectives on the priorities and content of CE.

Results and discussion

Through the Q methodology, this study investigated parents' and teachers' understandings of the purpose of CE in Turkey and reached the following conclusions.

Examining CE from diverse participant perspectives allows for a shared conclusion to be drawn. Despite notable disparities between the viewpoints of parents and teachers, there exists a widespread agreement regarding the reinforcement of national identity through CE. This consensus underscores that the principal objective of CE is to fortify students' national identity. This outcome signifies that the conventional model of CE, originally established in nation-states, is presently being advocated by both teachers and parents in Turkey. These findings align with the Nationalist model of CE as per Gifford's (2004) classification of national and post-CE. Numerous curriculum analyses conducted in Turkey indicate a reliance on themes related to national identity formation (Doğu and Kuş, 2022; Kuş, 2022; Kuş and Mert, 2021, 2023; Ozan and Kuş, 2021). These results reinforce the overarching trend observed in the studies. Sen (2023) underscores that teachers predominantly base their understanding of citizenship on an undemocratic concept that is centered around the nation, instilling passive obedience and is grounded in a pro-Muslim interpretation of human rights. Not limited to Turkey, the pivotal role of CE in shaping national identity has been widely acknowledged by countries globally since the era of the French Revolution (Perez-Manjarrez and Carretero, 2021; Wenger, 1998). While aligning CE with the construction of national identity can foster a sense of emotional connection within a nation, various authors have raised concerns about the potential risks associated with universally adopting this approach (Kymlicka, 2007; Osler and Starkey, 2018). The intricate links between identity and citizenship are acknowledged to be complex. However, Isin and Wood (1999) highlight that, while identity carries specific connotations, the concept of citizenship may theoretically possess more universal applicability in certain contexts. This perspective could serve to mitigate potential hazards.

Another noteworthy conclusion drawn from this study is that, despite both parents and teachers emphasizing the national identity aspect of CE, there exist variations in the presentation of national identity. Parents within the first perspective utilize CE to underscore a national identity rooted in religion, rejecting the necessity of loyalty to Atatürk's principles and reforms. In contrast, parents within the third perspective and teachers in both perspectives highlight a national identity grounded in the principles of Kemalism rather than one based on religion. This starkly illustrates the complexity of the national identity discourse in Turkey within the context of CE.

Within the parental cohort, there exists a tension regarding the objectives of CE in Turkey, particularly in terms of promoting Kemalism versus religious values. Various prior studies in Turkey uncover a divisive arena between militant-secular and Islamic nationalists, divided along religious-cultural lines (Sen, 2023; Sen and Starkey, 2019). This tension in Turkey appears to mirror the diverse political and historical dynamics within the society. During Turkey's modernization process, the Republican Government, led by Atatürk, embraced the principle of secularism and advocated for a secular, modern state. In this pursuit, it aimed to exclude the Ottoman Empire, along with the elements of collective identity associated with Islam, from the emerging national identity. The Republic adopted an independent, and at times, adversarial historical narrative regarding the Ottoman Empire, viewing it as the source of backwardness, and established it as the official historical account (Copeaux, 2000). Consequently, Kemalism's construction of national identity assumes a secular character. The pressure of secular national identity formation in the early years of the Republic initially restrained Islamist ideology; however, it gained strength in subsequent years as religion became accepted as a component of national identity, coupled with the implementation of Islamization policies (Paşa, 2021). With electoral successes since 2002, the Justice and Development Party shifted the ideological landscape, elevating memory elements of Islamist/conservative

ideology while diminishing those associated with Kemalism. This initiated a transformative process toward constructing a religion-centered national identity (Paşa, 2021). Consequently, today, there exists a division in Turkey where one faction (often aligned with the left) upholds the values of the republic, embracing an Kemalist and secular interpretation of nationalism. Simultaneously, another faction (often associated with the right) adheres to Islamist/conservative ideology, seeking to integrate religion into the national identity. This dichotomy remains a source of tension in various aspects, including education, in Turkey.

A significant result of this research is that only teachers in perspective 1 exhibit a limited focus on inclusive CE goals. These educators prioritize the main objectives of CE as fostering respect for different cultures and religions, imparting democratic values, and instilling environmental respect. Conversely, teachers and parents in perspective 2 generally adhere to a more traditional understanding of citizenship. Furthermore, both teachers and parents in perspective 1 demonstrate a reluctance to teach tolerance toward migrants and minorities, indicating a potential neglect of the missions of peace, democracy, and freedom in CE. This departure from the universal goals emphasized in the Eurydice (2017) report and by Kymlicka (2001) underscores the need for a more comprehensive approach. For CE to truly succeed, it is crucial that both parents and teachers guide students not only in understanding their national identity but also in appreciating cultural diversity and cultivating tolerance. This holistic approach holds the potential to contribute to the development of a society comprised of tolerant and responsible individuals with a broad perspective.

A notable outcome of this research is the apparent lack of priority given to civic skills, community involvement, and other essential elements of democratic CE by both teachers and parents. Parents in perspective 2 only partially favored political literacy. Critical thinking and questioning skills, crucial aspects of CE, were met with a neutral stance from parents across all three perspectives. Similarly, teachers remained neutral in terms of emphasizing scientific thinking skills. These findings suggest a preference among participants for a lower level of civic engagement, categorized as 'Personally Responsible Citizens' according to Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) classification. There is a notable distance from the higher levels of 'Participatory Citizens' and 'Justice Oriented Citizens'. Among the qualities emphasized by Crick (1998) for an effective citizen, only partial political knowledge receives attention. However, social and moral responsibility, as well as community involvement, do not emerge as primary preferences for parents or teachers. The prevalent focus of civic education on institutions, processes, and national history may prove insufficient in promoting active and responsible civic engagement. Consequently, there is a growing consensus on the necessity for a more diverse civic knowledge and understanding to foster the development of democratic citizenship skills (Amadeo et al., 2002; Fine et al., 2007; Hess, 2009; Kuş and Mert, 2023; Levinson, 2012; Sherrod et al., 2010).

Conclusion

Despite notable differences between teachers and parents regarding CE in Turkey, there is a prevailing consensus on the importance of promoting national identity through CE. The research indicates that the majority of teachers and all parents prioritize strong national sentiments, reflecting an undemocratic perspective on citizenship that allows little room for diversity. The influence of political power is evident in shaping these perspectives, with some aligning with a nationalism rooted in Islamic foundations and others adhering to a secular understanding of nationalism based on Kemalism. In this evolving landscape, the significant impact of political power underscores the need for a nuanced approach to democratic CE. It is crucial that teachers, particularly those responsible for teaching this subject, as well as supportive parents, comprehend the importance of democratic CE. This understanding can contribute to fostering a society

with a broader perspective on tolerance, multiculturalism, and democratic values. Teacher training institutions play a pivotal role in this process by imparting strategies to pre-service teachers, focusing on dimensions such as ‘community involvement’, ‘political literacy’, ‘civic skills’, and ‘global democratic values’ within CE. These strategies should aim to instill democratic citizenship values in students, enhance community involvement, and fortify democratic values. Policy makers, too, should prioritize democratic CE and support related strategies. Their effectiveness lies in integrating curricula that underscore democratic values into the education system, supporting the professional development of teachers, and formulating policies to heighten citizenship awareness within society at large. A concerted effort at both the individual and systemic levels is imperative for the successful implementation of democratic CE, fostering an inclusive, tolerant, and democratically engaged society.

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Appendix A: Three perspectives for parents

Table A1. Parents' Perspective I.

Nm	Statement	Q-Sort value	Z-score
7	Promoting religious values by providing religious information	4	1.91
4	To strengthen the spirit of solidarity with the nation	3	1.45
10	Promoting respect for and protection of the environment	2	0.95
23	Encouraging contribution to the solution of social problems	2	0.55
20	Teaching to resolve disputes peacefully	0	0.2
15	Teaching to behave effectively and responsibly in digital environments	0	0.05
29	Promoting democratic values (justice, equality, respect for human dignity)	0	-0.2
28	Encouraging co-operation with others	0	-0.22
11	Teaching the importance of national days (19 May, 29 October etc. . .)	-1	-0.46
8	Promoting citizenship based on Atatürk's principles and reforms	-2	-0.89
5	Encouraging participation in the local community	-2	-1.04
6	Teaching information about election and electoral systems	-2	-1.11
18	Encouraging future political participation	-3	-1.24

Table A2. Parents' Perspective 2.

Nm	Statement	Q-Sort value	Z-score
17	Teaching information about the law and the Constitution	4	1.88
22	Teaching basic concepts related to politics	3	1.35
6	Teaching information about election and electoral systems	3	1.3
8	Promoting citizenship based on Atatürk's principles and reforms	3	1.26
27	Teaching information about the government and other political institutions	1	0.62
9	Promoting citizenship with national values (nationalism, patriotism)	1	0.58
11	Teaching the importance of national days (19 May, 29 October etc. . .)	1	0.08
2	Promoting taking responsibility as a member of society	0	-0.42
13	Promoting tolerance towards migrants and minorities	-1	-0.56
14	Promote respect for other people, different cultures and different religions	-1	-0.59
23	Encouraging contribution to the solution of social problems	-3	-1.06
7	Promoting religious values by providing religious information	-3	-1.21
25	Teaching ways to communicate effectively and constructively with others	-4	-1.58

Table A3. Parents' Perspective 3.

Nm	Statement	Q-Sort value	Z-score
8	Promoting citizenship based on Atatürk's principles and reforms	4	1.75
26	Teaching respect for the principle of justice and human rights	3	1.1
11	Teaching the importance of national days (19 May, 29 October etc. . .)	2	0.93
19	Encouraging democratic participation skills	1	0.32
23	Encouraging contribution to the solution of social problems	0	-0.43
6	Teaching information about election and electoral systems	-1	-0.56
3	Teaching effective strategies to combat racism and xenophobia	-3	-1.15
7	Promoting religious values by providing religious information	-4	-1.73

Appendix B: Two perspectives for teachers

Table B1. Teachers' Perspective I.

Nm	Statement	Q-Sort value	Z-score
14	Promote respect for other people, different cultures and different religions	3	1.09
10	Promoting respect for and protection of the environment	3	1.02
29	Promoting democratic values (justice, equality, respect for human dignity)	2	1
2	Promoting taking responsibility as a member of society	2	0.97
8	Promoting citizenship based on Atatürk's principles and reforms	2	0.96
21	Teaching the rights and freedoms he/she has as a citizen	1	0.95
23	Encouraging contribution to the solution of social problems	1	0.89
12	Promoting students' critical thinking and independent thinking skills	1	0.31
25	Teaching ways to communicate effectively and constructively with others	0	0.16
11	Teaching the importance of national days (19 May, 29 October)	0	0.15
20	Teaching to resolve disputes peacefully	0	-0.24
15	Teaching to behave effectively and responsibly in digital environments	-1	-0.33
28	Encouraging co-operation with others	-1	-0.36
5	Encouraging participation in the local community	-1	-0.61
3	Teaching effective strategies to combat racism and xenophobia	-1	-0.77
18	Encouraging future political participation	-2	-0.83
17	Teaching information about the law and the Constitution	-2	-1.14
7	Promoting religious values by providing religious information	-2	-1.2
24	Teaching the functioning of local government, central government and other institutions	-3	-1.37
6	Teaching information about election and electoral systems	-3	-1.42
27	Teaching information about the government and other political institutions	-4	-1.44
22	Teaching basic concepts related to politics	-4	-1.57

Table B2. Teachers' Perspective 2.

Nm	Statement	Q-Sort value	Z-score
8	Promoting citizenship based on Atatürk's principles and reforms	2	0.96
11	Teaching the importance of national days (19 May, 29 October)	0	0.15
17	Teaching information about the law and the Constitution	-2	-1.14
22	Teaching basic concepts related to politics	-4	-1.57
6	Teaching information about election and electoral systems	-3	-1.42
5	Encouraging participation in the local community	-1	-0.61
21	Teaching the rights and freedoms he/she has as a citizen	1	0.95
29	Promoting democratic values (justice, equality, respect for human dignity)	2	1
24	Teaching the functioning of local government, central government and other institutions	-3	-1.37
18	Encouraging future political participation	-2	-0.83
2	Promoting taking responsibility as a member of society	2	0.97
10	Promoting respect for and protection of the environment	3	1.02
27	Teaching information about the government and other political institutions	-4	-1.44
12	Promoting students' critical thinking and independent thinking skills	1	0.31
23	Encouraging contribution to the solution of social problems	1	0.89
25	Teaching ways to communicate effectively and constructively with others	0	0.16
15	Teaching to behave effectively and responsibly in digital environments	-1	-0.33
20	Teaching to resolve disputes peacefully	0	-0.24
14	Promote respect for other people, different cultures and different religions	3	1.09
3	Teaching effective strategies to combat racism and xenophobia	-1	-0.77
7	Promoting religious values by providing religious information	-2	-1.2
28	Encouraging co-operation with others	-1	-0.36