



Asian Civil Society Workshop, 24 June 2022

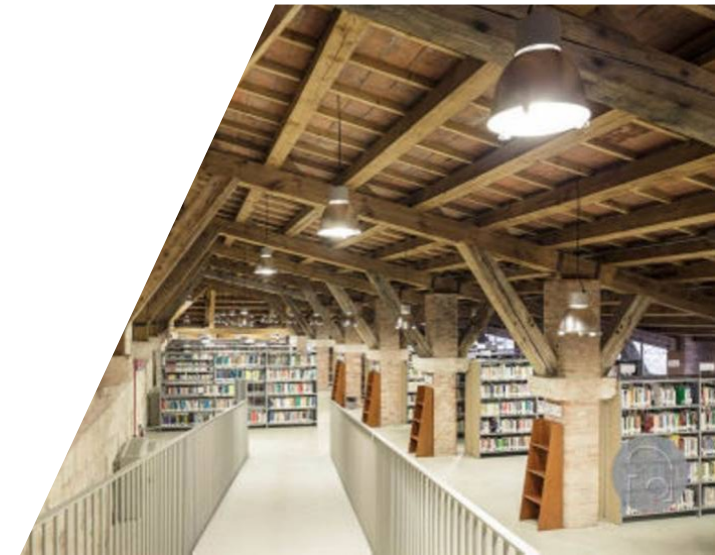
# Civic engagement learning through school-community partnerships

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## OVERVIEW

- 1) What is civic engagement (CE)?
- 2) Problematizing CE as a learning outcome
- 3) School-community partnerships & collaborations
- 4) Approaches to CE learning
- 5) A multiple-case study
- 6) Points for discussion

# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Ever-growing literature on civic engagement but no single, unambiguous definition exists
- Semantically framed according to the **disciplinary perspective** from which it is observed (Adler 2005; Sherrod 2010)

**Developmental psychology** considers CE as the outcome of positive youth development (Sherrod 2009), which emphasizes the individual dimension.

**Education** consider CE a non-cognitive outcomes of citizenship education (Haste 2010; Amnå 2012).

**Political and social sciences** underline the relationship that civic engagement has with social capital and socialization processes (Putnam 2000; Jennings 2007), focus on citizen participation in:

- 1) the political life of the system in which s/he is involved (e.g., voting)
- 2) the social life of the community of which s/he is an integral part (e.g., volunteering).

# PROBLEMATIZING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

- Citizenship education outcomes may involve cognitive (e.g., democratic knowledge) and non-cognitive spheres (e.g., attitudes towards social and political participation) (Isac 2014)
- But citizenship education is not a neutral process and not adequately problematized (Haste 2010; Amnå 2012)
- Citizenship education always embeds a normative aspect linked to the formation of ‘the good citizen’, whose characteristics are too often taken for granted (Westheimer 2004; Haste 2010; Amnå 2012; Peterson 2017)
- **Problems:** domestication (Haste 2010; Amnå 2012), low effectiveness in terms of civic engagement (Youniss 2011; Isac 2014; Peterson 2014)

Civic engagement entails a plurality of engaging practices and attitudes in civic, political and social life that contribute to the health of a democratic society  
(Banyan 2016)

CE implies that a person is outward looking, beyond the sphere of one's own needs or those of his/her beloved ones (Amnå 2012)

CE is expressed through an action exercised in a space of deliberation and autonomy by citizens capable of making conscious choices (Amnå 2012)

CE has to do with promoting social change (Adler 2005) to enhance equity that allows individuals to cultivate their own human potentials and communities to empower themselves (Amnå 2012).

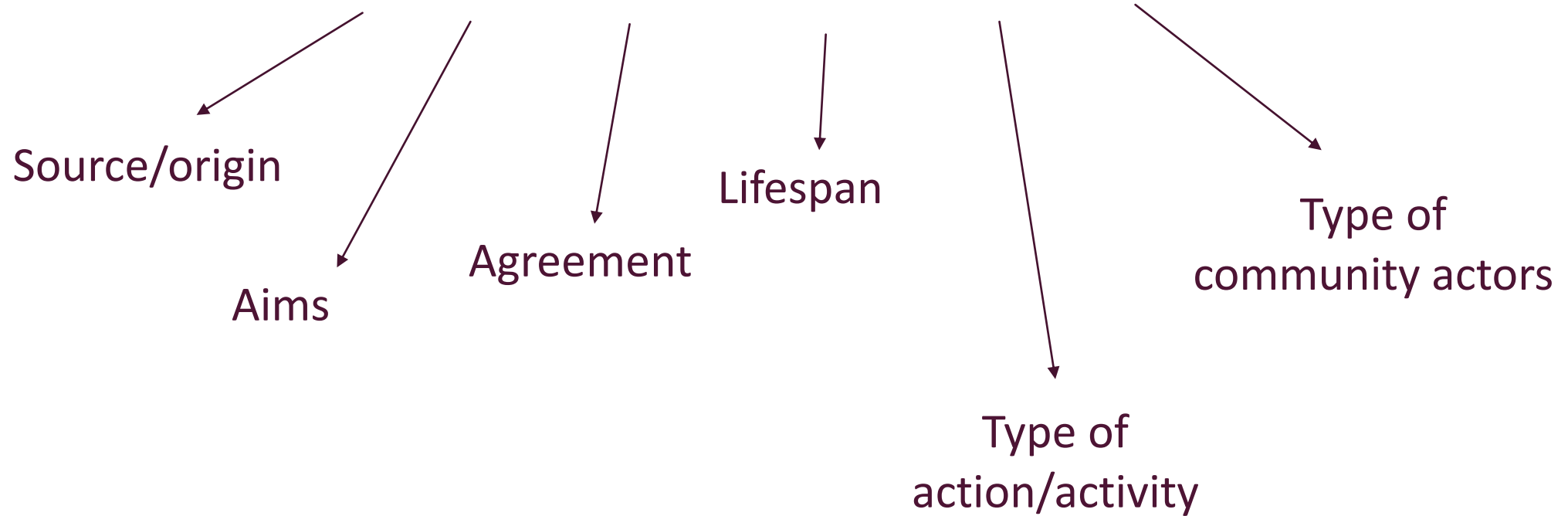
CE takes shape in the **community**

Place of territorial or residential proximity

Supranational or global sphere

Cultural or social space of belonging

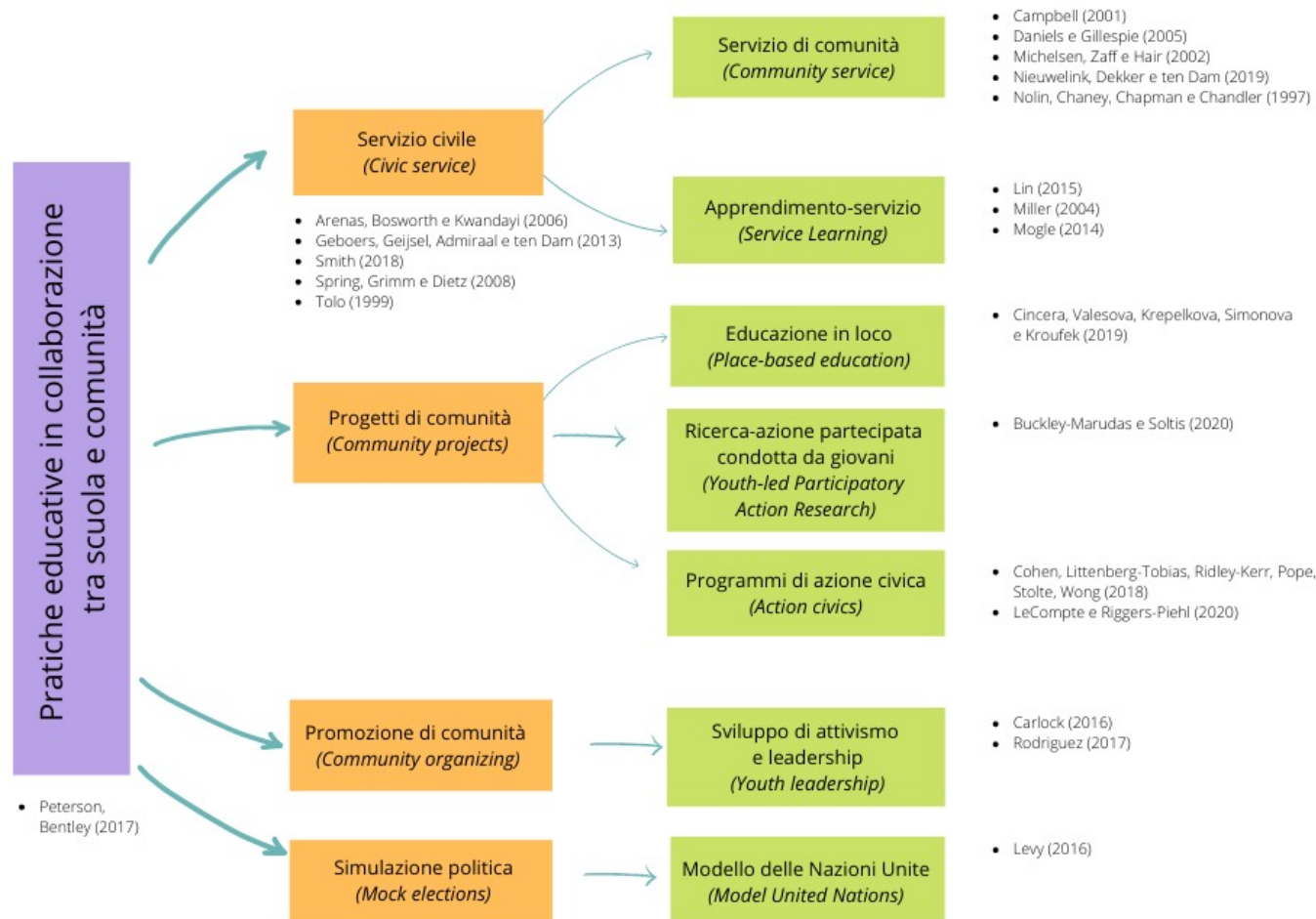
# SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS



# APPROACHES TO CE LEARNING

Rapanà, F., Milana, M., Marzoli, R. (2021). La collaborazione tra istituzioni scolastiche e territorio per la promozione dell'impegno civico e sociale. *Encyclopaideia*, 25(60), 25-43.

Figura 2 – Tipologie di pratiche educative di promozione dell'impegno civico e sociale che coinvolgono istituzioni scolastiche e territorio

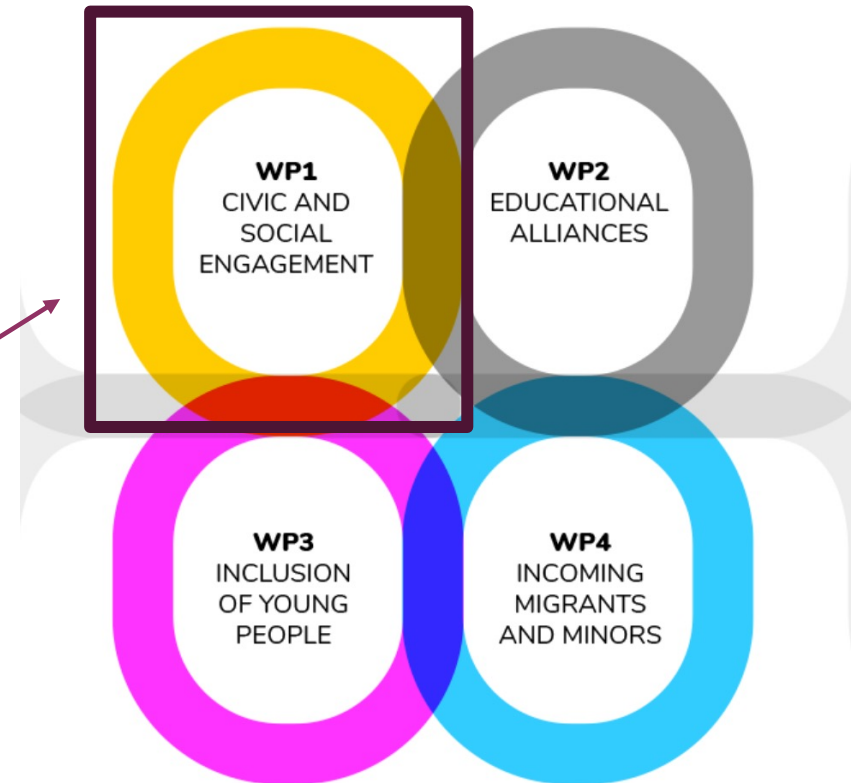


# THE RE-SERVES PROJECT

RE-SERVES -“REsearch at the SERVice of Educational FragilitieS”, is a Project of Significant National Interest (PRIN) financed by the Ministry of Education, University and Research (2019-2023)

**General aim:** Understand the intersection of vulnerability, marginality and education through the analysis and problematization of current educational practices in a variety of contexts both in and outside school

**Specific aim:** To investigate how school-community collaborations enacted in the city of Verona (Italy) relate to civic engagement learning

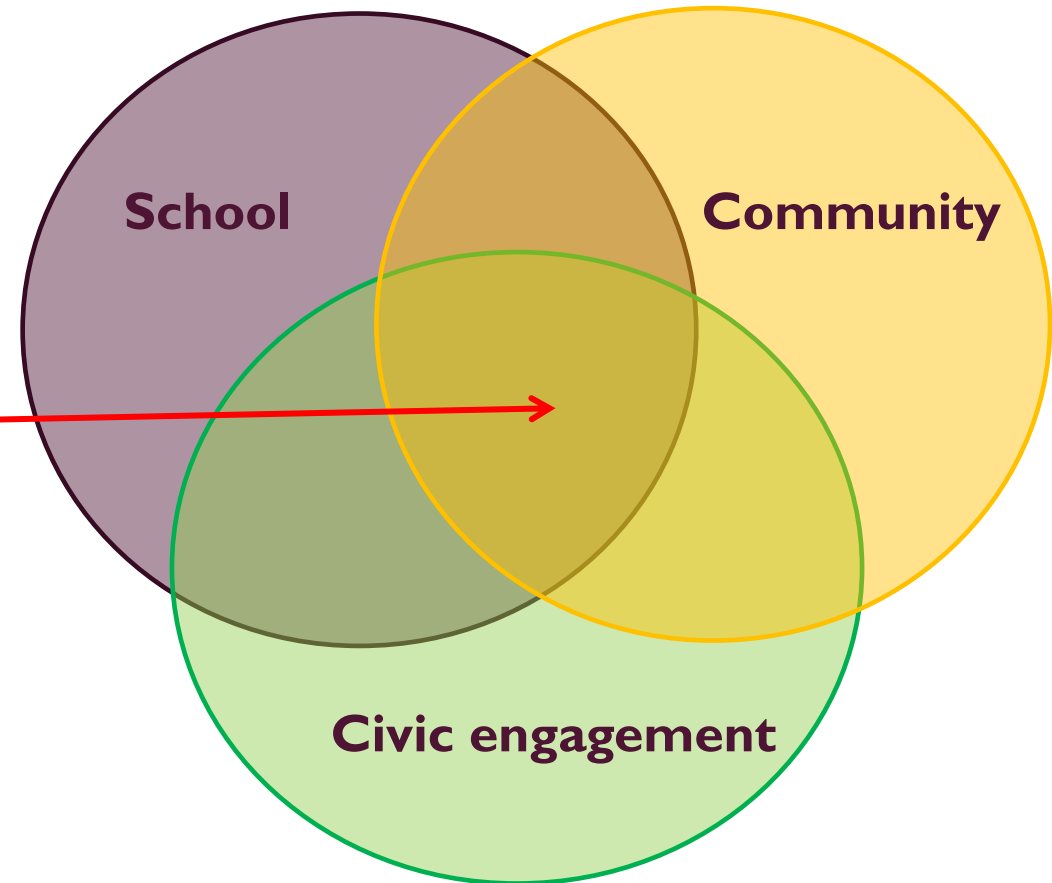




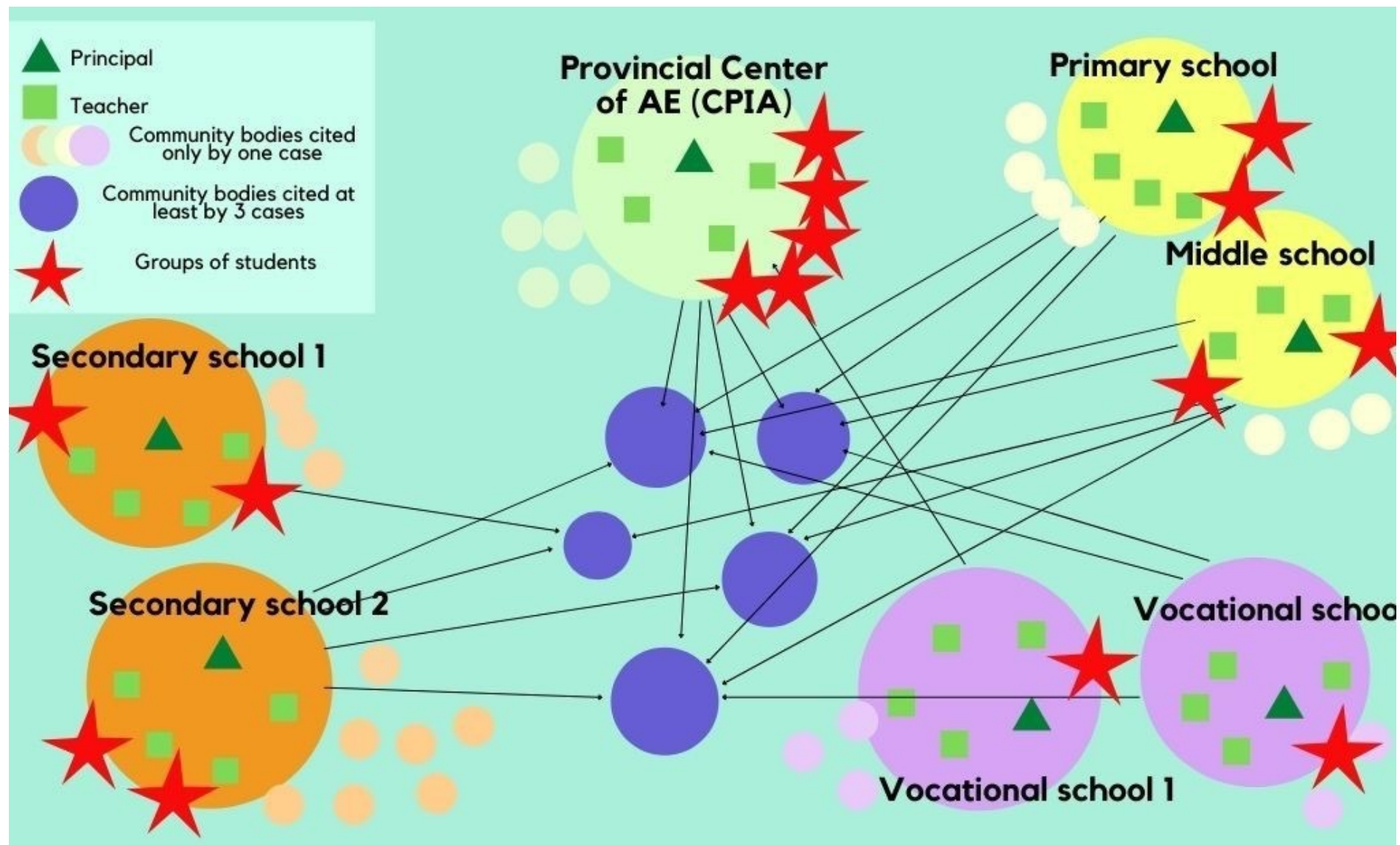
# RESEARCH DESIGN

**Research design:** multicase study (Stake, 1995, 2006)

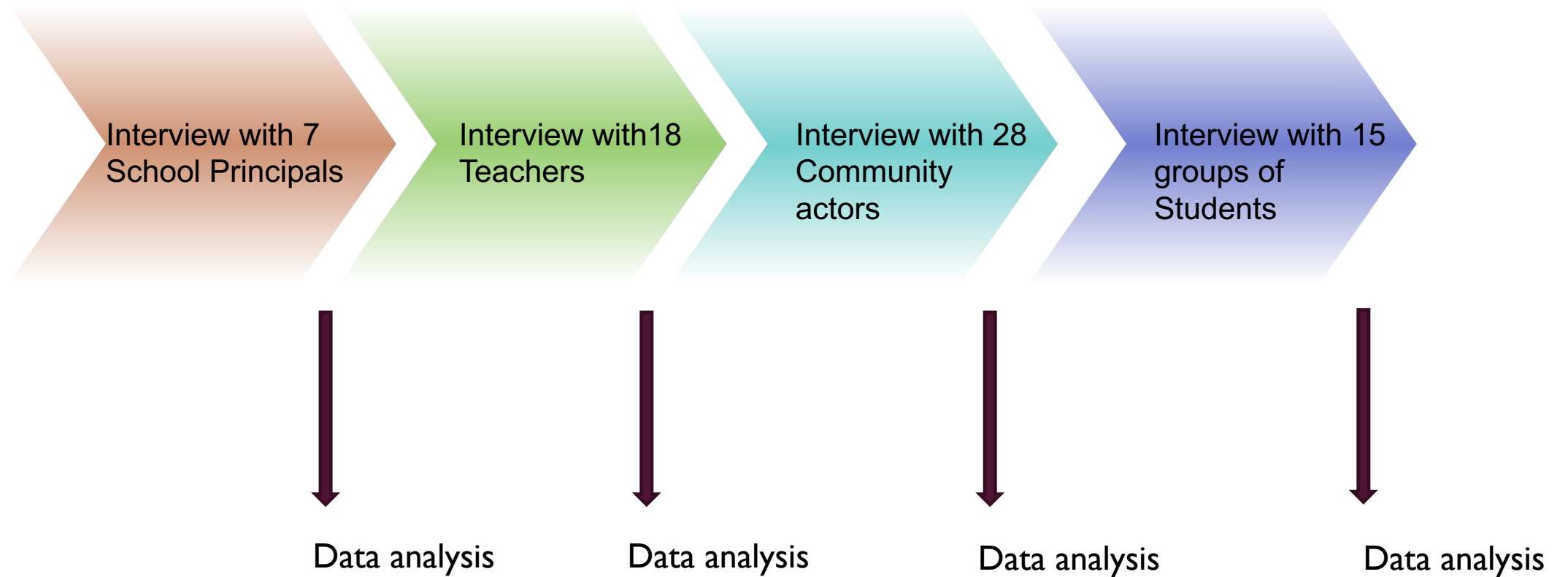
Multicase research starts with the **quintain**. To understand it better, we study some of its single cases — its sites or manifestations. But it is the quintain we seek to understand. We study what is similar and different about the cases in order to understand the quintain better (Stake, 2006).



# RESEARCH DESIGN



# DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

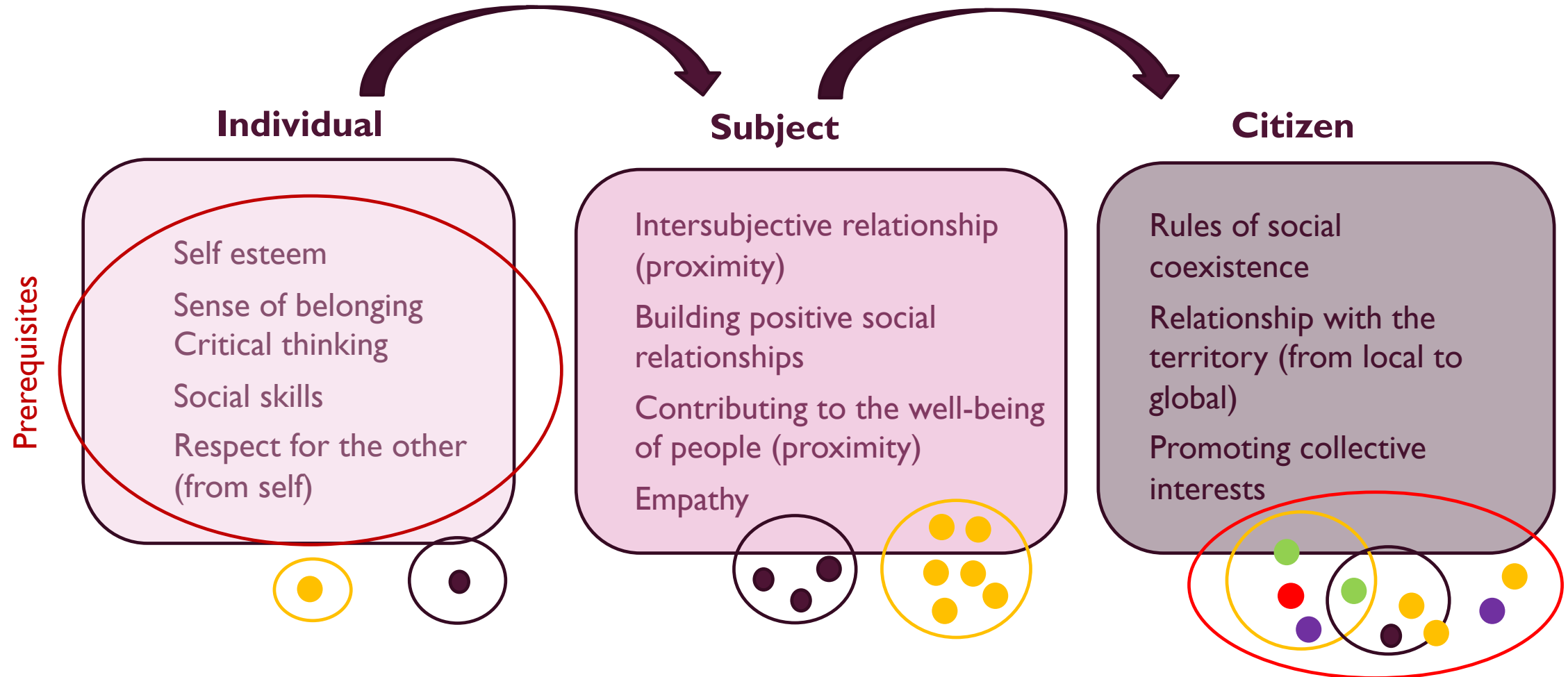


Needs/Aims	Interventions	Strenghts	Weaknesses	CE meanings
Supporting vulnerable students	Service Learning	Strengthening school intervention	Financing related to specific projects	Compliance with the rule
Supporting the integration of foreign students	Civic service	Providing more opportunities to students	Project's success dependent on teacher's degree of engagement	Respect for others
Offrire maggiori esperienze ai propri studenti	Meetings with experts	Networking	Bureaucracy	Respect for the environment
Providing more experiences to students	Field trips in the city and/or abroad	Offering students a space to express themselves (without teachers)	Poor sharing of projects' knowldge in the school	Being autonomous
Developing social skills	Meetings with key informants	Make the school known in the area	Different working schedules/calendars between schools and other institutions	Not getting manipulated by others
Developing autonomy	Italian as second language	Opportunities for discussion	Time consuming	Taking care of the most vulnerable
Contrasting early-school leaving	Guided discussions			Being recognized
Fighting prejudices	Political simulation			

## KEY/CRITICAL POINTS

- The idea of civic and social commitment is anchored to the perception that teachers have of their students
- Students are described based on gaps, a theory of deprivation prevails
- The school believes to be the main resource for the education of citizens (it is believed that families have abdicated) The development of civic and social commitment involves the preliminary development of prerequisites (knowledge, skills, experience) that students are assumed to be lacking
- From a deprivation diagnosis a compensatory approach (which is not rooted on the skills and competences students do have)
- Focus on individual skills
- Depoliticized vision of civic and social commitment (based on Westheimer and Kahne's: mostly "responsible citizen", little "participatory citizen" and no "citizen oriented towards social justice")
- Social justice is totally absent!

# TOWARDS A MODEL OF CE LEARNING



## POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- What normative idea of “the good citizen” guide who research/teach CE? What factors influence it?
- What factors shall be considered to create the conditions for CE learning?
- If “civic engagement entails a plurality of engaging practices and attitudes in civic, political and social life...”, how do these vary according to time, space, culture, ecc.?
- Shall such practices and attitudes... “contribute to the health of a democratic society”? Or is this a normative idea also open to contestation?
- ...



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