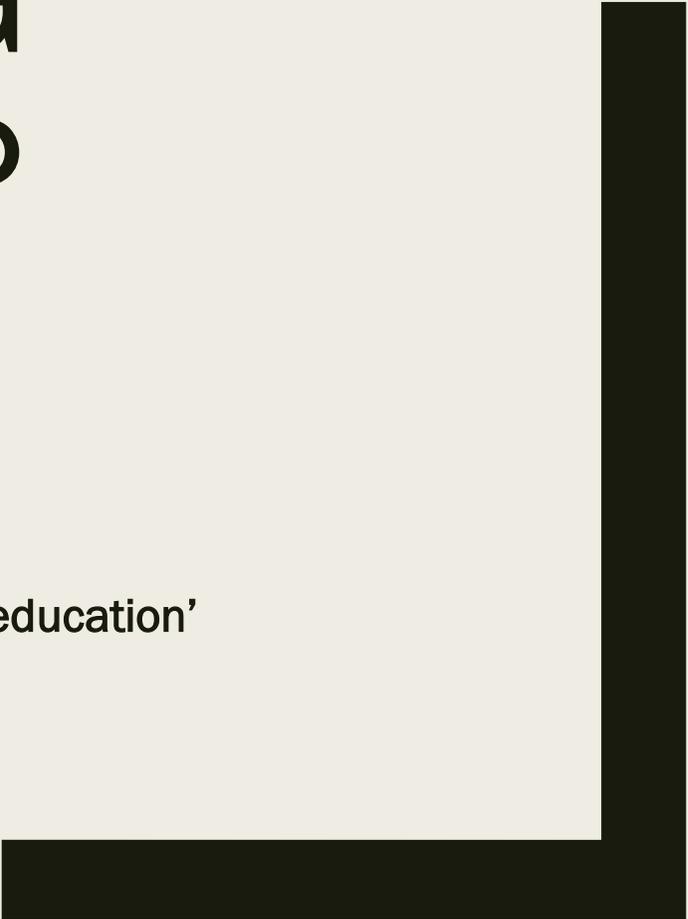




# RETHINKING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Dr Tristan McCowan  
EUNEC

‘Promoting citizenship and common values through education’  
Lisbon, 1-2 March 2018

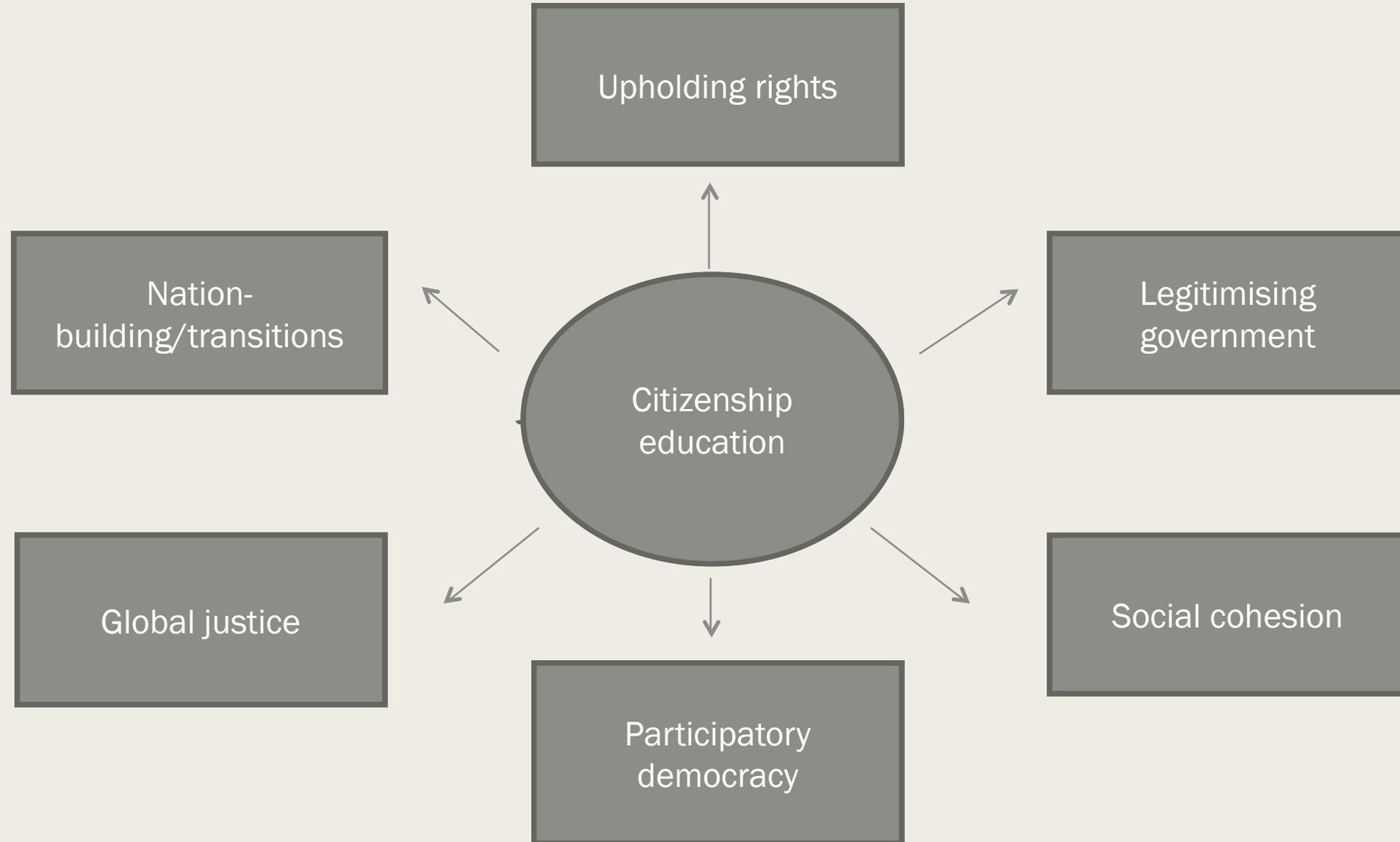




Normative-  
conceptual

Descriptive-  
empirical

# Drivers for citizenship education



# Normative debates

- Liberal and civic republican approaches
- Tensions:
  - *Rights / duties*
  - *Universality / difference*
  - *Local / national / global*
  - *Criticality / conformity*
- Non-western conceptions of citizenship

# Forms of citizenship education

General  
education

Traditional  
Civics

Embedding  
through  
curriculum

Student  
councils

Whole  
institution

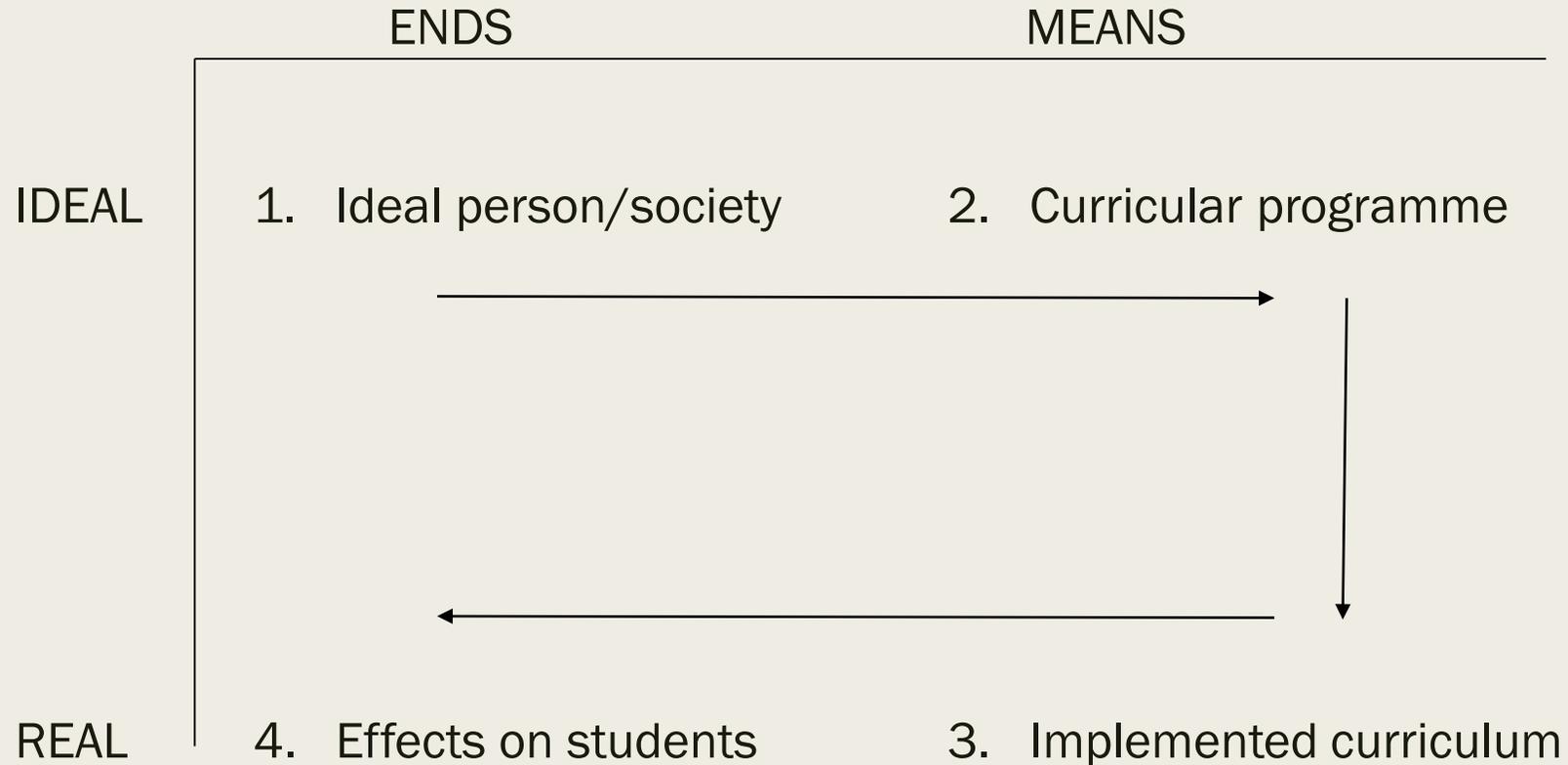
Service  
learning

About, for or  
through?

Dialogical or  
transmissive?

'Critical' or 'soft'?

# Curricular transposition

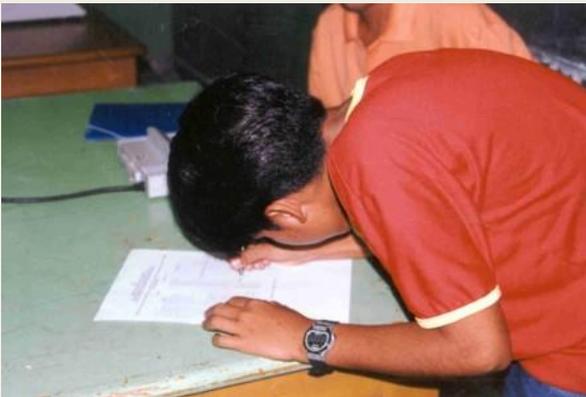


Source: McCowan 2008; 2009

# Voter of the Future programme



Pupils attending a lecture on citizenship



Registering to vote in the mock election

- Colonels and corrals: democracy in Brazil
- Origins of the initiative
- Forming the responsible voter

(McCowan 2008)

## Ideals

The critical voter

## Effects

Knowledge and skills  
of voting

Little wider citizen  
development

## Curriculum

Mock election

Lectures

Visits to public  
institutions

Competitions

## Implementation

Disengagement of  
teachers

Wider political  
constraints

Once we were discussing the use of what is public and they started to say, “It’s wrong!” And I took the chance to say, “I have to confess that often I see military police cars dropping policemen’s children off at school. Then someone rings to report a crime: “Oh dear, there's no police car” .... My wife says, “Look, you shouldn't say these things” .... but we have to show them how things are. We need to show that some things need to be said even though they carry some risk.

(Interview with teacher Robson)

The idea [of the programme] is great as a political theory, but it could integrate politics in a different way, not making the pupil a simple voter, but rather a politician...because when you've got the critical sense that the building of a square, the paving of the roads is not a favour for you, but an obligation...and knowing that you are a social politician participating in youth movements, you are going to know who to elect, you're going to know who to vote for.

(Interview with student Cassia)

# Key lessons

- Recognising existing knowledge of students
- Teachers as agents, not instruments
- Deep questioning of political, economic and social structures

# Putting the 'civic' at the centre...

They [children] learn to ask questions or not to ask them; to take what they hear at face value or to probe more deeply; to imagine the situation of a person different from themselves...; to think of themselves as members of a homogeneous group or as members of a nation, and a world, made up of many people and groups, all of whom deserve respect and understanding.

(Nussbaum 2006: 387)

# ...but no automatic fix

- Acknowledging the leaps
- The paradox of teacher ownership
- Embracing unpredictability