Citizenship education in England, the Netherlands and Sweden
Remmert Daas*, MSc (Supervisor: prof. dr. Sjoerd Karsten)
*email: R.J.M.Daas@uva.nl

Introduction
Do citizenship education policy and surrounding academic discussions reflect students’ outcomes on citizenship competence? In this study we formulate hypotheses based on analysis of the policy and academic literature on citizenship education in England, the Netherlands and Sweden. We evaluate these hypotheses using data from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS).

Research question
Do students in the Netherlands, England and Sweden display differences in citizenship competence and how do these relate to the different national discussions on citizenship education?

Method
- Literature study of citizenship education in England, the Netherlands and Sweden
- Secondary analysis of ICCS data

Selected citizenship competence scales:
1. Citizenship knowledge
2. Support for democratic values
3. Trust in civic institutions
4. Attitudes toward equal rights for all ethnic/racial groups
5. Citizenship self-efficacy
6. Expected adult electoral participation
7. Civic participation at school

Results:

England
- Generally average scores
- Emphasis on political domain and knowledge
- Practice in schools often considered rote learning
- Democratic deficit is still identifiable
- Strong focus on measurable outcomes

Netherlands
- Generally low scores
- Emphasis on social cohesion
- Poor provision through unclear requirements on schools
- Lack of alignment between policy, core objectives and provision
- ‘Participation at school’ scores extremely low
- Lack of insight into practice and effects in schools

Sweden
- Generally high scores
- Citizenship prevalent throughout educational policy
- Relatively small differences between schools
- Indications of slight decline in citizenship competencies
- Indications of growing differences between sub-populations
- Growing attention for measuring citizenship competence

General results
- High intra school correlation for knowledge (.55 Netherlands, .31 England, .17 Sweden)
- Low intra school correlations for values & attitudes. Range .03 - .11, Average .06
- Student behaviour, SES and expected further education strongest predictors of citizenship competence
- Low correlations between citizenship competence scales at student level; particularly for ‘Trust in institutions’ and ‘Participation at school’

Conclusions
- Sweden scores best of the three countries, followed by England. The Netherlands scores low overall.
- Expected electoral participation and democratic values score (relatively) low in all three countries. Interestingly, these are two of three scales on which girls do not score consistently higher than boys.
- Participation in school shows surprising results, and could be low overall. The low correlation with other outcomes calls for attention to this aspect of citizenship.