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Research Article

Creating European citizens through citizenship, geography, and history education: a temporal and regional analysis of the Spanish curriculum

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Keywords

*European Union,
Compulsory secondary education,
European dimension in education,
Social Sciences,
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Curriculum analyses*

Abstract

The European Dimension in Education (EDE) is a policy promoted by the Council of Europe and the European Union that aims to foster active, critical citizenship based on common democratic values. It is also associated with the idea of promoting better knowledge of the European Union and of the concept of European citizenship. Ever since the policy was initially launched, EU Member States have been trying to add a European dimension to their education systems, although little progress has been made. In this paper, we study the way EDE has been integrated into the Spanish education system. Our research is based on an analysis of the national and regional curricula for Social Sciences (Geography, History) and Citizenship Education in compulsory secondary education, as these are the main subjects within which Spanish students are taught civic education. Results showed few signs of progress in the integration of EDE into the Spanish curriculum. In fact, a regressive trend was observed in some cases. The curriculum has varied a lot over the years in line above all with the ideology of the national government. It has also varied considerably across Spain's different regions, which play an important role in the inclusion of EDE contents in the curriculum. The inclusion of specific subjects on Citizenship Education has provided a considerable boost to the integration of EDE into the Spanish curriculum. However, EU-related content is usually scarce and is never considered as important as content explaining the Spanish political system, citizenship, geography and history. Our paper concludes that a stronger European focus in the national curriculum would be highly recommended, so as to fully embrace EDE. In addition, a cross-party consensus should be reached on citizenship education and its contents, stressing the important role it can play as a separate subject.

Highlights:

- There is a regressive trend in the integration of EDE into the Spanish curriculum
- The Autonomous Communities have played a key role in the integration of EDE into the curriculum
- Social Sciences has been an important subject for teaching EDE-related contents
- The contents of Geography and History pay insufficient attention to the EU scale
- Citizenship education is a politically controversial subject, which hampers full integration of EDE into the curriculum



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The publication of the *European Journal of Geography* (EJG) (<http://eurogeojournal.eu/>) is based on the *European Association of Geographers'* goal to make *European Geography* a worldwide reference and standard. Thus, the scope of the EJG is to publish original and innovative papers that will substantially improve, in a theoretical, conceptual or empirical way the quality of research, learning, teaching and applying geography, as well as in promoting the significance of geography as a discipline. Submissions are encouraged to have a European dimension. The *European Journal of Geography* is a peer-reviewed open access journal and is published quarterly.

1. INTRODUCTION

The key role played by education in shaping citizens has been recognized throughout history. The classical philosophers of Ancient Greece emphasized the importance of the education system in the creation of good citizens (European Commission, 2017a). With the emergence of modern states after the fall of the Ancien Régime, education systems were created as part of the process of constructing new nations, serving to convey the prevailing nationalist message in each country (Wiborg, 2000).

The education systems of different nations, including Western European democracies, have inherited part of that vision. However, a transition is currently underway from instilling in children a sense of their own national identity to an education based on common democratic values and human rights that recognises several identities at the same time (from local to global) (Davies et al., 2005). The latter is usually referred to as ‘citizenship education’, in which citizenship must not be confused with nationality (Davies et al., 2005). Citizenship education, also referred to as societal science, political, civic or social education, or even as education for democratic citizenship, has been defined by the Council of Europe (2004) as :“a set of practices and principles aimed at making young people and adults better equipped to participate actively in democratic life by assuming and exercising their rights and responsibilities in society”.

The Council of Europe (COE) and the institutions of first the European Economic Community (EEC) and later the European Union (EU) have promoted citizenship education in their member states since the 1960s, together with other international institutions such as the United Nations (UN) (Diestro Fernández & García Blanco, 2016). Along similar lines, the COE and the EU have also promoted the idea of a European Dimension in Education (EDE) (DGES, 1989; European Commission, 1993).

EDE is an ambiguous concept that is interpreted in different ways by the COE and the EU institutions, although, in essence, it aims to promote democratic and human-rights values amongst European citizens, who should also be able to appreciate their common roots and the cultural diversity of the continent (Diestro Fernández, 2011). EDE is also regarded as a means of bringing European citizens closer to EU institutions and politics, raising their awareness of the process of European construction and inculcating in them a sense of belonging to a project in which all citizens share a common goal (European Economic Community, 1973; European Parliament, 1987; European Commission, 2017b). EDE should therefore be viewed as a form of citizenship education focused on European values and the EU political system. Diestro Fernández (2014) described the general aim of the EDE as follows: “It should make young generations become aware of the European identity to be able to assume responsibilities as citizens of Europe and get to know its culture, heritage and common values”.

EDE was mentioned in the foundational treaty of the European Union signed in Maastricht (Council of the European Communities, 1992). The treaty also recognized the concept of European citizenship for the first time. These were important steps forward which spurred EU member states to promote EDE more actively within their respective education systems (Diestro Fernández, 2011). However, these efforts to promote EDE reached a peak at the beginning of the 21st century, and little progress has been made in this direction in recent years (Diestro Fernández & García Blanco, 2016).

Now that several decades have passed since this process began, it is a good time to reflect on the changes that member states have made to their education systems to promote EDE and the associated content intended to raise awareness of the EU construction process and goals. This is especially relevant today, as EDE and increased awareness about European citizenship and European values have often been proposed as possible solutions to some of the challenges faced by our society, such as populism, xenophobia, nationalism,

discrimination and disinformation (European Council, 2015; Council of the European Union, 2018).

In this paper, we aim to provide a detailed overview of the integration of EDE into the Spanish education system since Spain's transition to democracy. To this end, we will analyse the Spanish curriculum, which is developed by the Spanish Government and the 17 Autonomous Communities or regional governments. Through this analysis, we aim to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the European Dimension of the Spanish curriculum and how has it evolved over time?
2. What role have the Spanish Autonomous Communities played in the inclusion of a European Dimension in the Spanish curriculum?

The curriculum is the main governmental instrument available to member states to implement EDE and can therefore offer us excellent insight into how committed member states are to this policy. According to Engel and Ortloff (2009), "curricula can be conceived as a state's expression of the cultural frames of citizenship" and represent not only statements of belief, but also policy action. After the approval of the latest Spanish Education Law (Boletín Oficial del Estado, 2020), which is expected to be implemented by academic year 2022/2023, a new curriculum needs to be developed. The debate about this new curriculum has already started (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2020). This is therefore the perfect time to reflect on what has been done to include EDE in the curriculum and how this can be improved in the future.

2. STATE OF THE RESEARCH

Previous researchers have tried to analyse the adoption of EDE in several different member states. This has been done using a range of different approaches, such as an analysis of textbooks (Michaels & Stevick, 2009; Banjac and Pušnik, 2015; Bušljeta, 2019; Onițiu, 2020); national curricula (Holz & Linhofer, 2015; Szakács, 2018); and through surveys of students to find out more about their knowledge, opinions and feelings (Oonk, 2014; Savvides & Faas, 2016; Santana-Vega et al., 2020). In Spain, similar studies have also been conducted following the same approaches, either for the whole country or for specific regions (Prats Cuevas et al., 2001; Valls Montés, 2004; Pereyra & Luzón, 2005; Fernández García, 2006; López Torres, 2009; Viejo et al., 2018; De Miranda & Aragón 2021). The work of Prats Cuevas et al. (2001), although now outdated, is perhaps the most relevant and comprehensive of all such studies.

As a result of this previous research, there is a general consensus regarding member states' lack of commitment to the incorporation of EDE into their national curricula (Turk et al., 2015; Bakker et al. 2017; Grimonprez, 2020). In addition, several studies have revealed European citizens' lack of knowledge of EU institutions (Santana-Vega et al., 2020). In other cases, authors have found a widespread, restrictive view of the EU as an essentially economic institution, without considering the social component of the Union and the rights attached to European citizenship (Fernández García, 2006; López Torres, 2009). In this regard, Prats Cuevas et al. (2001) found that the Spanish curriculum did not pay enough attention to essential concepts such as European citizenship and recommended not only adding more content to the curriculum, but also addressing existing curriculum content from a new European perspective. In a study of the Romanian curriculum, Szakács (2018) found that European identity was included in the curriculum, but only as an addition or complement to national identity.

Most of these studies have been conducted at specific moments in time, without providing a general analysis of the evolution of EDE within member state education systems over time. In addition, they usually lack a regional and local perspective, merely analysing the general

situation across one whole country. This line of research is also found lacking when compared with general research on citizenship education. Eurydice, a European network that provides analysis and information on the European education systems for policymakers, has published three comprehensive reports on the current practice of citizenship education across Europe (European Commission, 2018; Eurydice, 2005, 2012). In Spain, where citizenship education has been part of the curriculum since 2006, numerous papers have been published analysing the content of this subject (Arbués Radigales & Naval Durán, 2020; Buxarrais & Ortega, 2019; Sánchez-Agustí & Miguel-Revilla, 2020; Vázquez Ramil & Porto Ucha, 2020). Comparative analyses of citizenship education approaches across European countries are also very common in the literature (Faas, 2011; Johnson & Morris, 2012; Kjellin et al., 2010).

3. METHOD AND MATERIALS

3.1 Materials

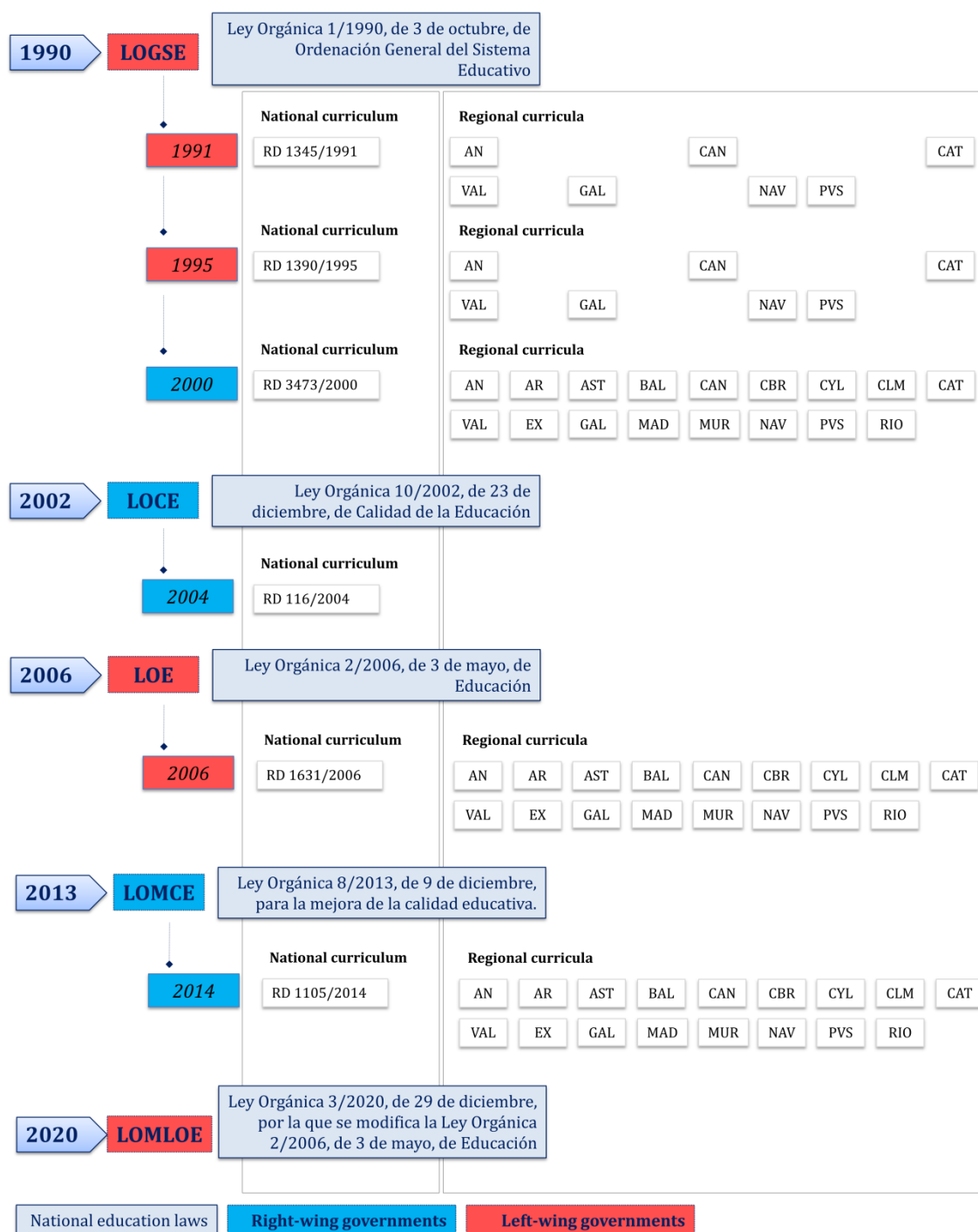
In this paper, we review the Spanish educational curricula drawn up at both the national and regional level since 1990. In the period we studied, five different Education Laws have been passed in Spain in line with the changes in the Spanish government. These laws are normally referred to by their acronyms: LOGSE, LOCE, LOE, LOMCE and LOMLOE.

A specific educational curriculum was drawn up for each law (Figure 1). From a legislative point of view, three levels can be identified in the design and implementation of the curricula for Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) in Spain:

1. State/national level: the basic curriculum is established in a Royal Decree (RD) issued by the Spanish Government. This guarantees a unified, coherent approach to compulsory education in all parts of the country.
2. Regional level: using a range of legal instruments (decrees, orders), the Regional Governments (known as Autonomous Communities) complement the Royal Decrees issued at a national level, including new contents and subjects in accordance with their interests and needs, in most cases to bring education closer to the particular situation of each region. Spain is divided into 17 Autonomous Communities with full powers in education and 2 Autonomous Cities (Ceuta and Melilla), which have no powers in this field.
3. School level: Each secondary school details the specific content and instructions issued by national and regional authorities in teaching programmes drawn up by the teaching staff.

In the case of the LOGSE, the curriculum was developed in three different decrees (Figure 1): the original, in 1991; an amendment proposed in 1995, which did not bring about significant changes in the subjects being analysed, and a complete review in the year 2000, carried out by a government of different political persuasion to that which passed the original law and curriculum. This last curriculum had similar content to the curriculum drawn up under the auspices of the second educational law, the LOCE, in 2004.

At the regional level, just 7 of the 17 Autonomous Communities had powers over education when the LOGSE was first passed in 1990, and these were therefore the only regions that had their own regional curricula at that time (Figure 1). By the year 2000, all the Autonomous Communities had been granted powers over education and since then they have all drawn up the curricula for their schools. However, we were unable to access the curricula for the year 2000 for the regions of Aragón and Castilla-La Mancha. For the latest education law, which is still in the process of implementation, the curriculum has yet to be drawn up. We did not analyse the curricula used in Ceuta and Melilla, autonomous cities with no powers in education, as they were drawn up directly by the Ministry of Education, the body responsible for the national curriculum.

Figure 1. Evolution of the legislation and the school curriculum in Spain.

Legend: Abbreviations for the Autonomous Communities (for the sake of coherence Spanish names are used throughout this paper): AN: Andalucía; AR: Aragón; AST: Principado de Asturias; BAL: Islas Baleares; CAN: Islas Canarias; CBR: Cantabria; CYL: Castilla y León; CLM: Castilla-La Mancha; CAT: Cataluña; VAL: Comunidad Valenciana; EX: Extremadura; GAL: Galicia; MAD: Comunidad de Madrid; MUR: Murcia; NAV: Navarra; PVS: País Vasco; RIO: La Rioja.

Source: Prepared by the authors on the basis of their analysis of the relevant legislation

3.2 Methods

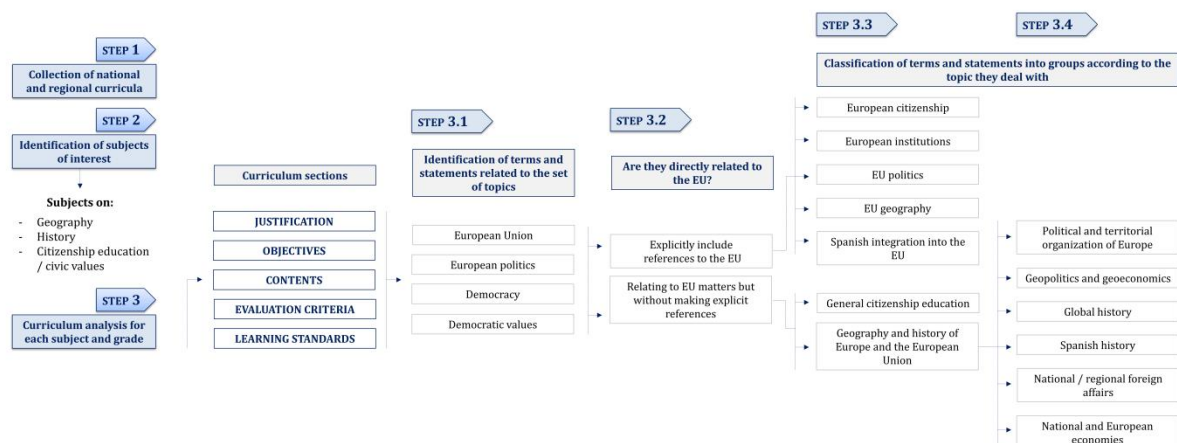
Curriculum analysis is commonly used in academic research because of the insight it provides into a range of issues such as the values promoted through the education system, the different approaches to student's education or the way in which specific content or concepts are considered in different countries (Brandoff, 2016; Engel & Ortloff, 2009; Faas, 2011; Liu et al., 2013; Michaels & Stevick, 2009). Curriculum documents are normally analysed using content analysis methodologies that apply both qualitative and quantitative methods of text analysis (Jamil et al., 2020; Muhammad & Brett, 2019).

Holz and Linhofer (2015) analysed the curricular content of five countries and assigned them to a set of predefined categories or items of analysis. Following a similar approach, Rodríguez Herrero et al. (2022) analysed the Spanish curriculum according to a list of key terms identified by a group of experts as relevant for the topic of analysis. They analysed the terms both quantitatively, in terms of frequency, and qualitatively, as regards their relevance and the context within which they appeared in the curriculum. In this regard, analysis combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches of curriculum analysis are quite common (Faas, 2011). Tani (2011) followed a more objective approach based on listing the themes included in the curricula and noting how much space was devoted to each one.

Following common practice in the literature, we used a qualitative content method to analyse the Spanish curriculum. To this end, we focused on the curriculum of a few specific subjects within the stage known as Compulsory Secondary Education or ESO (12-16 years old): these subjects were Social Sciences (Geography and History) and, when available, subjects covering citizenship education.

The ESO is the last compulsory level in the Spanish education system and, therefore, represents the final years of schooling for many Spanish citizens. Several authors have pointed out that people's political identities, i.e. their ideas of citizenship, begin to take shape at these ages (Oonk, 2014; Landberg et al., 2018). The subjects analysed here are those that deal directly with topics relating to civic education and with improving children's knowledge and understanding of the EU and European citizenship.

The curriculum for each subject was individually analysed for each grade and year available. The curriculum documents are normally divided into the following sections: justification (explaining the importance of the subject), objectives, content, evaluation criteria and, when applicable, learning standards (Figure 2). Following the approach proposed by Holz and Linhofer (2015), we searched each of these sections for terms or statements relating to one of the following categories: European Union, European politics, Democracy and Democratic values. The statements and terms that we uncovered were then split in two further categories: those that directly mentioned the European Union or European politics and those that did not directly mention them. In the first category we made a further classification between those that referred to general citizenship education questions, closely related with the EDE, and those that related to the geography and history of Europe and the European Union. The statements and terms in the second category were also subdivided according to the geographical or historical element to which they referred, differentiating between the following topics: Political and territorial organization of Europe, Geopolitics and geoeconomics, Global history, Spanish history, National / regional foreign affairs and National and European economies. Finally, we classified the terms or statements that explicitly mentioned the European Union or policies according to the following topics: European citizenship, European institutions, EU politics, EU geography and Spain's integration into the EU and its consequences. Each classification process was carried out independently by one of the authors and then reviewed by the other to validate the results obtained.

Figure 2. Methodology followed in our analysis of the school curriculum.

Source: the authors

4. RESULTS

4.1 The European Dimension of the Spanish curriculum and its evolution over time

All the curricula arising from the different Spanish Education Laws incorporate a European Dimension through content on citizenship education in general and on the European Union in particular. However, the extent to which each curriculum develops this content varies a great deal, with many differences over time and across the Autonomous Communities (see section 4.2). The national curriculum that arose from the last education law (LOMCE, 2013) has the least content aimed specifically at understanding more about the European Union and its goals. The curricula from the three previous laws include varying EDE-related content. The LOE (2006) curriculum focused more on general citizenship education content, while the LOCE (2002) and LOGSE (1991) curricula presented more specific content about the EU.

The different curricula also include varying references to the EDE in the justification of each subject or when listing its objectives. However, in many cases the fact that EDE is mentioned in the objectives and justification sections does not mean it is later developed in any great detail in the contents.

We have differentiated three ways in which EDE is addressed in the Spanish curriculum: 1. general aspects of citizenship education, without focusing on the EU; 2. specific curriculum items on the understanding of the EU as a supranational framework to which the students belong as citizens; and 3. other curriculum items that enable students to characterize and understand the EU, its geography and history.

4.1.1 EDE through general citizenship education approaches

All the curricula describe Social Sciences (Geography and History) as a subject that enables students to understand the society to which they belong, and by extension the world in which they live. This is done not only through traditional topics on world, European, national and regional geography and history, but also through specific contents on political systems, geopolitics, and social issues facing society today.

The 1991 (LOGSE) national curriculum placed more emphasis on the key role played by Social Sciences in terms of citizenship education, and initially (until 1995) it contained content on morals and ethics. The curricula from later education laws (except for the LOMCE) also highlighted the role of Social Sciences in the promotion of citizenship education and included

amongst its objectives that students should gain a greater understanding of social, cultural and linguistic diversities.

The 2001 curriculum describes how this subject could help students acquire the values required to become active members of a plural, caring society. It also included an objective to make students aware that they belong to more than one group identity. The 2006 curriculum (LOE) included a specific objective relating to the way that democratic societies work, and to understanding the rights and freedoms associated with them.

In 2006, under the LOE, the specific subject of citizenship education was added to the national curriculum. It covered most of the general citizenship content and objectives relating to EDE, including content on personal behaviour, critical reasoning, human rights, freedoms, political systems, social and other contemporary global issues. The inclusion of this subject was justified by citing the recommendations made by the EU and the Council of Europe on this matter, so proving the subject's direct links with EU guidelines on EDE.

The last education law (LOMCE) made further changes to the national curriculum. The specific subject of Citizenship Education was replaced with another more general subject called "Ethical Values", which was optional and complementary to the teaching of religion. This subject, which was to be taught for one hour a week in all four academic years of the ESO, had a moral/ethical perspective drawn from philosophical education. The Ethical Values syllabus included some citizenship education topics dealing with the democratic system or justice. However, these were just a small part of quite a wide-ranging subject.

4.1.2 EDE curriculum items focused on the EU from an institutional perspective

Although all the curricula we analysed included references to the European Union or the former European Economic Community (EEC), there is a common lack of content items explicitly covering these topics, even when the justification and objectives for the subjects mention them specifically (Table 1).

For citizenship education, the national curriculum of 2006 (LOE) included a specific objective on enhancing students' knowledge and understanding of the EU and the Spanish state. However, in terms of content, there were very few dealing explicitly with the EU, and they were much less detailed than those relating to Spain. The content referred exclusively to acquiring a knowledge of European institutions and only appeared in one of the two years in which the students studied this subject (4th year).

The LOMCE subject Ethical Values included some general context on the purpose and meaning of the EU, which aimed to make students aware of its importance for European citizens and its impact on their lives. This content therefore focused on EU policies and the consequences of European integration. However, it was an optional subject which was not studied by all students. We therefore decided not to include it when drawing up Table 1.

For Social Sciences (Geography and History), only two national curricula (1991, 2006) included content dealing directly with a knowledge and understanding of European institutions (Table 1). None of them referred to European citizenship, included in 1991 after the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht. The national curricula from 2001, 2003 and 2004 were the only ones with content referring explicitly to the geography of the European Union (as opposed to a general geography of Europe) and the effects of EEC/EU membership on Spain. On the other hand, the most recent curriculum (LOMCE) has no content focusing specifically on the political framework of the EU, and only addresses the EU when describing the content covered in contemporary European and world history.

4.1.3 EDE curriculum items that address the EU as part of the historical and geographical narrative

In Social Sciences (Geography and History), information about the EU is normally part of a wider set of five topics (Table 2): the political organization of Europe; World, European and, to a lesser extent, national history; a description of the world today from a geoeconomic and geopolitical perspective; the international and geopolitical context of Spain; and the impact of European politics on specific economic sectors at regional, national or European level.

Table 1. Inclusion of EU-related contents on five topics (European citizenship, European institutions, EU politics, EU geography; the effects of European integration on Spain) in the national and regional Spanish curricula for the different education laws (LOGSE, LOCE, LOE, LOMCE)

Includes contents about...	ES	AN	AR	AST	BAL	CAN	CBR	CYL	CLM	CAT	VAL	EX	GAL	MA	MU	NAV	PVS	RIO
LOGSE91																		
European citizenship			-	-	-		-	-	-			-		-	-			-
European institutions			-	-	-		-	-	-			-		-	-	+	+	-
EU politics			-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+		-		-	-			-
EU geography			-	-	-		-	-	-			-		-	-			-
The effects of integration			-	-	-		-	-	-			-		-	-			-
LOGSE01 – LOCE																		
European citizenship			-						-									
European institutions			-						-									
EU politics			-						-									
EU geography			-						-					+		+		+
The effects of integration			-					+	-			+	+			+		
LOE																		
European citizenship																		
European institutions								+									+	
EU politics																		
EU geography																		
The effects of integration																		
LOMCE																		
European citizenship																		
European institutions																		
EU politics																		
EU geography																		
The effects of integration																		

Legend: Highlighted in green, the curricula that included EU-related content. In red, curricula that did not include EU-related content. In yellow, the curricula that mentioned EU-related content when setting out the scope and objectives of the subject, but not when detailing the contents of the curriculum. In white (-), regions that did not have their own curriculum at that time (LOGSE91) or whose curriculum was not found (LOGSE01). If a national curriculum included EU-related content, it was assumed that this would also appear in all the regional curricula, which are therefore all highlighted in green. If the region developed this content further, it is given a + sign.

AN: Andalucía; AR: Aragón; AST: Principado de Asturias; BAL: Islas Baleares; CAN: Islas Canarias; CBR: Cantabria; CYL: Castilla y León; CLM: Castilla-La Mancha; CAT: Cataluña; VAL: Comunidad Valenciana; EX: Extremadura; GAL: Galicia; MAD: Comunidad de Madrid; MUR: Murcia; NAV: Navarra; PVS: País Vasco; RIO: La Rioja.

Source: prepared by the authors

All the curricula included explicit references to the European Union when explaining recent World and European History. However, in the content covered in History of Spain, there were no explicit references to the EU in either the first (1991) or the most recent (2014) curricula. When the curricula directly considered EU-related content as part of Spanish history, they tended to address the effects of Spain joining the EEC, which later became the EU (Table 2).

This content also appeared in other parts of the curricula, in which the EU itself was the specific theme of study, or in sections on the geography of Spain.

Table 2. Themes from the national and regional Spanish curricula that include contents relating to the EU for the different education laws (LOGSE, LOCE, LOE, LOMCE)

	ES	AN	AR	AST	BAL	CAN	CBR	CYL	CLM	CAT	VAL	EX	GAL	MAD	MUR	NAV	PVS	RIO
LOGSE91																		
Political and territorial organization of Europe			-	-	-		-	-	-			-		-	-			-
Geopolitics and geoeconomics		+	-	-	-		-	-	-			-		-	-			-
Global history			-	-	-		-	-	-			-		-	-			-
Spanish history			-	-	-		-	-	-			-		-	-			-
National / regional foreign affairs		+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-			-	+	-	-		+	-
National and European economies		+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+		-		-	-			-
LOGSE01 – LOCE																		
Political and territorial organization of Europe		+	-		+			+	-								+	
Geopolitics and geoeconomics			-						-									
Global history			-						-									
Spanish history			-						-									
National / regional foreign affairs			-						-									
National and European economies			-						-									
LOE																		
Geopolitics and geoeconomics														+				
Global history																		
Spanish history																		
National / regional foreign affairs																		
National and European economies																	+	
LOMCE																		
Political and territorial organization of Europe																		
Geopolitics and geoeconomics																		
Global history																		
Spanish history																		
National / regional foreign affairs																		
National and European economies																		

Legend: Highlighted in green, the curricula that included EU-related content within the particular theme. In red, curricula that did not include EU-related content. In white, curricula that were unavailable. If a national curriculum included EU-related content, it was assumed that this would also appear in all the regional curricula, which were therefore all highlighted in green. If the region developed this content further, it was given a + sign.

AN: Andalucía; AR: Aragón; AST: Principado de Asturias; BAL: Islas Baleares; CAN: Islas Canarias; CBR: Cantabria; CYL: Castilla y León; CLM: Castilla-La Mancha; CAT: Cataluña; VAL: Comunidad Valenciana; EX: Extremadura; GAL: Galicia; MAD: Comunidad de Madrid; MUR: Murcia; NAV: Navarra; PVS: País Vasco; RIO: La Rioja.

Source: prepared by the authors

Instead of including content on the EU as part of Spanish History, the 1991 national curriculum (LOGSE) explicitly mentioned the EEC when explaining Spain's international context and its relations with foreign countries, combining the study of the European Union with the historical relations that Spain has traditionally maintained with other Ibero-American countries. This content in which the EU is treated as part of the foreign affairs of the country or the region can also be contextualized within studies of the geopolitical and geoeconomic situation of Spain. In this regard, syllabus items aimed at achieving a better overall

understanding of world geoeconomics and geopolitics normally contained, except for the LOMCE, specific content or assessment criteria about the EU (or EEC) (Table 2).

Explicit references to the EU were also common in content analysing the territorial and political organization of Europe. Some curricula contained explicit content on the EU as part of an overall review of political systems and territorial organization at different scales: global, European, national and regional. However, in other cases, this curricular theme was seen as a suitable framework for presenting specific content focusing exclusively on the EU, dealing with EU institutions, politics or even EU geography, as previously analysed (section 4.1.2).

Finally, a few explicit references to the EU were also found in the sections of the curricula relating to Spanish and European geography, due to the impact of EU policies on the primary (agriculture, livestock) and secondary (industry, energy) sectors (Table 2). However, these references were normally quite brief. At the national level, only the first curriculum (1991) includes a specific reference to this issue.

4.2 The role of the Autonomous Communities in the inclusion of a European Dimension in the Spanish curriculum

The regional curricula are strongly influenced by the scope and aims of the national curriculum, which each region is obliged to include in its own curriculum. If no specific mention was made of the European question or of aspects of EDE in the national curriculum, the regional curricula usually followed similar lines. Likewise, the perspective from which EDE was approached in the national curriculum was usually reflected in the regional curricula. For example, in the 4th Year Social Sciences Course in the LOGSE, the EU was studied as part of Spanish international relations. The same approach was applied in all the regional curricula (Table 3), many of which also included specific additional content on the international relations between the region and the EEC / EU. In some cases, the regional governments continued with this approach in their 2001 curricula, even though by that time it had been removed from the national curriculum (Table 3).

The regions have played a key role in the incorporation of EDE into the Spanish education system. In fact, under the last education law (LOMCE), six regions included Citizenship Education in their curricula, even though it was no longer part of the national curriculum. In general, the regional curricula offer more detailed EDE content than the national curriculum (Table 3), although this varies a great deal from one region to the next and over time. For example, there are regions which under one Education Law provided curricula with a lot of EDE-related content, only to omit it in subsequent curriculum development.

In this study, we have identified three ways in which the regions have encouraged a European Dimension in Education through their respective curricula: 1. by adding specific subjects on citizenship education which were not part of the national curriculum; 2. by stressing the purpose and objectives of Social Sciences as a subject to promote the idea of citizenship; and 3. by further developing EU-related content from the national curriculum.

4.2.1 Regional subjects on citizenship education

Andalucía, Aragón, Islas Canarias, Cantabria, Extremadura and Galicia included citizenship education as part of the regional curricula in the LOMCE, which played a complementary role to the civic education offered within Social Sciences (Geography and History). In all cases, except for Galicia, the subject was called "Citizenship Education". In the Galician case, it was called "European democratic values", a name that fully connects with the purpose and objectives of EDE, as promoted by the EU and the CoE. Although this subject has a different name and a slightly different approach, the core content is the same as in the other subjects on citizenship education.

In general, the curricula of these subjects do not contain content relating explicitly to the EU. Such content only appears in the curricula for Aragón and Galicia, with the former focusing on EU institutions and the latter on the values inherent in the European Union. There are no

references to the EU in the syllabus for Citizenship Education in Canarias, Cantabria or Extremadura. In Galicia, the “European Democratic Values” syllabus also includes specific content on European citizenship, although it barely mentions the EU political system (institutions, politics...). In the Andalusian curriculum, one of the objectives of the subject includes a reference to a better understanding of the EU.

Table 3. Regional curricula that further developed the EU-related contents from the national curricula established under the different Education Laws (LOGSE, LOCE, LOE, LOMCE), differentiating between Social Sciences (Geography and History) and Citizenship Education subjects

	AN	AR	AST	BAL	CAN	CBR	CYL	CLM	CAT	VAL	EX	GAL	MAD	MUR	NAV	PVS	RIO
LOGSE91																	
Social Sciences		-	-	-		-	-	-			-		-	-			-
LOGSE01 – LOCE																	
Social Sciences		-						-									
LOE																	
Social Sciences																	
Citizenship education																	
LOMCE																	
Social Sciences																	
Citizenship education																	

Legend: in green, regional curricula that included more EU contents than the national curriculum. In red, regional curricula that did not include more EU contents than the national curriculum. In yellow, regional curricula that mentioned EU-related topics when setting out the scope and objectives of the subject. In white (-), regions that did not have their own curriculum at that time (LOGSE91) or whose curriculum was not found (LOGSE01).

AN: Andalucía; AR: Aragón; AST: Principado de Asturias; BAL: Islas Baleares; CAN: Islas Canarias; CBR: Cantabria; CYL: Castilla y León; CLM: Castilla-La Mancha; CAT: Cataluña; VAL: Comunidad Valenciana; EX: Extremadura; GAL: Galicia; MAD: Comunidad de Madrid; MUR: Murcia; NAV: Navarra; PVS: País Vasco; RIO: La Rioja.

Source: prepared by the authors

4.2.2 Strengthening the role of Social Sciences in citizenship education

The way Social Sciences (Geography and History) is conceptualized as a subject with a specific role in citizenship education varies a great deal between the different regional curricula and over time. The curricula from some regions focus on the role of Social Sciences in the creation of identities, which are closely connected to territory. This is especially evident in the curricula applied in Cataluña throughout this period and, for most of the time, in País Vasco, regions of Spain with strong nationalist movements. The Galician curriculum for 2006 (LOE) also included an objective designed to promote a sense of belonging to Galicia and other political frameworks of which students are part. The 2014 (LOMCE) curriculum for Castilla-La Mancha considered the assimilation of national and European identities as part of the students' learning path in this subject.

For the LOMCE, the curricula of Andalucía, Aragón, Islas Canarias, Castilla-La Mancha and Cataluña stress the important role played by this subject in citizenship education. The curricula of Asturias, Cantabria, Castilla y León and Comunidad Valenciana also include a justification along similar lines, albeit paying less attention to these topics. In the national curriculum, there were no direct references to this question.

4.2.3 Further development of EU-related contents set out in the national curriculum

The Autonomous Communities have further developed EU content in Citizenship Education and Social Sciences. In the LOE curriculum, Castilla y León, Madrid, Murcia, País Vasco and La Rioja included content on the European institutions or the framework of the EU in the 3rd

year Citizenship Education course (Table 1). Cataluña also included content about global and European citizenship. In the LOMCE, the EU-related content in Ethical Values is presented in greater depth in the La Rioja and Navarra curricula, which include contents about the structure of the EU and, by extension, its institutions.

In the 2001 regional curricula for Social Sciences, there were five regions with explicit content or assessment criteria on the institutions and political organization of the EU, while in the 2014 curricula, there were six (Table 1). Some regional curricula also had specific additional objectives aimed at improving students' understanding of EU structures and policies: these include País Vasco in the LOE and LOMCE (2006, 2014) and Andalucía and Aragón in the LOMCE (2014). The LOE curriculum applied in the País Vasco was the only one with specific content on European citizenship.

Some regional curricula (such as Asturias in 2001 and Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha and Extremadura in 2014) also included specific content on EU politics and laws (Table 1) or included EU content not mentioned in the national curriculum as part of their Spanish history and geography content (Table 2). References to EU policies were quite common when explaining Spanish and European geography, because of their importance for understanding economic changes and the dynamics of certain specific sectors, such as agriculture.

5. DISCUSSION

According to the results of our analysis, little progress has been made regarding the integration of EDE into the Spanish education system. Although all the curricula in the Spanish education system contain some EDE-related elements, these have evolved very little over time, despite the fact that several new curricula and laws have been passed. In fact, recent trends are negative in that the curriculum that arose from the last education law (LOMCE) was an important step back. Thus, in addition to the traditional diagnosis that points to a lack of ambition when it comes to including EDE in the curricula of the different member states (Turk et al., 2015; Bakker et al., 2017; Grimonprez, 2020), it would also seem that, for Spain at least, there is also a recent regressive trend that highlights a lack of commitment to this policy.

The Autonomous Communities have played a key role in the integration of EDE into the Spanish curriculum, a new finding that had never been identified in previous research. When designing their curricula, many Autonomous Communities have managed to mitigate the effects of the frequent changes in EDE content in the national curriculum, by providing curricula with a more stable EDE over time. Nonetheless, even in the regional curricula, some important variations have taken place over time, which have prevented full, effective integration of EDE into the Spanish curriculum.

If we were to extend our study to analyse current practice in schools, this might reveal greater efforts to integrate EDE into the Spanish education system. Schools and teachers are responsible for developing a specific part of the curriculum (Prats Cuevas et al., 2001) and for each of the syllabus items, they decide what is taught and how. Grimonprez (2020) points out that there may be significant differences between schools regarding the inclusion of EDE. Textbook analysis could also be an interesting approach to understand how EDE is applied in practice, as many teachers rely on textbooks when presenting curriculum contents (Prats Cuevas et al., 2001). Fieldwork in schools and textbook analysis could therefore provide additional complementary conclusions to those provided by this study.

EDE has been integrated into the Spanish curriculum through two main approaches: curriculum items on general citizenship education content and specific curriculum items on the European Union. The regressive trend observed in the LOMCE curriculum was also noted in two types of curricular items. Nonetheless, the most important changes regarding the inclusion of EDE in the Spanish curricula refer to general citizenship education content. This is due above all to the emergence of specific subjects on citizenship education from 2006 onwards. As regards the second type of items (specific curriculum items on the European Union), despite the considerable strides taken by the EU project since the first education curriculum was passed in 1991, there have been few changes in Spanish curricula in terms of the extent

of EU-related contents or the way they are addressed. The national perspective remains dominant when teaching citizenship education content, with little attention being paid to the broader EU framework and institutions, or to European citizenship.

5.1 The integration of EDE through general citizenship education approaches

Ever since the first education law (LOGSE), contents on citizenship education have been integrated into the Spanish curriculum as a cross-curricular theme and as part of humanities and social sciences subjects, such as Geography and History (Pereyra & Luzón, 2005). Since 2006, a specific subject on citizenship education was also included in the Spanish curriculum. The Eurydice Brief on Citizenship Education in Europe (European Commission, 2017a) identifies three complementary approaches to the inclusion of citizenship education in the curriculum: i) through specific subjects, ii) as part of other broader subjects and iii) as a cross-curricular theme. All three approaches have been applied in Spain in the different laws and curricula. However, some authors argue that the cross-curricular approach to citizenship education has been of limited success, at least for the LOGSE (Vázquez Ramil & Porto Ucha, 2020).

The importance attached to Social Sciences (Geography and History), and indeed to the school curriculum as a whole, in the promotion of civic contents and values varies greatly depending on the particular education law and its associated curriculum. The LOGSE, LOE and the current LOMLOE (2020) clearly emphasize the role of compulsory education in forming tomorrow's citizens, stressing the cross-curricular approach to citizenship education. This purpose is less evident in the LOCE and LOMCE, which highlight the pragmatic side of education, and focus more on effort, the quality of the education provided and the needs of the job market (García-Álvarez, 2019; Vázquez Ramil & Porto Ucha, 2020). The regional curricula designed by some Autonomous Communities have usually compensated for these changes in the national curriculum by highlighting cross-curricular themes of citizenship education, especially within Social Sciences. This is particularly notable in the cases of Cataluña and País Vasco, regions with strong nationalist movements, which usually assign a key role to Social Sciences in the shaping of territorial identities and a sense of belonging.

The study of Geography and History gives students a better understanding of the world in which they live and of the context within which their local environment is situated. These subjects can therefore help shape students sense of identity and of belonging to a specific country or region and should continue to play a role in the promotion of citizenship education, even when the curriculum includes a specific subject on this topic.

The inclusion of specific subjects on citizenship education complements the cross-curricular approach and can be considered an important step forward for EDE, at least from the perspective of promoting democratic ideals and the associated way of life, as well as values such as tolerance. In Spain, a specific subject on citizenship education was created in 2006 for the first time under a left-leaning government. However, it gave rise to a heated political debate and was discarded in the subsequent education law (LOMCE), passed by a conservative government (Engel, 2014; Ríos-Rojas, 2018; Arbués Radigales & Naval Durán, 2020).

Despite complying with the recommendations of the EU, the CoE and other international organizations, some conservative elements in Spanish society opposed this subject as they believed it impinged upon their right to freedom of thought (Engel, 2014; Buxarrais & Ortega, 2019). They argued that some of the contents taught within this subject breached the moral values of part of Spanish society, with close links to traditional Catholic morals (Engel, 2014; Ríos-Rojas, 2018). The dispute ended up in court, with polarized sentences in different directions being issued (Gómez Orfanel, 2009).

In the LOMCE, citizenship education was replaced by an optional subject on ethical values, which focused more on philosophical and moral contents, and placed less emphasis on civic questions. This change was an important step backwards for two main reasons. Firstly, because Ethical Values was treated as an optional alternative subject to Religion, so giving

education on civic and Catholic values similar, comparable status, and secondly because subjects relating to ethics had already been considered in previous education laws (Gracia Calandín & Gozávez, 2016).

Some Autonomous Communities rejected the Spanish government's decision to scrap Citizenship Education by retaining it as a subject on their regional curricula. Despite having a conservative regional government, Galicia included a specific subject on European democratic values in the LOMCE curriculum. This could serve as an example of a commitment to EDE and to the recommendations of the European and international institutions that transcends the ideological debate in which other regions are immersed.

The new education law (LOMLOE, 2020) passed recently by the left-wing government does not take Spain back to the situation in 2006 and instead opts for a consensus solution in a bid to avoid political controversy. It includes a new compulsory subject on ethical and civic values, which will retain the ethical and philosophical perspective and will be taught, according to the Minister¹, by teachers with a knowledge of philosophy. Unlike the previous subject on ethical values, it will be compulsory for all students and will place more emphasis on civic contents, including topics such as sustainable development and global citizenship (Boletín Oficial del Estado, 2020). However, it will still mean less contents and hours devoted to citizenship education than in 2006, so confirming the regressive trend mentioned earlier.

This regressive trend could be intensified in the regions which currently include Citizenship Education as a subject on their regional curricula. The new subject on Civic and Ethical Values may provide a compromise solution to the heated debate that arose after the approval of the LOMCE. It is therefore likely that the regions that fought the national government decision will no longer feel the need to include citizenship education as a separate subject on their curricula. However, the path taken by Galicia in the LOMCE offers an interesting way forward with a curriculum design that is independent of narrow party interests and committed to including EDE.

5.2 The integration of EDE through specific contents on the EU

Although subjects on citizenship education have played a key role in the promotion of democratic, tolerant attitudes, they have been less important in promoting awareness and knowledge of the EU project. Paradoxically, in some cases specific contents on the politics and institutional framework of the EU and even the concept of European citizenship has been discussed in more detail in Social Sciences (Geography and History) than in specific subjects on citizenship education.

The syllabuses for citizenship education subjects normally include contents about the democratic system, the active participation of citizens, the concept of citizenship or the main laws that govern our society. However, when analysing these issues, they have generally paid little attention to the structures or framework of the EU, as compared to the time devoted to the study and understanding of the Spanish and, in some cases, regional systems. The Autonomous Communities have followed a similar trend and have rarely offered detailed EU contents in the regional curricula of these subjects. Even the Galician subject on European Democratic Values omits a lot of EU contents, focusing instead on the general values behind the EU integration process.

When the curricula of these subjects include EU-related contents, they refer to the history behind the EU project as well as its institutional framework. However, contents dealing with specific aspects of EU politics, the role of citizens and the importance of the EU project for the everyday lives of European citizens are usually scarce. Even the very concept of citizenship, which necessarily lies at the heart of citizenship education, has no explicit EU dimension (European citizenship) in most of the curricula we analysed on citizenship education, except for the Galician subject on European democratic values. This may prevent students from identifying with the EU project as active members and citizens.

¹ <https://www.europapress.es/sociedad/educacion-00468/noticia-asignatura-valores-civicos-impartiran-profesores-conocimientos-filosofia-celaa-20201117184018.html>

In Social Sciences, most specific references to identities, senses of belonging or specific institutional frameworks refer to the Spanish national case or, in regional curricula, to the different Autonomous Communities. Although exceptions to this rule are quite common, in general, citizenship and identities are explained within the national and regional context, with less importance being given to European identity.

Geographical and historical contents are usually addressed at four scales: local/regional, national, European and global. Whereas the first two are usually connected to an idea of citizenship (the student belongs to a specific region or state, sharing certain elements in common with the rest of their fellow citizens and being part of the same project), the European and global scales are usually understood merely as theoretical frames of reference.

At a global level, some geographical contents are sometimes linked to the idea of people as global citizens, sharing rights and responsibilities with our fellows across the world. However, the notion of European citizenship is normally missing, appearing only in some of the regional curricula. Instead, Europe is presented as a geographical entity that provides a broader context or background to help students understand more about Spain, an approach that differs little from that adopted in Spanish textbooks prior to Spain joining the EEC and becoming actively involved in the EU integration process (Pereyra & Luzón, 2005; García-Álvarez, 2019).

The references to the EU project in the contents studied in Social Sciences, Geography and History have not varied much over time, despite the important advances in the construction of the EU. The most important step forward in this sense is the shift from analysing and presenting what was then the EEC as an aspect of Spain's foreign affairs to studying the EU as part of the Spanish historical and geographical context. Nonetheless, even despite this progress, there are still few explicit references in the curricula to the EU as part of the national narrative, as part of the understanding of the nation's geography and history. In this regard, it is worth highlighting that the only explicit EU-related contents in the LOMCE appear as part of global and European contemporary history, with no references at all in the Geography or Spanish History sections. Rodríguez Pereda (2021) showed how, unlike previous curricula, under the LOMCE these contents were taught at post-compulsory levels of education, so limiting the impact of these contents on the education of all citizens.

Regional curricula from the different Autonomous Communities have to some extent compensated for this lack of EU-related content in the LOMCE curricula by adding curriculum items related to the EU. However, even in these cases, EU curriculum items remain scarce and far from what would be expected in a curriculum that fully embraces EDE, especially given that the formation of the EU and Spain's participation in this project are essential processes in contemporary global, European and Spanish history.

In addition, many of the references to the EU in the geographical contents are of a specifically economic nature, which may lead students to view the EU as an economic entity rather than as a political body to which they belong as citizens. Fernández García (2006) and Cerezo & van Dijk (2010) reached similar conclusions when analysing Spanish textbooks.

Our analysis confirms some of the conclusions obtained by Szakács (2018) in research on Romania. When Europe and the idea of the EU is presented, it usually lacks a cultural background, presenting the EU as an institutional and political framework that does not connect with Europeans in cultural terms, in the way that nations and regions do. In addition, rather than a different or complementary identity, the EU process is usually presented as a way of "glorifying" the nation "in relation to an aspirational other, Europe" (Szakács, 2018).

EU-related contents deserve a more important role in the design and structuring of the curriculum. The political dimension of the EU and its practical application in policies are essential for understanding European and national geographies and should therefore have a more prominent position within the curriculum. Thus, the curriculum should be designed in a way that enables students to understand the political dimension of the EU and how it affects their everyday lives. These contents could be tackled in a similar way to those on Spanish geography and history.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the fact that a long time has passed since Spain joined the Council of Europe and the European Economic Community in 1985, and in spite of the efforts made by these institutions to promote a European Dimension in Education, only very limited progress has been made in integrating EDE into the Spanish curricula. In addition, the few, small steps that have been achieved have often later been reviewed and amended by new laws and curricula.

The Spanish government has sometimes neglected its role in the implementation of EDE in the Spanish curriculum. The different regions, through their powers in education, have assumed this responsibility by adding EU content to the curriculum. However, there should be a European dimension in the education of all Spanish citizens. This means that the Spanish government should take the lead in its implementation. Although the regions could help ensure that these objectives are achieved, this should not be left to their discretion, as it could create important differences in the education received by students in different parts of the country.

The lack of political agreement in the promotion of specific Citizenship Education subjects is one of the key barriers that hampers the full integration of EDE into the Spanish education system. Left and right-wing parties do not share a common vision of the role of education in society, which brings instability to both the curriculum and the education system in general. While the content taught within citizenship education continues to be seen as ideologically slanted, the lack of consensus on this matter will remain. For progress to be achieved, a cross-party consensus must be reached on the content to be taught, to free this matter from ideological debate. However, to this end, conservatives need to relinquish their desires to equate civic and religious education, a policy that contravenes the secular, civic principles on which EDE is based and could result in some core European democratic values being called into question as alleged products of left-wing ideology.

Subjects on ethics and philosophy have close links with citizenship education and their syllabuses usually contain civic content, as do those for Geography and History. However, philosophy/ethics and citizenship education are different subjects and should be treated as such. This means that the inclusion of one of these subjects in the curriculum does not inevitably require the exclusion of the other, as they can complement each other, so strengthening the European dimension in the Spanish education system.

The curriculum content of all the subjects analysed (Citizenship Education, Social Sciences (Geography and History) ...) usually focuses on the national or regional levels of analysis. Students study the geography, history and political system of their country and regions and only refer to the European and global dimensions when contextualizing the nation. In order to strengthen the European Dimension in Education (EDE), this content should pay more attention to the European level, making students aware that they are also citizens of the EU, which gives them certain rights and duties.

To this end, the curriculum needs to place more emphasis on the role of the EU when studying the geography of Europe, stressing the importance of EU policies for the European economy and in the development of the different countries. Students need to understand the principles behind the EU integration process and the differences and commonalities between the member states. In addition, the EU-related content should have a more important role in the narrative about Spanish history, to make students aware of how important joining the EEC was for Spain's progress as a country and how the concept of citizenship has changed since then.

Content on the European institutional and political framework and the concept of European citizenship should be included as part of Social Sciences (Geography and History), alongside similar contents on Spanish institutions and citizenship. However, such content should also be taught in subjects dealing with civic and citizenship education, which are actually better suited for teaching this content.

A curriculum for the latest education law (LOMLOE) is currently being discussed and designed. This could be a unique opportunity to take note of the lessons learnt in this paper and to strengthen the integration of EDE into the Spanish education system.

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