

Emotions and Relationships in Polish Citizenship Education: Mapping Opportunities and Change Through an Analysis of Secondary School Core Curricula

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Abstract: Is there room in school-based citizenship education to shape citizenship identity as an emotional and relational experience of community membership? Given the importance of school core curricula in many European countries, this paper analyses the core curricula in Poland to identify the provisions that facilitate the recognition of the concept of lived citizenship. The data comprise two core curricula (from 2018 and 2025) for citizenship education in Polish secondary schools, which were created in different political conditions. The aim is to identify, at the curriculum level, potential opportunities to include the affective dimension and to recognise the changes in this area resulting from the curriculum reform. The results demonstrate that both curricula reveal such potential. However, the 2025 reform offers a significantly better representation of categories that appear vital to grasping the affective dimension of citizenship.



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Citizenship education (hereafter: CE) remains at the forefront of national education policy agendas. In light of democratic crises, armed conflicts, migration, and the resurgence of far-right movements, CE is considered an essential imperative, with the cultivation of an understanding of democratic principles, critical thinking, and civic engagement being widely advocated. This raises the question of whether there is space within this framework for shaping citizenship identity as an emotional and relational experience of community membership, and whether school education is capable of capturing citizenship in specific contexts. Indeed, for more than two decades, the importance of emotions and relationships as integral parts of citizenship and CE has grown (Zembylas 2009; Wood and Black 2018; Kallio, Wood and Häkli 2020; Góralaska 2023; Keegan 2023). The question is whether this is reflected in the curricula in any way.

This article aims to identify potential opportunities created by the text of the core curriculum for CE to include the affective dimension and, in doing so, to recognise changes in this area resulting from the reform of the core curricula in Poland.

The research presented in this article contributes to curriculum studies. While it contributes to the study of CE among children and youth in the context of the critique of citizenship universalism, the focus is not on examining the effects of implementing specific programmes or student experiences. Instead, this article pursues a different approach. Given the central role of school core curricula in many European countries (including Poland), the study analyses core curricula through the lens of the concept of lived citizenship. This task is challenging not only because of the nature and genre of the research material, but also because of the purpose of the national core curricula. The study also contributes to a strand of curriculum research that focuses on comparative analyses of curricular change.

Dimensions of Lived Citizenship

The concept of lived citizenship is the starting point for the analyses presented in this article. This concept has been present in citizenship research for over two decades and developed in part from the growing focus on everyday life that has characterised critical theories since the 1960s (Kallio, Wood and Häkli 2020:713-715). Unlike the universalist un-

derstanding of citizenship as status and associated rights and obligations (Marshall 1950), it is the experience of being a citizen and citizenship recognised in those experiences and relationships with others that shapes belonging (Wood and Black 2018; Kallio et al. 2020). Kallio et al. (2020) identify four intertwining core dimensions of lived citizenship drawn from research in this area.

The first dimension—spatiality—holds that citizenship is always linked to a time and place. It is and has been classically identified with the idea of nation and state. Social and political changes have scaled this thinking both ‘up’ and ‘down’ (Kallio et al. 2020:717). However, citizenship can also be understood in local terms, close to everyday life. This understanding is part of a critique of the traditional conception of citizenship as being closely tied to the political actor and the public sphere (Lister 1997:42). Furthermore, it can also be understood as a transnational concept linked to political unions, such as the European Union (Kallio et al. 2020:717), whether global or glocal (Abu El-Haj 2015:56). While political and economic migration does not appear to weaken the concept of national citizenship, it certainly alters the way people think about citizenship, both in terms of how migrants function in their new countries and in terms of their relationship with their countries of origin (Abu El-Haj 2015:54; Nunn et al. 2016:388).

The second dimension—intersubjectivity—is a consequence of the reconceived understanding of spatiality. Citizenship does not emerge in isolation, but at the intersection of interpersonal relationships (Kallio et al. 2020:717). These interpersonal relationships can occur in physical, but also metaphorical, places (Staeheli 2010:394), and, therefore, attention is drawn to the combination of both dimensions (Wood and Black 2018:192).

Performed dimension of lived citizenship (the third one) refers to practices and actions that signify the realisation of citizenship (Kallio et al. 2020:718). Finally, the fourth dimension—affective—focuses on the emotions and feelings associated with being a citizen, especially in the context of belonging or not belonging to a group, community, or country, and of deeper engagement and responsibility (Wood and Black 2018:191; Kallio et al. 2020:718).

It is the affective dimension that is central to this article, although its connection with the other dimensions cannot be ignored, as lived citizenship arises at the intersection of these dimensions. Distinguishing between them serves primarily to organise areas of research and illustrate that studies of lived citizenship can focus more on one dimension than on the others (Kallio et al. 2020) without rendering the remaining dimensions irrelevant or simply “switching them off.”

I take the view that emotions and feelings are an integral part of citizenship, allowing it to be experienced in different spaces—physical or metaphorical—(spatiality), during different activities (performed dimension) and in relationships with others (intersubjectivity). If children and youth are seen as a group that is somehow excluded from citizenship (due to age and the resulting lack of, or incomplete, legal capacity), if they are seen as “half-citizens” (Lister 2007), who are only preparing for the role of adult citizen, then the feeling of what it is like to be a citizen and the experience of what that citizenship entails challenges the abstract sense of belonging that is embedded in the concept of the universal citizen. CE that takes into account the affective dimension of citizenship is relevant not only because of the diversity of national, cultural, ethnic, socio-economic, and ideological backgrounds (par-

ticularly in highly politically polarised countries) of children and their families of origin, but also for including children and youth and empowering them as citizens.

Research Questions and Key Assumptions

The aims outlined in the article give rise to the following research questions:

What opportunities are provided by the core curricula (CCs) for CE in Poland in terms of lived citizenship, especially its affective dimension? In other words: How is the concept of lived citizenship – particularly in its affective dimension – represented in the CCs to CE? Or, how do the texts of the analysed CCs legitimise this concept? Is it possible to capture changes in this area following the reform of CC in 2025, and if so, what do they involve?

These questions rest on two assumptions:

1. The CCs can provide opportunities to capture citizenship in the affective dimension;
2. Changes in the CCs brought about by successive government reforms may also lead to further changes in this area.

These two assumptions are at least partly related. As Schmidt (2008) argues, ideas are formed at different levels, and translating them from the institutional level to the programmatic level and then to the level of political solutions is not linear (Schmidt 2008:306–308; Steiner-Khamsi 2014). Furthermore, Wahlström and Sundberg (2017) point to the usefulness of these levels of idea formation for analysing the CCs. The shape of the CCs is the result of various intertwining

influences, including directions and trends at the international level (Nordin and Sundberg 2018:822). These influences themselves result from the translation of ideas into programmatic and concrete solutions, and are further interpreted in interaction with state policies and the cultural, historical, and socio-political context. In the case of changes to CCs, this means that political ideas are translated into specific party programmes, including those concerning education. These programmes, in turn, undergo specific modifications and are then to some extent translated into particular core curricula (Kopińska 2022). Consequently, the effect of such a blend is not entirely predictable, which makes studying it an interesting endeavour. These assumptions imply that analysing changes in the core curriculum is worthwhile, and this becomes even more significant when connected to a country's political change (Kopińska 2022). In addition, this also means that certain ideas and concepts regarding CE that are recognised at the international level may also permeate national curricula to some extent (Steiner-Khamsi 2014). As criticism of the universalist figure of the citizen has been present in the academic literature for several decades, and the concept of lived citizenship itself has also already generated a substantial body of research, some elements may be discernible in national approaches in school CE.

Returning to assumption (1), however, it is important to temper expectations regarding what the CCs can realistically deliver. Every state, regardless of its political system, is invested in “making” citizens (Pinar et al. 1995; Tröhler 2016). Therefore, any national CC should exhibit a universal, normative conception of citizenship constructed across differences and, therefore, often insensitive to the diversity of social experiences. Furthermore, the CC itself, which frames learning objectives and outcomes, is

a document devoid of emotion and feeling. This is partly because the CC is a legal act that operates in formal language, and partly because its learning objectives and outcomes follow a specific linguistic formula. The focus on knowledge and skills—and rarely on attitudes—further hinders the search for anything relating to the experience of citizenship.

Therefore, the question arises: How can one interpret lived citizenship from CCs? The research question guiding the analyses focuses on opportunities. The term opportunities here encompasses all parts of the CCs—general subject descriptions, objectives, learning outcomes, conditions, and the way of implementation—that relate to knowledge, skills, and attitudes or the way of implementation that, at the textual level, enable the identification of lived citizenship, particularly in the affective dimension. The essence is that the text of the analysed documents points to categories, or combinations of categories, which are essential for lived citizenship. I, therefore, identified seven main codes: locality, citizenship activities, relationships with others, social sensitivity, sense of belonging, responsibility, and engagement.

The codes were derived from the relevant literature and, in particular, from the characteristics of the various dimensions of lived citizenship described in the previous section of the article. The first three codes emerged at the intersection of the affective dimension with:

- the spatial dimension (locality), or
- the performed dimension (citizenship activities), or
- the intersubjective dimension (relationships with others).

The next four codes result from combining the affective dimension of lived citizenship with two other dimensions: “sense of belonging” combines the affective, spatial, and intersubjective dimensions. The codes “social sensitivity”, “responsibility”, and “engagement” combine the affective dimension with the intersubjective and performative dimensions. Table 1 lists the definitions of the codes and provides sample guidelines on how to assign them.

Table 1. The main codes used in the analysis

THE MAIN CODES
Locality: The code is assigned to all passages of the CCs that relate to the local context and how a student navigates everyday life in society, i.e. those environments that are spatially accessible or close to them (e.g. school, family, local community, municipality) or relevant in terms of everyday problems (e.g. young people’s problems, their legal situation, and their entitlements). In spatial terms, the code does not primarily refer to the place itself, but to those passages of the CCs text that concern the student’s relationship with that place. The code is applied to passages that contain references to, for example, everyday situations or matters of importance to a student. It also includes those requirements that explicitly indicate that a learner should address (by expressing an opinion, entering into a discussion, or drawing on their own experience) certain issues.
Citizenship activities: The code includes all requirements in the CCs for forms of individual and collective student activity that serve to develop citizenship skills in the environments accessible to the student. This includes both knowledge and cognitive skills (e.g. the ability to critically analyse and evaluate, the ability to design specific solutions, and knowledge of available options for dealing with a situation or the procedures in place) and actual engagement. The code goes beyond standard forms of citizenship activity; for example, acting to solve a problem in the school community counts as citizenship activity. The code is assigned to those passages in which the student acts as an active agent (e.g. initiates, reacts, plans, or defends their opinion in a public forum).

THE MAIN CODES

Relationships with others: The code is assigned to all passages in the CCs concerning relationships formed at the intersection of “me” and “others” (both familiar and unfamiliar people). This includes knowledge of these relationships and the problems they involve (e.g. conflicts, discrimination), as well as attitudes (e.g. respect and openness to different views). The coding of passages relating to the knowledge and attitudes described above assumes that they indirectly reflect the affective dimension on which they are based. The code primarily includes relationships of various kinds and forms (e.g. relationships with peers at school, cooperation on tasks, as well as official contacts or interactions with people or representatives of organisations in the local environment—for example, to obtain specific information or become involved in particular activities). The code therefore applies to those passages that concern the student’s interactions with other people.

Social sensitivity: The code refers to those passages in the CCs that relate to recognising, diagnosing, understanding, or responding to social and ethical problems, or rights violations perceived especially in the immediate environment. This may involve the use of knowledge to assess a given situation, the development of empathy, and the cultivation of specific skills related to the student’s response to identified problems or violations. The code is assigned to those passages of text that concern not only knowledge of a given problem, but also sensitivity expressed through a reaction or a readiness to react.

Sense of belonging: The code refers to those passages in the CCs that concern patriotism, and belonging to different social groups and to the country. It can include both the knowledge relating to different social identifications and requirements concerning the development of the ability to use knowledge to evaluate certain phenomena, to take action as an expression of these identifications, and above all to develop relevant attitudes. Those passages of the CCs that provide students with the opportunity to express their own opinions and feelings, engage in discussion, or present their own interpretation of an issue related to their social identities are particularly important in this regard. The code is applied in those passages where the student is expected to relate to the community in a value-laden and emotional way, and where they are expected to assess their relationships with social groups.

Responsibility: The code includes all requirements in the CCs that relate directly to students’ responsibility, as well as those that require them to act responsibly by taking action for the common good, responding when someone else’s well-being or the common good is threatened, or fulfilling their responsibilities in a collaborative team activity. This code can refer to the requirements of knowing how to react, how to behave, or how to act, but it is particularly concerned with acting responsibly and the student’s ability to articulate their own emotions, feelings, and point of view in relation to such actions. The code is assigned to those passages of the text where the student is expected to carry out a task or consider the consequences of making specific decisions; crucially, this must be done with consideration for others, the group, and the wider community.

Engagement: The code refers to an engagement that is understood not as the mechanical following of procedures, but as issue-driven agency. The code is assigned to those passages of the CCs that relate directly to student engagement, as well as those that involve cognitive engagement (understood as an interest in social issues and problems, especially in environments close to the student, and identifying opportunities to participate in related activities) and/or behavioural engagement (participation in these activities). Particularly important are those passages of the CCs that provide students with an opportunity to express their emotional involvement—that is, to express their emotions and feelings associated with these activities.

Source: Self-elaboration.

Analysed Material and Methods

The analysed material comprised two CCs for secondary schools: the 2018 core curriculum for the subject of *Wiedza o Społeczeństwie* [Knowledge about Society] (hereafter: CC 2018) (MNE 2018) and the 2025 core curriculum for the subject *Edukacja Obywatelska* [Citizenship Education] (hereafter: CC 2025) (ME 2025). The preparation and publication of CC

2025, which has been in use since the 2025/2026 school year, is linked to a political change in Poland. CC 2018 was implemented in connection with the 2017–2018 education reform under the government formed by the eurosceptic, right-wing *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* [Law and Justice] party. The *Knowledge about Society* curriculum, which was compulsory for all secondary school students, was abolished and replaced by *Historia i Teraźniejszość* [History

and Present Time] (HiT) in 2022. While this subject contained elements of the earlier Knowledge about Society, it was oriented more toward recent history than citizenship education. After the 2023 elections, the new government formed by the more liberal Civic Coalition announced that it would abolish the subject and begin work on preparing CC for citizenship education. Comparing CC 2018 and CC 2025, therefore, means comparing CCs of analogous subjects implemented under different political circumstances, which, as argued above, may translate to some extent into their final form.

The analysis compares documents relating to the basic scope of the subject, as it is this part of CC that all students follow. Content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon 2005) was employed, with all analyses performed in Atlas.ti. The coding units varied depending on which part of the CCs was analysed:

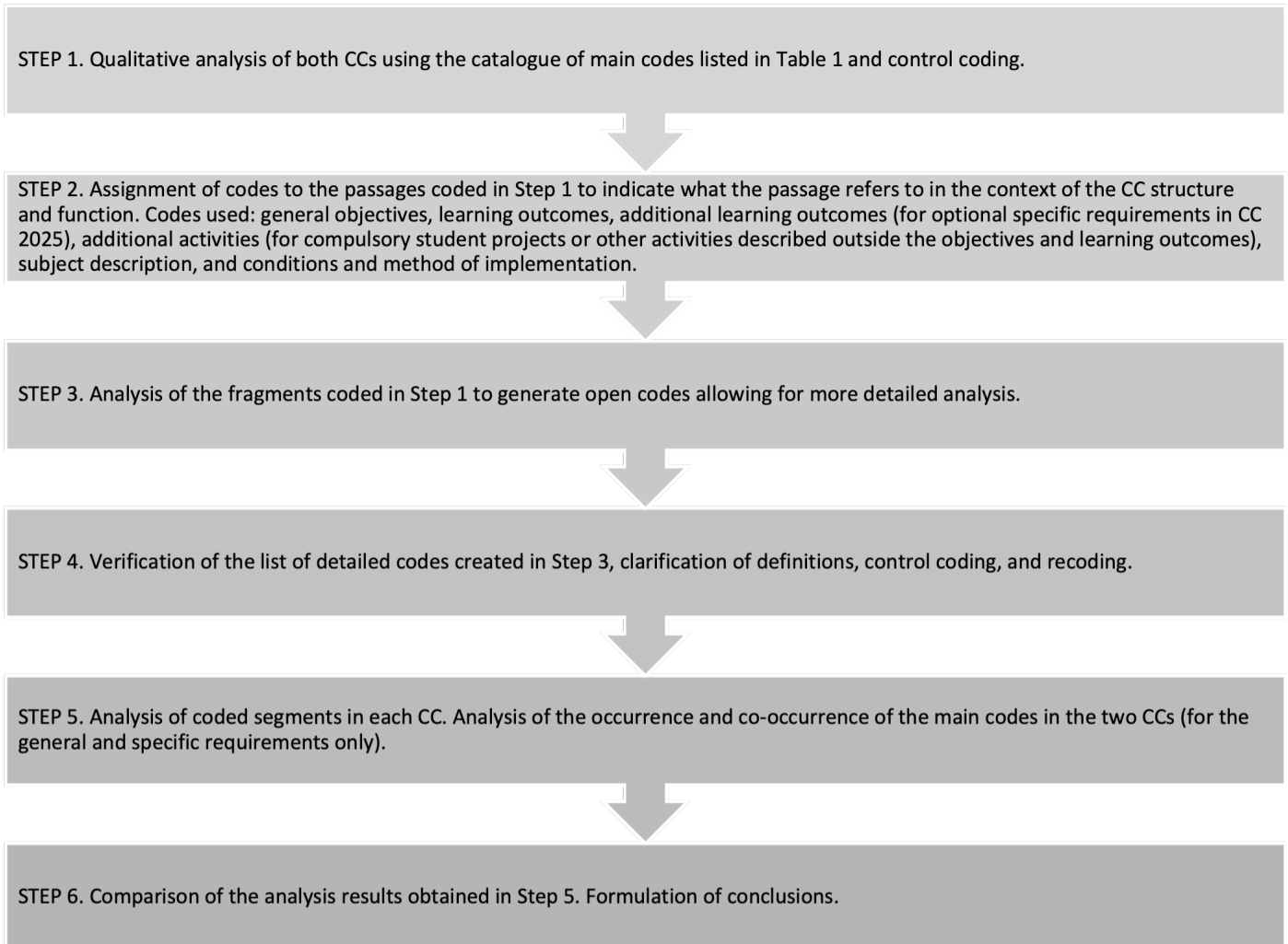
1. For the parts defined as *Learning objectives (general requirements)* and *Learning content (specific requirements)* (for CC 2018) or *Specific require-*

ments for knowledge and skills and *Specific requirements for citizenship activities* (for CC 2025), separate points were used as the coding unit;

2. For the other parts written in continuous text, the coding unit was a single sentence, or groups of several sentences that related thematically to the same objective, activity, method, set of methods, or organisational form.

In line with these differences in coding units, comparisons based on the number of code occurrences and co-occurrences refer only to those parts of the CCs described in point 1. Although general and specific requirements constitute the largest and most essential part of the CCs in Poland in terms of quantity, they do not represent the entirety of the CCs. The analyses were, therefore, intended to support the main argumentation, which focuses on the interpretive analysis of the documents.

The different steps performed during the analysis are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Steps of the analysis

Source: Self-elaboration.

Findings

There are several differences in the structure of CC 2018 and CC 2025 that are relevant to the analysis. Table 2 presents a comparison of the structural components of the two core curricula.

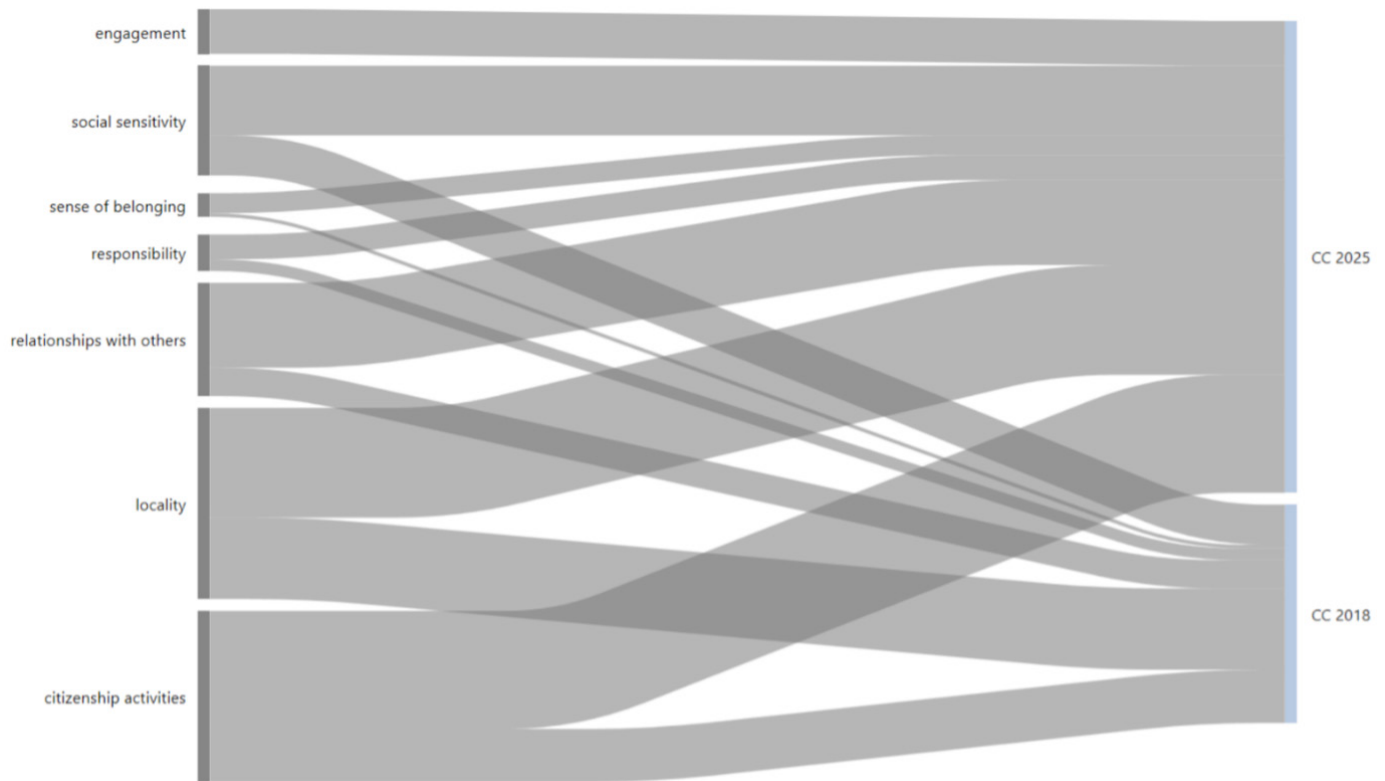
Table 2. Comparison of CC 2018 and CC 2025 designs

CC 2018	CC 2025
• Course description • General requirements: 19 learning objectives • Specific requirements: 64 learning outcomes • Conditions and the way of implementation, which include: 4 educational objectives, methods, forms of achieving objectives and learning outcomes, including the implementation of at least two student educational projects. • Total: 23 learning objectives, 64 learning outcomes and two student learning projects	• Course description including 3 learning objectives • General requirements: 6 learning objectives + 6 skills • Specific knowledge and skills requirements: 45 learning outcomes • Optional requirements: 37 additional learning outcomes assigned to each thematic unit of which at least seven should be selected (one from each section) • Specific requirements for citizenship activities and citizenship projects, including: one educational goal, a list of 18 citizenship activities, from which at least four must be selected for individual or team implementation, and an obligation to implement at least one team student project. • Conditions and the way of implementation • Total: 10 learning objectives and 6 skills, 45 learning outcomes +7 selected from the optional list, 4 citizenship activities, 1 team-based student project

Source: Self-elaboration.

The comparison shows that, in terms of the number of individual requirements, the two CCs are comparable, although CC 2025 contains fewer general and specific requirements. In addition, CC 2025 includes catalogues of optional requirements and citizenship activities, although it remains unclear which of these will ultimately be selected for implementation during school classes. For this reason, the comparison of the two CCs focused primarily on mandatory elements. After comparing the two CCs, the analysis was extended to selected elements. Accordingly, the comparison of code occurrences in the two CCs was limited to general and specific requirements (see the previous section).

The results show that despite fewer general and specific requirements in CC 2025, the codes listed and defined in Table 1 were assigned a higher number of quotations, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Distribution of main codes in CC 2018 and CC 2025 across general and specific requirements

Note: The width of the bands in the diagram shows the representation of each selected code that was assigned to the goals and learning outcomes of CC 2018 and CC 2025. A thick band indicates a higher prevalence of the code within the text, whereas a thin band indicates that the code appeared only occasionally in the document. The coding comprised the general and specific requirements presented as bullet points. The diagram was generated using Atlas.ti 25.

Source: Self-elaboration.

However, these findings provide only a preliminary basis for concluding that there is a difference in the representation of the affective dimension of the concept of lived citizenship in both documents. A more detailed analysis is presented below.

Lived Citizenship in CC 2018

The best represented main codes in CC 2018 are *citizenship activities* and *locality*, which were often identified together (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Network of relationships among the main codes in CC 2018 for general and specific requirements

Note: The height of the nodes at the ends of the bands indicates the extent to which a specific code is connected with other codes in the co-occurrence network. The diagram illustrates textual proximity, indicating that two or more codes are assigned to individual goals and learning outcomes. The coding units comprised the general and specific requirements presented as bullet points. The diagram was generated using Atlas.ti 25.

Source: Self-elaboration.

This means that goals and learning outcomes basically combine a spatial and a performative dimension. But what do they actually refer to?

The local aspect of lived citizenship in CC 2018 is revealed primarily in the fact that the knowledge and skills addressed by the objectives and learning outcomes are related to:

1. the student's own situation, including:
 - a) his/her legal situation, entitlements, and ability to exercise these rights, as well as to recognise mechanisms for asserting his/her own and others' rights and protecting these rights;
 - b) evaluating his/her own decisions and actions in society;
 - c) recognising and seeking solutions to everyday problems, local social issues, or problems specific to the student's age group;
2. the student's daily experience at school, especially in the classroom, including:

- a) discussing social issues, which also requires student to formulate, justify and defend one's own position while respecting views different from their own;
- b) cooperating in a group, which in turn translates into developing the ability to communicate, to take on different roles, distribute tasks, take account of conflicting opinions, and establish a framework for reaching the consensus necessary to complete a task.

The spatial dimension involves shifting the focus from the formal-legal status of citizenship to what is available to students both in terms of their legal situation and entitlements (1.a.), the social experiences that are close to them (at the spatial or problem level) (1.b-c; 2.a-b). It is closely related to the performed dimension of citizenship, i.e. the specific practices and activities through which citizenship is actively constructed. However, not all learning objectives and outcomes correlating with the spatial dimension and lived citizenship provide the same opportunities to capture the intersubjective dimension. Relationships with others are particularly evident in the objectives and learning outcomes re-

ferred to in points 2a and 2b, which concern local citizenship experiences associated with interacting within a class group. The analysis revealed only four passages in CC 2018 in which the codes *locality*, *citizenship activities*, and *relationships with others* appeared together. Two of these passages are learning objectives:

1. [the student] develops discussion skills—formulates, justifies and defends his or her own position in a public forum, respecting dissenting views.
2. [the student] cooperates in a group, taking into account the division of tasks and the values of society.

The other two passages are situated in the *conditions and the way of implementation* section and deal with the methods and forms of implementation of the learning outcomes. More specifically, they address the organisation of educational excursions designed to establish contact with people or organisations that may serve as sources of specific information, as well as the use of various forms of discussion to implement specific requirements. In addition, the need for each student to participate in a minimum of two student learning projects is indicated. This means experiencing citizenship in relationship with others, not just side by side. Collaborating, performing tasks in a project, and participating in discussions on political, social, and legal issues are definitely also conducive to grasping the affective dimension of citizenship. Thus, the affective dimension is evident in those parts of the CC 2018 text that concern the group process and are oriented towards achieving a common goal. Affect can also be discerned in those parts of the document that refer to dialogue and respect in matters of dispute.

The emotions and feelings associated with being a citizen can also be inferred from an analysis of the goals and learning outcomes coded as *social sensitivity*. The analysis of CC 2018 revealed that this code includes learning outcomes related to recognising violations of the law (human rights violations, discrimination, corruption) and recognising social problems (divisions in society, stigmatisation, intolerance, unethical behaviour, and systemic misconduct in public life). To a much lesser extent, it also encompasses knowledge about “others” and foreign nationals, seeking solutions to social problems, and understanding the need to oppose discrimination. However, none of the passages coded as *social sensitivity* refer to actions taken in relation to diagnosed violations or problems. It may, therefore, be inferred that sensitivity is represented here merely as the observer’s attentiveness, while the scale of the issues is fundamentally macro-social.

Regarding the passages assigned the codes *engagement*, *responsibility*, and *sense of belonging*, there are only a few examples present in the text. In the case of *engagement*, only one general objective relating to the formation of pro-community attitudes is formulated in CC 2018; furthermore, the subject description states:

3. The learning content is formulated in such a way that the student is aware of the influence of citizens on public life, but at the same time understands the need to take responsibility for their own choices and decisions.

Affect is here linked to an understanding of the need to take responsibility for one’s own choices. Consequently, the motivation for engagement derives from a sense of duty and a reasoned evaluation of the consequences of one’s actions. The implicit focus

on responsibility found in the passage quoted above is also evident (although not articulated explicitly) in the case of general objectives relating to the protection of human rights and freedoms. In contrast, a *sense of belonging* is only evident in two passages of CC 2018—specifically at the level of the general objective related to shaping attitudes (4) and at the level of the learning outcome related to knowledge (5):

4. This education is also intended to lead to the fostering of attitudes of respect for the national and world heritage as well as cognitive curiosity, open-mindedness and tolerance.
5. [the student] characterises human social roles in relation to their membership of different social groups; analyses the principles of reciprocity, trust and assistance.

Passage 4, while relevant to the state, exhibits a highly limited affective dimension, which can only be inferred indirectly from an attitude of respect

for heritage and openness. As regards Example 5, there is an absence of reference to the specific social groups to which the student belongs. Such a formulation suggests that the focus is predominantly on the cognitive aspects of a sense of belonging.

Lived Citizenship in CC 2025

For CC 2025, the best represented main codes are *citizenship activities*, *locality*, *relationships with others*, and *social sensitivity*, respectively. In this sense, the two documents are similar. However, the difference between the two core curricula at this level (restricted to general and specific requirements; see the 'Analysed material and methods' section) is that all the main codes are significantly more robustly grounded in CC 2025 (Fig. 2). This remains true even though CC 2025 contains fewer general and specific requirements than CC 2018. The corresponding co-occurrence network (Fig. 4) also reveals that the requirements contained in CC 2025 have a different structure from those in CC 2018.

Figure 4. Network of relationships among the main codes in CC 2025 for general and specific requirements



Note: The height of the nodes at the ends of the bands indicates the extent to which a specific code is connected with other codes in the co-occurrence network. The diagram illustrates textual proximity, indicating that two or more codes are assigned to individual goals and learning outcomes. The coding units comprised the general and specific requirements presented as bullet points. The diagram was generated using Atlas.ti 25.

Source: Self-elaboration.

The spatial dimension of lived citizenship in CC 2025 is, as in CC 2018, related both to the student's general situation—including: his/her legal situation, his/her own entitlements, the recognition of mechanisms for asserting his/her own and others' rights, and the identification of solutions to everyday and local social problems—and to his/her daily experiences within the school environment. Notably, a comparison of the two core curricula reveals a clear shift in emphasis towards an active performative and affective attitude. This shift is evident in learning outcomes related to taking action to protect human rights, responding to violations, or working to solve social problems, especially at the local level.

The co-occurrence analysis of CC 2025 indicates that *citizenship activities* and *relationships with others* are the most closely linked codes. Significantly, the majority of the goals and learning outcomes that were coded simultaneously with these two codes relate to discussing social, political, and school issues in the classroom. Citizenship activities outlined in these requirements—such as presenting and defending one's own position in the classroom—highlight the performative and affective dimensions of citizenship. This means the performative construction of oneself as a political agent, which is inherently linked to affective engagement. The emotional and ethical dimensions of dialogue are strongly emphasised; students are expected to respect the perspectives and opinions of others and to engage in dialogue on contentious issues with respect for differing views. This approach views intersubjectivity as a process of mutual recognition of subjectivity, rather than merely the resolution of disputes. This is illustrated by an excerpt from the description of the subject:

6. School should be a place where students seek to understand what unites and what divides Polish society, as well as a place where they learn to verify information on these issues, become acquainted with a variety of positions, try to form their own opinions, justify them, present them with respect for others and enter into dialogue with those whose views may be different.

As with CC 2018, the high potential for the affective dimension of citizenship to emerge in CC 2025 is provided by those passages assigned the code *social sensitivity*. Among the objectives and learning outcomes that relate to social sensitivity are both those confined to the cognitive sphere—with a possible performed dimension limited to undertaking a discussion on the topic (7)—and those that involve taking specific actions in response to diagnosed violations or problems (8, 9).

7. [the student] identifies and describes the specific characteristics of his or her local community and the heritage that builds local identity and local patriotism; forms an opinion and engages in discussion about the major challenges facing the community;
8. [the student] recognises examples of xenophobia, stereotyping and prejudice and discrimination, including hate speech, and responds to their manifestations in their environment;
9. [the student] describes the meaning of school rules set out in the statutes or other intra-school documents as well as students' rights and duties, knows their sources and justification, and reacts in situations of rule violation.

Such learning outcomes, especially those that simultaneously relate to the codes of *citizenship activities* and *relationships with others*, provide an opportunity to capture the affective dimension of citizenship. The point is that such learning outcomes not only emphasise the importance of being attentive to various issues that can affect group dynamics or to violations of human rights, but also explicitly call for a response. At the heart of such a response lies affect: a sense of injustice, or being affected by specific problems or the plight of others.

The affective dimension of citizenship is also related to the emotions and feelings connected to being a citizen, the sense of belonging, and the care associated with acts of citizenship, which in turn implies a deeper engagement and responsibility. Regarding *engagement*, the importance of a “commitment to the common good” is already emphasised in the description of the subject (10), which is also evident at the level of objectives and related skills (11).

10. The main objective of the core curriculum for the subject of citizenship education is to prepare students for informed and responsible citizenship engagement in a democratic society.
11. The student identifies social problems and seeks solutions to them, and engages individually or in cooperation with others in activities for the common good and the homeland.

Learning outcomes assigned the code *engagement* primarily focus on taking action for the school community (12), the local community, but also taking action at the state level (13). In the case of the state, the affective dimension of citizenship is definitely more limited, yet it is present, albeit indirectly. The

use of forms of citizen engagement in the lawmaking process (e.g. participating in a public hearing or preparing a petition) signifies a performative presence in the public sphere and entails a sense of responsibility for the common good; whilst this is embedded within a procedural framework, it is also linked to the affective dimension of citizenship.

12. [the student] diagnoses the problems and needs of the school community, proposes constructive solutions and, where possible (independently or as a team) takes action on the issue;
13. [the student], using a selected law as an example, presents the course of the legislative process in Poland; explains possible conventional and unconventional forms of citizen engagement in the law-making process and uses them where possible.

Half of the passages coded *engagement* in CC 2025 also refer to *responsibility*. In addition, the code *responsibility* has been assigned to those passages in CC 2025 where reference is made to identifying specific social problems and finding ways to solve them (14) or taking specific actions in that direction (8), but also when recognising and responding to violations of the law.

14. [the student] explains the causes and consequences of the climate crisis; analyses global and local initiatives to stop climate change and identifies actions that citizens can take and, where possible, engages in selected activities.

Regarding the sense of belonging, references to different identification groups are evident in CC 2025,

reflecting a shift in the structure of the learning outcomes. This is illustrated by the following learning outcome:

15. [the student] identifies different social groups and communities (from the family, to the local and national community, to the global community); evaluates the relationships between components of identity related to membership of specific groups and communities.

As with CC 2018, this outcome falls within the domain of knowledge without any clear reference to the student's personal circumstances, which reduces the affective dimension.

When identifying passages from which the feelings and emotions present in CC 2025 can be inferred, one should point to explicitly articulated pride on the one hand (16) and concern for the "small and large homeland" on the other (7), both of which are intrinsically linked to responsibility.

16. [the student, using the results of research, identifies what unites and what divides Polish society; indicates what we can be proud of as a country, and formulates an opinion and undertakes a discussion on this.

Both learning outcomes, by referring to discussions on these topics, shift the focus to the emotional foundation of citizenship.

Regarding the optional learning outcomes (see Table 2), the analysis showed that every section contains outcomes coded *citizenship activities*, *locality* and *relationships with others*, providing an opportunity to support the spatial, performed, and intersubjective dimensions of lived citizenship. Learning outcomes

relating to *social sensitivity* are present in six of the seven sections, followed by *engagement*, *sense of belonging* and *responsibility*. The additional learning outcomes are dominated by the recognition of social problems. The learning outcomes for developing openness to different views, recognising one's legal situation and rights, and finding solutions to everyday problems are also well represented. In summary, each section reveals additional learning outcomes that incorporate the affective dimension of lived citizenship.

Such potential can also be seen in the required citizenship activities. Many of the citizenship activities listed in the document demand a deeper engagement, which in turn is linked to responsibility and social sensitivity. The selection of four of these activities (see Table 2) may therefore further support the affective dimension of citizenship in CC 2025. In addition, as in CC 2018, a team project (at least one) is mandatory. CC 2025 indicates that this can be a community or research project. This requirement can be interpreted as the intersection of the performative, intersubjective, and affective dimensions of lived citizenship, matching the dynamics discussed regarding CC 2018. Such a task necessitates deeper involvement, responsibility for the task at hand, collaboration, and communication between team members. Furthermore, if the project is community-oriented and responds to a specific social problem, the importance of the affective dimension increases, as the actions taken reflect a concern for the common good or the well-being of a specific group.

Conclusions

Assessing the potential for capturing emotions and relationships in citizenship education, the basics of which are laid down in the core curricula, is a

challenging task. This article argues that this potential can emerge at the intersection of the different dimensions of citizenship, defined here as lived citizenship, and can be read mainly from the learning objectives and learning outcomes defined in the core curricula. The affective dimension of citizenship is only one of several dimensions intersecting with the spatial, intersubjective, and performed dimensions; therefore, in seeking the potential to capture the affective dimension in the core curricula, the analysis examined the presence of all the codes associated with the different dimensions of lived citizenship.

The analysis showed that both CC 2018 and CC 2025, although created under different political conditions in the country, reveal such potential. However, the 2025 curriculum revision introduced general and specific requirements with a different structure compared to CC 2018, whereby:

- despite a smaller overall number, all the main codes identified in the research are better represented; and
- an analysis of the co-occurrence of these codes indicates that individual learning objectives and outcomes combine the main codes to a greater extent.

The conclusions regarding the frequency and co-occurrence of codes are only preliminary in nature. The findings of detailed qualitative analyses of the texts of both CCs are of crucial importance.

In spatial terms, CC 2025 shows a clear downscaling of citizenship. Whilst the objectives and specific requirements that enable students to consider citizenship in local terms—both in spatial terms (local community, school community) and in terms of

issues (matters affecting young people, their legal status, and their entitlements)—are present in both documents, in CC 2025, the school becomes a key element of locality as a micro-scale of public space. The emphasis also shifts to what is important to students and their community. Even interactions with institutions and issues of a macro-social scale—such as human rights, environmental concerns, and global issues—are related to everyday situations and student engagement. In this way, a stronger foundation is built for the affective dimension of citizenship.

CC 2025 also shifts the emphasis towards active agency. In the formulation of learning objectives and outcomes, civic activities intersect with relationships with others. Even if these predominantly concern members of the class group, they nonetheless reinforce the affective dimension of citizenship present in the document. A highly conspicuous change in CC 2025 is that *social sensitivity*—which serves as a booster for the affective dimension of citizenship—includes not only goals and learning outcomes relating to the cognitive area, but also involves taking specific activities, action in response to diagnosed social problems and violations of the law. This change is crucial and, at the same time, linked to the significantly reinforced performed dimension of citizenship in CC 2025. Additional opportunities for capturing the affective dimension of citizenship exist in the elective requirements and citizenship activities. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that, although these are elective elements—viewed positively from the perspective of educational autonomy—they weaken the overall assessment of CC 2025 in terms of its representation of the concept of lived citizenship.

The above analysis suggests that changing the core curricula regarding citizenship education represents

a decisive step towards a concept based on more active citizenship experienced locally by students. And it is this change that seems to be most important for being able to grasp the affective dimension of citizenship. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this study addresses only opportunities, not the

differences between what is assumed and what is implemented in schools. The scope of this article is strictly confined to the interpretative potential of what is written in the core curricula, which ultimately means that the affective dimension of citizenship is poorly represented in both CC 2018 and CC 2025.

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