

University of Groningen

Rethinking Citizenship

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Introduction

The articles in this volume originate from a European Studies Intensive Programme celebrated at the University of Deusto, Bilbao in June 2012. The study of citizenship has been at the centre of much debate and research in the social sciences. The purpose of the Intensive Programme was to try and extend the concept of citizenship to other areas of interest such as, the new social movements of the “indignados”, feminism, globalization and multi- and transculturalism, popular culture(s), etc. In fact, issues and questions of culture are not very far from the political sphere and their interaction is crucial in today’s society at large.

Consequently, the general topic of the Intensive Programme sought to address all the issues above so as to obtain academic responses that could broaden the definitions and configurations of citizenship in its cultural component. Four sub-themes were therefore formulated, as structuring principles of the Intensive Programme:

a) Constructions and representations of European identity.

The idea of creating a common sense of togetherness with a simultaneous regard for difference is central for Europe today. The question remains whether it is still possible to think of a single European identity, or whether it would be more appropriate to consider many European identities? For many, the idea of Europe for its citizens is rather abstract. Some of the articles in this publication would address this issue. Do different European symbols provide a real sense of belonging to a cultural European identity? How is a European identity constructed and represented?

b) Combining national identities under a shared European identity.

This sub-topic of the IP addressed how single national sentiments and the combination of these played a big role in policy making in Europe. Some articles in this publication deal with this. For many, the combination of national identities under the banner of ‘European’ remains a legal, political and, more importantly, a procedural question. This sub-topic aimed to delve into the processes of potential broader integration amongst members of the European Union.

c) Cultural diversity (linguistic, religious ...) and democracy.

With this sub-topic the need to create a feeling of belonging and solidarity so as to achieve a stable democratic environment was addressed. The starting point for this could be the rise of a European demos which could share a set of commonly held values and the sufficient social trust between European citizens. Thus, cohesion becomes a transversal matter. Many of the articles in this volume will analyze how the future of European

integration depends on generating a common cultural identity for Europe by integrating multiple democratic discourses and practices.

d) Cultivating a plural and cultural citizenship.

Many of the articles in this volume will express the need for the cultivation of cultural citizenship in Europe. This can only be achieved through a comprehensive and plural education. Many of the best practices on how to cultivate cultural citizenship are also the main topic of these articles, highlighting thus the need for a volume of this kind.

This volume has been divided into three main sections which deal with a) cultural citizenship and theory, b) politics of memory and citizenship and c) citizenship and culture. The editors believe that this subdivision helps to understand the narrative of this volume.

The European Studies Intensive Programme (IP) 2012 was carried out together with eleven partner universities. These were Göttingen, Groningen, Indiana, Krakow, Olomouc, Osaka, Pune, Strasbourg, Udine, UNAM, Uppsala. The Deusto-IP was the last one in a row of three that ran under the title “Europe between Europeanization and Globalization”. The first one took place in Groningen in 2010, the second one in Göttingen last year. As it is already customary in all IPs students from all these universities were asked to come up with topics for their research papers and to submit abstracts. Like in any other conference, panels were formed out of around 85 students from more than 30 countries. Students were then asked to present their findings in front of fellow students and faculty members. The best papers of these presentation panels were nominated for publication by the panel tutors. “Walking the Tightrope” is the publication of the best student papers of the Groningen-IP 2010.¹ “Europeans in-between: Identities in a (Trans-)Cultural Space” is the volume of the best papers of the Göttingen-IP 2011.² Both volumes and this third one show the dedication and new perspectives a younger generation of students in European Studies is offering.

The editors of this volume would like to express their gratitude to all participants of the Intensive Programme for their contributions. All those involved and taking part in this Intensive Programme at the University of Deusto made it possible for this 12-day event to become an illuminating research and academic meeting point. The editors would like to thank the Groningen MA in Euroculture team as well as the staff of the library of the University of Groningen for their support in setting up this publication. Very special thanks to those involved in planning and organizing the IP in Deusto: Beatriz Pérez de las Heras, Maite Sagasti, Laura Ruiz and Carolina Delgado.

Asier Altuna and Mariluz Suárez
Deusto, August 2013

¹ Janny de Jong, Ine Megens, Margriet van der Waal (eds.), *Walking the Tightrope: Europe between Europeanisation and Globalisation. Selected papers presented at the European Studies Programme 2010* (Groningen: University of Groningen Library), <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/ppn/333995155> (accessed 15 June 2013).

² Lars Klein and Martin Tamcke (eds.), *Europeans In-Between: Identities in a (Trans-)Cultural Space. Selected Texts presented at the European Studies Intensive Programme 2011* (Groningen: University of Groningen Library), <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/ppn/352878479> (accessed 15 June 2013).

