

# IJPE

International Journal of  
**Progressive Education**

Volume 8      Number 3      October, 2012

*Special Issue:  
Education for Active Citizenship*



*An Interactive Journal Sponsored by International Association of Educators  
(INASED)*

## **International Journal of Progressive Education**

**Frequency:** Three times a year; February, June, and October

ISSN: 1554-5210

### **Indexing/Abstracting:**

- 1- OCLC-WorldCat: <http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/default.htm>
- 2- Journal Finder: <http://journalfinder.uncg.edu/demo/>
- 3- Directory of Open Access Journals: (DOAJ): <http://www.doaj.org/home>
- 4- EBSCO Publication: <http://www.ebsco.com>
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- \$45 Individual USA (Canada: \$50; Rest of World: \$55)
- \$35 Student USA (Canada: \$40; Rest of World: \$50)
- \$140 Library/Institution USA (Canada: \$160; Rest of World: \$160)

Single Issues and Back Issues: \$25 USA (Canada: \$35; Rest of World: \$35)

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### **Special Issue: Education for Active Citizenship**

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**Editorial: *Education for Active Citizenship: Practices, Policies, Promises***

**Alistair Ross**

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In recent years the adjective ‘active’ has frequently been added to the term ‘Citizenship Education’. Bernard Crick wrote “an education that creates a disposition to active citizenship is a necessary condition of free societies” (1999, p.337). This suggests that Active Citizenship is seen as more desirable than Passive Citizenship – but what do these terms mean, in terms of either educational policy or educational practice? Is it related by some policy makers to concerns about what is called the democratic deficit? Or is it perceived of as a variant of service learning? Are there different kinds of active citizenship, and of active citizenship education?

This Special Issue of the *International Journal for Progressive Education* explores these various meanings, through the analysis of policies and practices. Active Citizenship promises much: does it deliver?

Aristotle wrote

... it is not possible to be a good ruler without first having been ruled. Not that good ruling and good obedience are the same virtue – only that the good citizen must have the knowledge and ability both to rule and be ruled. That is what we mean by the virtue of a citizen – understanding the governing of free men from both points of view. (*The Politics*, Book III, Chapter iv (1277a33))

But the good citizen is not the same as the active citizen. Crick also pointed out that one can be a ‘good citizen’ in an autocratic state, and one can merely be a ‘good citizen’ in a democratic state (‘that is one can obey the law, pay taxes, drive carefully and behave oneself socially’ Crick 2007 243). Active citizens, on the other hand, will be able to discuss whether laws work well, if they are inequitable, and how they can be changed.

Citizenship education deals with the relationship between the individual and political society, between the self and others. The curriculum needs to reflect this: it must help the individual understand both their own identity and the nature of society, and how to actively engage with the complex relationship of rights and responsibilities that exist between the two. Audigier indicated the magnitude of this: ‘Since the citizen is an informed and responsible person, capable of taking part in public debate and making choices, nothing of what is human should be unfamiliar to him [sic], nothing of what is experienced in society should be foreign to democratic citizenship’ (1998: 13). Possibilities are opened for a vast range of exhilarating and stimulating work, drawing from the whole canvass on contemporary political and social debate. In one sense, the content of the citizenship curriculum is straightforward, based on the social and political debates of the day. What is critical however, and the major thrust of this journal issue, are the conditions and means by which these issues are debated, argued, analysed and acted upon by pupils.

The goal is the development of the active citizen: while many politicians would settle for a passive citizen (the ‘good citizen’, who votes, subscribes to the state obeys the law), many others – including most progressive educators – would hope to empower young citizens, to critically engage with and seek to affect the course of social events. This critical distinction between active citizenship and passive citizenship must be analysed, in both policy and practice.

Politicians and policy-makers in many countries now press for an ‘active’ citizenship that will address what they perceive of as a democratic deficit. A considerable literature has developed on this (see, for example, Verdun, 1998; Moravsci, 2004; Avbelj, 2005; Mitchell, 2005; Hirschhorn, 2006). In many democratic states the level of participation in elections

appears to be falling from election to election, and it is claimed that the percentage of young people voting also tends to be less than that of older people. This creates a problem for political leaders, who need a reasonably high percentage of the electorate participating in elections, in order to give them the legitimacy to govern. On the other hand, many in the citizenship education movement, and others, would also aspire to educational processes that empowered citizens – providing the intellectual skills and the practical knowledge to individuals who will critically engage with, and seek to affect the course of, social events. Active citizenship is, very broadly, about doing things, while passive citizenship is generally seen as related simply to status, to the act of being. The distinction between active and passive citizenship has been particularly debated over the past five to six years (Ireland *et al*, 2006; Nelson and Kerr, 2006). There is no consensus on these terms, but the model suggested by Kennedy (2006) may be helpful.

He distinguishes four forms or levels of activity in citizenship. Conventional political activity – the level at which those concerned with the democratic deficit would have us act – is engaging in voting, in belonging to a political party, and in standing for office. This is not necessarily far removed from Almond and Verba's (1963) third type of citizen orientation, the 'participant', who possesses a sense of influence and confidence in understanding the domestic political system and who votes regularly in elections. Voting, though an activity, is of course a minimalist action, but these kinds of traditional conformity are nevertheless participation, and participation with a view to changing civic society.

The second form of activity lies in social movements, in being involved with voluntary activities - either working as a volunteer with agencies, or collecting money on their behalf. This form of participation in civil society (as opposed to the former civic action) is essentially conformist and ameliorative in nature: it is action to repair rather than to address causes, or even to acknowledge possible causes: as Lister (2003) puts it, 'an exhortation to discharge the responsibilities of neighbourliness, voluntary action and charity' (p 31). It could be argued that the activities described in Jason Wood's article in this issue (2012) fall into this form of activity. These, and the previous conventional form, constitute what is sometimes derided as the 'voting and volunteering' approach to citizenship education.

The third form consists of action for social change, when the individual is involved in activities that aim to change political and social policies. This would range from such activities as letter writing and signing petitions to working with pressure groups and participating in demonstrations, pressure groups and other ways of trying to influence decision making. This form would also have various illegal variants, such as taking part in occupations, writing graffiti and other forms of civil disobedience. Common to both legal and non-legal forms of activity is a conflictual model of civic and civil change. Pahl describes this as 'local people working together to improve their own quality of life and to provide conditions for others to enjoy the fruits of a more affluent society' (1991, 34), or as Lister puts it, 'active citizenship which disadvantaged people, often women, do for themselves, through for example, community groups, rather than have done for them by the more privileged; one which creates them as subjects rather than objects' (2003, 32). In this issue, the articles by Ribeiro *et al* (2012), Porfilio and Gorlewski (2012), and by Nam (2012) clearly describe activities in this category of active citizenship: but so are aspects of the work described by Bronwyn Wood (2012), Hope (2012) and Inman *et al* (2012).

The fourth active form is of enterprise citizenship, an essentially individualist model of citizenship action, in which the individual engages in such self-regulating activities as achieving financial independence, becoming a self-directed learner, being a problem solver and developing entrepreneurial ideas. This is very much an economic model of citizenship activity, and individualistic in its range.

These four forms in no sense comprise a hierarchy or sequential form of development – the individual does not need to progress through one form to achieve the next: but the third form in particular would appear to be the type most closely aligned to what is meant by



‘active’ by most of the contributors to this Special Issue. But any curriculum should see all of these as concurrent activities to be encouraged, at any age or stage of development: the agenda set out by Chow in this issue (2012) seeks to classify all of these within a framework of civic competency. Nor is active citizenship necessarily always progressive: Lister distinguishes a radical collectivist activism from the narrower voluntary action and charity (Lister, 2003, p 31).

Kennedy also distinguished two forms of passive citizenship. The first of these is concerned with national identity, where the individual understands and values the nation’s history, and the symbolic and iconic forms of the nation – in its institutions, the flag, the anthem and the political offices. This kind of passive citizenship is commonly taught through transmission models of education, through civic education and the hidden curriculum of unspoken mores, structures and assumptions. Ghosh’s article in this issue (2012) illustrates the problems and potential challenges that such an approach might give rise to.

A second and variant form of passive citizenship is seen in patriotism, a more extreme national identity that includes military service and unconditional support for one’s country against any claims of other countries. This form of passive citizenship would inculcate values of loyalty, and unswerving obedience, and stress the value of social stability and hard work.

But these distinctions are not necessarily clear-cut, and Nelson and Kerr’s analysis (2006) demonstrates that there are strong cultural variations in what might be considered as appropriate forms of ‘active’ citizenship. In some countries it is clearly considered that many of the attributes characterized above as forms of passive attributes concerned with accepting status are elements of active citizenship that are to be encouraged and developed. This may depend on the particular historical development and configuration of the state: in some countries (perhaps particularly in Europe) there is a greater perception that citizenship and national identity may now be seen as social constructs, and that active citizenship may embrace a diverse range of relevant political scenarios in which to be a ‘politically active citizen’. The idea of multiple citizenship has been possible for the past half century, and ideas about nested citizenship were developed by in Heater, 1990; European Union, 1992, 1993; and the Council of Europe, 2002.

These variant forms of citizenship all imply a much greater sense of activity than passive citizenship, or even of conventional active political behaviour. Thus Davies and Issitt (2005), for example, suggest that aspects of the global citizenship education programme might usefully be incorporated into citizenship education, as separation appears to constrain both movements. Active citizenship, it is now being suggested, moves necessarily beyond the confines of the nation state. Differentiating citizenship education into active and passive is not uncontroversial. The development of citizenship as a simple passive identity has led to some issues as individuals are formally incorporated as citizens in France, for example (Sutherland 2002), while others (Mannitz, 2004) identify parallel issues of identity and civic belonging amongst young people from non-German heritages in Germany.

What are the key elements or components of an active citizenship education programme? The consensus in many countries seems to be that three major elements can be distinguished in any effective citizenship education programme: values and dispositions, skills and competences, and knowledge and understanding (Crick and Lister, 1979; Crick, 1998; Kerr and Ireland, 2004; Cleaver and Nelson, 2006)

The identification and demonstration of certain values and dispositions lacks precise definition of which values are meant, and the extent to which they agreed to be universalistic (or even universalistic in contemporary times) is not unanimous (Joppke, 2010). These key values might, for example, include the upholding of human rights; ideas of social responsibility and obligations towards others, particularly in relation to equity, diversity and minorities; certain legal values, particularly those concerning the rule of law, democratic processes and various (contested) notions of freedom; and humanistic values of tolerance and empathy for others. This list may appear at first sight to be relatively uncontentious: a survey

by Kidder (2002, in Sutherland, 2002) suggested that people from all across the world, when asked to identify their core moral values, would all agree on the same five ideas – honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness and compassion – but these concepts will have different meanings and differences in different cultural contexts and societies.

Crick and Porter (1978) and Crick and Lister (1979), in their pioneering works on political literacy in the 1970s (described in Clarke, 2007) had a more critical edge on these values: they argues for attitudes of scepticism to be tempered with self awareness, self criticism and an awareness of consequence. They also qualified the conception of tolerance of the substantive values of others (religious, ethical, political doctrines) with the need to maintain particular procedural values necessary to freedom - respect for truth and reasoning, open-mindedness, and willingness to compromise. Toleration, they argued, was not just accepting difference, but welcoming diversity, though not exploitation, racism or the suppression of opinion. Memorably, having an open mind did not mean having an empty mind.

The second group of key elements comprise the skills and competences necessary to be a citizen (Ross, 2007). These include the skills of enquiry, of rationally seeking to establish processes, causes, and the bases for action; sophisticated skills of communication, which include being able to consider and respond to the views of others, being able to persuade, and being capable of being persuaded; skills of participation, which include an understanding of group dynamics and of how to contribute to the social development of civic action; and skills of social action.

Knowledge and understanding is necessary for passive citizenship, but also underpins active engagement. These include both a conceptual understanding of key concepts of politics and society, but also knowledge of particular institutions and their procedures, local, national and international. It can be argued that an understanding of the underlying principles of the role of the law, of the nature of representative democracy, the powers of and restraints on government, and some awareness of the premises of the economy, society and the environment are necessary for the educated citizen.

Values, skills and knowledge are necessary factors for active citizenship (ineluctable, difficult to measure and imprecise though this may be); knowledge alone is sufficient for passive citizenship (though it may be efficiently and accurately assessed). The articles we present here all contribute to our understanding of this mix.

Jason Wood (2012) describes a form of activism located firmly in the communitarian tradition of citizenship, where a university took on the ambition of having an active role in its local community. He argues that higher education institutions are often left out of citizenship education programmes: their contribution to the localities in which they work is often a somewhat passive contribution to the local economy as a consumer of local services. The initiative described in his case study is largely of voluntary action, working with local schools and community projects, providing health screening, and the like: offering improvements and support, but not necessarily acting to politically transform.

Ana Bela Ribeiro and her colleagues (2012) present the sharply critical view that many non governmental organisations (NGOs) have of such institutional based programmes of active citizenship education. They evaluated the views of 120 citizenship education focussed NGOs in 20 European countries, and report that their predominant feeling is that formal citizenship education passively focuses on rules, responsibilities, duties and democratic processes, and pay far too little attention (or avoids) developing critical engagement and activity, and that this is particularly so in formerly totalitarian states: ‘policy makers are barely interested in promoting young people’s participation as well-informed, critical and active citizens’, but are instead ‘focussed on the theoretical transmission of formal democracy and on the discourse of respect for responsibilities and duties’.

Brad Porfilo and Julie Gorlewski (2012) give two vivid case-studies of NGO activism in the area of civic education in Canada. Youth-led organisations allow young people to express their awareness of social issues - racism, violence, inequity, gender inequalities - focussing on active citizenship and solidarity. Beat nation is a first nation/native Canadian young women's group that appropriates the language and forces of colonization to create agency and empowerment, while the 411 Initiative for Change –uses art to engage young people in social advocacy and commentary: both are reactions to the belief that the 'dominant forms of citizenship promoted by schools and dominant political and economic leaders ... have little prospect of ameliorating the intense suffering, social inequalities and alienation experienced by citizens across the globe'.

Chaebong Nam (2012) draws rather similar conclusions from his study of community activism among the Puerto Rican-origin young people in Chicago. ¡*Huntington Park No Se Vende!* is a community activist group that organized to preserve Puerto Rican cultural heritage and space in the inner city in the face of a proposed gentrification development. This is advocacy for social justice from the bottom up.

But the three papers that follow suggest that not all schools are incapable of developing active citizenship.

Bronwyn Wood (2012) reports on a detailed analysis of teacher discourse to illuminate the perceptions and practices of active citizenship of 27 teachers in four New Zealand schools. Although the Ministry of Education there requires students to 'participate and take action as critical, informed and responsible citizens', she finds variations between schools and how they interpret and understand this requirement. Two schools – both lower ranking in socioeconomic status – focus on community service and cultural citizenship: what the teachers describe as 'social studies with boots on'. Two other schools – both higher ranking in socioeconomic status – focus more on 'doing something' at national and global levels. Active citizenship, she concludes, does not happen in a vacuum. She attributes these differences to the collective, but often unstated, doxa shared by teaching departments in a school.

Max Hope's (2012) detailed ethnographic study of a small private school in rural England is a very different setting. The school negotiates both the curriculum and the rules and ethos of the school with the students, through community meetings. 'Citizenship education' is never raised, nor the term used, but Hope argues that the democratic process the pupils experience are far more effective than mainstream schools that work within the currently defined citizenship curriculum.

Sally Inman and her colleagues (2012) focus on one particular citizenship issue, of race equality practice in English schools. Examining a wide range of schools, with pupils between 9 and 17 years of age, they suggest that islamophobia is rare in schools that have a strong citizenship ethos that respects different religions. Citing Parekh (2000), they take a 'maximalist' view of citizenship, and find that in their sample of schools with a strong Muslim presence there is a 'pattern of harmonious schools, where religion and diversity are largely respected and where there are strong institutional processes and procedures to ensure any discriminatory practices are dealt with promptly and effectively'. This, they conclude, means that these pupils 'experience a form of citizenship in schools that is at odds with the wider society'.

Shreya Ghosh (2012) writes from a very different perspective, analysing the development of citizenship education policies in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Drawing on textbook narratives in these countries, she suggests that educational practices build a militarist idea of citizenship and, in doing so, show the nation as vindication of community-aspirations. In the process, conceptualisation of a south Asian space are erased from the cognitive maps of these countries' citizens. In such a context, education in south Asia is used to 'activate' a citizenship which is relational in content - based on ideas of 'us' versus 'them' – instead of allowing critical understanding of rights and identities. The active citizen becomes one who understands their membership of the polity as necessarily entailing a constant state of

preparedness to guard frontiers and homogenise notions of national identity, irrespective of the fact that they always can be plural in nature.

Finally, Joseph Chow (2012) outlines a project in progress that will include active citizenship within a general framework of civic competency, to be analysed across Europe. He contrasts the idea of civic competency – ‘the underlying attitudes, values cognition, motivation and behaviour citizens should possess in order to achieve civic engagement’ with civic competence – the actual level of competence in performance.

Crick wrote, in his 1998 report, that active citizens would be ‘willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life and with the critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting ...[citizenship education should] make them individually confident of finding new forms of involvement and action among themselves’ (1998, 7-8). We hope that this Special Issue of the *International Journal for Progressive Education* will add to the discussion on how this might be achieved. It will not be achieved only through formal education activities; nor will it always be identified as active citizenship education. As Chaebong Nam (2012) writes about the Puerto Rican student activists in Chicago in this issue,

what particular sense of citizenship is being constructed? ... the answer could be “No sense of citizenship was found,” because there was no language of citizenship in the community. ... [But] activists ... vigorously engaged in praxis-based citizenship to create situated and diverse forms of civic practice. ... Their wide range of community work—creating their own local information system, enthusiastically participating in an electoral campaign, and reaffirming Puerto Rican identity through cultural events and rituals—contributed in different ways to educate and involve community people of all ages for the purpose of building a unique model of grassroots democracy. HPNSV was effectively an overt collective resistance to social prejudice and oppression imposed on the community people. Their actions also naturally produced holistic and intergenerational civic learning for people of all generations, raising up critical and engaged citizens in the community.

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## **The University as a Public Good: Active citizenship and university community engagement**

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### **Abstract**

Education for active citizenship has been a key development in social policy over the past two decades, leading to a number of initiatives that have sought to strengthen political, social and moral literacy. This paper briefly reviews the UK policy context by situating this within communitarian definitions of citizenship. Despite the growth of initiatives designed to promote active citizenship, there has been comparatively little focus on the role of universities in addressing locally based civic, social and political challenges. Drawing on literature and a case-study of an innovative university community engagement project, this paper investigates to what extent universities can – and should – play a more active role in their local communities. In doing so, the paper argues that a potential ‘public good’ value of universities can emerge.

**Keywords:** University community engagement; citizenship; civic education; service learning

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## **Introduction**

New Labour's time in UK government marked a 'watershed in political and social education' (Wood, 2010, p.50). Responding to the perceived causes of a 'democratic deficit' and rising concern over anti-social behaviour, the government introduced a number of formal measures to promote young people's active citizenship. Secondary schools were required, for the first time, to teach citizenship education as part of the national curriculum (Crick 2002). Work was also undertaken to identify similar opportunities in post-compulsory education and training (Further Education Funding Council 2000) though this was less formally developed. The aims of this education programme were laudable, best articulated by the original Advisory Group on Citizenship (1998):

We aim at no less than a change in the political culture of this country both nationally and locally: for people to think of themselves as active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life and with the critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting; to build on and to extend radically to young people the best in existing traditions of community involvement and public service, and to make them individually confident in finding new forms of involvement and action among themselves. p 7-8

The themes contained within the education for citizenship agenda could also be found in a number of other social policy initiatives targeted at the general population. Despite waves of reform, higher education remained seemingly immune to challenges that it should provide more by way of a social and civic education experience.

This paper briefly revisits the context of citizenship education in the UK and considers the role of higher education institutions in contributing to local community and civic development. Drawing on a particular case-study of ongoing practice and the wider literature base, it argues that universities are institutes of vital intellectual and resource capital that can make a contribution to the 'public good'.

## **Communitarian citizenship**

What constitutes 'active citizenship' is a question that requires consideration of the political, social and economic context in which the ideal is advocated for. As Lister notes, active citizenship can take both radical and conservative forms, with collectivist and mutual activity on the one hand, and a narrower engagement with work or market-orientated contributions on the other (2003, p. 23-24). The market-orientated model had persisted in the UK for two decades before it was challenged by a number of interlinking factors, resulting in repositioning the active citizen as a contributor to the political, social and moral 'character' of the country.

At the apex of advanced liberalisation in western democracies came the unbridled power of free markets, individualisation and the uncertainties characteristic of the risk society (Beck 1992). Alongside specific concerns around democratic and social engagement, the period in which New Labour governed was characterised by wider and more pervasive qualitative shifts in the relationship between governor and the governed. These were not unique to the UK and reflected global changes in the provision and uptake of welfare as well as the repositioning of individuals as culpable for addressing a wide range of social problems. The nature of welfare states was challenged from above by globalisation and questions about the validity of the state (Johansson and Hvinden 2005). In Europe there was a 'need to shift from 'passive' to 'active' policies, meaning that the primary goal of social protection schemes should be to promote labour market participation' (Johansson and Hvinden 2005: 103).



Pressures also came from below with the observed trend of greater individualisation and a growing rejection of tradition (Giddens 1998; Johansson and Hvinden 2005).

Governments faced a challenge: how to instil moral and social obligatory connections between individuals whilst at the same time trumpeting wealth generation and individual consumerism? For the then UK Prime Minister Blair, the challenges of the new world indicated a need to 'define a new relationship between citizen and community' (Blair 1993, p. 11). The basis for a 'modern notion of citizenship' (Blair 1993, p. 7) was linked to two important threads: economic effectiveness in respect of providing welfare 'opportunities' (Morrison 2004) and new forms of social cohesion in terms of a renewal of civic and civil life.

The social welfare of New Labour was to be realised through the extension of 'conditionality' (Dwyer 2004) and the promotion of the 'active society' (Weatherly 2001). Together they would provide a 'social investment state' (Giddens 1998) instead of a welfare net characterised as 'good enough' welfare provision (Williams 1999). Civic and civil life would be shored up through the implementation of a 'communitarian' definition of active citizenship.

The idea of 'community' proved to be attractive. New Labour in particular was responsible for recasting it as not merely a 'soft and romantic' concept, but as a 'robust and powerful idea' (Mandelson & Liddle 1996, p. 19). Communitarian definitions of citizenship seemed more appropriate in capturing the changing relationship between individuals and their access to social rights and rooted the individual firmly in local, shared connections and obligations. Communitarian thinking emphasised active participation, 'civic spirit, responsibility for self and for the community, mutuality' and that the 'strength of families and the strength of communities are mutually reinforcing' (see Frazer 1999, pp. 35-38). There was also a political consensus on what threatens the community ideal including 'selfishness on the part of individuals, ineptitude and betrayal on the part of bureaucratic government, [and] crime' (Frazer 1999, p. 38).

Communitarianism offered a particular sociological review of the consequences and potential remedies of late modern society (Hale 2004). It was trumpeted as 'a response to practical issues' (Selznick 1998, p. 15) such as 'unbridled capitalism, drug addiction, crime, and citizenship' (Ibid.). At its heart is perhaps the key argument that individuals are 'enlarged as a result of social experience and [...] sustained by rootedness' (Selznick 1998, p. 16). Communitarianism, according to North American sociologist Etzioni, offered the necessary 'balance between social forces and the person' (Etzioni 1998). His assertions rested upon a central idea:

Americans – who have long been concerned with the deterioration of private and public morality, the decline of the family, high crime rates, and the swelling of corruption in government – can now act without fear. We can act without fear that attempts to shore up our values, responsibilities, institutions, and communities will cause us to charge into a dark tunnel or moralism and authoritarianism that leads to a church-dominated state or a right-wing world. (Etzioni 1993, p. 2)

For Etzioni, a conundrum was apparent where a major feature of contemporary American society was 'a strong sense of entitlement' (1993, p. 3) with a weak sense of obligation. Despite recognising that 'the imbalance between rights and responsibilities...is a basic trait of the American character' (1993, p. 4), Etzioni laments the recent developments in politics that had further widened the gulf between government and citizen, where the public can expect of the government solutions to social problems, with little fiscal cost to themselves: literally to 'have their cake and eat it' (p.4). Tam, writing in the UK context,

presents a thesis that is similar in tone and content: a consequence of market individualism is the decline in community ties and moral order, its 'cancerous effect' (1998, p. 3). With concerns ranging from political disengagement, poor parenting as a result of working longer hours, and the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, Tam (1998) concludes that:

Selfishness becomes a moral creed. Individuals are encouraged at every turn to put their own interests first, and to demand the freedom to make their own choices regardless of the implications for civil order. p.4

Tam (1998) puts forward the communitarian alternative to both individualism and authoritarianism where social and political practices can be reformed, arguing for 'inclusive communities' built upon 'questions about what collective action is to be taken for the common good' (p7). Inclusive communities require:

"citizens who can take part in co-operative enquiries determining a wide range of issues; who recognize that they share a respect for common values and accept the responsibilities these values imply; and who actively support the transformation of power relations for the common good." (Tam 1998, p. 8)

Communitarianism was thus a philosophical and pragmatic strategy that sought to challenge increasing individualism, seen as a consequence of advanced market economies. Moving beyond a traditional state/individual dichotomy (characteristic of liberal forms of citizenship), communitarians advocated that communities could offer the social connectedness necessary for civil and social order. In this respect, community was positioned not merely as an area of territory; it provided social stability and moral socialisation for the people who lived within it. This position also distinguished citizenship from the richer civic republican tradition but focusing, perhaps narrowly, on communities, at the expense of broader civic engagement.

Our appetite for initiatives that widen and deepen a communitarian version of active citizenship remains unfettered. Social policy continues to frame individual obligations 'towards the local, civil and the grassroots' (Blaug 2002, p. 102). In the new public sphere, citizenship as a responsibility has taken in new strands that extend beyond the political.

The continuation of these ideas is at the centre of the Big Society thesis:

The Big Society is about a huge culture change, where people, in their everyday lives, in their homes, in their neighbourhoods, in their workplace, don't always turn to officials, local authorities or central government for answers to the problems they face but instead feel both free and powerful enough to help themselves and their own communities. (Cameron 2010)

The attraction of a desirable community has enabled those who govern to locate the problems of social order at the local site and within local experience. With this remapping of the problem location, there is a definition 'of the problem of social exclusion as a problem of local origin and of the challenge of local regeneration as a challenge for local actors' (Amin 2005, p. 615). Taken one way, this is the time-honoured approach of localism, the favoured model of community workers who favour local empowerment over centralised directive. Yet, as Amin warns, without critical engagement and the real transfer of resources and power, local citizens become: 'agents for the 'domestication' of local politics, charged to deliver a consensual and responsible citizenry that performs the regeneration expectations of ruling elites' (Amin, 2005, p. 620).

### **Whither the university?**

It has been argued that universities have long had a commitment to contributing to the social and economic development of surrounding communities. The intellectual and resource capital of universities could, in theory, make them valuable partners in challenging the 'most pressing social, civic, economic and moral problems' (Boyer 1996, p. 11) by being 'of and not just in the community' (Watson 2003, p. 16). Yet, when compared to the reforms to schools during New Labour's tenure, questions about the engagement of higher education institutions in promoting active citizenship have been somewhat less pronounced. Most universities would consider themselves as conducting work that has wider benefits, particularly in relation to their immediate surroundings. Studies on the contribution of universities to local and regional economies abound and Schmuecker and Cook (2012) state that by simply being present in an area, universities provide a positive economic effect, though they acknowledge that this is a somewhat passive notion of 'contribution'.

In the UK, the Dearing Report (1997) found evidence of 'patchy' local and regional engagement 'but that it needs to turn to active and systematic engagement' (Para 12.7). However, engagement has too often been focused on the potential commercial opportunities for universities, with little strategic support for work with those on the margins. Consequently 'university-community engagement remains peripheral in terms of universities' organisation, funding, management and strategic control, reducing their benefits for excluded communities' (Down et al 2010, p. 5). The absence of priority is perhaps easy to understand in the context of current higher education policy in the UK which seems on the one hand to emphasise real-world impact of research (and therefore the need to 'engage' but with measures that expect the widest possible 'reach' and 'significance') but on the other, the marketisation of higher education through a primary focus on teaching quality and social mobility.

As a result, where exemplary community engagement exists, it has usually been realised through the expansion of student volunteering initiatives (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2010) and the widening of student community placements and internships (Hynie, Jensen, Johnny, Wedlock, & Phipps, 2011) as well as broadening attempts to communicate or apply research more effectively (e.g. through the *Beacons National Centre for Public Engagement*). Whilst these established approaches undoubtedly contribute to the personal and social development of the students and staff involved and can contribute to material economic development, commentators on even the most 'creative and assertive' engaged universities in the USA note the need to 'improve and expand efforts' (Hollander 2011, p. 166) in terms of civic and community development. The extent to which such a role can be realised is somewhat influenced by how a university positions itself in relation to the community that surrounds it.

Powell and Dayson (2011) argue that there is a historically 'unresolved dialectic' within English university systems. A university either occupies a detached, geographically unconstrained position in its pursuit of universal knowledge or it sees itself as a local stakeholder and employer, 'hosting intellectual resources which would appreciably improve the social and economic well-being of its community' (Mulvihill et al 2011, p. 4). This dialectic is not unique to the UK. Hollander's work on research universities and their contribution to civic education, found that where such work is developing, it is 'doing so in the face of faculties with varying degrees of interest in civic education, knowledge of community-based learning methods, and pressures to put their time elsewhere' (Hollander, 2011, p. 174).

Benneworth et al (2008) produced a typology of university community engagement with a particular focus on how higher education institutions engaged with 'harder to reach' groups. In this group, they referred to small businesses and groups within the community and

voluntary sector, hitherto unlikely to have benefited equally from higher education institutions. The authors acknowledged the rise of a 'so-called third mission, external engagement' but that 'there is a need to rebalance universities' societal contributions' (Benneworth, Charles, Humphrey, & Conway, 2008, p. 1).

Their resulting typology somewhat confirms the narrowness of current engagement, features of which have long been common in applied universities:

- Research which involves engagement with external stakeholders as a core element of the knowledge generation process,
- Transferring existing knowledge within the university to external stakeholders,
- Delivering services to external groups which they find useful and/ or demand,
- Involving external stakeholders (small business and community) in teaching activities which meets their needs and improves teaching quality. (Benneworth, Charles, Humphrey, & Conway, 2008, p. 2)

The revival of interest in citizenship described in the first part of this paper may in fact result in changes to the value placed upon active citizenship by universities (O'Connor, Lynch, & Owen, 2011). As Bamber and Hankin observe: 'shifts are said to be occurring in higher education pedagogy, where efforts are being made to expand the social, cultural and human capital of universities and their local communities' (Bamber & Hankin, 2011, p. 190). As a result, there has been increased awareness of 'the social responsibility of universities...third stream work with both employers and community groups is becoming as much a part of the mission of many universities around the world as teaching and research' (Millican & Bourner 2011, p.92).

### **Rethinking the university community relationship**

De Montfort University's Square Mile initiative provides an ongoing case-study that demonstrates an approach to university community engagement that may be classed as innovative. Announced in April 2011 and formally launched six months later, the initiative set out to 'demonstrate how the skills, knowledge and expertise of the university can assist and sustain the development of a community and improve the wellbeing and prospects of the residents'<sup>1</sup>. In practice, this project would connect staff, students, residents and partner organisations in identifying and responding to the needs of a local community.

The initiative was conceived by De Montfort University's Vice Chancellor Dominic Shellard, as part of a wider mission to position the university as a 'public good'. In the context of increasing personal finance of universities through raised tuition fees, initiatives such as the Square Mile were argued to offer an alternative to the discourse of students as 'clients and customers' (Millican and Bourner 2011, p. 92) with universities perhaps perceived as serving only themselves.

Senior management and governing body support was assured by operating the initiative directly from the Vice Chancellor's office, a factor that also enabled the project to maintain a high profile presence both within the university and outside of it. Dedicated staffing resources were allocated to the project including the provision of a project director and team of staff to ensure its delivery. In addition, funding was awarded to redeploy a senior academic post to the initiative and an associated PhD scholarship, to provide the mechanisms for investigating the processes and impacts of the initiative. A formal partnership with Leicester City Council

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.dmu.ac.uk/mile2](http://www.dmu.ac.uk/mile2) for a comprehensive overview of the work of the initiative (last accessed 20/06/2012).

was launched in May 2011 when the city's first and newly directly elected Mayor committed to supporting the initiative.

The Square Mile initiative deployed a number of novel approaches to realising its aims. The project sought to work with a particular area of Leicester, thus focusing intensively on one geographically defined urban community. Staff and students undertook a pre-launch community engagement exercise featuring extensive community research. In parallel to this work, university staff submitted over 150 initial ideas for projects that could contribute to the development of a local community. At the point of launching the project in September 2011, the initiative comprised a series of time-bound projects, opportunities for staff, student and resident volunteering and a wider community engagement strategy.

### ***Identifying and engaging the community***

De Montfort University sits just outside of the city centre of Leicester. As a result, it could potentially focus its attention on a number of different areas of the city, including the three electoral Wards and two constituencies that directly surround it. The university worked with a number of local stakeholders to identify potential communities to work with assisted by the following criteria: its proximity to the university; the level of need and whether university resources and expertise can 'match'; and the extent to which local government or other agencies are present in the area. The lack of investment was seen as an important factor by the university, with the Project Director noting that:

We didn't want to go into an area that's had billions of pounds [*sic*] of investment and the local authority have done a lot of work with it already. We wanted to place the project in an area where it could make a measurable impact (Black, 2011).

The process of selection was underpinned by review and analysis of neighbourhood statistics, deprivation index data, public service inputs and informal walkabouts in a number of communities.

The university proposed to work with one urban area notable for inequitable access to resources, with evidence of some entrenched social problems and challenges in terms of cultural and intergenerational cohesion. In many ways the area was typical of similar urban areas in the UK. It comprised large numbers of owned, privately and council rented terraced housing stock and uniquely featured the UK's largest terraced street. It contained around 4000 residencies, several under-used green spaces and a visibly declining industrial area including a disproportionate share of derelict buildings and abandoned factories. The area contained what might be termed three 'distinct' neighbourhoods that account for two Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) and with adjoining neighbourhoods and facilities, crossed two wards and bordered a third.

The area ranked high in aspects of the deprivation index with crime of biggest concern (672 out of 32482 on the 2010 index for two of the neighbourhoods). Negative ratings were also recorded in health, income, education and living environment deprivation indicators. Whilst access to housing and services was rated positively on the index (largely due to less social housing stock), social problems persisted and a city-wide survey showed the lowest levels of public satisfaction and confidence in local services and democratic decision making power (Ipsos Mori 2008). The area is also notable for demographic uncertainty. Census data from 2001 was largely redundant as parts of the neighbourhoods are sites of population flux. Since European Union expansion, migrants have moved into (and out of) the area. Data on this population and the service responses is limited.

An intensive phase of community consultation and engagement followed the selection of the area, designed both to provide in-depth data drawing on the perspectives of residents and to introduce and consult on the Square Mile initiative. This phase of work was based on the Rapid Rural Appraisals (RRA) approach to working with communities in developing countries, which has also been used in assessing urban health needs in a UK context (see, for example, Cresswell 1996). University staff and students engaged in a period of orientation and systematic observation of the local community: 'knowing the 'patch' or the 'ground' – where things are and what is going on' (Smith 1994, p. 15), collecting photographs and qualitative field notes to supplement secondary data sources. This familiarisation stage resulted in the development of a number of different engagement strategies, used over the course of a five month period, to better identify the needs of the local area and to consult residents about proposed responses.

Community-based research was seen as a vital component to the engagement work, since it would provide more sophisticated theoretical and practical insights into the complex features of a modern urban community. Too often, policy definitions of community are based on neutral, normative accounts that bear little cognisance to the real experiences of local residents (Staeheli 2008). The work therefore sought to explore the connections between familial, social, spatial and technology based networks (Castells 2009), levels and types of social capital (Boeck 2009), new forms of belonging in transient and established communities (May 2011), power relationships and their capacity to influence decision makers (Marcus et al 2011) and the inclusionary and exclusionary practices associated with living in a shared territory (Staeheli 2008). Participative and co-produced accounts of community experience helped to challenge the 'etic/emic' or 'insider/outsider' divide, often an inherent feature of active citizenship programmes where outsiders determine what is 'good' for a community (Wood 2009). This divide is arguably more true of universities where knowledge hierarchies, politics and academic practices can reinforce the distance between academic privilege and communities (Durose et al 2010).

A number of different community research methods were used, drawing on previous social action and participatory research undertaken by university academics around active citizenship (Wood 2009) and social capital (Boeck 2009). A questionnaire survey was conducted on the doorstep with residents, using Likert-type scales to capture levels of agreement to a number of statements about belonging and connectedness in the local area. Statements focused on whether the community was considered tight knit, friendly, safe and a place where people looked after each other. Participants rated the extent to which they felt they could influence decisions made about their local neighbourhoods and provided a satisfaction rating for a range of local services. The survey also captured participant views on the problems or challenges facing the area by capturing ratings and commentary against a number of issues identified as problematic in secondary data. Finally, two open questions invited participants to provide a vision for what could change in the local neighbourhood to make it look or feel differently in one year's time and their perspectives on the university engaging with the local area. A total of 223 residents took part in the survey with each encounter lasting between 15 minutes and 2 hours. Whilst extensive and insightful, the survey cannot claim to be representative of the community as a whole. A non-probability, purposive sampling technique (Blaxter et al 2001) was used, insofar as surveys were completed with those who answered the door and consented to take part. Language proved to be a barrier and on occasions where translators were used, a higher response rate was evident.

Initial analysis of doorstep survey data identified important overarching and interconnected themes<sup>2</sup>. There were low levels of connection and cohesion between individuals living in the local area with poor ratings in response to whether the community

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<sup>2</sup> Based on 195 responses.

was perceived as 'close knit', 'friendly' and a place where 'people look after each other'. People in the area generally felt powerless with the lowest possible rating applied to whether individuals felt that they could 'influence decisions' made about their neighbourhood. People felt safe in their neighbourhood during the daytime but not at night. Crime and anti-social behaviour was one of the biggest concerns for residents and this was connected to feelings of isolation, disconnection and poor ratings of the local living environment.

There were a number of factors that appeared to contribute to these ratings. The area combined transient and established population groups, with individuals often living side by side but unknown to one another. Doorstep data indicated that the majority of people had either lived in the area for a very short time (48%, 2 years or less) with a high turnover in this group, or for a long time (27%, over 11 years) resulting in both groups reporting feelings of disconnection and low levels of belonging, a feeling particularly acute amongst and towards new migrants.

There were acute intergenerational tensions and conflicts. The area is notable for a lack of dedicated youth facilities and young people were cited as the key cause of anti-social behaviour and crime in the community with various measures in place to disperse groups including the regular use of police to move young people on and the presence of the controversial 'Mosquito' device on one of the shop fronts<sup>3</sup>. Young people reported feeling excluded from public spaces and the lack of facilities was their biggest concern, a feeling shared by residents in the doorstep survey. Although crime and anti-social behaviour were rated as one of the biggest concerns, much of what was experienced might be termed 'generalised intimidation and fear' as opposed to direct experiences of harassment or intimidation.

All of these issues were situated within the context of a shared living environment characterised by its depreciation and physical decline (which residents rated highest on their concerns). Former industrial areas surrounding one neighbourhood were depreciating quickly with empty factories and physically deteriorating structures abound. In another area, there were a number of incomplete building projects that failed to progress when the economic crisis took hold in 2008. Historically, there were three 'public houses' in a row in the third neighbourhood that served as meeting points for the community: a pub, a church and a cinema. The first closed in 2007 and remains empty at the time of writing, the second was burnt out in 2004 and has been abandoned since, and the third is now a supermarket chain convenience shop. Changes to the landscape, along with issues of litter and general untidiness, contributed to residents feeling the area was significantly 'ignored'. Parks were seen as the most unsafe areas to go to across all age groups and neighbourhood centres were either underused or had been converted into council offices or services with a city-wide remit.

Whilst a large number of people reported a sense of hopelessness in terms of change in the area, almost unanimously residents welcomed the involvement of the university. When asked to imagine what might look or feel differently in one year's time, the most common responses were grouped as follows: changes to the living environment (33%), a reduction in anti-social behaviour and crime (24%), better community facilities (17%) and a better (generalised) sense of neighbourliness or community (14%).

In addition to the doorstep survey, a number of other strategies were used to secure access to different groups of people living or working within the community. Detached, street based consultation work was undertaken with young people, using a modified social capital survey devised and carried out by a team of four young people employed by the university as

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<sup>3</sup> The Mosquito Device emits a high pitched frequency that is generally only heard by people under the age of 25. It is used to disperse groups of young people and has been subject to controversy. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7240653.stm> (last accessed 17/04/2012).

‘associate research assistants’<sup>4</sup>. This exercise resulted in the positive capture of voices that may otherwise have been excluded from the consultation exercise. Community vision cafe meetings were held at local neighbourhood centres to capture resident views on emerging survey data and the proposed responses by the Square Mile project. Regular meetings were also held with elected politicians, council officers and other local service providers, and the team attended all local Ward Community Meetings.

The resulting datasets were voluminous and provided distinctive insights into the day to day perceptions and experiences of living in a modern urban community. They also enabled the university to identify its response more effectively than if it had relied solely on secondary data alone.

### *Developing the response*

Two distinctive approaches to university community engagement can be determined in the response by the Square Mile project to the needs identified in the local community – direct ‘social/community planning’ alongside a hybrid of ‘community care’, ‘organisation’ and ‘development’ (Poppo 1995). Social/community planning typically featured analysis of social problems and conditions, goal and priority setting, and implementing and evaluating services or programmes. The Square Mile project designed, consulted on and delivered a range of proposed specialist projects around the themes of community cohesion, health and wellbeing, local identity, skills and media. The projects were delivered almost exclusively in situ, meaning that the university effectively created an ‘interrupted space’ (Bolzan and Gale 2011) through which to engage with residents. As a result of the initial idea generating process within the university and consultation with residents, twenty-one projects were introduced at the point of the initiative’s formal launch in September 2011<sup>5</sup>. These were as follows:

1. **Community:** There were a number of projects that emphasised a participative, developmental process, distinguished by their ambition to engage as wide a network of community members as possible, their open-ended nature and their focus on collective and outdoor activity. They included sports, community garden and community café groups. A team of street-based student youth and community workers were deployed to the area to complete their professional practice under the supervision of local authority youth workers and in partnership with local voluntary sector organisations.
2. **Health:** In the first phase of the initiative, a series of short and tightly focused projects were developed to work with targeted population groups who had distinct health needs. Projects included: sexual health work with people who have learning disabilities; support for increasing breastfeeding in an area where uptake is lower than average; equipping pharmacies to deliver creative weight management advice and information; introducing student-led hearing screenings to open up access to health services and; working with parents and carers to develop new approaches to increase communication skills amongst very young children.
3. **Local identity:** Enabling both transient and established groups to access a localised and collective identity was identified as a key ambition. The area was also the site of

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<sup>4</sup> De Montfort University was thought to be the first university to train and employ young people as associate research assistants, ensuring their contribution to all stages of various externally commissioned projects. See: <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/faculties/hls/research/applied-social-sciences/csa/associate-research-assistants.jsp>

<sup>5</sup> Projects continue to be introduced and a more comprehensive list and descriptions can be found at: [www.dmu.ac.uk/mile2](http://www.dmu.ac.uk/mile2) (last accessed 20/06/2012)



important history and retains this through its various landmarks. Projects included: in-depth research investigating feelings of belonging and inclusion on one street in the Mile2 area; a web-based interactive device allowing users to navigate backwards and forwards in time using layered photographs of specific locations and; using architecture to think about areas in new ways.

4. **Media:** The use of media in work with community is an established tool for nurturing creativity, building relationships and for finding innovative ways of connecting individuals with their local communities. The group of media projects aimed to bring together residents, students and academics in journalism and media production together with a citizen journalism partnership with the local newspaper. Two projects focused on training local reporters for presenting their outputs on a regular student radio show broadcast in the Leicester Mercury. Students also produced 10 documentaries on area and projects.
5. **Skills:** This package offered focused educational projects that sought to work directly with targeted groups in the Square Mile community. They were time-limited and focused around key learning objectives and aimed to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in key areas identified as important during the consultation work. These included offering free English lessons to the newer population groups within the area: a direct response to locally identified needs. Other projects provided information on aspects that were high on the local community's agenda (such as the provision of information about laws).

Running parallel to the projects, the university engaged in roles and functions that would be described in Popple's (1995) typology as a mix of 'organizer', 'volunteer' and 'catalyst', concentrating on supporting new and emerging networks, providing support to existing and developing service provision and establishing mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the interventions in the Square Mile area. Thus, university staff and students continued to provide a consistent community 'presence' in the neighbourhoods, providing a general and responsive community support mechanism outside of the specific, targeted and often time-limited projects. This work aimed to develop, what Holland and Ramaley identify as 'partnerships that ensure a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge between the university and the community' (2008, p. 33) and was informed by the principles of community development work. The work reflected the historical traditions of community action, development and organisation (Smith 1994) with attempts to expand and test new forms of university community co-production and action (Durose et al 2010).

This diffuse community engagement strategy was actualised through a range of different activities, each targeted at overcoming difficulties identified in the doorstep survey and other consultation work. As 'volunteer', the university engaged its staff and students alongside residents and local authority staff in regular volunteering activity. These ranged from a mass volunteering day to launch the project (where over 200 staff and students volunteered) through to regular community cafe sessions with smaller numbers. As 'organizer', the university supported an emerging partnership between residents, the police and the voluntary sector, focused on strengthening and sustaining youth work provision in the area. The university contribution included providing consultation data, identifying potential funding sources and supporting the completion of a funding bid.

As 'catalyst', the university aimed to respond to the low levels of resident confidence in influencing decisions made about the local neighbourhood, a finding that confirmed Mori's (2008) statement that people in the ward were less trusting of the local authority and democratic services than in other areas of the city. The absence of democratic power was compounded by the nonexistence of neighbourhood groups and tenant associations in the

area, a situation inconsistent with the rest of the city. Over a period of four months, staff and students from the university worked with an emerging residents group to initially provide a mechanism through which the Square Mile could regularly consult a core group of residents. This group developed to become a Community First panel<sup>6</sup>, tasked with identifying needs and awarding funds to projects that can respond most effectively.

### *Emerging impact*

Initiatives that promote opportunities for active citizenship often seek to promote two forms of impact. Instrumental impacts are defined as experienced by individuals or groups and can be identified as 'personal rewards' (Wood 2009): the acquisition of new skills, knowledge or the opening up of new opportunities for an individual's personal or social development. Generalised impacts concern the 'collective rewards' that emphasise 'the wider reward gain for communities' (Wood 2009, p. 150). At the time of writing, the Square Mile initiative has been in operation for less than twelve months and it would be unwise to prematurely declare lasting impact. Yet, some early data provides interesting insights into how personal and collective reward gains may result from the initiative in the longer term.

Particular projects set out to provide practical experiences or skills development that could result in changes in the aspirations or circumstances of participating residents. For example, the constituency within which the Square Mile sits was noted for a number of secondary schools failing to achieve a 50% standard of GCSEs A-C. The constituency also reported low progression from compulsory to further and higher education when compared with the city, region and nationally. The Faculty of Technology provided a project in one secondary school designed to raise young people's aspirations and add value to the learning experience beyond the classroom. Robot Club provided 25 young people with the opportunity to build working robots. As a result of the project, two school students were flown to Vienna to compete in an international competition. The group of young people also presented their robots to the Duke of Edinburgh when he visited De Montfort University in March 2012. The project leader, an academic in technology, noted that the project had increased the confidence and self-esteem of some of the students. It was also likely that Robot Club would become incorporated into the school curriculum, an indicator of the project become self-sustaining with possible wider impacts beyond the initiative. The provision of free English lessons, delivered by the Centre for English Language, was targeted primarily at residents from the large Polish community and included practical sessions on job searching and interview techniques. The sessions were oversubscribed and had to be moved from the local neighbourhood centre to De Montfort University's city campus. Residents attending the project have reported that they feel more confident and having made new friends, less isolated.

Projects delivered by students were also providing an important connection between the community and existing services. A hearing screening programme set up in community settings for residents resulted in students providing free screening tests for over 25 residents to date, leading to appropriate advice and guidance on how to access existing NHS services.

Critically though these early successes speak strongly to the 'service' component of student and staff engagement in the community. To what extent the initiatives provide students and staff with the opportunity to engage in learning that can enhance their civic and citizenship knowledge and behaviours is yet to be determined.

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<sup>6</sup> Community First is an £80m government-funded initiative that will run for four years, until March 2015. Eligible wards receive funding that must be allocated by local panels against their locally identified priorities. See <http://www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first> (last accessed 17/04/2012).

### **Conclusion: universities as a public good?**

This paper has set out the policy context of active citizenship and community engagement, and has demonstrated one way in which universities can make a contribution to their local social and economic context. The Square Mile initiative both accepts and rejects dominant policy definitions of community engagement, favouring a direct intervention based approach to classical community development work (Popple 1995). Many of the driving values that underpin the initiative could be interpreted as those found within the UK political communitarian discourse of the New Labour years. Similarly, institutions working outside of government to stimulate change within communities could be emblematic of the current Big Society agenda. However, the Square Mile suggests the balance of an eco-system between the state, other institutions and local residents is not yet ready to be realised. The early success of the initiative has depended on resource commitments not usually associated with a university's community engagement strategy and this in turn provides a potential threat to such work. An acute example was in the intensive work required to support an emerging panel of residents who, it is hoped, will go on to contribute to the sustainable development of their neighbourhood. This positive development required intensive staff and resident co-production, the antithesis of a passive role. This suggests that normative accounts of self-directed community organisation found in the Big Society discourse are insufficient for explaining how institutions are often required to stimulate and help sustain activity.

Does the Square Mile initiative indicate a public good contribution? It is certainly evidence of a university engaging in an innovative way with its local community, demonstrating early signs of service, if not yet 'learning', impact. It will also undoubtedly have 'private good' benefits for the university insofar as the initiative has proved to be a good public relations tool. The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) together with the Observer newspaper named the Vice Chancellor as one of Britain's 50 New Radicals for the idea (Observer, 2012). The project featured significantly during a recent visit by The Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Duchess of Cambridge at the start of the Diamond Jubilee Tour, and has attracted regular local media attention. In an era of increased competition, universities that offer a distinctive experience for students will also be more attractive. This in itself can translate into further public good only if part of a wider strategy of civic education. Student community participation is a vital component of the more developed community engaged universities (Millican & Bourner, 2011), and the 'personal reward' benefits for students undertaking such activity are well documented. The value of targeting this work and situating it firmly within a broader community engagement mission cannot be understated:

As volunteering becomes more mainstream within higher education, not just in the UK but elsewhere, a critical perspective is necessary to ensure that it neither normalises students to social inequalities, nor perpetuates social injustice. (Holdsworth & Quinn 2010, p. 124)

Universities, through their cherished tradition of knowledge generation and access to extensive knowledge production, are arguably amongst the best placed institutions to ensure a critical dialogue about inequality and injustice is part of the student experience (Durose et al 2010). This is why the balance between private and public good is achieved through more than mere volunteering activity. Universities are often positioned within walking distance of excluded communities and have vital capital to offer in addressing the challenges faced by civic society.

Millican and Bourner (2011, p. 91-92) contend that the 'model of universities that dominated during most of the twentieth century no longer seems to fit in a world where universities are seen as more accountable to the societies in which they are located'. Through

working intensively with one community, the Square Mile project shows that a university can actively contribute to the needs of its neighbours. Yet more time is needed to show if the model offers evidence that universities can be leaders, not followers, in promoting meaningful active citizenship (Hollander 2011).

### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the residents, staff and students engaged in delivering the Square Mile programme. The responsibility for this article remains with the author.

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## **Promoting “Active Citizens”? The Critical Vision of NGOs over Citizenship Education as an Educational Priority across Europe**

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### **Abstract**

In the last decades, Citizenship Education (CE) has been at the forefront of both educational policies and international research regarding curriculum design and impact on pupils' knowledge, values and skills. However, not only what citizenship “is” is diversely conceived by different democratic traditions (Eisenstadt, 2000; Heater, 1999) but, obviously, CE also involves organisations beyond the walls of schools. This paper confronts educational policies with the views of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in 20 European countries. Results suggest that the vision of CE as a priority in educational policy documents is questioned by NGOs that consider schools are too focused on formal democracy and overemphasize respect for rules, values and responsibilities, rather than promoting critical, informed and active citizens. Especially in countries with an authoritarian past, NGOs consider that models of conformism and submission are still dominant, and emphasize the role of CE in promoting a strong civil society.

**Keywords:** citizenship education, educational policies, non-governmental organisations

*\*Ana Bela Ribeiro* is a PhD student in Education Sciences supported by FCT, the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (SFRH/BD/78829/2011).

*Mariana Rodrigues* is a research assistant in the project Participatory citizenship education in transitional societies financed by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology.

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### **Acknowledgements:**

The research presented here was financed by the Portuguese Foundation of Science and Technology (FCT) under the project EduCiPart (PTDC/CPE-CED/102952/2008), that supports both Andreia Caetano and Mariana Rodrigues. Ana Bela Ribeiro is also supported by the FCT with a doctoral scholarship (SFRH/BD/78829/2011).



## Introduction

Democracy is sustained both by civic and political participation and acceptance of diversity (Sullivan & Transue, 1999), but young people are frequently being accused of lack of commitment, interest and participation in their communities (Theiss-More & Hibbing, 2005; Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 2002; Putnam, 2000; Russel, 2004; Menezes, 2011; Fahmy, 2006; Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehman, Husfeldt, & Nikolova, 2002), while many authors defend that youth civic and political participation is a good predictor of political knowledge, interest and engagement in adulthood (e.g., Azevedo & Menezes, 2008; Osterle, Johnson, & Mortimer, 2004). Flanagan and Sherrod (1998) argue that political participation is the basis of a democratic society, making it impossible to sustain if citizens are not free to participate in the governance system – as Verba et al. (2002) would say, voice and equality are central in democratic participation, that involves a variety of behaviours beyond voting in elections. But the growing signs of political disaffection and distrust explain why, “in established democracies (...), in new-established democratic states (...) and in countries taking steps towards democracy, there is a recognition that democracy is essentially fragile and that it depends on the active engagement of citizens” (Osler & Starkey, 2006, p. 435). Therefore, it is not surprising that the promotion of active citizenship has entered the public and academic discourses and that Citizenship Education (CE) was affirmed as a central role of school.

In Europe, particularly after the fall of the Berlin Wall – that Huntington (1992) has considered the third (and last) wave of democratization in Europe –, CE has emerged as a priority for school curricula across Europe, with many formats, strategies and denominations. The need for a formal education in this domain was certainly reinforced by the process of democratic transition that many European countries were experiencing, together with signs of growing intolerance and xenophobia both in transition countries (with the Balkan wars being the most impressive and dramatic sign) and in well-established democracies (with the rise of extreme-right parties in countries such as Holland or France, where, in 2002, Le Pen reached the second round of the presidential elections). Simultaneously, the significance of CE was underlined by international studies such as the IEA Civic Education Study (Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald, & Schultz, 2001) or the Council of Europe project on Education for Democratic Citizenship (Bîrzéa, Losito, & Veldhuis, 2005).

However, this apparent consensus is not without contest. In fact, even the concept of citizenship was disputed as problematic and exclusionary (e.g., Beiner, 1995; Benhabib, 1999), while defining that *what a citizen is* varies immensely not only across history (e.g., Heater, 1999), but also across democratic traditions (e.g., Eisenstadt, 2000; Janoski, 1998), ranging from passive (existence) to active (participation) rights (e.g., Ross, 2008), and varying in the intensity and contexts where these rights are exercised – from minimalist versions that expect citizens to vote and pay taxes to maximalist perspectives that view citizenship as a right to be exerted in diverse and multiple daily settings. For instance, Kallioniemi, Zaleskiene, Lalor, and Misiejuk (2010) understand active citizenship as “participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy” (p. 7) that can involve “individual and/or collective act of social responsibility towards others or on behalf of others (...) [and also] participation and involvement in decision-making processes that affect the wider society” (p. 8). Ekman and Amnå (2009) go further to recognize both latent and manifest forms of civic and political participation, from engagement to activism, including life-style and identity anti-political discourses. From this point of view, the *crisis* of participation means, simultaneously, collapse and expansion (Menezes, 2011) as it exposes the decline of conventional forms of participation (such as partisanship in political parties or unions) and the emergence of unconventional forms of civic and political participation (such as demonstrations, sit-ins, e-participation, political consumerism ...). Even if these newer

forms of civic and political participation can be characterized, in tune with our post-modern societies, as more fluid and self-expressive (Ferreira, Azevedo, & Menezes, in press), they surely defy a deficit model of young people as *citizens in the making* (Marshall, 1950) and challenge us to recognize youth daily life civic and political agency.

This is in line with Biesta and Lawy (2006) argument that, even more important than teaching citizenship, is that young people actually learn about democracy. Biesta and Lawy consider that young people are frequently unaware of their role and position in society and that they feel that they lack a voice and political knowledge. However, “the inclusion of citizenship in the formal curriculum has served to mask a deeper and more profound problem concerning young people’s citizenship (...) [and] represents no more than a partial response to the alleged ‘crisis’ in democracy” (Biesta and Lawy, 2006, p.64). Schools have important limitations as contexts for CE and “citizenship and democratic learning may require more practice outside school than any other subject (...) being more a way of life, and being a step into participation in real life and experience” (Park, 2007, p. 3). McCowan (2009, p. 25) goes further by saying that “citizenship education is by no means confined to the school grounds” and “in fact, there are reasons to believe that experiences outside school may be more important than those within it”.

The recognition that CE involves “real-life” beyond school walls explains why various NGOs are actively involved in this process, not only as providers of citizenship experiences for young people, but also as interfaces between schools and communities and, finally, as actors within the school context by developing materials that teachers can use or organizing teacher training in specific areas (Kallioniemi, Zaleskiene, Lalor & Misiejuk, 2010; Park, 2007). Obviously, across Europe NGOs have a variety of roles, even if Kallioniemi et al. (2010, p. 9) highlight some important commonalities: first, NGOs share an ideal, they “collect citizens together to act upon issues of social concern and are (usually) independent from governments of states”; second, in spite of having “several purposes (...) [g]enerally their basic function is to promote their members’ political or social aims” and “can be seen as active participants in open, democratic societies”. Moreover, “in many countries NGOs have made special material for schools [and] because of their activities NGOs have lots of opportunities to show examples of a living Active Citizenship” (Kallioniemi et al., 2010, p. 12). This makes of NGOs not only contributors for the citizenship education curricula, but also contexts for citizenship education, throughout their everyday activity.

Hence, for many years, NGOs have been key actors in the field of CE: for instance, in Holland, since the sixties, NGOs were actively pressing the Ministry of Education towards the inclusion of specific cross-curricular themes and were very active in the development of curricular materials (CIDREE, 1994). With the institution of the European Union this role was reinforced, not only because the EU actively supported the creation of European networks of NGOs but also endorsed a vision of NGOs as essential partners of the ‘Europeanization’ of civil society (Warleigh, 2002) – and therefore consultation and involvement with/of NGOs became central in Europe.

This paper departs from this reality to consider how CE is conceived by educational policies and how NGOs evaluate existing policies and practices of CE across 20 European countries. More specifically, we want to address the following research questions: How is CE operationalized in educational policies across Europe? What visions of citizenship are expressed in CE topics and contents? Moreover, what kind of citizens are schools and civil society organizations, such as NGOs, advocating for? How do NGOs view their roles as CE providers? How do they perceive current CE practices in schools and how do they envisage their engagement with schools regarding the promotion of CE activities?

### Method

Given the diversity of Europe, especially in terms of the institution of democratic regimes and political historical past, we felt it would be important to include a diverse sample of European countries to consider not only their emphasis on CE in educational policies but also the perception of existing NGOs regarding the policies and practices in the field of CE. Table 1 describes the participating countries and the number of NGOs involved.

Table 1

*Participating European Countries: Current Political System, Time of EU Integration And Number of NGOs Involved*

	Country	Current political system	EU integration	Number of NGOs
1.	Austria (AT)	Federal Republic	1995	5
2.	Belgium (BE)	Constitutional Monarchy	1957	3
3.	Bulgaria (BG)	Republic	2007	5
4.	Czech Republic (CZ)	Republic	2004	5
5.	England (ENG)	Constitutional Monarchy	1973	8
6.	Estonia (EE)	Republic	2004	4
7.	Finland (FI)	Republic	1995	3
8.	France (FR)	Republic	1957	4
9.	Ireland (IE)	Republic	1973	4
10.	Italy (IT)	Republic	1957	3
11.	Luxembourg (LU)	Constitutional Monarchy	1957	2
12.	Poland (PL)	Republic	2004	3
13.	Portugal (PT)	Republic	1986	12
14.	Malta (MT)	Republic	2004	2

15. Netherlands (NL)	Constitutional Monarchy	1957	4
16. Romania (RO)	Republic	2007	4
17. Slovakia (SK)	Republic	2004	2
18. Slovenia (SI)	Republic	2004	3
19. Spain (ES)	Constitutional Monarchy	1986	5
20. Sweden (SE)	Constitutional Monarchy	1995	2

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It is important to underlie that we have included countries that are representative of Huntington's (1992) three "waves of democracy": the first wave that occurred from 1828-1945, i.e., until after the Second World War (e.g. Italy); the second wave that happened during the seventies (e.g., Portugal and Spain); and the third wave in the nineties, after the fall of the Berlin Wall (e.g. Estonia, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Poland). The case of the UK is also stressed as an exception once it is frequently characterized as the "oldest democracy" in the world. Within this historical and political framework, all of the countries in our sample are members of the European Union, including both founders of the former European Economic Community (e.g., Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy) and the more recent members (e.g., Bulgaria and Romania). Moreover, there are significant variations in indicators of the quality of democracy such as trust in political institutions, levels of civic and political engagement and participation, degree of media control and freedom of speech or female representation (Diamond & Morlino, 2004; Lijphart, 1999; Morlino, 2004).

Our research involved a policy analysis of principles, intentions and key-concepts of CE and a survey of NGOs broadly working within the CE field.

### **Policy Analysis**

The policy analysis entails a comprehensive analysis of principles, intentions and key-concepts of CE which are present in national policy documents (e.g., laws and regulations). This information was complemented using a multi-level approach with a range of other resources (e.g., articles, databases, and European surveys), thus combining direct and secondary sources. We aimed to understand what kind of CE educational policies are advocating for, by performing thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79), a qualitative analytic method that provides a flexible approach for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data". The statements allowed us to reach a total of 56 different categories that reveal concerns towards CE in educational policy (e.g., number of hours, curricular strategy), as well as its definition (e.g., goals and contents).

### **Survey of NGOs**

The inquiry of European NGO's through an e-mail survey took place between August 2010 and February 2011. Contacts were drawn from existing databases of European NGOs broadly working within the CE field – e.g. Networking European Citizenship Education, Democracy and Human Rights in Europe, European Network of Political Foundations, and

Euro Partners Development. An invitation letter in five different European languages (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Ukrainian) was e-mailed to a sample of 424 NGOs from 41 European countries. Approximately 30% of the European NGOs that were involved in the study answered the e-mail survey; if we exclude from the initial sample the 27 NGOs that refused to respond (because they were currently not involved in the topic, among other reasons) the response rate was 32% – a value that is quite positive if we consider the tendency for the decline in email surveys response rates (Sheehan, 2001). As mentioned above, this paper presents the results for a subset of this sample that consists of 83 NGOs from 20 European countries, as shown in Table 1.

Once the NGO accepted to participate in the study, an e-mail survey was sent to them. The e-mail survey consisted of the following six open-ended questions including a description of the NGO and the respondent's role; the dominant vision of CE in educational policies; the barriers regarding its implementation; positive experiences; the evaluation of the work done in the field of CE in and out-of-school; and the significance of a promoting critical citizens both regarding the authoritarian past (if existed) and existing democratic institutions. Data was analysed using qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278), “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”. In this paper we will address roles, activities and target groups of NGOs; perspectives of the NGOs regarding CE and school's role on it dominant vision in CE; and evaluation of CE, highlighting the barriers to implementation and positive experiences in national and international CE.

Because the questions were open-ended, it was possible to obtain a rich and extensive database on the visions of European NGOs regarding CE. Data was organized by grouping together similar views, while retaining the specificity of the opinions. The NGO was used as unity of analysis.

## **Results**

### **Policy Analysis**

CE is referred as an educational priority in the curricula of all 20 countries, but there are important variations. For instance, the number of hours per week assigned to CE varies from non-defined (e.g., Bulgaria and Italy), 1 hour/class per week (e.g., Estonia, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden), 2 hours/classes per week (e.g., Austria, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Spain), 3 hours/classes per week (e.g. Romania and Finland) or 4 hours/classes per week (e.g., Poland and Check Republic); decentralized education policies in both Finland and England implies that schools can autonomously decide the number of hours they allocate to CE. The designation also varies with Civics appearing as the most frequent (e.g., Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden) and CE being explicitly mentioned in England, Belgium, Check Republic, Portugal and the Netherlands. Moreover, as CE is linked to a variety of compulsory and optional subjects, it can adopt more than forty different types of designations; the more common are “Personal, Social and Health Education” (e.g. England and Ireland), “History and Social Studies” (e.g. Austria and Finland), “Ethic Education” (e.g. Finland and Slovakia), “Civic Education” (Poland and France) and “History and Geography” (e.g., Italy and Luxembourg). Finally, CE can be implemented as a cross-curricular theme, as the object of a specific subject in the curricula or as an optional or compulsory subject (or other type of curricular space); the option for a cross-curricular strategy is the most frequently adopted at both primary and lower secondary education.

The vision of CE in educational policy documents is very diverse and includes “commitment to the democratic state”, “knowledge of human rights”, “active participation in the democratic process”, “respect for diversity”, “responsibility”, “social coexistence”, “tolerance”, and the development of “social skills and competencies” or of “critical consciousness and reflection”. On the whole, most countries emphasise “individual development” (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Finland, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovakia and Spain) and “active participation in the democratic process” (e.g. Austria, Belgium, England, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain) that involves politics within different spaces such as school and community, as well as “responsibility” (e.g. Austria, Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Sweden, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain) and “social skills and competencies” (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, England, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Slovakia and Slovenia) (Figure 1).

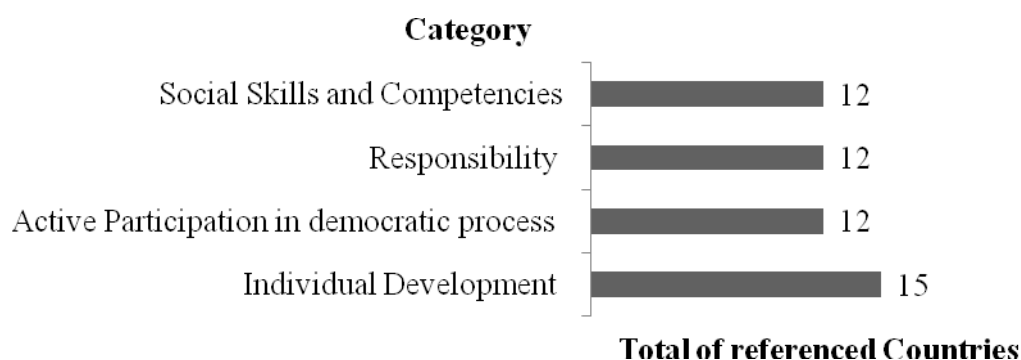
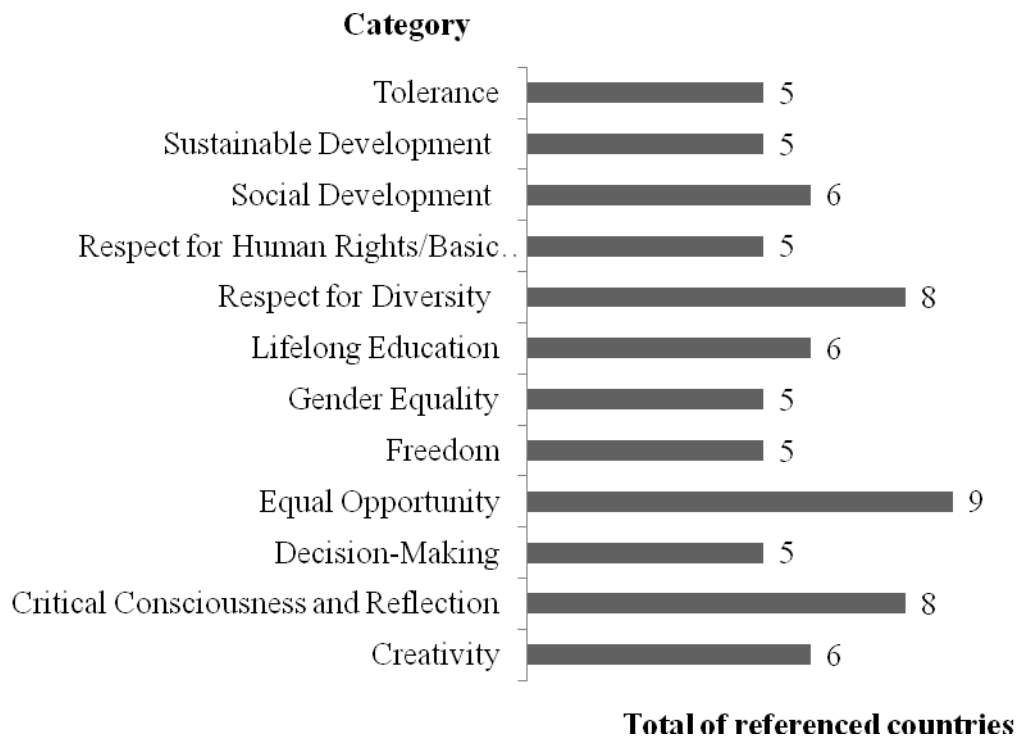


Figure 1. Higher level of referenced categories in 20 countries

Less frequently, but mentioned in various countries, are associations between CE and “equal opportunities” (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Malta, Slovakia and Spain), “critical consciousness and reflection” (e.g. Austria, England, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain), and “respect for diversity” (e.g. Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Malta, Portugal, Sweden and Slovenia). Similarly there are references to “social development” (e.g. Czech Republic, England, Finland, Ireland, Portugal and Slovakia), stressing notions of integrity and ethics, “lifelong education” (e.g. Belgium, Czech Republic, England, Luxembourg, Malta and Spain) and “creativity” (e.g. Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia), “decision-making” (e.g. Austria, England, Ireland, Italy, and Slovenia), “freedom” (e.g. Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain), “gender equality” (e.g. Czech Republic, France, Luxembourg, Romania and Sweden) and “sustainable development” (e.g. Czech Republic, France, Luxembourg, Sweden and Slovakia) (Figure 2).



*Figure 2.* Intermediated level of referenced categories in 20 countries

Besides these commonalities, less frequently CE appears associated with a large variety of other concepts such as “solidarity” (e.g. France and Spain), “rights” (e.g. Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Italy), national (e.g. Austria, Estonia, Slovenia) and European identity (e.g. Slovenia), “moral values” (e.g. Bulgaria, Italy and Slovakia), “empowerment” (e.g. Belgium and Ireland) or “entrepreneurship” (e.g. Bulgaria, England and Slovakia) (Figure 3).

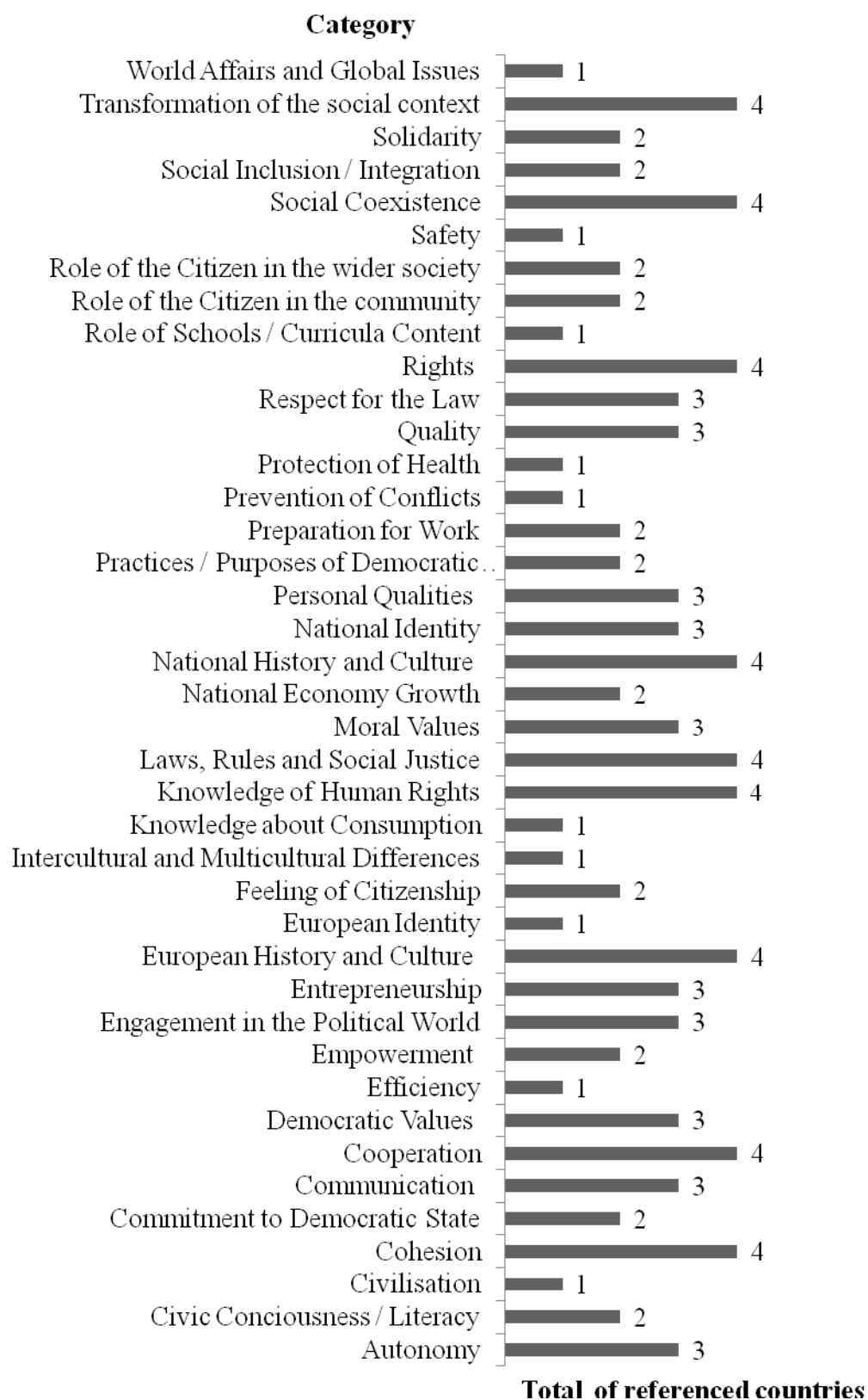


Figure 3. Lower level of referenced categories in 20 countries



On the whole, these results suggest that CE is presented as a priority even if this is not always translated in an intense curricular timetable or space; moreover, given the large variation of topics and contents associated with CE, it appears as a (large) umbrella term to accommodate both more traditional (e.g., national identity, moral values) and emerging (e.g. entrepreneurship) educational and social concerns. Again, we could question whether this might be described as a strategy of compensatory legitimization (Weiler, 1990) that risks producing little real change in the daily lives of schools.

### **Survey of NGOs**

To a significant number of participating NGOs, CE is at the core of their services and actions: NGOs play an important role as CE providers at all levels of education, using formal, non-formal and informal methodologies, complementing school provision and fostering citizens' active participation in a democratic society. However, even if the respondents emphasise their advocacy efforts with political and educational stakeholders and decision-makers for the formal instilment of CE and its effective implementation within the educational system, "the advisory councils are few and end up not allowing the views and contributions of citizens and NGOs which would be crucial for policy decision-making" (NGO, Portugal). Moreover, they criticise a top-down approach where

(...) the concepts and proposals departed from a hierarchically superior entity, almost in a demagogic and doctrinal way. At the end, it is expected that in the end of the whole process of learning, people change their daily actions, habits and lifestyles (...) which most often does not happen, because only are forecast and "imposed" one-off actions and without continuity with the support of the students and not constructed with the students in order to ensure their ownership of the process (NGO, Portugal).

The participating NGOs view the dominant vision of CE as founded in the assumption that school has the role to provide pupils with the knowledge, skills and values that are considered relevant to be good citizens. Thus,

(...) its starting point lies in perceiving the actual society as a society with a moral deficit. Therefore, young people need to be schooled into good citizens. (...) It is associated with a particular set of claims about what makes a citizen and about the necessary conditions of that status (NGO, Belgium).

The institutionalised CE is also criticised for being too focused on formal democracy – public institutions and its functioning, elections, political parties, etc. – and for overemphasising respect for rules, values and responsibilities, both at national and European level, hence "it is seen as an instrument of social cohesion" (NGO, Romania), suggesting that an active and critical approach to CE is not often realised, meaning that CE "lacks the critical, questioning, [and] social justice aspect at the centre of active citizenship" (NGO, England).

Mostly NGOs agree that much of the CE provision in schools is focused on the transmission of knowledge about citizenship instead of on the creation of conditions and opportunities to exercise citizenship on daily life; but CE implies

(...) the involvement of young people in public life and affairs and this encompasses a wide range of activity requiring diverse skills, [because] young people learn what it means to be a citizen through discussions and debates in the classroom and participation in the life of the school or college and in the wider community. They are

given opportunities both to develop their learning and to put it into practice in 'real life' situations (NGO, England).

Additionally, this means

(...) that pupils should develop and strengthen concept skills, method skills, modelling skills and decision-making skills. (...) Instead of mainly teaching knowledge about political institutions and the political system [CE should] focus on the empowerment of pupils for taking part in the democratic system (NGO, Austria).

Moreover, it is important to foster

(...) the creation of local networks that meet regularly and bring together youth, youth associations, leaders, elected politicians ... with the aim to reflect and act together so that youngsters are recognized as full participants in planning, but make sure they also take this role (NGO, France).

In addition, the respondent NGOs emphasise that teachers lack the knowledge and the skills to deliver CE using innovative methodologies, even recognizing that there are schools, teachers and educators who have a positive involvement. On their vision, leading political and educational structures often do not create the necessary conditions to foster the use of collaborative, practical and flexible methodologies, there is a "time pressure on teachers and schools, [as well as] a growing focus on 'core competencies like language and math'" (NGO, the Netherlands). It is assumed that citizenship education should promote "participative practice by encouraging young people to progressively take more responsibility in selecting, planning and leading activities that are based on their interests" (NGO, England).

NGOs highlight the need for more innovative methodological and pedagogical materials to deliver CE, namely through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The application of ICTs as a means for

(...) young people to acquire and strengthen participative decision-making competences as well as media competence. (...) [It also] demonstrates how modern media, above all the internet and WEB 2.0, can support political and civic education for young people and foster democratic discourse among them. (...). This approach of strengthening e-participation among young people is highly innovative (NGO, Austria).

Considering possible improvements to the CE provision, the "last thing is combining different communities and people from different sectors - public, private and economic -, so that they can together bring more positive changes" (NGO, Poland). On the whole, NGOs "have received very good feedback for (...) [their] efforts and partnerships established (...). An additional benefit is that we connect both political and civic leaders and help form a wider network of public entities" (NGO, Bulgaria).

Particularly in countries with authoritarian pasts, NGOs consider that models of conformism and submission are still dominant in the relationship between citizens and the Government, taking into account that "those countries with undemocratic history face the problem of low social capital at both local and national level. A change is processed very slowly" (NGO, Czech Republic). However, CE is seen as an essential condition for citizenship and democratic development and understanding in all countries: CE should be

(...) concerned with the conditions of young people's lives, and with the processes through which they learn the value(s) of democratic citizenship. (...) presupposes an

attitude wherein everyone, including teachers and young people in schools and colleges, is routinely engaged in a continuous and thoroughgoing public dialogue (NGO, Belgium).

Some NGOs also point out that, given the growing cultural diversity in contemporary societies, fostering a critical historical consciousness “is especially important in order to link recent developments regarding the phenomena of racism and anti-Semitism to this period, but to also show that there are new developments like Islamophobia and more culturalised strands of racism” (NGO, Austria), as well as the enlarged “number of non-citizens (persons of undetermined citizenship)” (NGO, Estonia) – promoting tolerance towards minorities should be an important goal of CE.

In sum, both in countries with a recent democratic history and in those with a long democratic tradition there is a recognition that

(...) democracy is in need of constant renewal otherwise it can die or be set back, that’s why critical minds are so important and an understanding that change is possible though it may not be easy and it may not happen immediately (NGO, England).

### **Conclusion**

On the whole, our findings are consistent with other comparative studies on citizenship education that point out the disputed nature of the concept and the diversity of curricular strategies and definitions (Kennedy, 1997; Hahn, 1998; Ichilov, 1998; Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). In fact, our policy analysis in 20 European countries shows the complexity surrounding CE, and how it is defined using a panoply (and broadness) of related domains that can result in a lack of specificity, hampering its recognition as a relevant educational goal and fostering a gap between policies and practices of CE – that could be characterized as a “everything means nothing” phenomena.

In fact, educational policies portrait CE as involving knowledge (e.g. knowledge about nation, state and political institutions) with emphasis on the respect for the law and the security of the state (e.g. Estonia, Czech Republic and Bulgaria), that can suggest a vision of pupils as passive citizens. From this point of view it seems that educational policies, despite emphasizing the importance of developing critical thinking, participation and active involvement of pupils, mainly promote citizenship conceptions based on conventional actions such as voting and volunteering (Norris, 2002).

In this research, we confronted educational policies related to CE with the vision of NGOs that also operate in this field. As we stated above, the involvement of NGOs in CE is complex and diverse, as they both act as providers of CE experiences, as mediators between the school and the community, and as actors in the school arena by producing curricular materials and training teachers to address specific CE topics. It is important to remember that NGOs play a significant role in contemporary democratic societies and are key actors with an agenda of their own: in fact, “since NGOs are sectoral in their interests there is a clear limit to their ability to claim general representativity” (Warleigh, 2001, p. 622). Besides, their own mechanisms of internal governance can be more or less democratic and, obviously, this limits their potential as a CE space for active and critical citizens, and can even result in disempowerment (e.g., Stewart & Weinstein, 1997). This cautionary note is only to remind us that NGOs are not neutral participants in the CE field, and therefore their evaluation of CE policies is committed to their own political positions.

European NGOs that participated in this research argue that policy makers are barely interested in promoting young people's participation as well-informed, critical and active citizens in civic and political issues in different contexts. As Marinetto (2003, p. 118) argue "[f]or governments, the idea of active citizenship is primarily significant because of the part it plays in political rhetoric and in strategic calculations". In fact, most NGOs involved in this research agree that CE policies, curricula and practices are focused on the theoretical transmission of formal democracy and on the discourse of respect for responsibilities, rights and duties – however,

(...) knowledge of values, rights and obligations does not directly translate into personal attitudes, not to mention that even if a person has such attitudes this does not necessarily guarantee that he or she will behave accordingly. (...) [Therefore], reducing the concept of citizenship to as set of rights and responsibilities would be unfounded and futile reductionism (Dimitrov & Boyadjieva, 2009, pp. 154-155).

In this line of thought we could argue: "if the goal [of citizenship] is to promote students' civic and democratic participation, [then it] should begin to consider the opportunities students actually have to experience democracy in the schools" (Campos, Costa & Menezes, 1993, p. 15) and beyond. The emphasis of CE on the transmission of values, rules and knowledge about society, has led Sultana (1992) to question whether CE is playing a function of mere social control, viewing citizens as simply "spectators who vote" (Walzer, 1995, p. 165).

Notwithstanding the political rhetoric about the importance to enhance youth participation and involvement in the public sphere, the participant NGOs say it is difficult to influence improvements in educational policies and practices due to the dominant role of governments in decision-making processes. These arguments are in line with Marinetto (2003, pp. 106-107) that affirms that

(...) citizens in Western democracies, although regarded as sovereign, have only a passive role in the political and decision-making process. There are opportunities to enter the state as political representatives or to join distinct interest groups. Nevertheless, for the majority of citizens, their most telling contribution to government is the intermittent opportunity to choose democratic representatives.

According to Biesta (2008, p. 4), CE is not confined to the school context, as "young people learn continuously from the situations, practices, relationships and experiences that make up their lives". Many years ago, John Dewey expressed this brilliantly: "interest in learning from all the contacts of life is the essential moral interest" (1916, p. 527). And Biesta (2008, p. 4) continues: "It is in those situations that they learn the value of democratic and non-democratic ways of action and interaction and it is through such experiences that they also learn about their own position as citizen". Therefore, as many NGOs respondents state CE requires a well-structured and continued strategy, in order to achieve durable and effective awareness, participation and involvement of all citizens.

Partnerships between governments, civil society, political parties, youth organizations and even private companies were explicitly identified as a potential channel for CE through which more public or private resources could be gained and the educational provision could be enriched. Furthermore, the role of CE in promoting a strong civil society is emphasised. However, as Boje (2008, p. 3) argues,

(...) the possibility of civil society becoming a locus for democratic learning, political reflexivity and governance depends, on the one side, on its own specific institutional

mechanisms, and, on the other, on the broader institutional configuration which such civil society is a part of.

The fact that “only few governments (...) started real power sharing through new participatory policies, increasing citizens’ rights and institutionalized forms of participation” (Hedtke, in press) reveals that democracies across Europe still have to work on the mechanisms to enhance citizens’ critical and active participation. And although CE has become a fashionable educational policy across Europe, it appears that more has to be done, in- and out-of-schools, to guarantee that it effectively promotes active and critical citizens.

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## **Promoting Active Citizenship through the arts and youth: Canadian Youth-Led Organizations as Beacons of Hope and Transformation**

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### **Abstract**

This essay details the pedagogical and cultural work of two youth-led organizations situated in Canada - Beat Nation and 411 Initiative for Change. Through the narratives generated by interviews with several of the organizations' artists and founders, the organizations' pedagogical work generated in cyberspace, and through artists' music, multi-media presentations, and speaking engagements in schools across Canada, we build on the critical project of reconceptualizing how youth express their awareness of what gives rise to salient social issues, such as racism, violence, environmental degradation, poverty, and gender inequalities, and how they work actively with other citizens to extend social and political rights for all. Youth-led organizations such as 411 for Change and Beat Nation seek to change the discursive realities and possibilities of hip hop by exercising it as a means of critical pedagogy. This approach supports the educational goals related to active citizenship, including solidarity, valuing the identities of minoritized populations, and a sense of belonging. We argue the organizations promote active citizenship by working to eliminate oppression confronting the global community, by guiding youth to understand the reasons for social inequality as well as the importance of working collectively to challenge injustice, and by embracing pro-social values and dispositions consistent with democracy, fairness, and equity.

**Keywords:** youth-led organizations, active citizenship, critical pedagogy

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### **Promoting Active Citizenship through the arts and youth: Canadian Youth-Led Organizations as Beacons of Hope and Transformation**

At today's historical juncture, the corporate and political elite in North America wield their power to scapegoat youth for the social and economic problems, (such as poverty, crime, violence, and homelessness), that they create through globalizing capital and outsourcing labor across the globe as well as gutting social rights (such as full employment, housing, public transportation, and health care for children and other citizens). The dominant elite's chief outlet for lulling the public to believe youth are utterly redundant and disposable, waste products is through media-driven spectacles, where they falsely characterize youth, especially youth marginalized by their racial class status, as aberrant social creatures who are violent, anti-intellectual, lazy or out of control and 'up to no good' (Giroux, 2010). Consequently, through this (mis)information, the elite has swayed the public to support what Giroux calls a "war against youth." This involves the ruling elite implementing spates of draconian educational policies and practices, such as high-stakes examinations, scripted curricula, zero-tolerance initiatives, and corporate advisement/marketing strategies. This "warfare" is designed to position youth to become compliant spectators in decisions and events that perpetuate not only their alienation and oppression, but also generate the stark social realities encountered by the vast majority of global citizens.

Despite the concerted efforts by the dominant elite to reduce youth to invisible objects or make them "become subject to the dictates of the criminal justice system" (Giroux, 2010), several scholars who support critical and postmodern conceptualizations (Tereshchenko, 2010, Lister, 2008; Rasmussen and Brown, 2002) of citizenship have pinpointed how youth are, indeed, critically aware of what is spawning suffering in their schools, communities, and other social contexts as well as engaged "in action for social change, the establishment of active solidarity, and the extension of rights for all global citizens (Ross, 2007). Unlike many scholars who limit their investigation of youths' citizenship activities to being involved in typically adult and male-centered channels of voting or in formal political work, critical citizenship scholars have examined multiple social spaces in which young people "learn and experience citizenship" (Tereshchenko, 2010). For instance, through their involvement at school, community centers, the virtual world, and in popular culture activities, critical scholars have shown that youth are far from being apathetic, narcissistic individuals who are concerned with their market-driven needs, wants or desires; rather, they are cognizant of what constitutive forces cause oppression, are actively working with their peers and adults to guide other citizens to reflect upon the sources of social maladies, and are "able to express their views across a range of citizenship issues" (Tereshchenko, 2010).

The purpose of this essay is to detail the pedagogical and cultural work of two youth-led organizations situated in Canada - *Beat Nation* and *411 Initiative for Change*. Through the narratives generated by interviews with several of the organizations' artists and founders, the organizations' pedagogical work generated in cyberspace, and through artists' music, multi-media presentations, and speaking engagements in schools across Canada, we build on the critical project of reconceptualizing how youth express their awareness of what gives rise to salient social issues, such as racism, violence, environmental degradation, poverty, gender inequalities, and how they work actively with other citizens to extend social and political rights for all citizens. We argue the organizations promote active citizenship by working to eliminate oppression confronting the global community, by guiding youth to understand the reasons for social inequality as well as the importance of working collectively to challenge injustice, and by embracing pro-social values and dispositions consistent with democracy, fairness, and equity.

## Culture and Cultural Intersections

Culture, as lived individual and shared experiences, can never be condensed into neat, comparable categories. As Jones cautions, it is absolutely to be expected that some lived experiences cannot be translated or understood by people whose world views involve different cultures. This is not a problem to be solved; instead, these conditions reflect an opportunity for mutual growth. That is, the spaces of struggle, spaces where cultural intersections occur, are not prospects for homogenization or assimilation. Spaces of struggle are to be celebrated and embraced. They are locations of praxis, of energy, of possibility. The very *impossibility* translation – which usually results in colonization through the impositions of dominant narrative as a vehicle of translation – in fact represents hope. Understanding that cultural intersections create opportunities not for resolution, but for endless struggle, has positive implications:

This has to be seen positively, given it *is engagement*; it is not *dis-engagement*. To struggle with another is to give active and proper *attention* to the other, to *relate* to the other. Even as an enemy you are *hoariri* or *hoa whawhai* – an angry 'friend': one with whom it is worth engaging, someone with whom you have a *relationship* of struggle. (Jones, 13)

No pedagogies can support transformative aims associated with active citizenship unless they support engagement between and among educators, students, and the wider society. Disengagement is the antithesis of meaningful participation. And, as Jones indicates, when cultural intersections are treated as problems to be resolved, the need for ongoing struggle is not honored: a colonized rather than a reciprocal, relationship is constructed. Active citizens must be willing to engage in struggle if they are to understand and become empowered participants in the creation of their world.

Since cultures are continually constructed and consumed by members of various groups, interrelations among these groups cannot be simplified or essentialized. It is possible, however, to explore and investigate intersections, as long as investigations honor the possibilities that emerge within the complex notion of endless struggle. It is in this context that, based on an analysis of interview data, the authors suggest that hip hop and Indigenous experiences reflect and embody cultural commonalities. Participants in Beat Nation and the 411 Initiative for Change describe the shared world view as a consistent rejection of the dominant cultural/colonial imperatives. Such a perspective provides a useful platform from which to promote active citizenship through critical pedagogies.

## Culture and Citizenship

Citizenship, as defined by Ross (2007) is treated as an aspect of belonging rather than as a legal term connected with national rights. He argues that

Citizenship and civil identity can be constructed in terms that do not necessarily relate to national identity. ... Citizenship is an important aspect of our identities: it is that aspect that involves our political engagement and participation in a community. (297)

In addition, he explains that to foster active citizenship, educational endeavors must acknowledge, include, and *value* multiple identities that are constructed and produced in social settings. This is particularly significant for students who are traditionally marginalized, as are Indigenous youth. Ross explains:

...in order to be effective, education for active citizenship must address and encompass both the nature of multiple identities and the extension of civic rights to minorities, and in particular that a focus on the possible enhancement of rights will provide a powerful vehicle for learning through deliberative democracy. (pp. 286-7)

The perspectives and actions of participants in Beat Nation align well with this conception of citizenship. As members of a community of Indigenous hip-hop artists, participants embody and promote cultural heritage, while simultaneously challenging the hegemonic norms associated with the status quo. Again, Ross discusses the connections between citizenship, community, and belonging.

Citizenship implies working towards the betterment of the community one lives in through participation, volunteer work and efforts to improve life for all citizens. This is not therefore simply the same as the old-fashioned legal definition of citizenship, which was narrower, territorial and specifically related to allegiance to the government of a state (and probably related to nationality). ... [T]he broader definition requires some consideration of community – or communities – and of the notion of belonging. (p. 297)

The role of community is essential to the construction and production of identity, and one's sense of belonging is deeply associated with the possibilities of establishing a sense of agency in society. Critical pedagogical approaches offer a powerful means of educating for active citizenship.

### Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogies build on the critical project of reconceptualizing how youth express their awareness of what gives rise to salient social issues, such as racism, violence, environmental degradation, poverty, gender inequalities, and how they work actively with other citizens to extend social and political rights for all citizens. Youth and, by extension, youth culture, is frequently coupled with competing discourses. Black (2011) explains

Young people are often held up as our hope for the future, the ones who will protect our democracies and spearhead better social and environmental practices. At the same time, they are subject to a pervasive risk discourse and to a range of mechanisms designed more to govern and control them than to learn from them or let them lead. (p. 25)

A sense of critical consciousness, intentionally developed through critical pedagogies that reveal, explore, and extend understandings of social inequities and the forces that constrain active participation, provides opportunities for active citizenship to be fostered and performed. Critical consciousness enables youth to perceive and expand their own agency as it relates to their communities to which they belong as well as the communities that are dominant in society. Critical pedagogies, and the consciousness they advance, empower youth to reconcile the competing discourses that shape their social positions and responsibilities.

In contrast to the intensification of standards and standardization that permeates contemporary public schools in the U.S. and Canada, hip hop provides an alternative perspective to power and pedagogies. Gustafson (2008) asserts that "Falling short of promoting a general understanding of the complexity of culture in a democracy, the language and procedures recommended by state curriculum guides construct a template for participation that is restrictive. These judgments circumscribe participation and limit inclusion" (pp. 288-289). In her investigation of the interconnections among hip hop and

education, she reveals how hip hop creates intellectual and physical spaces for possibility and agency – possibilities that relate directly to community and critical consciousness.

After expressing concern about the ways that standardization limits the ability of youth to imagine alternatives to the status quo, Gustafson acknowledges that “Hip hop’s reputation as an antisocial activity presents harsh dilemmas for the school curriculum” (p. 289). Since many educational leaders have only been exposed to antisocial forms of hip hop, which are promoted by large-scale conglomerates in mass media outlets, they generally exclude hip hop from traditional pedagogical experiences. According to Gustafson, this reinforces existing power relations that have particularly negative consequences for already marginalized youth.

Each teaching situation has different degrees and types of limitations on participation. Consequently, there are no ready prescriptions for achieving equity. Realizing that we cannot come to a language that is completely free of the burden of distinctions between students’ learning, my aim is to create a critical awareness of historically shifting definitions for music and reductive ideas associated with cognition, authenticity, diversity, and purposeful movement. (p. 292)

Indigenous hip-hop artists face particular challenges with respect to the expectation that they will link their present-day work to their heritage. And, because both Indigenous identity and hip-hop identity have been historically marginalized, this expectation is intricate and complex. In a sense, Indigenous hip-hop artists are working from a space of praxis that is doubly exclusionary: Indigenous culture and hip-hop culture have been colonized by Western influences.

The exclusion of hip hop, in particular, provides a clear example of this limitation..., making it difficult to welcome and command the interest of the individual who reasons about music through speech, hearing, mental processes, and movement. When looked at as a social activity and an aesthetic form, hip hop is one genre that draws many students’ interests and brings to light a rich array of social experiences that are ordinarily shut out of the classroom. (p. 293)

Youth-led organizations such as 411 Initiative for Change and Beat Nation seek to change the discursive realities and possibilities of hip hop by exercising it as a means of critical pedagogy. This approach supports the educational goals related to active citizenship, including solidarity, extension of civil rights, and a sense of belonging.

### **Beat Nation**

One aspect of this article is based on an Indigenous hip hop group called Beat Nation. Beat Nation, based in Vancouver, is an outgrowth of Grunt, which is a non-profit society run by a board of working artists whose purpose is to maintain a space accessible to artists and audiences. Grunt supports a variety of initiatives around evolving concepts of community, particularly those which explore intersections between various cultural groups. The organization is funded through Heritage Canada’s Gateway fund.

### **Methodology**

Eighteen members of The Beat Nation were invited to interview for this study and six hip-hop intellectuals agreed to participate. All are females who ranged in age from 26 to 41. Four are Canadian citizens; two are citizens of the United States. All identify as First Nation, Native North American. Because of funding and scheduling constraints, interviews were conducted via Skype and digitally recorded.

The oral history was developed through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which were transcribed and then analyzed using grounded theoretical methodology. In addition, document analysis of artifacts – which included lyrics, curatorial statements, artists’ assertions, and public records – was conducted. Grounded theoretical approaches, based in a critical philosophical framework, were used in order to gain a deep understanding of the lived experiences of study participants. Ideally, this method minimizes power differences by interrogating and exploring the experiences of participants deeply. Because investigators sought to establish authentic dialogic conversations, our interviews involved numerous moments of realization, awareness, and, ideally, education and empowerment during the narrative process. Giroux (1983) describes the underlying beliefs inherent in this type of interrelation:

Central to such a process is the fundamental notion of critique, a notion that should inform such exchanges and processes. More specifically, critique should be organized around historical and sociological modes of analysis. That is, the “self” and the wider society must be understood as socially constructed and historically constituted through social practices that are contradictory in nature but anchored in a totality of dialectical relations, i.e. society. (p. 29)

To facilitate analysis, notes and transcriptions were imported into Nudist data analysis software. When data collection was complete and transcriptions and field notes were imported, data were read and analyzed to identify topics for coding. To develop and facilitate analysis of codes, researchers used constant comparative methods, which enabled them to “establish analytic distinctions – and thus make comparisons at each level of analytic work” (Charmaz, 2009, p. 54). To establish codes, transcriptions were first read, word-by-word and line-by-line, through about one-third of each type of data, making notes on themes that emerged in order to create tentative coding categories. This close reading was intended to “make fundamental processes explicit, render hidden assumptions visible, and [provide] new insights] (Charmaz, 2009, p. 55). Using the constant comparative method, recurring themes and motifs related to the research questions were then identified as codes.

The Indigenous hip-hop movement represented by The Beat Nation provides a space for free expression that is both unique and shared. Study participants offer insights for understanding youth identities<sup>1</sup> and perceptions of education that are emerging in this dynamic social and political climate. As we explore below, this work provides a distinctive perspective on the educational goals related to active citizenship. It is also linked to the critical project of reconceptualizing how youth express their awareness of what gives rise to salient social issues.

### **Connecting Traditional and Contemporary Culture**

The potential conflicts that might emerge between Native youth and other community members who are products of diverse experiences are addressed candidly by Beat Nation Producer Glenn Alteen (2009). Here he links the traditional and the contemporary and perceives areas of conflict not as sources for division, but rather for opportunity for enlightenment and empowerment.

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the view of youth culture represented here is defined broadly. In this study, researchers look at how social actors who consume or produce this culture, but who are not necessarily youth. This conception of youth culture clearly includes artists associated with The Beat Nation and the 411 Initiative for Change, regardless of their ages.

There has been some criticism over the years by older community members who see this influence as a break from tradition and the movement of the culture towards a pop-based mainstream assimilation. But in Beat Nation we see just the opposite happening. These artists are not turning away from the traditions as much as searching for new ways into them. Hip hop is giving youth new tools to rediscover First Nations culture. What is most striking about this work is how much of it embraces the traditional within its development.

Alteen asserts that Indigenous hip-hop artists do not reject the works of their ancestors; in fact, they *extend* it:

In many ways, the greatest achievement of Haida master carver Bill Reid was in taking the carving tradition from wood, silver and argillite into other sculptural media. The artists in Beat Nation do the same thing in their media of spray paint, live mix video, turntables, and beat boxes. There is a strong sense of activism present in the work and recognition of the responsibility the artists hold towards their communities.

The explicit union between community, art, and activism is an organizing aspect of Beat Nation. Bridging the metaphorical and the imagined with the material and the actual, Beat Nation artists and curators draw on Indigenous influences to inform and amplify the experiences and voices of today's youth.

Aboriginal artists have taken hip hop influences and indigenized them to fit Aboriginal experiences: The roots of hip hop are there but they have been ghost-danced by young Native artists who use hip hop culture's artistic forms and combine them with Aboriginal story, experience and aesthetics. (Willard, 2009)

In her curatorial essay, Willard describes the origins and aims of Beat Nation:

The influence of hip hop on marginalized inner-city youth has been written about, Gucci© handbags have been made with graffiti art and car commercials feature hip hop tracks, but the culture of hip hop still has room for independent and local transformation, able to ignite youth expression and creativity. Hip hop has been used by youth and cultural workers from the Northwest Territories to South Africa as a tool for youth empowerment and expression. (Willard, 2009, p.2)

Consistent with the principles of critical pedagogy, Beat Nation participants seek to develop agency and empowerment from the authentic, grounded experiences and perceptions of youth. Notions of cultural norms and community belonging are understood as contested, a perspective that paves the way for genuine engagement and participation. A transformational viewpoint incorporates a dialogic aim, one that aims for mutual learning and shared leadership. Such a viewpoint represents a theoretical and substantial move away from hegemonic pedagogies and toward critical pedagogies. It also represents an embracement of active citizenship because it supports a transformational, dialogic approach to community participation.

The possibilities for hope and transformation represented by groups such as Beat Nation are particularly remarkable in a socio-political context marked by marginalization of Indigenous groups. It is important to note that Indigenous communities currently exist in largely colonized global circumstances.

In Vancouver BC, the unceded territory of Coast Salish peoples and a meeting ground for many different urban Aboriginal youth, hip hop has been an inspiration to art and politics since the early shows in the 90s...In Vancouver's slice of unceded Coast Salish territories, the influx of Native female ... represent hip hop with a message. Hip hop as activism has been a driving force in Aboriginal expression. (Willard, 2009)

The transformational possibilities exemplified by the participants of Beat Nation are realized as efforts to use art as a de-colonizing energy come to fruition. Despite the fact that these hip-hop artists work and live in spaces that have been stripped from their community, they refuse to surrender to hopelessness and despair. Instead, Beat Nation participants seize traditional and contemporary culture, remixing and remaking it to express their past, their present, and their hopes for the future. By engaging in these activities – activities that involve art as public intervention and subversive performance – members of Beat Nation seek to build on and express contradictions and connections among nature, society, culture, and identity.

Rap artist and Beat Nation member Rapsure Risin explains how this work integrates and amplifies possibilities for transformation through critical consciousness:

Attraction to music comes from beyond the mind. This music comes from beyond the mind. A strong belief in walking the earth as a complete human being, with all four aspects intact – Mind, Spirit, Body, Emotions – sets the bar for living that much higher. These aspects are present in all of us. When we are aware and fully conscious of our true presence, we are capable of infinite possibilities. ...We are here for more than the material, we are here for more than the knowledge, we are here for more than we could ever imagine. Imagine Rapture, being carried away to ecstasy, imagine rising to your highest state of being... (Beat Nation Trax, 2009)

In a similar vein, Tania Willard asserts explicit associations among the histories and traditions of Indigenous culture and contemporary hip-hop artists. She argues that today's artists do not represent a rejection of their heritage; they honor their ancestors while simultaneously constructing and producing their own culture. Culture, in this sense, is not produced in a linear, periodic manner. Culture exists contemporaneously: new constructions exist in the context of previous constructions. New voices and identities are informed and constituted of the social interactions and texts that preceded them.

Medicine beats and ancestral rhymes fuel indigenous hip hop, art and expression. Culture and identity are in a constant state of flux; new forms created today are becoming the culture of our grandchildren – hybridized, infused and mixed with older 'traditions'. We continue to shift, grow and change. Whether the influences are hip hop or country music, the roots of the expression go back to cultural story, indigenous language, land and rights, and the spirit of our ancestors.

This connection is not static, however. The connections and extensions these artists seek and construct cross boundaries of time and space, building – not *rebuilding*, but creating as a continuous process that resists forces of exclusion by being intentionally inclusive.

Our ancestors must be dancing for us: To see our culture thrive and survive they must be dancing to our beats. Like the beats of our sacred drums, we echo our ancestors in the expression of culture regardless of medium, whether electronic beats or skins, natural pigments or neon spray cans, beads or bling, break dancing or round dancing: We do it as an expression of who we are, as indigenous peoples. (Willard, 2009)

This community of Beat Nation artists provides both a model of how critical pedagogy functions in today's world and an example of active citizenship. Its members embody a transformational approach to the world, seeking to understand, express, and interrupt social inequities by appropriating the language and forces of colonization that threaten to assimilate and homogenize cultural and individual identities until they are incapable of engaging in meaningful democratic endeavors.

Hip hop artist Kinnie Starr encapsulates the role that hip hop has played for her with respect to exploring the interrelated worlds of music, identity, ancestry, and culture.

Making hip hop offered me a controlled environment where I was able to clear the clutter from my mind. Huge questions about the way society is structured come clearer to me from writing rhymes.

Writing rhymes affords wordplay, metaphor and making light of huge topics like not being connected to my Native ancestors. On my first album in '96 I wrote, "the Big Boys went out of style/ and so Pavement lines the roads now/ with indifferent reference to the past and preference/ of white pop trash and over abundance/ but where are my ancestors?" More than ten years later I continue to write about love, identity, family and history.

The notion of "love" recurs throughout the work of Beat Nation participants. Clearly intended to extend the Western conception of romantic attachment, Beat Nation artists refer to "love" as a powerful force that can be engaged to connect across time and space. It is a productive form of energy that, particularly coupled with critical consciousness, can strengthen human bonds and counteract forces of injustice. When considered as an act of human agency intended to transform life within a community, "love" can be understood as an aspect of active citizenship

While acknowledging the complicated intersections of identity, citizenship, and culture, Kinnie Starr (2009) notes the empowering possibilities of hip hop. Specifically, she engages in her work Beat Nation participants and the public in order to enact her own life mission:

To a woman who carries Native blood but is mostly white by blood quantum, hip hop is a world where story-telling allows me to be frank about my questions, my spirit, and my life mission, **which is that people should come together.** (emphasis in original)

In this excerpt, Starr connects the past, the present, and the future. In an attempt to fulfill her mission, she engages in critical pedagogies to interrogate her own experiences and then uses hip hop to express the thoughts and feelings that result. Clearly in concert with the aims of Beat Nation, these actions and stories reflect the transformational possibilities of authentic active citizenship.

### **The 411 Initiative for Change: Promoting Active Citizenship through the Arts and Focusing on Youth**

In addition to document analysis of artifacts – which included lyrics, You Tube videos, artists' and organizers' assertions and public records – one of the researchers (Brad) conducted interviews with two of the organization's founders and two of the organization's current artists. A qualitative research framework was employed because it allows researchers to capture the experiences and subjective experiences and interpretations of social phenomena as well as establishes the participants rather than researchers as the experts in the study



(Creswell, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2007). The interview method employed in this study allowed the participants to share their experiences with creating or taking part in youth-lead organizations and being situated in oppressive contexts during their childhood.

The researcher (Brad) also engaged in telephone exchanges with the participants. This allowed the participants to clarify any ambiguous information from the transcripts. It also allowed the participants to provide further information on their experiences with youth, schools, and social activism. Next, both authors examined the transcripts to find common themes within the participants' narratives. The data collection process was completed when the authors examined the youth-led organization's websites for additional information that focused on the organization's pedagogical and cultural work.

For over 12 years, the 411 Initiative for Change has been actively involved in schools and communities across Canada, in communities across Africa, and in the virtual world in order to create a social world based on the ideals of diversity, freedom and democracy, instead of on the dominant ideals of individualism, greed, and competitiveness. Specifically, the 411 directors and socially-consciousness artists promote active forms of citizenship by bringing awareness to what constitutive forces cause stark social realities for the vast majority of the world's citizens, by highlighting why it is necessary to extend civic rights for all global citizens, and by illuminating how youth can generate supportive communities--in the virtual world, in schools and their communities--predicated on eradicating human oppression. Here, Tamara Dawit, a founder of the organization and currently the Executive Director, captures the key focus of the organization

411 is a Canadian arts-based organization founded by a group of young people interested in using art to engage young people in social commentary and advocacy. 411 has worked with members of the Canadian arts, music and film industry to produce quality arts programming fusing the content of Canadian NGO's and charities working on international development issues affecting young people both in Canada and around the world. 411 aims to provide a platform using the arts as a medium for the voices and ideas of young people to be heard on the world stage.

Tamara recognizes the potential to change the social world lies in guiding youth to hold a critical understanding of what gives rise to social inequalities and in employing arts to give youth a platform "to be heard on the world stage." However, the organization's directors, along with the artists, are cognizant that it is not an essay task to guide young people to understand institutional forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, gender inequalities, classism, and homophobia, are systemic rather than personal in nature. They also recognize it is difficult nudging youth to become politically engaged in their schools and communities for the purpose of improving the quality of life for all citizens. In essence, they realize many youth have been inculcated to believe incorrectly the social world is fair and open where social and economic success is based upon one's effort and intelligence. Consequently, many youth do not believe there is an immediate need to engage in active forms of citizenship, such as working in solidarity with those who are committed to extending civil rights for all citizens, to eliminating oppressive conditions that spawn human suffering, and to engendering a global community based upon respect, diversity, and belonging.

To guide their youth-based audience to reflect upon the nature of their world as well as to understand key tenets associated with active forms of citizenship, the 411 members employ arts, music, lyrics, and multimedia presentations. They capture how global youth grapple with oppression on numerous levels, as they are individuals who are the most exploited and experience the most social and economic oppression at today's historical moment. Below, Tamara addresses some of the societal issues that the 411 foregrounds to its audience in order to give a more personalized perspective of why they must become educated

about what causes oppression and why they must be active, rather than playing “a very tokenistic role,” in building a just society.

Some of the most critical issues impacting young people, both in Canada and internationally, relate back to the basic rights of young people as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of The Child. In Canada and other countries youth play a very tokenistic role in policy making (if they play any role at all) – especially in the formation of policy that directly impacts young people. Other critical issues including HIV/AIDS (infection and stigma) which is further impacted by poverty – both which are real issues affecting young people even in a “developed” country like Canada. The final issue which 411 has noted through our programming in Canada and overseas relates to integration and belonging (faced by immigrant and refugee populations)

### **Community Building and its Link to Promoting Active Citizenship**

The artists and directors of the 411 also understand the importance of building a supportive culture that is based upon openness, sharing, and caring. One key focus in building this community is through the 411 members readily sharing their experiences of struggle and marginalization through their artistic work and presentations as well as through their direct communication with young people. These individuals, due to being marginalized on the structural axes of race, class, gender, and/or sexuality, have endured oppressive conditions growing up in Canada, in their communities, and in their familial contexts. Therefore, the 411 members’ candor with how social forces have led to their own personal struggles as well as to their resiliency to make the world a better place positions youth to freely share “their own struggles, joys and concerns.” Here Eternia, one of the many artists involved in the 411 Initiative for Change, details how she engenders authentic and genuine relationships with youth. She shares with them her own authentic experiences with pain, joy, and sadness.

Really, just watching how the youth get into our presentations is very positive. The interaction and engagement is truly inspiring. Young people are smart and empathetic and aware. Every day it inspires me to learn more, know more, and be a better example. Young people are looking to me for answers. I know many women and girls have approached me and reached out to me, expressing how my music mirrors many of their experiences, such as pain, sadness, joy, and others. They say, “It’s like you wrote my life story in your songs.” That happens a lot. I think people crave authenticity and genuineness. I provide that for a lot of people. I’m just me.

For Eternia, the pain and sorrow she experienced emanated from growing up in a poor multicultural Canadian neighborhood. She also witnessed firsthand how domestic violence took major physical and emotional tolls on her mother and other family members. To break away from the pain and sorrow, she sought her own path by leaving her household at age fifteen. Despite dealing with the social, emotional, and physical costs associated with being impoverished for most her life, she completed high school and college with outstanding grades. That is why many “young people” feel comfortable looking to her “for answers” for the suffering they encounter in their own lived worlds.

The artists and directors also realize they must focus on the interests and concerns of their audience, if they are to build a sustained community that is committed to building equalitarian schools and a just society. This is done by first employing the technological modalities, such as YouTube, Facebook, music, and videos, that youth generally harness to communicate and to understand themselves and their social world on a daily basis.

Second, the organization engages in dialogue with youth to keep culturally-relevant and youth-centered. Over the past decade, the organization has, in several cases, acted upon the suggestions put forth by youth. It now incorporates contemporary issues that young people perceive are impacting them as well as new cultural forms consumed and produced by young adults. For example, based on youths' feedback, the organization generated a "video commentary with girls in countries around the world, theater, music performance and audience participation" for the purpose of giving girls across the globe a space to highlight "both their struggles and successes in impacting change as local heroes" (<http://www.whatsthe411.ca/>). The organization also generated a 411 TV program to help educate girls, their family members, and educators about "domestic issues affecting girls, such as body image, self-esteem, racism, careers, healthy relationships and bullying. The program takes the format of a mock live-to-air TV talk show, mixing video, theatre and music with live interviews to relay positive images of girls and to offer real-life testimonies from Canadian girls and women" (Cunha, 2011). Moreover, based on youths' suggestions, the organization is contemplating reaching out to punk artists who are committed to fostering youth consciousness and activism. By continually acknowledging and respecting the diverse ideas and experiences of the youth who support the 411 initiative for change, the organization believes it will stay relevant, young, and positive for many years to come.

The organization also recognizes that its vision for improving the lives of youth and people across the globe can only be actualized if it gains support from the powerbrokers who control access to educative spaces in schools and in communities across Canada. Since many of the powerbrokers who control knowledge production and access to space in and outside schools are from the dominant culture, they often view minoritized youth through pernicious stereotypical representations promulgated by corporate conglomerates in the music industry and mass media. According to the organization's Program Director, Patrick McCormack, this fuels the youth artists to smash these "stereotypes," as he believes getting the powerbrokers to look beyond the stereotypes is vital to building credibility with multiple institutions, particularly schools. Most often, the powerbrokers' initial misunderstanding or skepticism about the organization is replaced with acceptance and encouragement. According to Tamara:

Teachers are often wary of us when we arrive. For example they find out the project is being run by a group of young people or, in some all-white parts of Canada, people of color (we actually had a teacher in Nova Scotia tell a presenter that the school had never had a black person come and talk to the students). These things make the principals and administrators look visually worried before the show starts. However, after the show, they are always happy with the project and many of those schools have invited us back. Basically our group defies the stereotype of what guest speakers to high school are supposed to look like.

### **A Path to Social Justice: 411 Members as Cultural Workers**

In addition to building a supportive community that guides youth to recognize the systemic nature of injustice, that engages in sustain dialogue with youth to support their interests and needs, and that builds alliances with adults inside and outside of schools to gain support for its initiatives, the members of 411 Initiative for Change engage in sustained forms of activism designed to build a better global society. For instance, Toronto-based, hip-hop intellectual Rochester has attempted to ameliorate the dehumanizing effects of youth imprisonment by implementing a one-of-a-kind program in Brookside youth jail in Cobourg, Ontario. The artist helped several youth produce their own music videos and hip-hop songs. The long range goals of the project are to release the inmates' singles and invest any profits in the kids' education, "so they can go to college and learn more" (Mendleson, 2010). The more subtle impact of Rochester's activism has parlayed into altering social relationships between

inmates and guards: During “workshops the boys are attentive, “asking questions, laughing, joking,” says Rochester. “The guards, they’re breathing a sigh of relief” (Mendleson, 2010).

The activist work of the artists has also provided the impetus for youth to engage in cultural work in their schools and other communities. For instance, Dwayne Morgan, a spoken word artist and activist from Toronto, notes how the organization’s global tours have inspired numerous global youth to formulate their own youth-led initiatives or join other social collectives, which are dedicated to eradicating human misery. In fact, the artists’ activism has spurred youth to “start chapters of Amnesty International in their schools.”

#### Re-envisioning Youth and Citizenship: Concluding Thoughts

As demonstrated in this essay, the dominant forms of citizenship promoted by schools and dominant political and economic leaders---voting and promoting a nationalistic identity based on Eurocentric values--have little prospect of ameliorating the intense suffering, social inequalities, and alienation experienced by citizens across the globe. The transnational elite’s project of globalizing capital and outsourcing labor across the globe as well as gutting social rights and entitlements of all citizens can only be subverted by citizens having a reflexive understanding of what causes the world to look so bleak and engaging in dissent movements which are predicated on providing rights and social entitlements for all citizens. Fortunately, Beat Nation and the 411 Initiative for Change provide educators and other concerned citizens guideposts for altering unjust social arrangements, for valuing the identities of minoritized citizens and engendering a sense of agency and belonging for all global citizens, and for engaging youth in activist pursuits that are personally empowering and socially transformative. Beat Nation engages hip-hop to generate a transformational approach to the world, seeking to understand, express, and interrupt social inequities by appropriating the language and forces of colonization that threaten to assimilate and homogenize cultural and individual identities until they are incapable of engaging in meaningful democratic endeavors. On the other hand, the 411 Initiative for Change strategically employs multimedia presentations in schools, in communities, and in the virtual world, creates alliances with educational and community leaders, and engages in cultural work across the globe to guide young people, their parents, and schoolteachers to become critically aware and actively involved in building a more just social world. We now call on other scholar-activists to mine the cultural manifestations and cultural work generated by youth-led organizations across the globe. We believe they may provide fertile sites to (re)conceptualize youth in a socially-generative light, to understand more fully what policies, practices, and structures make the world miserable for youth and the vast majority of global citizens, and to ensure citizenship formation is predicated on challenging the status quo, rather than keeping in place citizenship formulations that keep youth complicit in their own marginality.

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## **Implications of Community Activism among Urban Minority Young People for Education for Engaged and Critical Citizenship**

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### **Abstract**

Citizenship is fundamentally defined by praxis--i.e., engagement in local and diverse forms of civic practices--rather than by a legal status tied to the nation-state (Tully, 2008). This study examined the participatory democracy practices of a community activist group that was organizing to resist gentrification in a Puerto Rican community in Chicago in the U.S. In order to preserve their Puerto Rican community and build a grassroots democracy practice, the young activists involved themselves in a variety of community issues, ranging across political, socio-cultural, and educational domains. Noticeably, they worked to engage local youth in community events and in the process of production and distribution of local information. This helped the youth to learn about important community issues, as well as Puerto Rican history and culture, which had not been taught in local public schools. Such intergenerational and holistic educational activities not only produced new young leaders but in fact created a pipeline of community leadership. Their efforts present a useful educational model of engaged and critical citizenship, demonstrating the unique contributions of learning beyond the classroom.

**Keywords:** Community activism, Urban minority youth, Critical citizenship

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## Introduction

Citizenship fundamentally concerns a particular way of being, i.e., praxis. It is not only about a legal status tied to the nation-state but more importantly about how to become a particular kind of a person in a certain context. Through participating in civic life and interacting with others, people learn important values, norms, language, and practice, which constitute diverse and situated forms of civic practice according to different social contexts (Tully, 2008). Unfortunately, to a great extent, current citizenship education in schools has been missing such a sense, resulting in a large disconnect from communal life. Primarily concerned with a passive and institutionalized form of citizenship tied to the nation-state, current citizenship education manages to produce compliant nationals, but falls short of producing engaged and critical citizens. This paper stresses the importance of community engagement in education for engaged and critical citizenship with a consideration of the unconventional notion of citizenship, or praxis-based citizenship. Of the many forms of community engagement, I place special attention on community activism among minority young people, because of its strong advocacy for social justice from the bottom up. I conducted a case study of a community activist group that organized to preserve Puerto Rican cultural heritage and space in Chicago's inner city in the face of gentrification.

## Citizenship as Praxis

The classical meaning of praxis is rooted in Aristotle's idea of *phronesis* (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Smith, 1994). *Phronesis* concerns practical knowledge, practical ethics, or value judgment as a departure for action. It focuses on what is valuable, on that which cannot be encapsulated by universal rules, and on specific cases (p. 57). Being or becoming a citizen thus entails moral and political questions and practice contingent on the particular context in which a person resides.

No singular universal form of citizenship exists according to this perspective. On the contrary, praxis-based citizenship concerns situated and diverse forms of practice in local contexts, not necessarily tied to the nation-state. Praxis-based citizenship is also constructed out of an agent's active and ongoing engagement with other people; people develop their own civic practices according to different social contexts—ways of interacting with others, sets of civic values and norms, communication tools, uses of civic language, and more (Tully, 2008). Such civic practices are not static but changing through ongoing negotiation processes among people. People *civicize* themselves and become citizens as they engage in such ongoing and varied civic practices. Tully (2008) said:

Since civic activities of citizens are primary, people do not become citizens by virtue of a status defined by rights and guaranteed by the institutions of the modern state and international law. This status is simply to be a 'subject' of that system of laws and a 'member' of that association. Individual and collective agents become citizens only by virtue of actual participation in civic activities. Through apprenticeship in citizenship practices they acquire the linguistic and non-linguistic abilities, modes of conduct and interaction in relationships with others, forms of awareness of self and other, and the use of civic equipment that are constitutive of citizenship (p. 29).

Unfortunately, this notion of citizenship—that is, praxis-based and constructed through community engagement—is not widely accepted in society. The dominant idea is that of modern liberal citizenship, which is a universal and institutionalized form of citizenship based on constitutional law within the nation-state. It is usually viewed in a passive and narrow sense as merely a legal status (Tully, 2008). This tendency is reflected in the school curriculum as well; citizenship education in schools is often dry, dull, and largely disconnected from students' real lives. Citizenship is taught mainly as a legal status that

grants the right to vote. Although voting is apparently the most common and formal form of political participation in the modern representative democratic system, there are many other forms of civic engagement required to uphold democracy. Yet, in many cases, civic education in schools rarely focuses on how to participate in grassroots and participatory practice; make change; or learn the particular norms, values, or civic languages of everyday relationships with others. Arguably, this disconnect at school between learning and real life may be responsible for the growing gap between school-constructed citizenship and the citizenship actually practiced in the community (Knight-Abowitz & Harnish, 2006).

In particular, youth of color have faced an even larger gap, due to textbooks and curricula that are still primarily Eurocentric, as well as social prejudices surrounding them both inside and outside school. Meanwhile, the last decade has witnessed a dramatic movement towards community activism among urban minority young people in order to address issues such as educational justice, school reform, and racism, all of which heavily affect their daily lives. Such grassroots movements are important not only because they promote social justice and participatory democracy in society but also because they become significant civic educational practices in themselves. I am particularly interested in the vital potential of community activism for cultivating engaged and critical citizenship, i.e. citizenship as praxis.

### **Community Activism among Minority Young People**

Youth of color have been largely ignored in mainstream literature surrounding youth development and citizenship education. They have often been characterized negatively, portrayed as being vulnerable to crime and social pathology, with a primary focus on prevention programs (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). However, during the past decades young urban minority people have taken a leading role in creating a new participatory culture. They have actively organized grassroots movements to address issues important to them, which chiefly concern deep-rooted racism and fighting against social prejudices associated with them. Known by various names such as youth organizing, youth-led community organizing, community organizing, and community activism, this movement highlights the willingness of the people of the community to voice their issues themselves from the subject position, rather than allow their issues to be represented by others from the outside. Such grassroots democracy practice can help participants “see themselves as actors with the potential to resist oppression, see their peers and local community as potential collaborators in collective action, and see their community as a source of resources and a site for building collective power for social change” (Schutz, 2006, p. 725). The theory and practice of this movement including community activism is largely influenced from Saul Alinsky (1971) and Paulo Freire (2000), and community activism is also considered to be one of many civic practices to realize participatory democracy.

It is important to note that as community activism has helped young participants link their everyday life experiences to broader socio-economic issues concerning social discrimination, economic poverty, and other forms of oppression, they could foster critical consciousness, social skills, leadership, social responsibility, and community action, referred to as critical civic praxis. These educational fruits in turn could be a solid foundation for becoming agents of social change (Akom, Cammarota, & Ginwright, 2008; Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Duncan-Andrade, 2006; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Middaugh & Civic Engagement Research Group, 2012; Morrell, 2006; Romero, Cammarota, Dominguez, Valdez, Ramirez, & Hernandez, 2008; Torre & Fine, 2006).

Significantly, community activism has had a prolonged impact on participants’ future civic engagement orientation, too. In Warren, Mira, and Nikundiwe (2008), young activists who had successfully organized previous campaigns later came back to their communities as



adult community leaders. In Ginwright (2010), young people who were involved in organizing displayed higher levels of commitment to future activism as adults than did other students in a national sample. More than 90% of young people in the survey expressed a desire to stay involved in activism and remain committed to long-term social change efforts. Ginwright viewed youth organizing as playing a critical role in producing a leadership pipeline for social justice in the community.

In brief, community activism is a natural civic venue where people participate in important social issues, learn unique civic practices and culture, cultivate critical consciousness, and become active citizens in their local settings. In spite of such significance, however, community activism has rarely been discussed in connection with citizenship education, purportedly because it has been considered an unconventional and radical area. This paper challenges such a conservative tendency found in current citizenship education and re-envision education for engaged and critical citizenship. To this end, I conducted a qualitative case study about the participatory democracy practices of a community activist group that organized to fight against gentrification in an urban Puerto Rican immigrant community in Chicago, USA.

## Methods

**The case:** This paper is based on a case study (Stake, 1995) about a community activist group in Chicago that organized to resist gentrification in the community. The case of this study is the “¡Huntington Park NO SE VENDE!” (Huntington Park Not For Sale, HPNSV) Campaign in Huntington Park, an urban area of Chicago known to be a Puerto Rican community for the past fifty years. Huntington Park had survived several previous displacements that demolished other Puerto Rican communities in Chicago, but in the mid-1990s, Huntington Park was hit by another city redevelopment plan, euphemistically referred to as “urban renewal” (Rinaldo, 2002). Developers were buying old houses at low prices and replacing them with new condominiums to be sold at high prices. This brought newcomers, mostly middle-class white people, to the community, while long-term working class residents were pushed out because they could not afford the rising rent or property taxes. This phenomenon ostensibly divided the community into white people and Puerto Ricans, although issues of gentrification in Huntington Park were much more complicated than they appeared on the surface.

HPNSV was born out of a youth organizing group called *Barrio Urbano* (often simply referred to as *Barrio*). *Barrio* was founded in 2002 by a group of local youth to provide youth a space where they could express their feelings and thoughts through performing poetry, spoken word, hip-hop music, dance, etc. Such cultural activism became an integral conduit through which youth became connected to talented peers, encouraged each other, and defied the social prejudices and oppressions imposed on Puerto Rican and Latina/o youth.<sup>7</sup> *Barrio* youth leaders also became interested in important issues of the community, especially gentrification, and in the fall of 2003, the youth leaders, including Richard, who was one of the two co-founders of *Barrio*, began internal discussions about ways to address important local issues and redefine politics at the grassroots level. The youth leaders were impressed with experiments with democracy at the local, direct, and everyday level in Latin America, such as the Zapatista movement in Mexico and a participatory budgeting model in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The youth leaders’ focus was on the adaptation and implementation of such alternative democracy models in their own community, so that the local people can participate more actively in the policy-making process at the micro- level.

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<sup>7</sup> More detail about *Barrio* is available in a book chapter, “From hip-hop to humanization: Batey Urbano as a space for Latino youth culture and community action” (Flores-Gonzalez, Rodriguez, and Rodriguez-Muñiz, 2006).

Gentrification was one of the most pressing issues in the community. Many people who had lived in the community for a long time were forced to move out due to rising rent and property taxes. At the time, many residents of the community did not have enough information about what was really happening and how to appropriately react to it. In 2004, the Huntington Park Participatory Democracy Project (often referred to by participants as the PD project) was officially launched in order to meet urgent needs of the community and ultimately to preserve the oldest Puerto Rican community in Chicago. Before long, the PD group adopted a new slogan: “¡Huntington Park NO SE VENDE!” (Huntington Park, Not for Sale!) After changing their name, they received more attention from residents of the community; most HPNSV activists viewed the new name as educative and representative of the work of HPNSV.

The Puerto Rican Community Center (PRCC) is another important piece of background for this case study. HPNSV was one of the initiatives of the PRCC, which had worked hard to serve the social and cultural needs of the community since it was founded in 1973. The PRCC ran many programs, including a high school, a daycare center, a community health center, a youth organizing group, and an afterschool program. The PRCC championed the Puerto Rican nationalist movement, and the key HPNSV members also strongly supported the independence of Puerto Rico.

I learned about Huntington Park and HPNSV through the Youth Community Informatics Project of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where I worked as a research assistant for three years. As I became more familiar with Huntington Park, I became fascinated with their active community movements and decided to study them with regards to critical and engaged citizenship. The main research question of this study was: What particular sense of citizenship is being constructed surrounding the “¡Huntington Park NO SE VENDE!” (HPNSV) Campaign in Huntington Park at Chicago?

**Data sources and analysis.** During data collection from January 2010 to mid-June 2010, I observed events HPNSV organized and participated in to see how they interacted with people, groups, and agencies within and outside the community in addressing their own issues. I looked into artifacts related to HPNSV, including *La Opinión*, the local newspaper issued and circulated by HPNSV, Facebook pages, flyers, video clips, books of poetry, murals, students’ reflection notes, etc., to see what messages were delivered to whom and in what ways. I interviewed adult participants to understand their motivations for involvement, roles, visions for HPNSV, and ideas for useful local strategies. The five key HPNSV activists were Luis, Juana, Karla, Quinn, and Richard, and they ranged in age from their mid-twenties to their early thirties. Luis, Juana, Karla, and Richard were Puerto Rican, as well as former youth leaders at *Barrio*. Quinn was ethnically Mexican, and also had an activist background in issues of LGBTQ and poverty.

I began data analysis by organizing interview transcripts and observation notes. Because HPNSV was involved in such a wide range of community work, I created four domains—political, anti-gentrification, cultural-social, and educational—to more effectively analyze the community work of HPNSV. Table 1 shows the basic data analysis. Major themes in each domain emerged as data organizing progressed.

Table 1  
*HPNSV Data Analysis*

The community work of HPNSV	Political	Anti-gentrification	Cultural—Social	Educational (Youth-focused)
Strategic purposes	Expanding influence into the electoral political realm	Specific efforts for anti-gentrification	A process of an identification	Producing leaders for the next generation
Main themes	The “one foot in and one foot out”  Racism-prejudices over HPNSV  Building a relationship with community residents	Collaborating with others  Building a relationship with community residents	Reassuring the Puerto Rican identity  Inter-generational interaction	Civic apprenticeship

### Findings: Participatory democracy in Huntington Park

The most notable finding is that HPNSV activists viewed HPNSV to be not merely about anti-gentrification but also about building a different model of grassroots democracy in the community. This was the reason that HPNSV involved a wide range of community work, spanning political, cultural, and educational domains, in addition to the work immediately related to anti-gentrification. Below, I present the various kinds of work HPNSV did for the community according to the four domains: specific anti-gentrification, political, cultural-social, and educational.

**Specific anti-gentrification efforts: Education and collaboration.** In the earlier days of HPNSV, many community residents did not know detailed regulations about housing policies, and many of them barely spoke English. They were therefore susceptible to being taken advantage of by developers, who sought to obtain their properties at extremely low prices. Providing information on property owners’ rights and free legal services therefore became the most important task HPNSV had to carry out. In 2004, HPNSV published a two-sided flyer, called *La Opinión*, to provide such information. Over the years, *La Opinión* developed its contents to a wider range of issues from education, health, and local politics to culture, in addition to housing issues in the community. By 2010, its average edition was about twenty pages long, and it was published monthly in print and web versions. *La Opinión* was distributed door-to-door to the Huntington Park neighborhood by HPNSV, their supporters, and local teens. Offline *La Opinión* distribution was critical for many community residents, due to their limited internet access. HPNSV actively used community festivals to disseminate local information including *La Opinión*; the traditional method of information distribution was still valued by many people, especially the older generation.

Public affordable housing was one of the most promising alternatives for coping with gentrification. HPNSV organized a door-knocking event to obtain signatures from community residents supporting the construction of public affordable apartments. These signatures were to be used to push elected politicians to pass a bill to approve the construction of public

affordable housing. For this event, HPNSV formed collaborations with the neighboring community that was facing the same fate of gentrification. The new apartments were planned to stand on the border of the Huntington Park community and its neighboring community.

HPNSV recruited volunteers for the event in many different ways, including social media such as Facebook, as well as existing partnerships with universities. They offered a series of workshops to train volunteers to provide correct information about public housing. These workshops also taught people various important issues of Huntington Park, from the history of the Huntington Park community, the philosophy of HPNSV/the PRCC, the importance of door-knocking, how to do door-knocking, the need for public affordable housing, and a strict screening process for the residents of public affordable apartments. In particular, HPNSV and its partner tried to dismiss the myth about public affordable apartments that prevailed mostly among business owners and the affluent: "Public affordable apartments will make the community the 'dumping ground of poverty.'" These people believed that public affordable apartments would cause an influx of black and brown people into the community, which would in turn ghettoize the community. However, the truth was that public affordable apartments would be created for families that earn between \$22,800 and \$44,000 a year. Given that the median income in the community at that time was \$36,245, public affordable apartments would be suitable for families that earn the same amount as those already living in the neighborhood. In order to dispel the myth, it was of utmost importance for HPNSV and its collaborators to disseminate this accurate information to community residents.

These workshops and the door-knocking event were not merely mobilizing strategies to achieve short-term goals. HPNSV used these opportunities both for informal educational spaces for the community residents including volunteers and for building solid relationships with the community residents by showing them their commitment to the real issues of the community.

**Political domain: "One foot in and one foot out."** A local primary election was held at the beginning of the data collection period. The election became overheated by conflicts between two groups: the one endorsed by the PRCC and working against gentrification and the one supported by developers who wanted to redevelop the community in a different way.

Cynicism and a low sense of political efficacy were among the toughest challenges for HPNSV. According to HPNSV activists, many community residents believed that all politicians are corrupt and selfish, so that their votes would not make any difference. Also, oftentimes people were not patient enough to understand the slow process of community work. Luis, a coordinator of HPNSV, said that even though community residents were concerned about rising rents, they were scarcely motivated to participate in making a collective effort to change the system. Such cynicism and a low sense of political efficacy led to low turnouts in elections, too.

HPNSV activists firmly believed in the importance of electoral politics to make changes in public policy regarding housing and urban planning, and they actively participated in the electoral campaign. They encouraged people to vote for people who would truly respect the community and contribute to long-term development, while enduring the opponent group's black propaganda attacking them as an "anti-yuppie racist organization." *La Opinión* offered useful information related to the election, the candidates, and their platforms, in order to garner interest in local politics. The outcome of the election turned out to be that community residents favored all of the candidates endorsed by the PRCC and HPNSV, which showed that many people in the community still appreciated the work that the PRCC did for the community.

Richard, one of the co-founders of *Barrio* and HPNSV, talked about their attitude during their participation in the electoral campaign, using the “one foot in, one foot out” metaphor:

You have one foot in, one foot out. The one foot in the system and then one foot used for critically looking at the system, but your end is not really that you’re going to stay in the system. The end is to transform the system.

This “one foot in, one foot out” metaphor represented not only their electoral participation but also the whole body of HPNSV’s (and the PRCC’s) work to make a real change in the community.

**Cultural and social domain: “The process of identification.”** Puerto Rican identity was an important foundation on which community residents claimed cultural ownership of the Huntington Park area. Huntington Park had long been known as a Puerto Rican community, and gentrification was regarded as a serious attempt to demolish their ethnic identity and presence in U.S. mainstream society. Also, in light of the Puerto Rican nationalist tendency of HPNSV, preserving Huntington Park was about more than simply occupying a physical space. It strongly symbolized resistance to U.S. colonialism and actualization of Puerto Rican independence in the community.

Rose (2000) said, “Community is not given, but must be built, made real, and brought into being by campaigns of consciousness raising, pressure groups, and community activists.” Specifically, cultural events played a key role in making the community real to people by creating a sense of belonging and reaffirmation of ethnic identity amongst community residents, which was what Rose called “the process of identification.” HPNSV participated in many cultural and social events organized by the PRCC, *Barrio*, and other PRCC affiliates to reaffirm Puerto Rican identity and cultural ownership of the space in the community. There was a wide spectrum of cultural events, all of which showcased the dynamic aspects of Puerto Rican culture and identity. Some were very political, such as a month-long community event held in March called “30 Years Behind the Bar,” commemorating two Puerto Rican political prisoners who had been incarcerated for about 30 years. Other events, such as community festivals, parades, and *Parranda* (a Christmas tradition in Puerto Rico) exhibited various beautiful features of Puerto Rican culture. These community festivals provided HPNSV with chances to reach out to a broader audience by making in-person contacts, distributing local information, and fundraising.

*Barrio* was one of the main spaces for these cultural events. The key HPNSV activists, Luis and Juana, maintained their connection to *Barrio* by attending *Barrio*’s cultural events on Friday nights. Youth leaders at *Barrio*—aging from mid-teens to early twenties—organized and advertised the Friday cultural events, in which their peers showcased their artistic talents and freely expressed their feelings and thoughts. HPNSV activists were aware of the potential of *Barrio*’s cultural activism for both present and future community activism, and they wanted such energy to pass over to the younger generation. In particular, Luis always tried to get local teens involved in these cultural events through an afterschool program where he worked as a coordinator. This is discussed in more detail in the next section.

**Educational domain: The ecology of civic learning for youth.** One of the pivotal features of the HPNSV’s community work is its effort to further intergenerational and transformative learning for the local youth.

*Youth community engagement through ICLAC.* Luis, a coordinator of HPNSV, oversaw an afterschool program called the Institute of Culture, Leadership, Arts, and

Communication (ICLAC), also affiliated with the PRCC. ICLAC served Puerto Rican and Latina/o youth in Huntington Park to promote positive youth development and community engagement. It offered five classes, including four media classes (radio, journalism, multimedia, and theater) and a Participatory Democracy (PD) class. Luis devoted the whole ICLAC program to community engagement. He also taught the PD class on Mondays, where students learned about important issues, culture, and history of the community. Besides the PD class, ICLAC included many community-based learning activities to help raise youth interest in community issues. These activities comprised an anti-underage drinking campaign (the main activity), distributing and reading *La Opinión*, bike riding, community surveys, and cultural events at *Barrio*. Furthermore, Luis always prompted ICLAC students to participate in community events, such as community festivals and cultural events at *Barrio*. As an example, the ICLAC students participated in the door-knocking event to obtain signatures supporting public affordable housing, too. They worked with volunteers, walked around neighborhoods, and talked to residents about where they came from, the cause of HPNSV, and the necessity of public affordable housing in the community. It became a good opportunity for youth to learn more about issues of gentrification and the efforts HPNSV made to address them.

Luis' emphasis on *La Opinión* extended to ICLAC, too. Luis tried to help students understand the importance of *La Opinión* in the community—how it was the most important tool for HPNSV to educate and communicate with people in the face of a mainstream media that mostly covered only the negative aspects of the community. He strongly encouraged students to contribute to *La Opinión*, so that the voice of the youth could be heard throughout the community. To this end, students in the journalism class wrote articles about their anti-underage drinking campaign. Students regularly circulated *La Opinión* to the neighborhoods and read articles including the one written by their peers together in the PD class. By so doing, ICLAC gradually drove students to become more engaged in the community and foster critical perspectives on the issues that affected their lives.

*Keeping close connections to Barrio: Sustaining the community leadership pipeline for the next generation.* *Barrio* was a springboard to an unconventional political space and community activism among youth. As HPNSV had origins in *Barrio*, Luis, who himself also grew into an activist through *Barrio*, always stressed the importance of connecting ICLAC to *Barrio* in order to continue *Barrio*'s legacy. In the PD class, students discussed how to intertwine *Barrio* and ICLAC. They talked about the meaning of the core rules of *Barrio*, such as youth ownership, no homophobia, no sexism, and no racism. In addition, most classes in ICLAC, including the PD class, took place at *Barrio*, which might have helped the ICLAC students to become more familiar with *Barrio*. The students were also asked to organize cultural events at *Barrio* on their own, from which they could learn organizing skills including leadership, collaboration, and peer-support. These were aimed at allowing the ICLAC students to experience what *Barrio* could be for youth and to recognize that they could be a part of it.

Some ICLAC students performed poetry and hip-hop music at *Barrio*'s Friday events. Youth came from other neighborhoods to see their friends' performances, or to perform themselves. Sometimes, the older generation of *Barrio*, who had become community leaders, including Luis himself, performed together with the new generation at *Barrio*.

There were several youth leaders at *Barrio*, known as the collective. The youth leaders played a key role in helping the ICLAC students become immersed in *Barrio* and the community. Megan was one of the *Barrio* collective and also a new coordinator of ICLAC. She said that when she was young, she harbored a lot of anger and negative emotions related to family issues, having lost her brother to gang violence, and having been involved in drug dealing in order to buy food for her younger sister. While she also had a hard time in school,

one of Megan's high school teachers had discovered her great talent for poetry. Little by little, Megan learned to sublimate the negative emotions rooted in her tough personal life into an art, which brought her praise and acknowledgement. This changed her life, leading her to successfully graduate from high school, go on to college, and in time become one of the leaders at *Barrio*. She also actively participated in other community work including HPNSV, emerging as another young role model for youth and an agent for change in the community. Because Megan went through and overcame many struggles that many of the ICLAC students also faced, her presence in *Barrio* and ICLAC was promising to other youth. There were several other youth leaders at *Barrio* like Megan who could help the ICLAC students connect to *Barrio* and its community engagement.

The variety of ways in which Luis got the local teens involved in the community represented holistic and intergenerational civic learning. This contributed to producing active members of the community and sustaining the community leadership pipeline for the next generation. I believe this is a good example of what education for critical and engaged citizenship should be about, which has long been lost in institutionalized civic learning. Interestingly, however, Luis never used the term "citizen" in his PD class. Instead, he used the terms "*Borinqueño*" or "*boricua*," which means "Puerto Rican" in *Taíno* language, the indigenous language of the island. This is another important finding of this research: an absence of a language of citizenship, which I further discuss in the next section.

## Discussion

I want to emphasize that the distinction between the four domains— political, anti-gentrification, cultural-social, and educational—is not the focus of this study. Indeed, HPNSV did not categorize their works as such; the four domains are intertwined with each other in practice. In the long run, HPNSV's myriad community projects aimed to resist gentrification and build their own unique model of participatory democracy at the local level. HPNSV's wide range of efforts to get people of all ages to engage in the community essentially embedded civic learning into their everyday lives. Here, I further discuss the importance of the community work of HPNSV regarding the ecological approach to civic learning and the absence of language of citizenship in their community work.

**An ecological approach to education for critical and engaged citizenship for everyone.** The community work of HPNSV was constructed based on a mixture of the collective Puerto Rican diasporic identity, deep-rooted racism, economic inequity, and a long tradition of vibrant community engagement. The PRCC, the umbrella organization of HPNSV, had long worked hard to meet the various needs of the community people, based on the philosophy of self-determination, self-reliance, and self-actualization, which they captured in the simple phrase: "Live and help them live." Such long-term commitment contributed to the development of the Huntington Park community and also made the Huntington Park community known as one of the most famous Puerto Rican communities across the nation. In this context, HPNSV did not merely fight gentrification, but effectively organized to build a model of participatory democracy that suited the unique context of Huntington Park. Karla, one of the key HPNSV activists, talked about this:

Whether it's electoral politics, whether it's a parade down the street, whether it's *La Opinión*, whether it's a housing seminar, whether it's an afterschool program—it all ultimately is to help to keep the community residents here and give them resources that they need to make the community better.

Hence, HPNSV was involved in a wide range of community work, and through *La Opinión*, HPNSV communicated the efforts of the PRCC for the community. HPNSV activists wanted the people of the community to see gentrification from the broader

perspective of long-term community development. The activists concerned themselves with vigorous educational practice to help people understand what “*Boricua*” living in Huntington Park was meant to be. They wanted people to keep their pride as Puerto Ricans and know the numerous brilliant achievements that the PRCC made for the community, while being aware of the many forms of social injustice imposed particularly on communities of color. The activists most of all tried to encourage people to take part in collective efforts to preserve their cultural territory and develop the community.

HPNSV activists always highlighted the importance of building relationships with community residents. They wanted their movement to be embedded in people’s everyday lives based on long-term relationships, rather than be a simple one-time mobilization. Their wide range of community work entailed the creation of unique civic spaces, networks, support systems, and cultural traditions in the community. People were able to interact with one another, be informed of what was happening in the community, and take part in making a difference. This constituted informal and critical civic learning in the everyday lives of all people, a process that Longo (2007) refers to as the “ecology of civic learning.” Also remarkable is that HPNSV, chiefly through Luis, ICLAC, and *Barrio*, actively included youth in this community engagement project for the purpose of producing active members of the community and sustaining the pipeline of community leadership for the next generation. Luis made consistent efforts to involve local youth in community events and issues, and to pass over the legacy of community activism to the next generation. These features form a good illustration of civic education embedded in everyday lives.

**The absence of a language of citizenship.** Interestingly enough, the term “citizen” was rarely used in association with the community work of HPNSV. The participants never voluntarily used the term “citizenship” in interviews before I brought it up. I found this to be an interesting gap in language use, which I had not anticipated before doing my fieldwork. Instead of the term “citizenship,” participants used the term “*Boricua*” or “*Borinqueno*” to highlight their Puerto Rican identity regarding their community work. “I’d never use the language “citizenship” (laugh) describing anything. . . . We don’t even use the language of citizenship because the realization of citizenship is not the objective,” Richard said. He added, “[Citizenship is] so associated with American-ness. And when people talk about American, they really mean white.” Other participants voiced similar opinions. Luis, too, saw himself as a second-class or third-class citizen of the U.S., despite the fact that as a Puerto Rican he was technically a U.S. citizen.

Puerto Rico’s ambiguous political status—neither a state nor an independent nation-state—was an important backdrop for understanding the work of HPNSV and their attitude towards citizenship. While Puerto Rico is officially a commonwealth of the U.S., many people in HPNSV/PRCC saw Puerto Rico as an internal colony of United States and had historically supported the nationalist platform of independence for Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans had been collectively made U.S. citizens by the Jones Act of 1917, but even then, native-born Puerto Ricans were not granted the constitutional rights of U.S. citizenship, according to *Downes v. Bidwell*, which declared that Puerto Rico was “a territory appurtenant and belonging to the United States, but not a part of the United States within the revenue clauses of the Constitution” (Perez, 2008, p. 1037). Such an ambiguous political status led to an inferior citizenship status for Puerto Ricans, in which those on the island pay no federal taxes and are not allowed to vote in U.S. presidential elections. Elias, the executive director of the PRCC, outlined two meanings of citizenship to Puerto Ricans: “One, you can be drafted to the U.S. Army, and two, you can travel to the U.S. without a paper. That’s it!” He added, “This is a colony. They [the U.S. government] don’t go as far as saying, ‘This is our colony.’ But they say, ‘Puerto Rico belongs to, but not a part of [the U.S.]. Something belongs to you, it means a colonial possession.’”



What HPNSV activists were opposed to was not citizenship per se, but rather white privilege, racism, individualism, and U.S. colonialism linked to citizenship. Elias viewed citizenship in terms of universal human rights, as opposed to citizenship framed by the contours of the nation-state or the U.S. constitution. His perspective had something in common with the critique of the restricted notion of citizenship in the modern liberal tradition. He said, "If you define citizenship as something defined exclusively by a state, by a constitution, that's quite problematic. At the end of the day, all people have basic human rights. Citizenship must be about a whole person." His philosophy of citizenship was embodied by three major concepts—self-actualization, self-reliance, and self-determination—drawing upon Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. Importantly, Elias's three "self-" concepts connoted collectivism, not individualism, in the context of the community. He said, "We are talking about the context of community being self-reliant. The community will have the means at its disposal to be able to realize itself as a full people. That means the right of self-actualization and ultimately, the right of self-realization."

Although HPNSV activists did not favor the term "citizenship," their community work demonstrated the realization of such ideals in the community, which is the essence of what I call "citizenship as praxis." Their community work is in itself fundamentally concerned with civic teaching, learning about the meanings of being "*Boricua*" living in Huntington Park and the various desirable ways of doing so. It is notable that HPNSV activists and their colleagues in the community never wanted to be insular locals confined within Huntington Park. Rather, they actively interacted with diverse groups of people in the larger society to address community issues. They were aware that gentrification is a global phenomenon that is taking place almost everywhere in the world and is related to the larger structural problems rooted in racism and an unjust economic order. In order to address such issues, HPNSV activists developed their own local strategies that best suited their social and political contexts, and they were open to collaborating with others who faced similar issues.

After having conversations with me about the different perceptions of citizenship, the HPNSV activists tried to connect their civic practice with the idea of citizenship as praxis, rather than simply status. Although they still felt awkward about it, they all agreed upon the importance of community engagement as a primary responsibility associated with being a member of a particular society. Quinn said:

What type of citizen are you? Are you a citizen [who] just sits back just assisting what they are? Or a citizen who feels compelled to act on the realities and tries to improve it and make it better realities for themselves and future generations? You can't just sit down and complain about it. You have to actively work toward changing it. [It] all starts at the very small level, eventually to change things around you.

I believe one of the most crucial steps towards developing education for active citizenship is to recognize the significance of community activism. Community activism offers vital examples of how people can create situated and diverse forms of civic practice to make social change, whilst the prevailing notion of citizenship is too restricted to account for such civic practices and social criticism. I suggest that more attention be given to investigating what citizenship really means in the context of ordinary civic lives, with regards not only to community activism but also to other grassroots movements. Moreover, further effort should be made to think about practical ways to possibly integrate these lessons into current citizenship education.

In an interview, Richard raised provoking questions: "How would this [accepting the notion of citizenship as praxis] be different to us? How would it impact our work and practices that we performed here?" I have yet to come up with a satisfying answer. These questions are another indicator of his reluctance to use the term "citizenship," but at the same

time, they are a good starting point for researchers and educators to further inquire into how to create a consensus for the use of the same language between different groups, so that all can band together to re-envision what education for engaged and critical citizenship ought to be like.

## Conclusion

This paper explores an unconventional notion of citizenship, or citizenship as praxis, regarding community activism among minority young people. My research question was: What particular sense of citizenship is being constructed surrounding the “¡Huntington Park NO SE VENDE!” (HPNSV) Campaign in Huntington Park at Chicago? It is not easy to give a simple answer to this question. Technically, the answer could be, “No sense of citizenship was found,” because the term “citizenship” was not associated with the community work of HPNSV. Nevertheless, it cannot be overemphasized that what HPNSV activists were opposed to was white privilege, U.S. colonialism, racism, economic injustice, and the individualism associated with U.S. citizenship, not citizenship per se. From my perspective, HPNSV vigorously engaged in praxis-based citizenship to create situated and diverse forms of civic practice: HPNSV (and the community) were earnestly concerned with what it meant to be “*Boricua*” living in Huntington Park, and what the desirable ways of doing so were. Above all, HPNSV was an overt collective resistance to social prejudice and oppression imposed on the people of the community. Also, their wide range of community work—creating their own local information system, enthusiastically participating in an electoral campaign, and reaffirming Puerto Rican identity through cultural events and rituals—contributed in different ways to educating community people of all ages for the purpose of building a unique model of grassroots democracy. Having naturally involved holistic and intergenerational civic learning, the work of HPNSV was important especially in their efforts regarding local youth, in which the youth were encouraged to actively participate in the community and become critical and engaged “*boricuas*.” I believe as educators and researchers we should make a greater effort to integrate these rich civic lessons into the body of citizenship education.

I do not argue that praxis-based citizenship renounces modern liberal citizenship, which I earlier defined in this paper as an institutionalized form and legal status within a governmental authority. The two modes of citizenship—praxis-based citizenship and modern liberal citizenship (Tully, 2008)—are conceptually distinct, but in reality they overlap with each other. The point of this study is to restore the praxis-based citizenship that has long been missing in the discourse of citizenship. Whereas community activism is often classified as radical, unconventional, and inappropriate for the classroom, questioning who defines what is radical and why would be the starting point for embracing the integral civic lessons of community activism and eventually revolutionizing citizenship education. This study is one of the first steps towards achieving such a purpose, broadening the boundaries of citizenship education.

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## **Scales of active citizenship: New Zealand teachers' diverse perceptions and practices**

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### **Abstract**

The heightened focus on 'active' citizenship in New Zealand's current curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) mirrors a pattern observed in many nation's curricula in the past decade. The scale of active citizenship in this curriculum includes an expectation that students will participate in local and national communities but also extends to participation in 'global communities'. Recognising that citizenship is a hotly contested concept, how do teaching departments, as collective curriculum 'gatekeepers', understand, interpret and enact such curriculum requirements? This paper describes the perceptions and practices toward active citizenship of New Zealand social studies teachers (n=27) from four differing geographic and socio-economic secondary school communities. This study reveals significant differences in the scale of teachers' citizenship orientations with lower socio-economic school communities prioritising locally-focused citizenship and higher socio-economic communities favouring national and global orientations. Applying a Bourdieusian analysis, the author posits that these diverse perceptions and practices are socially and culturally constituted and reinforced by the shared doxa within school communities. Understanding these differing perceptions of 'active' citizenship is essential to gain more nuanced perspectives on how citizenship education is enacted and practised in classrooms.

**Keywords:** Active citizenship, curriculum, citizenship education, Bourdieu, doxa, scales of citizenship

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## Introduction

The explosion of sociological, political, and legal literature on citizenship in the past ten years or so has been paralleled by a growth in educational policies that seek to promote citizenship in schools (Brooks & Holford, 2009; Mutch, 2005b). Within such citizenship curricula, a further trend toward a more 'active' conception of citizenship has been observed (Kennedy, 2007; Kerr, 1999; Nelson & Kerr, 2006; Ross, 2008). While the reasons to explain this trend are multiple (see Brooks & Holford, 2009), Nelson and Kerr (2006) suggest that the impact of the relentless pace of change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is compelling officials and educators to pose serious questions about the nature of participation of citizens in civic and civil society and, in particular, how citizens participate in society. As a result, citizenship is increasingly defined "not just in relation to *status* (historically status in relation to the nation-state), but crucially in relation to *citizenship as an active practice*" (Nelson & Kerr, 2006, p. 7 their emphasis).

Moreover, in recent times, many argue that the scale of this 'active' citizenship has been challenged by an increasingly globalised world. In particular, the changing nature of information technology, efficient international travel, global marketing and financial systems, multinational corporations and global employment opportunities has broken down traditional national barriers (Barr, 2005). Such shifts have led to the "erosion of distinct boundaries dividing markets, states, civilizations, cultures, and not least of all the lifeworlds of different peoples" (Beck, 2007, p. 1). These changes present a number of key social, economic and environmental challenges related to the pace of movements of people, money, information and goods around the world. As a result, some suggest that contemporary scales of citizenship responsibility need to be broadened beyond the boundaries of the nation-state to more explicitly recognise diversity and the responsibilities of being part of a globalized world (Osler & Starkey, 2003, 2005). Osler and Starkey (2005) argue that viewing citizenship as a function of nationality is no longer adequate. Instead, they propose a vision of cosmopolitan citizens who, as well as local and national citizens, view themselves as citizens of a world community based on common human values and a sense of solidarity with others (p. 93).

The heightened focus on 'active' citizenship in New Zealand's current curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) mirrors a pattern observed in many nation's curricula in the past decade. Notions of active citizenship have been raised across the whole New Zealand Curriculum and are seen in the 'vision' of this document which aims to create young people who are "actively involved" and "participants in a range of life contexts" (p. 8). The most explicit call for active citizenship can be seen in the social sciences curriculum which states that students will "explore how societies work and how they themselves can participate and *take action* as critical, informed, and responsible citizens" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 17, my emphasis). The scale of active citizenship conveyed in this curriculum includes not only local and national communities, where students will be "connected . . . members of communities" and "contributors to the well-being of New Zealand" (p. 8), but also extends to a role of active participation as "international citizens" (p. 8) who are "part of a global community" (p. 39). These multiple scales of citizenship are perhaps summarised most concisely in the social sciences learning area which states that through the social sciences, "students develop the knowledge and skills to enable them to: better understand, participate in, and contribute to the local, national, and global communities in which they live and work" (p. 30). This curriculum therefore promotes a view of active citizenship that requires operation on a variety of scales.

Whilst the goals of active citizenship in this curriculum are explicit, just how do teachers understand, interpret and enact the nature and scale of this active citizenship? This is a particularly thorny question as it is well established that citizenship is an essentially

contested concept (Faulks, 2000; Kennedy, 2008; Lister, 2003), and that the ‘vocabularies of citizenship’ differ according to historical, social, political and cultural contexts (Kennedy, 2007; Lister, Smith, Middleton, & Cox, 2003). The concept of citizenship can reflect various and competing and conflicting philosophical political models (Frazer, 2008). In fact, the elusive nature of a citizenship definition is perhaps part of its almost “universal appeal” (Faulks, 2000, p. 1). As a concept, it can provide a degree of general agreement, as well as a cover for the more ambiguous aspects, as it has the potential to serve the aims of both the right and the left (Brooks & Holford, 2009; Faulks, 2000). Citizenship curricula therefore are socio-political constructs and cannot be divorced from the context in which they are developed and the ideology that drives them:

Such a curriculum is never value-free or neutral: it will always reflect current conceptions of the ‘good citizens’ as the ends toward which the curriculum is directed. (Kennedy, 2008, p. 486)

For this reason, it is very important to focus specifically on the “tangled contexts of the classroom” (Sim, 2010, p. 221) in order to gain further insights into how teachers interpret and operationalise this concept. Audrey Osler (2011) states that, “neither education policy, nor education practices can be understood merely through document analysis, since teachers are constantly interpreting official policies and adjusting them to their own professional practices in the classroom (p. 8). Thus, she argues, “teachers are engaged in a process of policy formation” (p. 8). In particular, and addressing Faulks’ (2000) criticism that much citizenship research fails to pay enough attention to the question of context, it is important to investigate how teachers’ perceptions and practices of active citizenship are developed within specific social, cultural and educational contexts such as a school community.

In this paper I examine how active citizenship is perceived and practised by New Zealand social studies teachers ( $n=27$ ) in four diverse school communities. In particular, I explore how teachers’ collective identities shape the *scale* of their citizenship dispositions by considering the spatiality of their focus (local/global). In light of a growing call for more cosmopolitan notions of active citizenship in a globalising world, it is increasingly important to understand the nature and geographies of citizenship responsibility (Massey, 2004). If, as Massey suggests, responsibility is derived from those relations through which identity is constructed, then it is of paramount importance to examine how teachers’ individual and collective identities inform their citizenship beliefs and practices.

I begin the paper with a review of the research that examines the interface between citizenship curriculum policies and teachers’ perceptions and practices. Data related to my research with New Zealand teachers are then introduced and analysed through a Bourdieusian framework. The paper concludes with a consideration of the implications of these diverse perceptions and practices of active citizenship.

### **Teachers’ multiple, contested conceptions of active citizenship**

In this section I review the limited research previously undertaken that examines how teachers perceive and enact citizenship curricula documents. From this research, it is apparent that teachers conceptualise citizenship in multiple ways both *across* and *within* cultural contexts (Kerr, Cleaver, Ireland, & Blenkinsop, 2003; Nelson & Kerr, 2006; Prior, 1999, 2005; Sim, 2010; Torney-Purta, Richardson, & Barber, 2005). These multiple conceptions held by teachers reflect the conflicting theoretical perspectives upon which citizenship is based, and the political and social context and differences in the conceptual understandings

held by individuals – for example, “individualist vs. collectivist, political rights vs. social rights, local vs. global” (Evans, 2006, p. 413).

At the outset, it is important to recognise that there is considerable ambiguity between what curriculum policies state, and what teachers do (Evans, 2006). Studies indicate that teachers’ perceptions of citizenship are not always consistent with the curricula documents of a nation. For example, Prior (1999, 2005), found that Australian teachers placed high value on tolerance, moral behaviour and social aspects of citizenship in contrast to a national curriculum which placed a strong emphasis on patriotism, national history and civic knowledge. In fact, teachers in his study rated patriotism as the least important characteristic of a good citizen, preferring an image of an inclusive and caring community. Prior (1999) suggests that these perceptions reflect teachers’ attempts to come to terms with growing multiculturalism, and uncertainty about national identity, and therefore expressed an impasse about “who we are and on what occasions and in what form we might express a sense of patriotism” (p.13). Similarly, Osler’s (2011) research with teachers in three contrasting schools in the north of England found that while the national curriculum placed considerable weight on both national identity and national political institutions, teachers preferred to focus on local dimensions of citizenship in their curriculum choices and pedagogies. She found they had a degree of ambivalence about teaching European citizenship and were more convinced of the importance of teaching issues of global citizenship concern.

Second, there is evidence that teacher practices do not always reflect their own conceptions of active citizenship. For example, Evans (2006) suggests that citizenship education teachers in Canada do not necessarily *do* what they *say*, and cites evidence of incongruity between their rhetoric and practice. His research suggests that teachers still revert to practices that favour learning content and facts (transmission), rather than the transformative approaches they may have spoken about. Research on New Zealand teachers’ conceptions of citizenship similarly found that teachers endorsed a rather uncritical notion of ‘citizenship as belonging’, overlooking more contested aspects of how citizenship is experienced (Milligan, Taylor, & Wood, 2011). Milligan et al. argue that such a conception had the effect of glossing over, or silencing tensions related to multiculturalism and conflicting models of citizenship which were apparent in the teachers’ discussions.

Third, research has also shown that teachers interpret the same curriculum documents differently. Jasmine Sim’s (2010) research with social studies teachers in Singapore found that teachers conceptualised and approached citizenship education in a number of different ways, “even in the context of a hegemonic state” (p. 241). Teachers in her study demonstrated four distinct approaches to citizenship education: expository and highly controlled, rationalistic and persuasive, interactive and participative, and constructive and experiential. Her research highlights the creativity and agency of teachers, and the significance of their personal identities and philosophies in interpreting citizenship curricula.

Finally, there is evidence that teachers view the more ‘active’ aspects of citizenship as problematic. For example, research in New Zealand has revealed that the social action is viewed by social studies teachers as one of the ‘hard bits’ of social studies (Keown, 1998; Keown, McGee, & Carstensen, 1997). Keown (1998) suggests that teachers are apprehensive about the contentious nature of values and social action teaching which opens up the potential for accusations of social engineering, indoctrination and community condemnation (see also Harrison, 1998; McGee, 1998). As a result, Taylor (2008) found that teachers’ practices of active citizenship in New Zealand schools remained focused on largely ‘safe’ and widely ‘acceptable’ forms of social action such as fund raising, writing letters to the newspaper, environmental actions such as tree planting, and promoting student leadership in schools.



Together these findings highlight the complex and contestable nature of citizenship education and the importance of finding out more about locally-derived expressions of both citizenship and agency of teachers within and beyond the 'official knowledge' (Apple, 1993) of the curriculum. They also alert us to the importance of recognising differences that can emerge as teachers interpret a citizenship curriculum document. Building on this prior scholarship, I was particularly interested in my research to see how teachers' collective identities, shaped within the context of their school departments and communities, informed their perceptions and practices of 'active' citizenship. This approach rested upon a critical social constructionist theoretical framework drawing primarily on Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) theory of practice.

### **Theoretical and methodological framework**

My interest in this research was to explore how teachers act as 'curricular-instructional gatekeepers' (Thornton, 2005) who control both the content of what is taught and how it is taught in the classroom. This concept of gatekeepers reinforces the multiple ways even a prescribed curriculum can be interpreted and enacted within a classroom (Osler, 2011; Sim, 2010). However, rather than viewing these teachers as autonomous agents, I wanted to examine how their perceptions and practices toward active citizenship were shaped in the context of their school communities. With this in mind, I turned to Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) theory of practice and his concepts of habitus, capital and field as a way to gain deeper understandings of how the practices of individuals and groups can be seen to be beyond the false antinomies of structure and agency. As an alternative, he proposes a social praxeology which sees human practice as a reflection of the interconnecting "conceptual triad of habitus, capital and field" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 25), which he describes in the formula he provides in his book *Distinction*:

$$[(\text{habitus}) (\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice. (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101)}$$

Through this formula, Bourdieu makes a connection between an individual's dispositions and actions (i.e. their practice), and the inseparable interplay of habitus, capital and field (Bourdieu, 1984).

Applying these ideas to a focus on teachers' perceptions and practices of active citizenship involved examining their practice within the social context of collective experiences of being part of a curriculum department in a school. Bourdieu's theory of practice alerts us to consider how the social, cultural and economic *capital* held by teachers, along with their *habitus*, or shared perceptions, appreciations and actions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), shapes their practice. Moreover, Bourdieu states that both capital and habitus are necessarily understood within a specific *field* (in this case the social studies/social sciences department at one school), and that within this field, certain capitals are awarded differing degrees of 'distinction'. Mutch (2006) suggests that viewing a school or department as a social field on a micro-level reveals insights into how similar processes may be operating in wider social contexts and related fields. Bourdieu's theories draw attention to how citizenship perceptions and actions reflect socially accumulated ways of operating that derive from shared, unquestioned beliefs or *doxa* (Bourdieu, 2000).

### **Methods, sample and participants**

This study reports on data collected with teachers from social studies/science departments from four purposively selected New Zealand high schools between late 2008 and the end of 2009. Social studies, a compulsory, integrated curriculum area for students in years 1-10 (ages 5-15), has historically been the primary vehicle in New Zealand for delivering citizenship education (Archer & Openshaw, 1992; Barr, 1998; Mutch, 2005a, 2005b;

Openshaw, 2004). My research in this paper focuses on the social studies curriculum and the concept of ‘social action’ (the term most widely used to convey active citizenship in this curriculum) and how social studies teachers perceived and enacted this idea. My unit of analysis was the social sciences department.<sup>1</sup> Findings related to their students’ perceptions and practices are not reported in this paper (see, Wood 2010, 2011). A multiple site approach was used in order to generate comparative data which held the potential to highlight the “contextual sensitivity” (Silverman, 2006, p. 17) of a concept such as active citizenship, recognising that such a concept is likely to have a variety of meanings in different contexts.

The selection of secondary schools was made on the grounds of two criteria: first, that they represented a *diversity of socio-economic and geographic indicators*. To achieve this, I relied on the decile rating system used by the Ministry of Education to provide equitable funding for New Zealand schools. A school’s decile rating indicates the extent to which a school draws its students from a low socio-economic community; a decile 1 represents the lowest 10% of socio-economic communities and a decile 10 the highest 10% of socio-economic communities. Like Marsh, O’Toole, and Jones (2007), I assumed that these school sites were ‘classed’, or in Bourdieu’s (1986) terms, ‘institutional embodiments of fields’, and therefore provided opportunities to explore situated expressions of habitus and social, cultural and economic capital. Second, my purposive selection focused on schools that demonstrated a prior interest in, or familiarity with, ‘*social action*’ and/or *community engagement* either in their social studies programmes or wider school programmes. This focus was to ensure that teachers in these schools had an interest in active citizenship and some experience in implementing this (Table 1). Pseudonyms have been used to maintain the anonymity of these schools, the participants and their geographic locations.

**Table 1: Summary of selected schools and teacher participants**

College	Decile	Nature of high school	Geographic location	Social studies teachers		Total no. of teachers
				Male	Female	
<b>A</b>	6	State co-ed	South Island city	3	4	7
<b>B</b>	1	State co-ed	North Island city	3	8	11
			Suburban			
<b>C</b>	4	State co-ed	South Island	2	1	3
			Rural town			
<b>D</b>	8	State Girls’	North Island	0	6	6
			Central city			
<b>Total</b>				<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>

Data collection involved semi-structured focus group interviews with all social studies teachers in the schools. Teachers were invited to opt in to the study and, of the 28 invited, one declined. The focus group discussion followed the completion (in pairs) of a PMI table about what teachers viewed as ‘Positive’, ‘Minus/negative’, and ‘Interesting’ about active citizenship in their school.

<sup>1</sup>In New Zealand high schools, most social studies teachers teach both junior social studies (Years 9 and 10) as well as a senior social science subject such as history, geography or economics (Years 11-13). A smaller number teach senior social studies (Years 11-13). These teachers all belong to the social sciences department/faculty. Departmental involvement includes planning shared classroom programmes, assessments, field trips, competitions, fundraising and general philosophical approaches.

This task-based activity was designed to stimulate reflection, and discussion, and to generate more easily comparable data before teachers participated in a whole group discussion (Punch, 2002). Focus groups were an important way to gain a sense of the collective beliefs – or doxa – that were shared by members of a school social studies department. Focus groups ranged in size from three to eleven teachers, reflecting the varying sizes of the social science departments (for example, College C only had three teachers in the social science department). Through these discussions, I attempted to get a sense of teachers’ ‘cultural story’ (Silverman, 2006), or the way they drew from their social and cultural contexts to develop their understandings of active citizenship. Data collection also included observations of social studies lessons in each school, and analysis of school data (websites, prospectus and curriculum planning documents) related to practices of active citizenship.

### Teacher talk: Scales of ‘active’ citizenship

In this section, I compare the perceptions and practices of social science departments in each of the four schools. All schools provided a range of school-wide opportunities for active citizenship for their students (see Table 2). The examples provided in Table 2 include both traditional conceptions of citizenship (such as the school council) as well as broader conceptions of citizenship that include opportunities for expressions of cultural identity, rights and connections of young people (Harris, Wyn, & Younes, 2007). These opportunities exemplify the facilitating conditions which Ireland, Kerr, Lopes, Nelson and Cleaver (2006) suggest contribute to more active conceptions of citizenship in the school setting.

**Table 2: Some opportunities for active citizenship provided by schools in 2009**

Participation opportunities offered by Colleges	A	B	C	D
Active environmental group	■		■	■
School Council with elected students	■	■	■	■
Cultural performance groups	■	■	■	■
Support for World Vision’s 40 Hour Famine	■	■	■	■
Support group for gay and lesbian youth	■		■	
Student activism group				■
Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD)	■		■	
Sporting groups	■	■	■	■
Amnesty International group	■		■	
Human Rights group			■	

*Sources of information:* School websites, teachers and field notes.

Yet, while all schools had many similar opportunities for active citizenship, it was apparent to me that there were wide differences between these four schools. One key way these differences could be seen was in the scale of their spatial orientations toward active citizenship (local/global). In the following section, I describe how these differences were articulated by groups of teachers within social studies departments.

### Local and communitarian orientations

Two schools (Colleges B and C) conveyed an orientation toward active citizenship that placed a high value on local and community-focused issues, relationships and actions. There were, however, some significant differences between these two schools which are worth exploring in greater detail.

*College B* is a co-educational high school set in a working class, low socio-economic suburb (decile 1) in a large New Zealand city. Students at this school were predominantly Pacific Nations in origin (69%), Māori (19%) and Asian (7%). This ethnic composition reflects migration to this suburban area from primarily Pacific Nations (such as Samoa, Tokelau, Cook Islands and Niue), along with rural-urban Māori migration and refugee settlements, in the past 40 years.

The teachers at *College B* conceptualised active citizenship primarily as a way of encouraging participation and strengthening relationships with the local community. For example, they described the purpose of social action was for “coming together,” “community building” and “creating relationships with others.” Others affirmed that in taking social action, “a sense of positive community needs to be paramount,” to “make students feel part of society” and to be “fully involved.” The Māori language teacher saw social action as “whanaungatanga”<sup>2</sup> which she defined as “building community and then participating in it” (Teacher B2). She described how active citizenship also involved preserving culture, such as *Te Reo* (the Māori language), *te taiao* (the environment) and *tikanga* (cultural traditions).

This school prioritised the celebration and preservation of the cultural traditions of their student population through musical, performative and linguistic opportunities. *College B*’s language acquisition programme (for Pacific languages and *Te Reo*, the Māori language) was awarded a Human Rights award in recognition of the rarity of such a commitment in New Zealand secondary schools and the leadership this school demonstrated (School website, 2009). These commitments had strong community links with local people actively involved in supporting cultural and linguistic initiatives within the school.

Opportunities for active citizenship within the social studies programmes were, however, less common. Teachers referred to a small number of one-off events (such as Human Rights Day) and a couple of units that had employed a social action approach (such as a survey of local businesses). They endorsed the community service approach taken by many Pacific Island churches in their community, yet were also cautious about how social action “could provoke angry responses or greater resistance” as “so it could have the effect of destabilising relationships as opposed to the positive outcomes of strengthening” (Teacher B2). This approach has similarities to Rosaldo’s (1989) conception of ‘cultural citizenship’. Advocates within this tradition promote the incorporation of rights, perspectives and experiences of all cultural groups, and especially those previously marginalised in society.

While teachers from *College C*, rarely referred to cultural citizenship conceptions, they also had a strong community focus to their perceptions and practices of active citizenship. *College C* is a decile 4, co-ed high school based in a small rural town in the South Island. Students at *College C* predominately came from New Zealand European backgrounds and approximately 20% were Māori. A commitment to develop “well rounded citizens making a positive contribution to the community” is espoused in the School Prospectus (2010) and more than 15 service groups are active in the school (School Prospectus, 2010) (see Table 2).

Social studies teachers at *College C* had a strong tradition of social action within their social studies programmes. In fact, as a social studies department a number of years earlier, they had initiated a Community Issues class in response to what they saw as a very passive previous social studies curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1997) which focused only on *social decision-making* and not *social action* (Field notes, March, 2009).

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<sup>2</sup> Whanaungatanga (Māori) conveys a sense of whānau, family relationships gained through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging.

Teachers referred to this Community Issues class as “social studies with boots on” as it enabled their students to get “more real” by engaging with community issues and talking to people in the community (Field notes, April, 2009). This Community Issues class now was a compulsory experience for all Year 10 students in the school (age 14-15 years). The focus of this class was on a student-selected community issue and in recent years, students had investigated issues such as 1080 poison,<sup>3</sup> Didymo,<sup>4</sup> the arrival of McDonalds, local government structures, and the closure of the local swimming pool. Students would research this issue, conduct a local survey and then present the findings to the community. Local business and advocacy groups had become involved in the programme and often lobbied the school to undertake their issue of concern. For example, during my research a group representing Transition Towns presented ideas to the Community Issues class to encourage them to focus on issues of local environmental sustainability.

Teachers saw social action as an empowering way to connect their students with the immediate community:

Well, for me, it is making the learners more connected to the community that they're in and that's not something that just happens in the four walls within which you study. So if other people come into your classroom or you go out and deliver your thoughts to other people, you know, when that happens, it's quite empowering for them to feel that they've been listened to. (Teacher C1)

They described the strength of the Community Issues class was how it allowed students to interact with the community and pose questions about local issues. Similar to Zipin and Reid's (2008) idea of ‘making community curricular’, these teachers advocated for the community to form the centre of citizenship curriculum approaches, although Teacher C1 teacher felt that these “little pieces [of social action] that we've been trying to infuse into our programmes” could still be taken “to the next layer”.

### **Global and cosmopolitan orientations toward active citizenship**

*College A* is a decile 6, co-educational state high school established in a suburban area of a regional city in the South Island. Students were predominantly from New Zealand European backgrounds (83%), with a smaller number of Māori (14%) and Asian (3%) students. The school has an active philosophy of student leadership and, in 2009, there was a student-led Environmental Committee, lobby groups such as Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD) and Amnesty International, as well as student-led groups that raised funds for the World Vision 40 Hour Famine and child cancer (CanTeen) (see Table 2).

The teachers' conceptions of social action centred on “doing something” in response to their social studies learning, that created ways to “connect with the outside world”. They described how they worked to make social action relevant, authentic and engaging to students. In response, they had put in place a number of approaches to develop active, global, cosmopolitan citizens. For example, in social studies they had units focusing on global citizenship, child labour, war and terrorism. Within these units, the social studies teachers provided a number of opportunities for their students to “take action”. This included, for example, selling friendship bracelets to raise money for Voluntary Services Abroad (VSA), collecting food for local food banks, holding an End Poverty conscious-raising school assembly, and writing submissions to the Council on local issues.

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<sup>3</sup> 1080 is a controversial poison used extensively in New Zealand to control pests such as possums and stoats.

<sup>4</sup> Didymo, a fresh water alga, is an introduced water-borne species that causes extensive destruction of waterways.

Teacher A1, the Head of Department, had also initiated a field trip to a developing country for social studies students to gain international exposure and take social action by contributing to humanitarian work in this country. Further international trips were being organised for social studies students in future years which were strongly supported by students and their parents. Teacher A1 was a passionate advocate for global issues and encouraged social responsibility from her students. I heard her say to her classes on a number of occasions:

Your grades in social studies are important, and I will do everything I can to help you get the best grades possible. But what counts to me more than anything else is that you will contact me in years to come and tell me what you have done for others. (Field notes, October, 2008, March 2009)

Having trialled a number of 'social action' approaches in their social studies programme, this department was consolidating their approaches and reflected that "if we do [social action] regularly it becomes the norm and therefore we are more comfortable" (Teacher A3).

The final school, *College D* also had a strong global focus, but also explored opportunities for local and national active citizenship. College D is a decile 8, state, single-sex girls' school located in a central North Island city. Students with a diverse range of cultural backgrounds attended the school and only 48% of students were of New Zealand European origins. The school was an Enviroschool and had an active student council. In 2009 there was a student activist group, a student-led environmental group, and a student-led 40 Hour Famine Committee (Table 2).

Social studies teachers at College D described a number of ways in which they provided opportunities for social action in their programmes and practices. For example, teachers described how students were active in writing submissions to the Council. This was one way to ensure students knew they had a real audience:

And even if they're not particularly able in the skill of structuring an essay, it's still empowering for them to think, well they can still be heard. Cos some of them will never be particularly strong writers, but they still could be hounding the Council for years... (Teacher D1)

Teachers described how exposing their students to social action could enable them to "go out on their own" later in life, as "isn't the whole idea of [the social action process] that we're making more active, you know, future citizens, that will be greater participants in our society?" (Teacher D3)

Teachers at College D, reflecting on the scale of their social action, discussed how they "do try and cover a range of different places in the world at the moment" as the focus of their learning. For example, they taught a number of global social issues in their social studies programme including human rights, child labour, and environmental sustainability. Teachers referred to the cultural diversity of their students as another reason for incorporating global perspectives in their social studies programmes:

D3: Well, I teach a student in Year 9 whose father was killed by the Taliban. And she's come here from Afghanistan. So it's closer than you think.

D4: There's another [student] in year 11.

D1: Well she's only recently done a speech about that so I think that students are probably more aware of global issues than you might think.

At Year 11, the social studies programme involved a specific focus on water conservation at global, national and local levels as well as auditing water flows in their school. This also involved a field trip to a local stream where students examined the impact of humans and collected rubbish. The unit culminated in student-led social action to fundraise for more water tanks for their school to conserve water. Teacher D3 described how this active citizenship programme had connected students to their communities, and “also increases their awareness that they’re part of the community and they can effect change”. Teacher D2 went on to question “but do we need to make sure we cover a range of scales in terms of our social action? That’s something we need to think about. Cos we have been looking locally and nationally but do we need to look at globally?”

### Discussion

Active citizenship does not happen in a social vacuum. The patterns of active citizenship discussed in this paper reveal that while teachers held multiple and varying conceptions and practices of social action *between* the four school sites, they also held surprisingly high levels of agreement *within* school sites. These differences between school sites were manifested in the nature of active citizenship perceptions and practices and, in particular, in the scale of teachers’ spatial orientation toward active citizenship. In this discussion, I will review these findings, and, through Bourdieu’s (1977/1990) concepts of capital, habitus and field, propose that the doxa, or sets of unquestioned shared beliefs held by a school department, can be seen to be socially and culturally constituted within school communities. This may provide insights into how similar processes may be operating in wider social contexts and related fields (Mutch, 2006).

An analysis of the *spatial orientation* of social action across the four schools reveals that teachers from Colleges A and D had more of a ‘global’ focus to their conceptions and practices of social action, and teachers from Colleges B and C had more of a ‘local’ or community focus. Teachers from College A had particularly global and cosmopolitan participatory dispositions with a sense of citizenship that was not limited to that of the nation (Osler & Starkey, 2005). This included an educational focus on many global citizenship issues as well as providing opportunities for students to raise money for international organisations, and, for some students to participate in social action in a developing country. College D had a similar focus on global issues such as human rights/child labour. Their unit on water conservation was examined at global, national and local levels, highlighting the importance they placed on understanding the geographies of active citizenship responsibility between these scales.

In contrast, College C’s Community Issues class had a strong local issues focus that aimed to build links between the school and groups and individuals in the community. For College B, a cultural and community focus of active citizenship centred on belonging to, and participating in, the local community (conveyed by the Māori concept *whanaungatanga*). Employing what could be described as a cultural citizenship (Rosaldo, 1989) approach, their perceptions and practices emphasised the flexible social membership, the limitations of citizenship merely as rights, and issues of identity and difference— aspects which Isin and Turner (2007) describe of as characteristic of an expanded and deepened notion of citizenship in recent times.

Teachers across all four schools used the same curriculum documents, yet arrived at a set of agreed perceptions and practices that were, at times, markedly different. The local-global spatial orientation I have noted between the schools also reflects the relative socio-economic position of schools, with the lower decile schools (B and C) exhibiting a prevailing local/community focus, and higher decile schools (A and D) more of a global awareness. How can we explain how these groups of teachers within social studies departments

developed shared understandings that in many ways reflected the social field of their school communities?

Bourdieu's concept of *doxa* is a useful analytical or 'thinking tool' to help explain this. Bourdieu (2000) refers to *doxa* as "a set of fundamental beliefs which does not even need to be asserted in the form of an explicit, self-conscious dogma" (p. 16). Deer (2008) explains that these are "pre-reflexive, shared but unquestioned opinions and perceptions mediated by relatively autonomous social microcosms (fields) that determine 'natural' practice and attitudes *via* the internalised 'sense of limits' and habitus of the social agents in the field" (p. 120). Teachers in each of these schools shared an unquestioned or *doxic* way of thinking about active citizenship.

Bourdieu's (2000) theorising of *doxa* also illuminates how the nature of such shared beliefs can emerge within specific social fields. He proposes that *doxa* are articulated around the legitimisation and accumulation of social, cultural, economic and symbolic capitals. These field-specific sets of beliefs inform the shared habitus of those operating in the field (Deer, 2008), thus reinforcing and reproducing the habitus and capital of a social field (Bourdieu, 2000). In this study, the more globally-oriented schools (A and D) also represented communities that had access to greater levels of wealth (seen in their decile rankings – 6 and 8 respectively). Students at these schools were therefore more likely to have access to economic capital that would enable them, for example, to attend an international exposure trip such as the one held at College A. Higher levels of social and cultural capital in these two communities also were likely to contribute to a greater awareness of global issues, facilitated through exposure to wide social networks, global cultural capital, and information (Buckingham, 2000).

Massey (2004) proposes that political commitments and responsibilities are derived from relations through which identity is constructed. For the teachers in this study, their individual and collective identities were likely to be shaped by their own cultural, social and economic capital, but also their relationships with the schooling community. For example, teachers at College B were conscious of their conservative local community and were anxious to not let social action destabilise community relationships. This appeared to shape the nature of the cultural citizenship which the school practised that was strongly supported by community members. Similarly, the presence of refugee students at College D reinforced the teachers' attention to global issues in their social studies programmes as they believed students were "more aware of global issues than you think". In both these examples, relationships between teachers and members of their school community were shaping the scale of citizenship action that they enacted.

### **Concluding remarks and further considerations**

The findings discussed here highlight the significance that teachers' shared identities within school departments and communities have on the way a malleable concept such as active citizenship is conceptualised and taught. I have suggested that Bourdieu's (2000) concept of *doxa* helps to explain the unstated, collective, taken-for-granted agreement shared by the teachers in each school (see also Osler, 2011 for similar findings). Moreover, viewing *doxa* as a reflection of the social, cultural and economic capital and habitus shared by members of a social field (in this case, a school department), provides a useful thinking tool to account for the diverse actions and practices of these social groups.

This Bourdieusian analysis does raise further questions, especially when we consider the *symbolic capital* associated with differing forms of active citizenship. Bourdieu (1986) suggests that schools are artefacts of the dominant social and cultural faction which award certain forms of capital with greater status or distinction than others – he refers to these forms



of capitals as holding *symbolic capital*. Could it be that the global, cosmopolitan perceptions and practices of teachers from the wealthier school communities also held greater levels of symbolic capital associated with active citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than lower socio-economic communities?

Given the prevailing neoliberal frameworks in which this curriculum is embedded (see Wood, 2009), and the nature of global economic capital which young people are intended to access through such a curriculum (Codd, 2005), it is likely that teaching strategies that contribute to higher levels of 'global' knowledge and 'global' participation (especially economic and employability) are valued highly. For this reason, it is possible to speculate that social, cultural and economic capital that favours global orientations of active citizenship is likely to hold greater symbolic capital within an educational field than local orientations. Osler's (2011) research in this area is sobering. She found that teachers of lower-attaining students chose to focus exclusively on local citizenship issues and topics, whereas, higher-attaining students were offered a more 'cosmopolitan' approach to their citizenship education. She concludes that enabling only higher-attaining students to extend their horizons "may result in an approach where cosmopolitanism is seen as the preserve of elites" (p. 15).

If this is the case, then this has significant implications for the local-oriented, lower decile schools (Colleges B and C) in particular. By focusing on community issues and local action, were teachers possibly restricting their students' access to powerful global capital that is held in the hands of globally-oriented elites? If so, this would render these young people unable to access the symbolic (and associated economic, cultural and social) capital associated with global economies.

Yet, did locally-oriented perceptions and practices of active citizenship necessarily imply less transformative and 'minimal' (Kerr, 1999) approaches to active citizenship? Kerr (1999) proposes that minimal interpretations of citizenship are largely content-led and knowledge-based, whereas maximal forms of citizenship aim to develop values, skills and dispositions toward citizenship. While College B and C focussed almost exclusively on local issues and actions, they also demonstrated a commitment to transformative and social-justice oriented (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) dimensions of active citizenship. The Community Issues class exemplified active citizenship that was locally oriented yet, had a strong level of critique and social transformative potential embedded within its approach (Zipin & Reid, 2008). Similarly, the cultural citizenship approaches of College B also held potential to address issues of representation, identity and engagement of otherwise marginalised citizens within a nation (Rosaldo, 1989). While global citizenship practices and perceptions may favour elite school communities, is it possible that localised foci could offer more chances to be transformative and authentic? A number of researchers argue that political and social issues take on greater meaning for young people when interpreted through local experiences, and that young people have greater levels of insight, critique, and agency over issues which are part of their everyday, lived experiences (Gruenewald, 2003; Harris & Wynn, 2009; Weller, 2007; Zipin & Reid, 2008).

These findings highlight the complexity of the role that teachers hold as gatekeepers to the experience of active citizenship education. While curriculum documents convey a growing expectation for students to be active citizens in local, national and also global communities, teachers are left grappling with just what this means. In particular, there are challenges relating to how to uphold the integrity of globally-focussed ideas whilst remaining committed to authentic relationships with local school communities. If, as this research suggests, we see teachers' perceptions and practices as consciously or unconsciously mirroring the school community in which they operate, then questions are raised about how teachers develop and imagine allegiances to alternative communities. A further challenge centres on how to ensure that the nature and scale of active citizenship will provide

opportunities for maximal and social justice-oriented citizenship. More attention to these issues is essential if we are to support teachers, as well as young active citizens, with the ability to negotiate the complexity and scale of citizenship commitments within local, national and global arenas.

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## **Becoming citizens through school experience: A case study of democracy in practice**

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### **Abstract**

This paper offers a critique of current definitions of active citizenship and argues that children and young people need to be seen as citizens within their school communities and not just citizens of the future. Pedagogy and school decision-making should reflect the aims of active citizenship and thus engage children and young people as active participants within their school communities. This requires a radical change to the way in which many schools are currently structured and organised. A case study of a small democratic school is used as an illustration of an exemplary model of education for active citizenship. This school does not offer citizenship as a curriculum subject nor explicitly aim for active citizenship – and yet active citizenship is integral to its ethos, values, structures, processes and pedagogy. Throughout the paper, it is suggested that democratic schooling is not just one way – but the best way – of providing education for active citizenship.

**Keywords:** Democratic education, active citizenship, experiential learning, critical thinking, citizenship schools

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## Introduction

In the summer of 2011, David Cameron, British Prime Minister announced that he wanted to “mend our broken society” following years of “slow motion moral collapse”. This was in the aftermath of the extensive riots in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool and other towns across Britain. Cameron’s focus was on re-building society, to create a culture of “us” rather than “them and us”, to restore a sense of moral values to alienated and angry young people. Schools, as well as his new National Citizen Service for 16 year olds, were crucial within this agenda (Cameron, 15 August 2011).

Concern with young people’s attachment to and alienation from society is not new. Britain has been described as having a ‘democratic deficit’ for several years (Osler and Starkey, 2006, Crick, 2010). Voting levels have declined amongst the whole population but amongst young people in particular. Levels of ‘anti-social behaviour’ have been highlighted as a major concern for governments and communities. It is hard to pinpoint the exact date that these concerns started; some even argue that there were problems with alienation and anti-social behaviour as far back as Ancient Greece (Pasoula, 2000). What is certain, however, is that 1988 was a “vintage year” in terms of the development of the modern citizenship agenda (Deem, Brehony and Heath, 1995). This year marked the first time that a government minister (Douglas Hurd) used the phrase “active citizen” (Deem et al., 1995). It is also the year that citizenship was introduced as a cross-curricula subject on the new National Curriculum. At a similar time, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) stated that children had the right to influence the decisions which affected them. Later, the Every Child Matters (2003) policy explicitly aimed for every child to have the opportunity for “making a positive contribution: being involved with the community and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour” (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). These all contributed to the increasing profile of the citizenship agenda within British schools.

This paper will use *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools 1998* (‘The Crick Report’) as a watershed in the way in which citizenship education was perceived and delivered within British schools. This report, agreed by an Advisory Group of people from different political persuasions and professional backgrounds, was adopted by a New Labour government and became a cornerstone of education policy. By 2002, citizenship had become a statutory part of the secondary National Curriculum, and has remained so for ten years. The aim of the report’s authors – to change political culture – is clearly defined:

We aim at no less than a change in the political culture of this country both nationally and locally: for people to think of themselves as active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life and with the critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting; to build on and to extend radically to young people the best in existing traditions of community involvement and public service, and to make them individually confident in finding new forms of involvement and action among themselves (QCA, 1998 p 7-8).

The Crick Report uses the phrase “active citizens” or “active citizenship” on twenty two occasions, and there is no doubt that this was deliberate (Crick, 2010). *Active* citizenship is different from citizenship, and indeed, from passive citizenship. This paper will specifically focus on the role of schools in the development of active citizens, and in particular, it will consider *how* children and young people might be best able to learn to be active citizens. In order to do this, debates about the meaning of the terminology will be explored, and the usage of specific terms within this paper clearly explained.

This paper will argue that schools have a key role to play in supporting the development of active citizenship. It will use one school as a case study to illustrate how

active citizenship can be developed as part of the educational process. This is a small democratic school based in Devon, England. Through exploring this school, it will be argued that democratic schooling is not just one way, but the best way, of effectively offering education for active citizenship. This requires a change in values, accompanied by structural change, in the way that many mainstream schools are currently organised.

### **What is Active Citizenship?**

What does the phrase ‘active citizenship’ mean? Does it mean that people are actively involved in their communities, as school governors, as volunteers, as members of Neighbourhood Watch? Does it mean that people are expected to take an active role in political processes, by for example, voting, sitting on juries, standing for election? Does it mean that citizens get involved in Cameron’s ‘Big Society’ by running schools and hospitals or getting involved in local decision-making?

Active citizenship is a contested term (Lawson, 2001, Kennedy, 2007, Mayo and Annette, 2010). There is no single definition. It certainly implies a role where one is *actively* involved in community and political life but what does this mean exactly? Is it synonymous with being a ‘good’ citizen or indeed, a ‘good person’? All of the examples in the above paragraph are likely to be classified as ‘good citizenship’ but they also suggest a degree of compliance to existing political structures and processes. Would the Occupy London supporters who illegally camped outside St Paul’s Cathedral in protest at global capitalism be classified as active citizens? Would a Quaker who risks getting sent to prison for withholding taxes which pay for armaments be an active citizen? Would young people who decide not to vote but join several single-issue protest groups be active citizens?

Ken Osborne (2005) makes the distinction between being a ‘good person’ and a ‘good citizen’, arguing that citizenship demands an investment in making a better society rather than a mere focus on individual behaviours. Schools, he argues, are often effective in helping students to become good people, but less effective in terms of encouraging their engagement with the wider society. Good citizenship, for him, “requires a willingness and an ability to play an active and morally principled part in the public life of one’s society” (Osborne, 2005 p 13). But what does this active part in public life really mean? Take the examples of the Suffragettes, Gandhi, Nelson Mandela or the student protestors at Tiananmen Square in China. These were all passionate, inspiring people with a deep commitment to developing a better society. With the benefit of hindsight, we might argue that they are all shining examples of good citizenship. At the time, however, many of them were publicly vilified and imprisoned by those in authority – and certainly not seen as good citizens. It seems important, therefore, to remove the concept of citizenship from the potentially loaded terminology of being ‘good’.

Henry Giroux (2005) argues that education for good citizenship is often seen in terms of teaching young people to fit in with society and conform to societal norms. For him, active citizenship is different because it does not imply an adherence with the status quo. Rather, he argues that the notion of citizenship is in itself a radical term which “must be removed from forms of patriotism designed to subordinate citizens to the narrow imperatives of the state” (Giroux, 2005 p 6). From this perspective, the Suffragettes, Ghandi, Mandela, protestors outside St Paul’s, Quakers who withhold taxes and young people who choose not to vote could all be classified as active citizens – even if they are breaking the laws of the state. The issue is about their engagement with political life and not about conforming to current political agendas. They might be ‘active citizens’ without necessarily fitting in with society as ‘good citizens’. For Giroux at least, citizenship entails a degree of criticality rather than mere conformity.



In Britain, the Citizenship Foundation has been highly influential in terms of the development of citizenship education in schools. They have taken a clear stance on whether active citizenship and good citizenship are the same by arguing that:

Citizenship education is about enabling people to make their own decisions and to take responsibility for their own lives and their communities. It *is not* about trying to fit everyone into the same mould, or about creating 'model' or 'good' citizens (Citizenship Foundation, 2012, emphasis in original).

The Crick Report used the phrase 'good citizen' or 'good citizenship' on eight occasions. Some of these are in the same sentence as 'active citizen', and at other points, the phrases appear to be used interchangeably. Neither term is explicitly defined and therefore it is easy for the reader to assume that they mean the same thing. In other work, however, Crick has been clear that they are different:

It seems to me elementary that there is a difference between being a good citizen and being an active citizen (Crick, 2000). One can be a good citizen in an autocratic state. One can also be only a good citizen in a democratic state, that is one can obey the law, pay taxes, drive carefully and behave oneself socially ... It is this minimalist approach to citizenship that made me, thirty years ago, voice scepticism about an old tradition of citizenship education as Civics which stressed the primacy of 'the rule' of law and learning about the constitution. For citizenship surely involves public discussion of whether laws work badly or are unjust and how they can be changed (Crick, 2007 p 243).

This paper is based on the premise that education for active citizenship has an agenda which is about encouraging young people to engage with society and with political processes. It is not about encouraging young people to unthinkingly follow the guidance of others, but rather, to actively engage in critical thinking about their own values, attitudes and behaviours. It is about supporting young people to develop the skills and confidence to make their own informed decisions. It is assumed that this is not just about teaching young people to respect the laws as they are set out, to adhere to a specific moral code or to behave in ways which are deemed by others as appropriate.

Active citizenship also implies an investment in community, in whatever ways that might be defined (geographical, social or political). The traditional liberal individualism approach to citizenship is predicated on a rights-based agenda where freedom is attached to moral and legal *rights* of individuals to assert their own interests. This perspective does not fit with active citizenship. Active citizens cannot simply claim their rights and then withdraw from community (Lawson, 2001). Active citizenship demands engagement with others. It fits better with a communitarian approach to citizenship in which rights are seen in tandem with *responsibilities*. From this perspective, individuals cannot use their rights as a trump card. They accept that the exercising of their own rights has an impact on others, and that they have a responsibility to take the needs of others into account when making decisions about their own values, attitudes and behaviours. Active citizens have an investment in the community in which they operate. If everyone within the community is to be an active citizen, then a genuine sense of belongingness becomes crucial (Osler and Starkey, 2005).

### **How is citizenship learnt?**

In discussing the role that schools might play in the development of active citizens, it is vital to discuss not only the definition of citizenship, but also the central issue of how it might most effectively be learnt. This is a pertinent issue, in part, because research has highlighted a major "implementation gap" between policy and practice (Cleaver and Nelson,

2006). Issues of pedagogy are of particular relevance here, arguably more so than for any other subject on the school curriculum – and herein hides an issue. Should citizenship be seen as a curriculum subject or is it different from this? And if it is a ‘subject’, how should it be taught?

The Crick Report states that “effective education for citizenship” needs to develop *knowledge, skills and values* in three interrelated areas; *social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy*. It argues that these are “mutually dependent on each other, but each needing a somewhat different place and treatment in the curriculum” (QCA, 1998 p 11). It also argues that it is as “intellectually demanding and as capable as any other subject of being taught and assessed at any level” (QCA, 1998 p 8). The language here clearly lends itself to citizenship being taught as a discrete curriculum subject, assessed in nationally recognised tests in the same way as any other subject. This is indeed what has happened in most schools (Cleaver and Nelson, 2006). The ‘knowledge’ aspect of citizenship has been taught and then tested. In addition to this, many schools have introduced schemes which encourage community volunteering by young people. These have attempted to develop skills and values. Alongside these initiatives, some schools have attempted to develop a whole-school approach to citizenship, including developing strong school councils and other ‘pupil voice’ initiatives (Davies, Williams and Yamashita, 2005a). These have all attempted to enable young people to develop political literacy.

A key question to address at this point is that of how children and young people learn. For many years, educationalists have argued that *teaching* and *learning* are two distinct activities (Rogers and Freiberg, 1994, Alexander and Potter, 2005, Apple and Beane, 1999, Freire, 1970, Neill, 1962). A student can be taught to pass a test. They can absorb information and facts without necessarily making meaning from them. The facts can become divorced from the meaning (Cleaver and Nelson, 2006). In the case of citizenship, this is not useful learning. The Crick Report itself states the importance of knowledge, skills and values. How can skills be developed? How are values challenged? One thing is certain – this requires deep learning on the part of the student (Marton and Saljo, 1976). Surface learning for the purpose of passing an exam is not sufficient if the aim of developing active citizens is to be achieved. Now, there is no simple way of assessing the examples given in the previous paragraph. If citizenship is a discrete curriculum subject, will students engage in deep learning about values? They might – but not necessarily. If they engage in community volunteering, will they develop the skills needed to be active citizens? Possibly - but only if the project is designed in such a way as to enable this. Are school councils automatically linked to political literacy? No, some are extremely tokenistic and actively work against genuine political involvement (Garratt and Piper, 2008, Maitles and Deuchar, 2006) – but some are excellent and undeniably support young people in developing their skills, values and knowledge (Davies et al., 2005a). The deciding factor in all these cases is not what is offered as such, but how it is organised and the values which underpin this work.

This paper argues that the importance of the value-base of staff within schools which want to develop active citizenship cannot be underestimated. This is not just in terms of having clear values about the purpose of citizenship education, but also about the way in which they see children and young people. An example is given by Ponder and Lewis-Ferrell (2009) of a primary school project in which children collectively agreed upon an issue which concerned them and then worked together to make a local impact in relation to this concern. The staff showed that they had a high level of trust in the children’s abilities. They believed that they could make good decisions. They valued their input. They believed in the importance of the project being genuinely child-led. This links with a key debate in the field of citizenship education. This relates to whether children and young people are seen as citizens now, or whether the purpose of citizenship education is to develop young people so that they can be active citizens as adults (Alderson, 2000). In short, are they citizens or

citizens-in-waiting (Maitles and Gilchrist, 2006)? This is far more than a semantic distinction, as it underpins the ethos and values behind citizenship education. If they are the latter, then the job of citizenship education is to make sure that they are ready, when the time comes, to take on their responsibilities as an active citizen. This is quite different from if they are seen as the former – as citizens – which means that they take on some of these rights and responsibilities as of now. In the case described above, the staff clearly believed that the children could be treated as citizens now. Coffield and Williamson believe that this is a vital part of effective citizenship education:

... learning about citizenship is not simply a matter of pursuing a course of study. It is an experience and a practice that changes our identities; we become citizens when we are treated and valued as citizens (Coffield and Williamson, 2011 p 60).

If children and young people are seen as citizens – rather than citizens-in-waiting – then it is hard to see a better way to learn about active citizenship than experiential learning. In fact, it is hard to imagine that *active* citizenship can be learnt in any other way. Active citizenship is not about facts and information. It is about criticality, about values, about the balance between rights and responsibilities, about community and belongingness. How can this be taught? Surely it has to be learnt? Again, the distinction between teaching and learning is important. This is a point on which Crick himself agrees. In 2007, he wrote:

Citizenship by prescription, order, rote, grid or check-list is not true citizenship at all. The name of the game is, of course, not citizenship *teaching* but citizenship *learning* (Crick, 2007 p 242, emphasis added).

Experiential learning is not a new idea. Aristotle wrote: “Anything that we have to learn to do we learn by the actual doing of it... We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate ones, brave by doing brave ones” (Aristotle, 1976: Nicomachean Ethics, Book II p 91). This seems particularly pertinent when considering active citizenship. Young people are more likely to learn through being citizens – not through being told how to be citizens. They will learn about the complicated balance between rights and responsibilities if they have a chance at experiencing this, making mistakes, reviewing and reflecting on their experiences. This is not about subject knowledge. It is about learning to be members of a community.

Dewey, an early proponent of democratic education was also a key thinker on experiential learning. He argued that schools should run as democratic communities because “the very process of living together educates” (Dewey, 2004 p 6). As part of this, he advocated that experiential learning is crucial because:

To ‘learn from experience’ is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence. Under such conditions, doing becomes a trying; an experiment with the world to find out what it is like; the undergoing becomes instruction ... (Dewey, 2004 p 134).

This paper argues that experiential learning is crucial for learning about active citizenship. This presents a challenge to the dominant pedagogy in many schools. It places far greater emphasis on creating the conditions for learning, rather than on teaching itself. It has echoes of Rogers, founder of the person-centred approach to education, who stated that: “Teaching is, for me, a relatively unimportant and vastly overvalued activity” (Rogers and Freiberg, 1994 p 51). By this, he meant that the focus on the teacher is unhelpful as they do not have it within their power to make someone learn. Rather, the internal process of the student is of far more interest. The job of the teacher (or as Rogers preferred, ‘facilitator’) is to facilitate learning. This means creating the conditions through which learning is more

likely to happen. This entails ensuring that the student has control over the learning process and that there is a genuine, understanding and open relationship between student and facilitator. In the language of citizenship, this might be translated to mean that students are treated as active citizens with a genuine involvement in decision-making. It also strongly reinforces the importance of providing opportunities for experiential learning.

The implications of offering education for active citizenship are more far reaching than just pedagogy. If students are to be viewed as citizens, then this demands the democratisation of schools. Teaching young people about citizenship without giving them the opportunity to participate is, according to Garratt and Piper (2008), nothing more than tokenism. Participation is the fundamental right of citizenship (Hart, 1992). This point is reinforced by Fielding and Moss who argue that democracy should be a “fundamental value running through the whole education system and process” (2011 p 58-9). In fact, they argue that democracy “should *precede* citizenship” (Fielding and Moss, 2011, emphasis added). This affects the structure of schools, governance, hierarchies, processes for decision-making and relationships. It affects how educational outcomes are measured (Maitles and Gilchrist, 2006, Wrigley, 2003, MacBeath and Moos, 2004). It requires the development of “citizenship schools”, defined by Alexander as ones in which “citizenship is practiced as well as taught” (Alexander in Alexander and Potter, 2005 p 140). This requires nothing short of a whole-scale reform in the way that schools are run.

### **Case study of a ‘citizenship school’**

Sands School is a small independent secondary school based in South Devon. It has spaces for approximately 70 students. It is one of only two schools in England which explicitly describes itself as a ‘democratic school’. It was established in 1987 by a small group of teachers and students – this might in itself be seen as ‘active citizenship’ in action. It is underpinned by a strong ethos about enabling students to have control of their own learning and their own lives. It is based on values about trust, equality and mutual respect. Teachers and students have equal status and decision-making is carried out through the use of a number of democratic processes. The school operates as a community.

This school was studied as a part of a three-year research project which explored students’ experiences of democratic education (Hope, 2010). This project used Grounded Theory methodology which meant that there was no hypothesis and no specific set of research questions (Charmaz, 2006, Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Instead, the researcher had an open mind about what would emerge. There were three research visits to the school during which six students were interviewed in depth, informal conversations were held with many other students, lessons were observed, School Meetings and Staff Meetings were attended, and there were informal discussions with almost every staff member. An extensive piece of documentary analysis was also undertaken which included the school website and publicity materials, policies and timetables.

As an independent school, Sands School is not obliged to follow the National Curriculum. Instead, it develops its own curriculum in negotiation with the students. Sands School does not have ‘citizenship’ as a subject on the timetable. They do not offer it as a GCSE subject. At no point during the research did a single student or a single teacher use the word ‘citizenship’ or ‘citizen’. Yet, Ofsted’s most recent inspection stated that “Students make an exceptional and exemplary contribution to the school community” and that “The school’s strong focus on developing students’ skills and attitudes towards working with each other, tolerating difference and becoming involved in community events provides a rich and rewarding range of experiences which prepare them very well for their adult lives and economic well-being” (Ofsted, March 2010). This paper will argue, therefore, that when viewed through the lens of citizenship education, Sands School can be presented as a

‘citizenship school’ - an model of active citizenship in action, and one from which other schools might learn.

As an independent school, there is an obvious limitation with using Sands School as an outstanding example of active citizenship in action. Although a community in its own right, the school cannot realistically be seen as a microcosm of wider society as the student population is in no way representative of the wider community of the UK. By virtue of being a fee-paying school, it is inherently selective, and although applications are welcomed from people from all backgrounds, there are only a limited number of financial bursaries available. Therefore, the vast majority of students come from families which can afford to pay the school fees (approximately £8700 per annum). This is not to suggest, nonetheless, that all students are wealthy. This is not the case. The school has arrangements with at least one local authority which pays the fees for students with a special educational needs ‘statement’. Other students described the ongoing problems that their families endured in order to find the fees – such was the commitment to wanting their child to attend the school. It should also not be assumed that all students are high achievers, highly motivated or that they would thrive within any school. Students offered extensive evidence to the contrary – many had negative experience of being in large mainstream schools.

The process of becoming part of the Sands School community also makes it a different type of community from those in the wider world. In order to be accepted to attend Sands School, students have to actively *want* to go. All potential new students are invited to attend a ‘trial week’ at the school. By the end of this week, the student decides whether they want to join the school. If they do (and their parents or guardians are supportive, of course), then their case is taken to a whole school meeting for a decision. They are accepted if – and only if – the school feels that the student has grasped the ethos of the school and are able to work within it. This is not a mechanism for trying to keep people out of the community; rather, it is a way of ensuring that only those who genuinely want to be involved are invited to be. This is of course very different from most communities – and almost all schools. In these other settings, members might well have *not* made an active choice to be defined as a community member. This makes a qualitative difference to the nature of active citizenship within Sands School to that of other communities.

Nonetheless, the experience of Sands School still offers some useful learning for educationalists working in other settings. Although the context might be different, Sands School is still a secondary school, working with young people from the ages of 11-18 - an important transition period from child to adult. It offers a broad and balanced curriculum. It supports students to sit the same nationally recognised exams before they leave school. It is inspected by Ofsted, the same body as all other schools. The *what* they do is similar but the *how* they do it is substantially different.

Sands School offers students an experience to live and work as a community, based on the premise that this is in itself educational. This is not to suggest that this is all that they do. Although they do not offer citizenship as a discrete curriculum subject, they do offer General Studies, and they also integrate many aspects of citizenship in a cross-curricula fashion. Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that Sands School does not view citizenship as a curriculum subject but as a *way of living*. This fits with Dewey’s argument that “the very process of living together educates” (Dewey, 2004 p 6). The school was established before citizenship became popular parlance within educational policy and yet the values of active citizenship permeate the whole school. The core principles of the school focus on treating students as citizens, as active members of a community, as participants. Students have many rights – the right to choose whether to attend lessons, the right to make decisions, the right to set the rules – but with these rights come responsibilities. This clearly models the

communitarian approach to citizenship (Lawson, 2001). The school is clear about the balance between rights and responsibilities:

At the heart of what we believe is that children, when given the opportunity, are kind, trustworthy and responsible and that they are eminently capable of helping run the place within which they work. In fact, it is an expectation that in return for the freedom and trust they are offered, the students must respond by behaving in a responsible and trustworthy manner (Sands School, 2011).

This delicate balance between rights and responsibilities is a crucial component of citizenship education which at Sands School is learnt experientially. Students have freedom to make their own decisions but it is also clear that they have a responsibility to the wider community if these decisions have an impact on others. For example, students can negotiate their own learning programme and they can choose whether to attend formal lessons. As a result, some students might be sitting outside in the gardens whilst others have chosen to be inside in lessons. The school rules make it very clear that the students have a *right* to choose to be outside – but they do not have a right to disturb those who have chosen to be inside. They have a *responsibility* to ensure that their behaviour does not have a negative impact on others. And this rule is upheld by the community – not necessarily by teachers – but by other students. It is a frequent occurrence to see students asking other students to be quiet. This is active citizenship at its best. Everyone feels a responsibility to the community.

But where are these rules made in the first place? They are made by the community as a whole through the School Meeting. This takes place every week and is the central decision-making body of the school. All students and all staff are able to attend, to raise issues, to speak freely and to influence the final decision. The school tries to make decisions by consensus but failing that, a vote is taken by all present. Given that the number of students outweighs the number of staff members, this gives students considerable power. Now, all students have the *right* to attend this meeting but they are under no obligation. However, the vast majority do choose to attend every week, and as one explained:

... sometimes they drag on for a bit and you get a bit bored after like, two and a half hours going round in a circle, but if we didn't have them, we wouldn't have such a great atmosphere and such a great amount of people at Sands as we do now, if we didn't decide what goes on in it, cos if everybody else decided it for us, then it just wouldn't work, because that's not what we want. We want a school where we decide what goes on, and we decide who comes in and who doesn't, and what's going to happen with it ...

This student clearly understood that if she wanted to be in a school where the students have the power to make decisions, then she also has a responsibility to participate in meetings which she sometimes finds boring. This illustrates that the students themselves, albeit unconsciously, have understood the values embedded within the communitarian approach to citizenship.

Balancing rights and responsibilities can, in practice, be challenging. With reference to Summerhill School, the first democratic school in the world, A.S. Neill described this as a “perennial problem that can never be solved.” He called it the “problem of the individual vs the community” and stated that:

In the disciplined home, the children have *no* rights. In the spoiled home, they have *all* the rights. The proper home is one in which children and adults have equal rights. And the same applies to school (Neill, 1962 p 107, emphasis in original).

This is a key issue for a democratic society. How do children and young people learn how to exercise their freedom without taking away the rights of others to do the same? How do they learn to take the needs of a wider community into account? Democratic schools are no different. These issues can be real, painful and challenging. At Sands School, one student felt that democracy “gets on top of you sometimes” because “you’ve just gotta weigh everything up and see what happens, which is hard”. She went on to explain how she had been part of a decision to expel a fellow student. This was a rare occurrence but nonetheless an extremely painful one. She explained how the School Meeting had talked at length about the issues involved. It was stressful because she felt close to the other student but eventually, she agreed with the decision to expel the student. She was clearly able to prioritise the needs of the community as a whole over her own personal feelings. Given that she was 15 (and some students involved in this decision were 11), this is clearly ‘deep learning’ (Marton and Saljo, 1976). It is hard to imagine how this type of learning could have occurred if citizenship was merely taught as a curriculum subject. Here, the experiential nature of the school meant that she was able to learn from being a part of democracy in action.

Students can only take this level of responsibility if they are trusted. This trust is embedded in the values of the school and it is powerfully experienced by students. Although some students recognised that it could take time to trust others and to feel trusted by others, all highlighted the importance of this trust. This level of trust enables students to feel that others have confidence in them – and in turn, they learn to develop greater confidence in themselves. Running alongside this trust – and underpinning it – is an organisational structure based on equality. Equality between students and teachers is of great significance to this school, and it is this which enables the development of a genuine democratic community. Democratic communities are characterised as being self-governing. An exploration of the ‘rules’ at Sands School illustrates the nature of this self-government. In contrast to mainstream schools, which one student described as being “bells and rules”, many Sands students struggled to clearly identify the rules at all. One said, for example, “They have boundaries but I wouldn’t say that they have major rules.” Another said, “I didn’t do well under rules, whereas here I have none.” Further analysis of data revealed that Sands School does have rules but that these rules have a completely different tone to them. They are explicitly based on common sense. One student explained that “you know what’s acceptable and what’s not acceptable, and you should know that from your own common sense.” The Sands School website states that:

The school prides itself on its common sense approach to daily life and from its inception in 1987 the use of petty rules and punishments has been avoided as much as possible and has been replaced by discussion, negotiation and conflict resolution (Sands School, 2011).

Sands School, therefore, can afford not to have a large number of explicit rules as it has a powerful culture of self-governance. New students do not need to be told what to do (or what not to do); they can work this out for themselves. Students can learn to trust their own common sense. They can learn to be responsible for themselves, and to be responsible to others. And if this is not enough, then the forum of the School Meeting can be used for discussion and if necessary, an agreement to implement a formal rule. Yet the feeling of not having a lot of rules adds to the feeling of freedom and of trust. Rules are restrictive. The ethos of using common sense is not. Students feel more responsible for themselves and more ownership of the school. Through the lens of citizenship education, these are important foundations from which transformational learning can take place.

Being a self-governing community brings its challenges for staff. Self-governance does not mean governance by young people alone – it means governance by all those involved within the community. This gives a clear role to staff and one that is not easy. They

have to be willing to share responsibilities with students whilst also maintaining their own sense of rights. They have a right to be heard, to influence decision-making, to have freedom – and balancing the rights of students with those of staff is a continual challenge. Take the example of ‘negotiated learning’. Students have freedom to choose which lessons to attend (or in some cases, to attend none at all). However, once the decision has been made, they are expected to turn up to the lessons they have chosen and be ready to engage with learning. The teacher prepares the lesson for the number of students who have chosen the option. Issues arise if, having chosen particular lessons, the students do not turn up. In effect, they have broken their side of the agreement. Now, it could be argued that students have to take responsibility for their decision and that they cannot expect to be able to pass an exam, for example, if they have not turned up. This is of course true, but there is another issue. The teacher, having prepared the lesson, has a right to be annoyed, upset or even angry. What do they do with these feelings? During this research project, one teacher decided that the way that he wanted to express his anger was to go ‘on strike’ for one day. He came to school but he did not turn up to any of the lessons he was supposed to teach. Instead, he did what he wanted to do – spending time having coffee and chatting, re-decorating his classroom. His aim – or at least his stated aim – was to encourage students to think. When students turned up to lessons and he was not there, he wanted discussion to ensue, particularly in terms of rights and responsibilities and the impact of taking unilateral decisions. Of course, the merits of his decision to strike can be debated at length (as indeed they were at the weekly staff meeting), but what is certain is that his motives were consistent with the agenda of encouraging active citizenship. He wanted students to think about their – and his – responsibilities to one another. Establishing rules which are based on common sense means that students (and staff) have to *think*. This is an important aspect of active citizenship. Students cannot proceed unthinkingly through school, sticking to the rules and coming out unchanged. Students have to engage with the school processes. They have to engage with others. They have to decide how they want to behave. They have to be prepared to be accountable to others. They have to be critical thinkers. This is a powerful experience, and students change as a result. One explained that:

... my opinion on things changed a lot, and whereas before when I first started coming here, I was you know, I was a little sheep, followed the fashion, had to talk cool, know the latest words and have the latest CD or whatever, and since coming here now, I’m so chilled back and relaxed, my mum’s just like ‘you’re completely different person’. It does change you a lot, coming to a school like this ...

The reason that students change – and are able to reflect on this change – is because of the way that they engage with each other and with the school. They feel accepted as individuals, but they also feel connected to others and invested in others. The sense of belonging helps students to experience a strong sense of community, and this motivates them to want to adhere to the ‘rules’ and philosophy of the school. This is a crucial part of citizenship. It suggests that not only do these students feel connected as citizens within a community now, but that they have developed the attitudes, values and skills which will help them to be active citizens once they leave school too.

Sands School students, then, might be seen as active citizens, but they are not necessarily compliant citizens. They are not likely to unthinkingly follow rules which have been laid out by others. They are more likely to ask questions, to argue, and even to resist. One student, for example, argued that democracy is a model of government that can only work on a small scale. He said that “I believe that democracy, country-scale democracies are just a waste of time, to be honest.” Another explained that her long-term plan after she left school was “to change education really”, specifically because “people need more choice about where they go to school, and they need to want to go to school.” These are not the words of compliant citizens but of ones who wants to challenge the status quo. They will be engaged and active, but critical, citizens (Giroux, 2005).



## Discussion

The citizenship agenda for Britain's schools is, on paper, a radical document. It aims for "no less than a change in the political culture of this country both nationally and locally" (QCA, 1998 p 7). In many schools, nonetheless, there appears to have been an "implementation gap" between policy and practice (Cleaver and Nelson, 2006). Although citizenship has been formally taught as a curriculum subject, it has not had the impact in terms of developing engaged and active citizens. The danger of this was forewarned within the Crick Report when it stated that:

Also it is obvious that all formal preparation for citizenship in adult life can be helped or hindered by the *ethos* and *organisation* of a school, whether pupils are given opportunities for exercising responsibilities and initiatives or not; and also whether they are consulted realistically on matters where their opinions can prove relevant both to the efficient running of a school and to their general motivation for learning (QCA, 1998 p 25, emphasis added).

Sands School has not experienced an implementation gap between policy and practice for one obvious reason; it is not trying, in any way, to implement policy. Rather, the ethos, values and organisation of the school, by default, are consistent with the active citizenship agenda. By explicitly describing itself as a 'democratic school', the intention to actively involve students as participants within all elements of school process is at the forefront of the agenda. This is not because the government has instructed them to, but because this is inherent within the values of the school itself.

It is perhaps this value-system from which other schools might learn the greatest lessons. The majority of schools have, after all, attempted to involve children and young people in decision-making through the development of school councils and forums – and yet, many of these have been criticised as being tokenistic and ineffective (Garratt and Piper, 2008). The reason for this is not a fault of the mechanisms themselves but a problem with an inconsistency of the values which underpin them. Treating students as citizens rather than citizens-in-waiting requires a change in the culture of schooling (Fielding, 2001). It is not about ticking boxes. It is about genuinely believing that the involvement of children and young people is the right thing to do.

Schools which offer genuine opportunities for active citizenship show, almost without exception, that the outcomes for students, for teachers and for the school itself are overwhelmingly positive (Davies, Williams and Yamashita, 2005b). Students have increased self-esteem, better interpersonal skills, a sense of belonging and improved personal efficacy. Schools have better atmospheres, the relationships between teachers and students are improved, student behaviour is less disruptive and relationships between peers are enhanced (Davies et al., 2005b). Research into democratic schools in particular has shown that these schools have better communication, improved decision-making across the schools and an increased sense of belonging. Rules are more likely to be kept. There is less likely to be a culture of "them and us" (Harber, cited in Trafford, 1997 p 9).

Citizenship schools have been defined as those in which citizenship is practised as well as taught (Alexander and Potter, 2005). This is crucial. Citizenship is not like a traditional academic subject. It has to be learnt through experience. It is only through the experience of having rights and responsibilities, of being accountable to others, of feeling a sense of belonging, that children and young people can really grapple with the complexities that come with 'active citizenship'.

### Conclusion

This paper started with the widespread civil unrest of August 2011. A culture of “them and us” is exactly what David Cameron warned about in the days following the riots (Cameron, 15 August 2011). The rioters, according to Cameron, had little invested in society. They were alienated. They felt no sense of responsibility to the communities in which they lived. They had no sense of belonging. These individuals were not all young people, of course, but one can but wonder how different it might have been if they had experienced something different at school. Investing time and energy in developing active citizenship in schools is not straightforward, but if done effectively, the payoffs for students, schools, and ultimately for society, would surely be high.

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## **Islamophobia, conflict and citizenship**

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### **Abstract**

This article discusses some preliminary findings of the English part of a European Commission Fundamental Rights and Citizenship funded project 'Children's Voices' (2011-2013) concerned with exploring and understanding children and young people's experiences of interethnic conflict and violence in primary and secondary schools. This is a comparative study of England, Slovenia, Cyprus, Austria and Italy and the English focus is on Islamophobia. The research comprises a review of literature, legislation and good practice in race equality in England; a quantitative study of 8 primary schools (year 5/6) and 8 Secondary schools/sixth form centres (year 12/13) in 4 regions of England; a qualitative study of pupils and adults in 4 schools in one region and interview material from semi structured interviews with a range of 'experts' in the area. The article outlines some of the research findings from the first quantitative stage of the research. It argues that in schools with a strong citizenship ethos, where different religions are respected and where there are strong institutional processes and procedures against discriminatory practices, Islamophobia and conflict are not likely to be an issue, however, the same cannot be said for the wider society.

**Keywords:** Religion, Islamophobia, conflict, citizenship

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### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the staff and pupils in the schools for agreeing to take part in the research and for organising our research visits so efficiently. Many thanks to Leslie Wible for her final edit of the article – any mistakes remain ours.

### **Introduction - the research project**

With evidence of increasing racism across many European countries, within the context of EU enlargement, globalization processes, and the diversification of migration flows there is a need for research that seeks to understand the experiences of young people with respect to racism and conflict. As schools are spaces to explore and challenge behaviours and assumptions as well as to foster positive relations, they are key arenas in which to analyse interethnic violence as well as mechanisms to address xenophobia and racism. This article is part of research from a larger research project, *Children's Voices*, which examines interethnic violence in schools in five European countries: England, Austria, Cyprus, Italy and Slovenia (the lead partner)<sup>1</sup>. In addition to analysing interethnic violence, the research project aims to identify positive measures that combat discrimination and provide examples of good practice as well as the role of the school in promoting citizenship.

The aim of the project is:

To understand interethnic and intercultural conflict and violence in primary and secondary schools across the five European partners. The overarching aim of the project is to support the implementation of children's rights by analysing the range and nature of interethnic violence in schools. For the purpose of this study the definition of violence encompasses all actions that might pose a threat to human dignity. (University of Primorska, 2010)

The research takes place in all five countries in the project and has two stages: the first stage is a quantitative study, using a questionnaire, and the second stage is a qualitative study employing individual semi structured interviews with experts, teachers and other educational professionals and focus group interviews with pupils. This article concerns only the first stage of the English part of the project, the quantitative study.

### **Why Islamophobia?**

In researching intercultural and interethnic violence and children's rights in the school environment in England, there is a vast tapestry of interethnic relations available for analysis. However, in light of world and home events over the past two decades, in particular the terrorist attacks on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 and the London bombings in July 2005, and the resulting so-called 'war on terror' and counter-terrorism strategies that disproportionately affect Muslims, there is discernible evidence of increased hostility and prejudice towards Muslims in England and, indeed, Europe more generally (Poynting & Mason, 2007; Crozier and Davies, 2008; Suleiman, 2009; Lambert & Githens-Mazar, 2010; Allen, 2010).

Thus, we opted to analyse interethnic violence in the school environment in England through the lens of Islamophobia, in relation to both children's own experiences as well as attitudes towards Muslims<sup>2</sup>. As schools are spaces to explore and challenge behaviours and assumptions as well as to foster positive relations, they are key arenas in which to analyse interethnic violence as well as mechanisms to address xenophobia and racism. In addition to analysing interethnic violence, the research project aims to identify positive measures that combat discrimination and provide examples of good practice.

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<sup>1</sup> The project is co-funded by the European Union's Fundamental Rights and Citizenship programme. For further information, see website: <http://childrenvoices.eu/>

<sup>2</sup> In choosing to examine Islamophobia, we do not assume Muslims to have an essentialist homogenised identity but, rather, we acknowledge the multifaceted and dynamic nature of identity and understand Muslims as those who choose to identify as such. Indeed, Muslims in the UK are a very ethnically and theologically diverse group (Suleiman, 2009; Beckford, Gale, Owne, Peach, & Weller, 2006).

As there is little available evidence on the prevalence of Islamophobia in schools or, indeed, of interethnic or intercultural conflict in schools in England, the article draws from a variety of research looking at racism and Islamophobia more generally and levels of violence within the educational setting.

### **Increased racism towards Muslims since 9/11**

Whilst it can be difficult to differentiate between racially motivated attacks and attacks determined by religious hatred (Athwal, Bourne and Wood, 2010), a significant body of research has shown that after the events of 11 September 2001, the London bombings in July 2005 and other attacks, as well as the Oldham and Bradford riots in 2001<sup>3</sup>, there has been an exponential increase in Islamophobic rhetoric and agendas (see CBMI, 2004; Poynting & Mason, 2007; Crozier & Davies 2008; Suleiman, 2009; Lambert & Githens-Mazar, 2010; Allen, 2010). Indeed, as Athwal et al. (2010, p. 8) argue, “[T]he category ‘Muslim’ is becoming more and more racialised and the distinction between ‘racial hatred’ and ‘religious hatred’ is increasingly blurred”.

In the UK, the far-right British National Party adopted a highly explicit Islamophobic campaign, reasserting Christianity as being under threat from Muslims in the UK and stressing the inability of Islam as a religion to assimilate with British culture (Allen & Neilsen, 2002). Thus, Islamophobia is not just restricted to hate crimes and more obvious violence, but it also occurs in more subtle, discriminatory ways through forms of structural violence. For example, in educational and occupational attainment, Muslims are found more likely to face educational and occupational disadvantages (Khattab, 2009). Indeed, a significant body of literature notes the socially disadvantaged nature of much of the UK Muslim population (e.g. CBMI, 2004; Open Society, 2005; Meer, 2009; Suleiman, 2009).

### **Interethnic violence in schools**

Whilst there is little literature available on interethnic violence in schools in England, several questionnaire studies have focused explicitly on the degree and frequency of peer victimization and bullying among ethnic minority children. Available research highlights a number of discrepancies, evidencing the methodological issues and comparative difficulties of studies.

The concept of bullying itself is still a somewhat contested issue<sup>4</sup> and, owing to differences in methodology and terminology, it is difficult to find comparative data (Oliver & Candappa, 2003; Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schulz 2001). Researchers utilise different concepts of bullying, although most draw heavily on the work of Olweus (e.g. 1997). Further difficulties arise in isolating factors, as bullying can also be influenced by environment – class composition, size, teacher responses, a school’s ethos towards anti-bullying, etc. (Watkins, Mauthner, Hewitt, Epstein, & Leonard 2007; Green, Collingwood, & Ross, 2010). In addition, children’s own perceptions of bullying can be influenced by other factors, such as age and gender (Monks & Smith, 2006; Wood, 2007).

As a result, studies reveal differing findings and considerable variance in the prevalence of violence (Wolke et al., 2001).

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<sup>3</sup> These riots saw clashes in northeast of England between largely white and Asian groups of youths and were termed race riots by the media. See [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/7/newsid\\_2496000/2496003.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/7/newsid_2496000/2496003.stm)

<sup>4</sup> For further discussion of the definition of bullying see Monks and Smith (2006)

For example, Eslea and Mukhtar (2000), in a study of Hindu, Indian Muslim and Pakistani children, found that all three groups suffered bullying equally but that they were less likely to experience bullying from their own ethnic group. Other studies have found that children from ethnic minorities were more likely to experience racist name-calling and social exclusion compared to children from a majority ethnic group (Boulton, 1995; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002; Monks, Ortega-Ruiz, & Rodriguez-Hidalgo, 2008; British Council, 2008; DfES, 2006).

In contrast, Sweeting and West (2001) found that experiences of teasing/bullying did not differ according to race, physical maturity or height, but was more likely among children who were less physically attractive, overweight, had a disability or performed poorly at school. However, the majority of their respondents were classed as 'white' (96%). Smith and Shu (2000) also found low levels of racial name-calling in their study. Again, however, 90% of the sample was white. Similarly, in a recent study for the then Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF, now Department for Education, DfE), Green et al. (2010) found that young people from minority ethnic groups were less likely to be bullied than white young people (Green et al., 2010). However, as the report acknowledges, the largest proportion of young people (87%) were in the 'white' group, with only 1-3% falling into each of the other ethnic groups<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, it is clear that racist bullying is a complex phenomenon across and between ethnicities and may vary between schools depending on the proportion of ethnic minority pupils (Green et al., 2010) and the overall school ethos. Indeed, research in this area must take into consideration the fact that educational environments differ greatly within the UK. Thus, research findings must be considered carefully in light of the specific contexts in which they are applied and the potential for generalisable findings or comparisons are limited. Further, much of the literature looks at racist name calling and not at other forms of bullying which may be less overt, and there is evidence that pupils do not report racist abuse when asked about bullying in general, which might indicate that the levels of racial victimization experienced by pupils in schools is underestimated, as suggested by Siann et al. (cited in Monks et al., 2008).

Research also evidences that institutional racism towards ethnic minority children is still an issue in some schools. For instance, Gillborn and Rollock (2010) argue that although legislative changes since the Macpherson Report in 1999 saw schools imposed with a legal duty to proactively promote race equality following the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence, the education system "continues to produce outcomes that are deeply scarred by systematic race inequalities," (p. 139). For example, rates of permanent exclusion are widely recognised as disproportionately affecting Black student groups and rates of educational achievement remain lower for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds (Parsons, 2009; Carlile, 2010; Gillborn & Rollock, 2010)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The report used data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE), which encompasses a number of limitations (see for example Gillborn, 2010)

<sup>6</sup> Although some of this data, when disaggregated for other factors, highlights more differential patterns as groups or as not homogenous, instances of social class also has a part to play (Gillborn, 2010).



Much of the research on racism in schools points to the fact that teachers often deny or are oblivious to the existence of racism in their school (Hill et al., 2007; Crozier & Davies, 2008; Gillborn & Rollock, 2010). Such findings are symptomatic of the often widely held view that racism is a term that relates only to the obvious, in the form of violent attacks, rather than reflecting the reality that many forms of racism can be much more subtle and even unintended (Gillborn & Rollock, 2010).

### **Islamophobia in schools**

Whilst there is very limited literature available on instances of Islamophobia in schools (Shaik, 2006), evidence from more general research on Muslims highlights problems within the education system. Institutional racism towards Muslims within the educational sector, both in relation to teachers' assumptions and prejudices towards Muslim students, is found to be a problem in several research papers (Weller et al., 2001; Shah, 2006; Hill et al., 2007; Crozier & Davies, 2008; Meer, 2009). A recent OSI report on countries across Europe found that although many schools did engage in inclusive educational practices with Muslim pupils, some Muslim pupils continued to suffer racism and prejudice and faced low expectations from teachers (OSI, 2010).

Further, educational outcomes amongst young Muslims are often lower than those of other groups (Meer, 2009). While it is accepted that parental education and social class play an important role in shaping these educational outcomes, Halstead (cited in Meer 2009, p. 389) lists a range of other issues that are perceived to be relevant by Muslims themselves: "Religious discrimination; Islamophobia; the lack of Muslim role models in schools; low expectations on the part of teachers; time spent in mosque schools; the lack of recognition of the British Muslim identity of the student."

In England, Farzana Shain's (2011) detailed study of Muslim boys in the West Midlands found that existing tensions were aggravated within schools post-11 September 2001 and whilst boys stated racism existed prior to then, since then they had felt increasingly stigmatised as being associated with Islamic terrorism. Shain also found racism to be a central feature of the boys' experiences of school, from both overt, low level name-calling to more covert institutional racism. However, she noted that contemporary racism is complex and contradictory: whilst the boys were addressed as 'terrorists' and 'Bin Laden' following 11 September, which "illustrates how the politicisation and racialisation of religion are shaping contemporary racist discourse," biological notions of race were also a feature of their experiences of racism (Shain, 2011, p.158). Crozier and Davies (2008) also found in their study that, for the majority of South Asian young people from a Muslim background they spoke to, racially motivated abuse, harassment and often subsequent violence was a central feature of their school experience. In line with other studies, they also found teachers often denied this experience. Unfortunately, as Islamophobia is not always recognised as racism and is often not referred to in guidance / policy documents by local authorities, Islamophobia in schools can sometimes go unaddressed (CMBI, 2004).

### **Legislative context**

Since 1990, we have witnessed a wide range of legislation in relation to race equality with implications for education. At a wider societal level we have seen moves to strengthen and extend legislation around employment, provision of services, education and the promotion of good relationships between people of different ethnic backgrounds. For example, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires all public authorities to promote race equality. This act builds on the Race Relations Act (RRA)1976, which provides protection to 'racial groups', explained as "a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origin" (Richardson, 2009, p. 3)

Neither religion nor belief were included as appropriate markers and became subsequently excluded. However, following developments in case law since 1976, monoethnic religious groups such as Jews and Sikhs came to be defined as ethnic groups and are therefore protected, but multi-ethnic religious groups such as Muslims and Christians were not included (CBMI, 2004; Cesari, 2006). More recently, the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 makes it unlawful to stir up hatred against persons on religious grounds. Also in 2006, the Education and Inspections Act introduced a new section to the Education Act 2002 giving schools a duty to promote community cohesion from September 2007. The Equality Act of 2010 brings together many different equality laws to harmonise and, in certain respects, to extend the various pieces of discrimination law that had been introduced over the last 30 years.

Specific legislation in relation to education has been introduced alongside the more general race equality legislation. For example, the Education Inspections Act 2006 made it a legal requirement for head teachers to include prevention of all forms of bullying in their school's behaviour policy. This includes racial or ethnic bullying.

The legislation, recommendations and related guidance have been important in providing the stimulus for the development of good practice in schools with respect to race equality and in many cases schools have used Citizenship Education as one vehicle to implement this (Osler, 2009).

### **Citizenship, race equality and Islamophobia**

The research is concerned with examining interethnic and intercultural conflict in schools as a way of supporting the implementation of children's rights both in schools and in the wider society. In taking this perspective, we are clearly adopting a particular conception of citizenship, one which would argue for a citizenship in which people and children can legitimately have, and express, diverse and multilayered identities. The Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review 2007 report was explicit about the need for young people to learn about, respect, and value the diversity of identities in schools and the wider society. The report asked:

Do we, as individuals and as a nation, respect each other's differences and build on commonalities? Do we appreciate our own and others' distinct identities? Do we really have an understanding of what it is to be a citizen, of how it is to live in the UK? And, most importantly, are we ensuring that all our children and young people have the education they need to embrace issues of diversity and citizenship, both for them to thrive and for the future of our society? This 'education for diversity' is fundamental if the UK is to have a cohesive society in the 21st century. (DfES, 2007, p. 16)

In asking such a question, the report was underlining the importance of a citizenship that is 'maximalist' (Mc Coughlin, 1992) with citizens with layered identities. As Parekh describes it, a form of citizenship where

Citizens are both individuals and members of particular religious, ethnic, cultural and regional communities. Britain is both a community of citizens and a community of communities, both a liberal and a multicultural society, and needs to reconcile their sometimes conflicting requirements. (Parekh, 2000, introduction)

Thus, citizenship within this perspective cannot operate if people, including children and young people, experience conflict, prejudice and discrimination due to their 'race', culture, ethnicity or religion. The need for citizenship education, which takes diversity and identity seriously, was accepted by the previous government. Indeed, the current secondary

citizenship education curriculum includes as one of three major concepts “Identities and diversities: living together in UK” and starts by emphasizing the importance of citizenship education which, it states, “encourages respect for different national, religious and ethnic identities. It equips pupils to engage critically with and explore diverse ideas, beliefs, cultures and identities and the values we share as citizens in the UK. Pupils begin to understand how society has changed and is changing in the UK, Europe and the wider world’ (QCA, 2007, p. 27). One of the five cross curriculum themes of the secondary curriculum is “Identity and cultural Diversity” (QCA, 2007). Had the previous government returned to power in 2010, the plans were to have introduced a revised primary curriculum in which this conception of citizenship education was explicit. However, a new government took office and, at the time of writing, the primary and secondary curriculum are being reviewed and we do not yet know what kind of citizenship is being planned for the revised curriculum from 2014.

Given that there is little literature on interethnic violence in schools (Monks et al. 2008), the specific focus of this study is to examine violence that arises from ethnic tensions and focus on the different types of violence experienced, something which is less covered in previous literature (Monks et al., 2008) and thus to examine such forms of violence as social exclusion. The aims of this study are therefore to shed light on pupils’ experiences of interethnic violence within the school environment, and to compare and contrast the experiences of pupils based on their religious and ethnic background to establish if there is any differences. For the purposes of this article, only data relating to pupils’ religious background will be referred to.

## **Method**

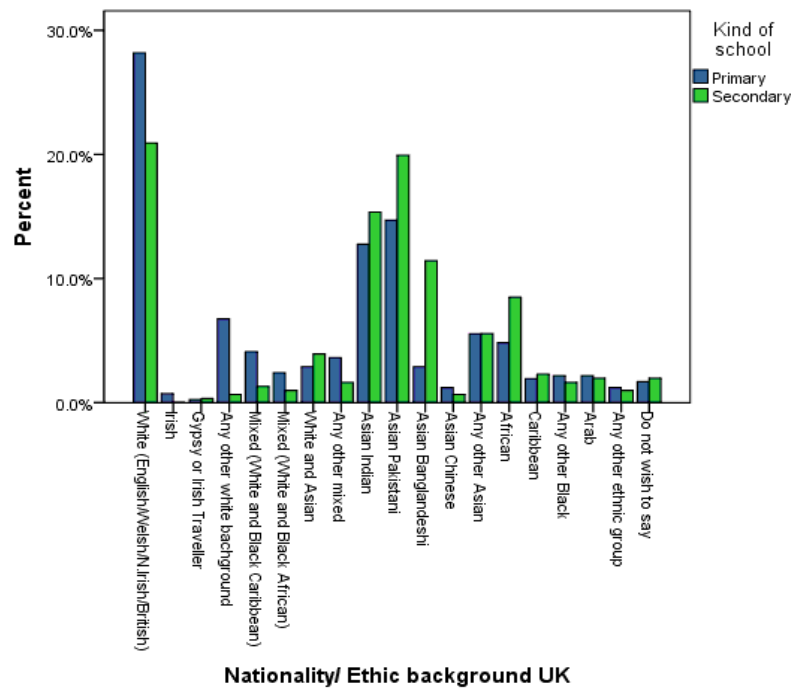
### **Research Setting**

All of the schools, except one, had provision in place for pupils for whom English is not their first language. The one school without provision was a sixth form centre that admits pupils at 16 years or older. Some of the schools had large ranges of strategies and resources for such pupils which largely reflected the needs of the school population in relation to first languages spoken. All but one school had explicit policies and procedures for dealing with racism and bullying and many had a large range of race equality and anti bullying policies and activities. We would suggest that this shows that these are schools which embed the aims of citizenship education in their ethos and whole school approach.

### **Sample**

A total of 729 children and young people completed questionnaires. Fifty-seven per cent (422) of respondents were in primary school in Year 6, with two classes of Year 5 children and 43% (307) were in secondary school in Year 13, with two classes in Year 12. The gender breakdown in the sample overall was 54% female and 46% male.

The ethnic composition of the sample is broken down in Figure 1. The largest ethnic group of the sample was White British (25%) followed by Pakistani (17%), and Indian (14%).

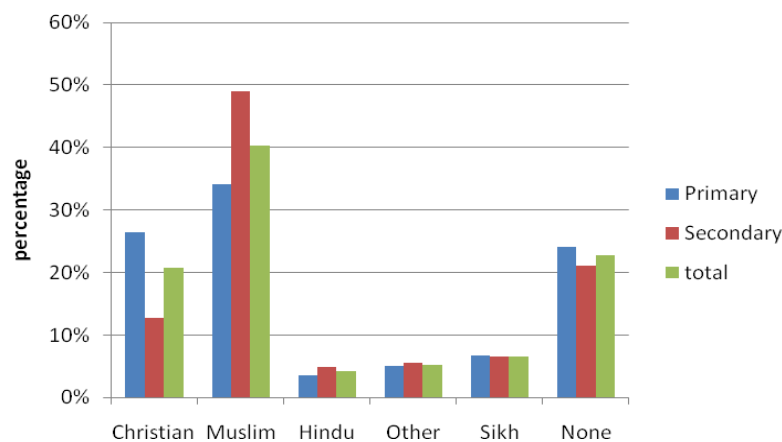


**Figure 1. Ethnic background of respondents**

## Religions

Overall, over 40% of the respondents were Muslim, reflecting our choice of schools in areas with high Muslim populations. This was followed by Christian (21%), Sikh (6%), Hindu (4%), Other (1% -including Jehovah's Witness, Taoist, Zoroastrian), Buddhist (0.7%) and Jewish (0.3%). Twenty-three per cent of respondents stated that they were not religious and 3% chose not to declare their religion.

As numbers of respondents from a Jewish or Buddhist background were so low (2 and 5 respectively), the decision was made to amalgamate these groups together with 'Other' to create the possibility for better comparison. Those who chose not to declare their religion were also grouped into 'Other' to create a larger group for the purposes of analysis. Figure 2 shows the resulting percentages.



**Figure 2. Religious background of sample regrouped**

## Measures and Procedures

The questionnaire was developed with all partners across the five countries, with additional questions added by each partner for their particular focus. Separate questionnaires were developed for the two different age ranges: primary and secondary/sixth form. The questionnaire itself was loosely divided into sections and used a range of question types, including multiple choice and scales, to explore children's attitudes to their peers with regard to ethnic background and religion, the nature of interethnic violence in school as well as pupil and institutional response in school, locally and on a national level. All participants were asked to indicate their gender and ethnic group using the ethnic classifications from the 2011 UK census.

The data collection took place in five different regions of England: London, the South East, West Midlands, East Midlands, and Yorkshire and Humber, all of which have areas of high ethnic mix and density. However, for the purpose of this research, we treated the East and West Midlands as one region. In each region, the questionnaire was administered in two primary schools and two secondary/sixth form centres and pupils generally completed the questionnaires themselves. The schools and secondary/sixth form centres chosen to for the study were all non-selective, mixed gender, state schools with a higher than average ethnic mix. No faith schools were included in the sample. Schools were also asked to provide contextual data on their ethnic composition and anti bullying policies.

The fieldwork itself took place in November and December 2011 across England; all the researchers were white British. The aim was to have a minimum of 40 pupils completing the questionnaire in each school; however, in three secondary school/sixth form centres, figures were slightly lower. In total, 729 pupils completed the questionnaire. Chi-square comparisons were carried out to test associations between responses and pupils' religious background, as well as age.

We encountered a range of problems and issues with regard to data collection:

1. Difficulties in finding and gaining access to schools: participation in the project was voluntary and finding schools that would agree to take part was difficult. This was partly due to the selection criteria (which restricted the choice of schools): the sensitive nature of the project, which meant that it was possible that only schools who felt confident with the way they managed interethnic violence were prepared to be involved; and the nature of schools themselves. School staff are often very busy and research is not a priority for them, which is a consistent problem in research of this nature (see Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000).
2. Adults and peers vetting/influencing the data: in many primary schools the completion of the questionnaire involved considerable discussion and explanation, and classroom assistants and teachers were used to read and sometimes scribe for pupils who had greater difficulties comprehending. Inevitably this could have influenced the answers.
3. Finding enough participants: in the secondary school/sixth form centres, where a looser structure exists with regard to attendance, it was sometimes difficult to find enough pupils to complete the questionnaire.
4. Pupils' understanding and interpretation of questions: as other research, such as that of Hurry has shown, variation in reading abilities and comprehension of read information varies largely in English primary schools (cited in Wolke et al. 2001, p. 3) and thus may be a source of error. Indeed, many of the questions involved the

term ‘ethnic’ or ‘ethnicity’ and the idea of ethnicity proved a difficult concept for some of the younger pupils in primary schools to grasp. (Cohen et al., 2007).

## Results

The overall focus of the questionnaire was interethnic relations and whether conflict arose from ethnic tensions within the school environment. However, for the purposes of this article, only the findings relating to religion will be discussed.

### Pupils’ experiences of school

In relation to the school environment, respondents were asked whether their school was a place where pupils were treated equally by teachers and whether their school had an inclusive environment.

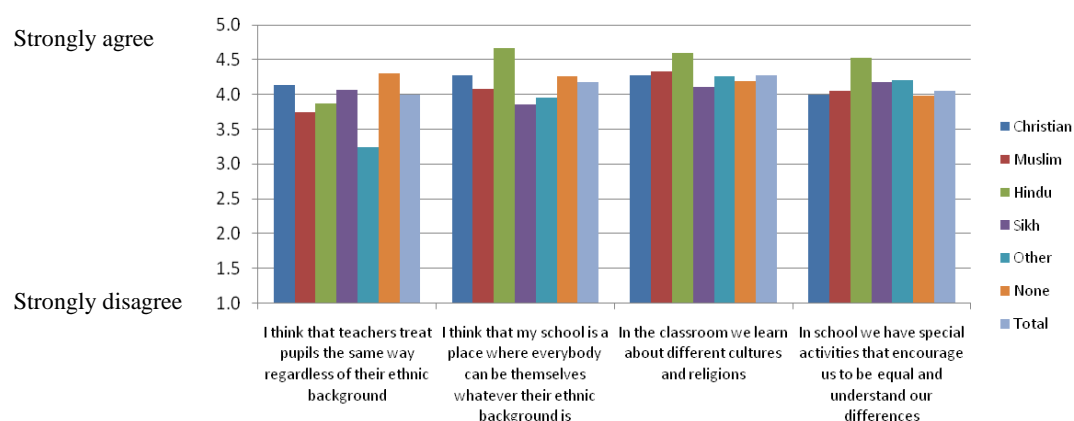


Figure 3. The school environment – primary

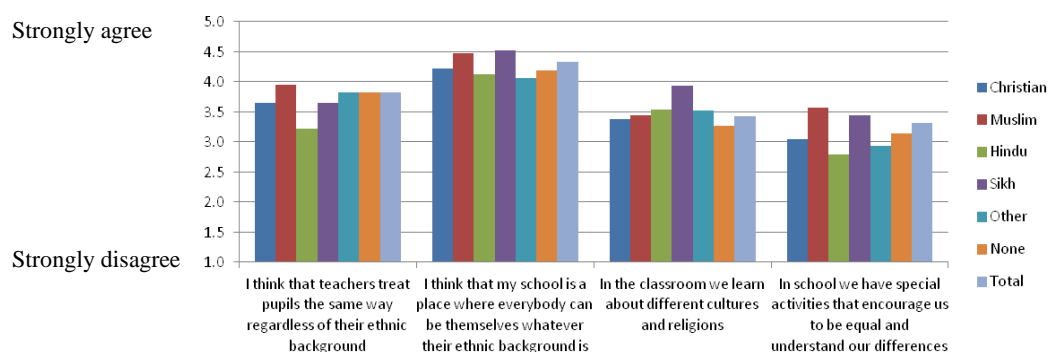


Figure 4. The school environment – sixth form

Pupils were asked to comment on their perception of how inclusive their school was, and whether it was a place where they felt all were treated equally irrespective of their ethnic background using a five point scale from 1- ‘strongly disagree’ to 5-‘strongly agree’. Figures 3 and 4 reveal the average (mean) scores for primary and sixth form pupils.

Chi square analyses reveal that students from all religious backgrounds were in agreement that their school was a place where teachers treated students equally and where an inclusive environment was promoted; there was no significant association between religion and perception of the school environment. Significantly less sixth formers than primary school pupils agreed that they had special activities in the classroom ( $\chi^2(700) = 82.02, p <$

.000) or learnt about different cultures and religions ( $\chi^2(700) = 136.34, p < .000$ ). However, in the sixth form this is likely to be due to the nature of the curriculum in that students often only attend classes in their particular examination subjects.

### Personal experiences of violence within the school environment

Respondents were asked to state how safe they felt in various locations within the school. Levels of reported safety were high in both primary and secondary school, although slightly lower in primary school, particularly in relation to the toilets ( $\chi^2(710) = 37.80, p < .000$ ) and the playground ( $\chi^2(713) = 32.53, p < .000$ ), as figures 5 and 6 below reveal. Areas respondents felt least safe were the playground, which corresponds to other studies in this field (for example, Wolke *et al.* 2001), and also the toilets (Brown and Winterton, 2010). When analysed separately by religion, there was no statistically significant association between religion and safety in school in either primary or sixth form pupils.

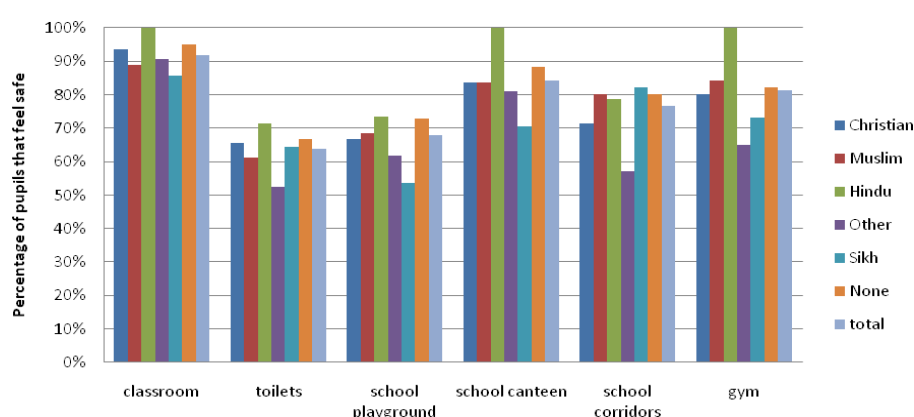


Figure 5. Safety in school – primary

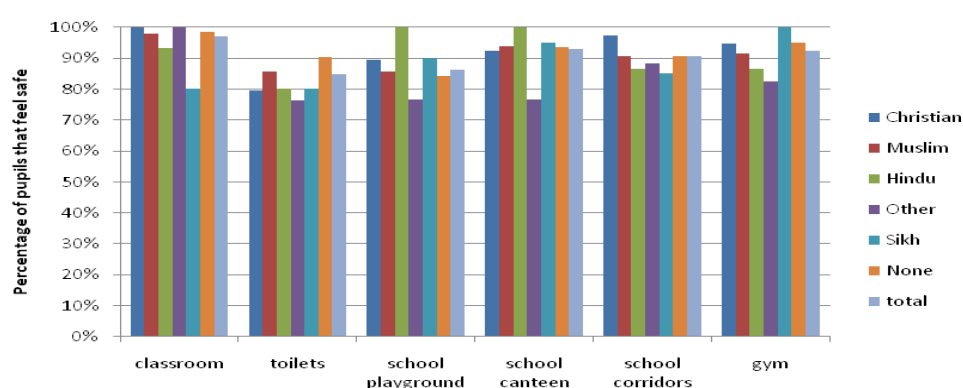


Figure 6. Safety in school – sixth form

### Levels of racial bullying per religious background

Figure 7 highlights the percentage of primary school pupils from different religious backgrounds who had experienced bullying at least sometimes in school in the last school year because of their ethnic background. Overall, the most common form of bullying reported was other pupils talking behind their backs (40%), followed by name calling (32%), which is a consistent finding in other literature (e.g. Smith & Shu 2000, Monks *et al.*, 2008). Prevalence of name calling was slightly lower than estimates given for racial name calling in previous literature (Eslea and Mukhtar, 2001). Twenty-five percent of primary school pupils

reported experiencing physical violence at least sometimes due to their ethnic background, which is slightly lower than that reported in other studies (e.g. Wolke et al. 2001; Monks et al. 2008).<sup>7</sup>

Analysis by religious group reveals an association between religion and interethnic violence experienced by pupils in primary school in relation to the following forms of violence: name calling ( $\chi^2(404) = 16.69, p < .005, \phi = .28$ ); rumour spreading ( $\chi^2(404) = 16.69, p < .005, \phi = .20$ ); social exclusion ( $\chi^2(404) = 16.44, p < .006, \phi = .203$ ) and physical violence ( $\chi^2(403) = 14.03, p < .015, \phi = .19$ ). As figure 7 below shows, Muslims, Sikh and pupils of Other religious background in primary school experienced higher frequencies of name calling (43%, 54% and 52% respectively), rumour spreading (49%, 44% and 62% respectively) and social exclusion (32%, 32% and 43% respectively) due to their ethnic background than other groups, with those in the 'Other' category particularly experiencing higher levels. Fifty-two percent of pupils from an 'Other' religious group reported experiencing physical violence at least sometimes, compared to lower percentages in all other groups. Numbers of pupils in 'Other' or Sikh category were quite small (N=21 and N=28), whereas Muslim pupils were quite a large group (N=139). Pupils from a Christian or no religious background generally reported experiencing all forms of violence less than other groups.

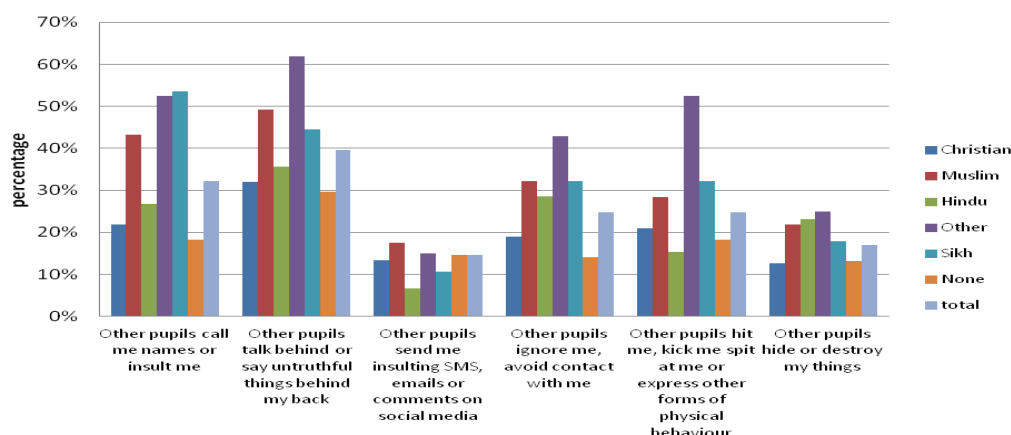


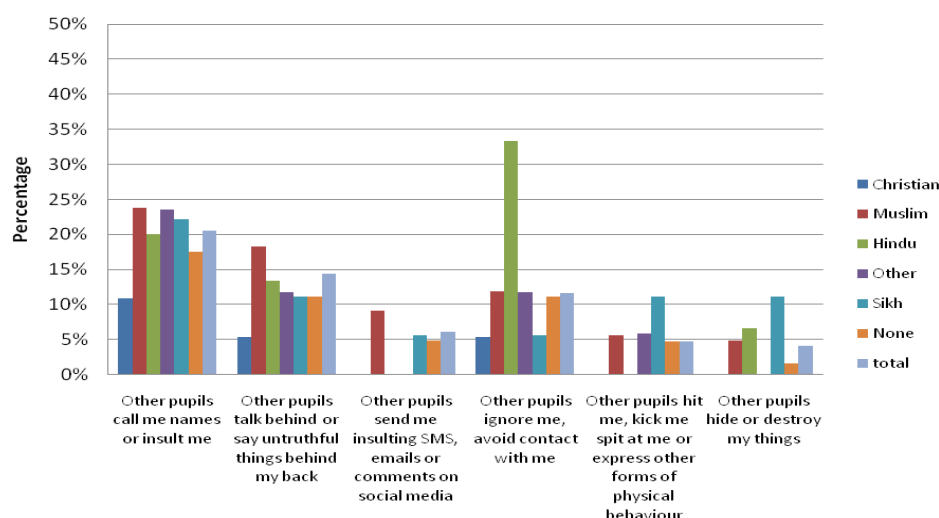
Figure 7. Experience of different forms of bullying due to ethnic background in primary school

Levels of interethnic violence experienced by students in sixth forms were lower than pupils in primary school, as Figure 8 reveals.<sup>8</sup> When analysed overall, the most commonly experienced form of violence due to ethnic background in sixth forms in our sample was name calling (20%). Levels of physical violence (5% at least sometimes) were significantly lower in sixth forms than in primary school ( $\chi^2(701) = 48.47, p < .000$ ). Chi-square analyses revealed no significant association between religious background and levels of violence experienced in the sixth forms in our sample.

<sup>7</sup> Data was missing from 2.6% of primary school children who failed to complete this section

<sup>8</sup> Data was missing from 4.5% of students in this section, as they failed to answer the questions





**Figure 8. Experiences of different forms of bullying in secondary school**

### Disclosure

Those pupils that reported experiencing violence due to their ethnic background were then asked to whom they disclosed this information. In primary school, of the sub sample of 40% of children who experienced some form of bullying because of their ethnic background, 54% of pupils would tell their mother / carer, followed by friends (51%) and teachers (39%). Chi-square analysis revealed no significant association between religious background and disclosure patterns. Of the sub sample of 20% of sixth formers who experienced violence due to their ethnic background, 64% reported they would disclose to friends and 21% would disclose to a teacher. Chi-square analysis revealed no significant association between religious background and disclosure patterns in sixth formers.

Thus, it would appear that in our sample, religious background is not a determinant in pupils' experiences of bullying due to ethnicity and that perceived levels of institutional violence are low as pupils in both primary schools and sixth forms in our sample reported feeling able to be themselves and that they would disclose to teachers when they experienced forms of ethnic bullying.

Pupils were asked about their perception of the level of respect afforded different religions in three arenas of their lives. As Figure 7 shows, only a very small percentage of our respondents in both primary and sixth forms felt that religion was not respected in their school or local area. However, in sixth forms a significantly higher percentage of students (47%) felt that religion was not respected in the media compared to primary school (19%) ( $\chi^2(693) = 61.03, p < .000$ ). Perhaps, indicative of the greater awareness of the media within this age cohort.<sup>9</sup>

	Primary	Secondary
In my school	7%	6%
In my local area	16%	12%
On TV, radio and in newspapers	19%	47%

**Figure 9: respect for religion**

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that data was missing from primary school children in relation to the question on school (3.7%), the question on local area (4%) and the question on media (4.9%). For sixth formers, data was missing from the question on school (4.6%), the question on local area (5.9%) and the question on media (6.5%).

When analysed by religious group, results reveal statistically significant differences in sixth formers in responses to perceptions of the portrayal of religion in their local area ( $\chi^2(287) = 16.75, p < .005$ ), as the percentage of those from Other or no religious background that felt religion was not respected was slightly higher than other groups (24.2% and 23.5% respectively). There were also statistically significant differences in sixth formers' perception of the portrayal of religion in the media ( $\chi^2(285) = 17.91, p < .003$ ) as the percentage of Muslim pupils who felt religion was not respected was significantly higher than all other groups (58% of 143 students), except Other (53%, however, numbers in this group were very low ( $n=17$ )).

The sub sample of pupils that reported that religions were not equally respected, were then asked to identify which particular religions they did not feel were respected. Of the 7% of primary school pupils who felt religions were not all equally respected in their school, 59% of this sub sample felt Islam was not respected in their school, 52% felt Hinduism was not respected and 30% felt Christianity was not respected. Of the 6% of sixth formers who stated religion was not respected in their school, 67% felt Islam was not respected equally, 47% felt Judaism was not respected and 26% felt Christianity was not respected. It should be noted that as the percentages of pupils who felt religion was not respected were so low, numbers in the sub sample are very small.

Of the 16% of primary school children and 12% of sixth formers who felt religions were not all equally respected in their local area, overall 69% of the sub sample of primary school pupils and 74% of the sub sample of sixth formers stated that Islam was not equally respected in their local area. When analysed for significance, tests reveal no association between religious background and perception of respect for religion in pupils in both age cohort's local area.

Of the sub sample of 19% of primary school children and 47% of sixth formers who felt religions were not all equally respected in the media, 69% of the sub sample of primary school children and 88% of the sub sample of sixth formers stated that Islam was not equally respected, as Figures 10 and 11 reveal. When analysed by religious group, results reveal no significant association between religious background and responses in primary school children. However, for sixth formers, a significant association was found between student's religious background and whether they felt Christianity ( $\chi^2(127) = 30.80, p < .000$ ) and Judaism ( $\chi^2(127) = 18.62, p < .002$ ) were respected in the media as more Christian students stated that Christianity was not respected in the media than was, and more students from an 'Other' religious background (including Jewish students) reported that Judaism was not respected in the media compared to other groups. There was no significant association for other religions.

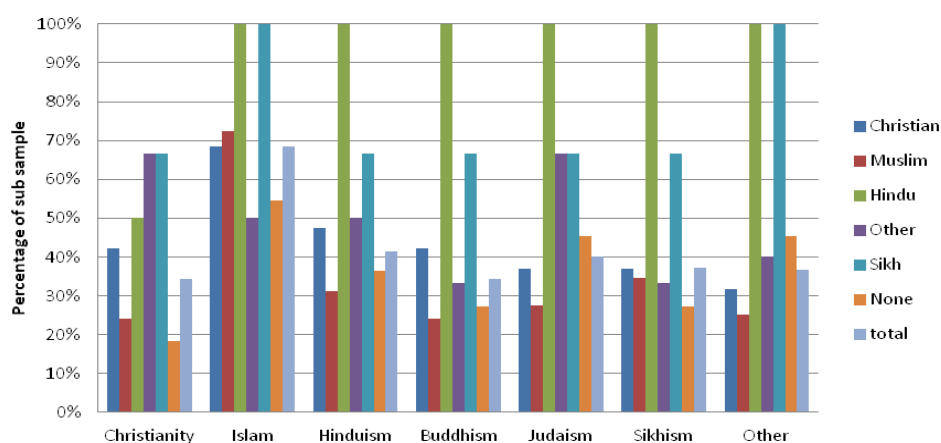


Figure 10. Which religion is not respected in the media – primary school

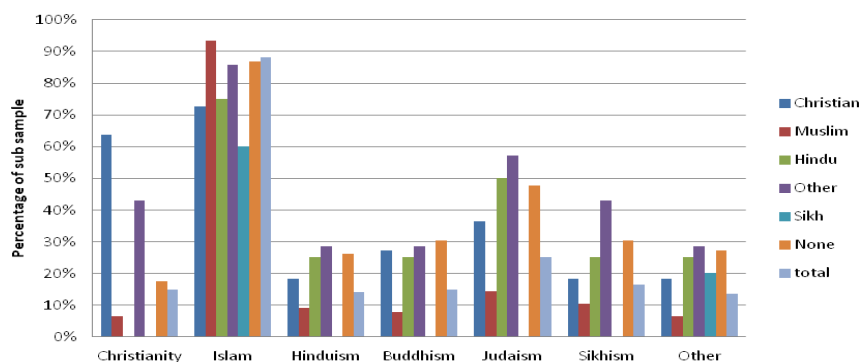


Figure 11. Which religion is not respected in the media – sixth form

## Discussion

Results from the 16 schools in our sample reveal that pupils strongly felt that their school was a place that was welcoming to pupils from different backgrounds, that teachers treated all pupils equally and that they felt safe at school. Pupils were likely to disclose to teachers if they experienced violence due to their ethnic background and there was no association with religious background and disclosure patterns. Thus, on the basis of the quantitative findings, perceived institutional levels of violence can be said to be low within our school sample for the manifestations of violence we examined (exclusion and educational attainment not being covered in this research).

In terms of the different forms of violence experienced by pupils in our sample, overall 40% of primary school children reported experiencing rumour spreading and 32% experienced name calling because of their ethnic background which corresponds with findings in other literature on racial name calling (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2001). Primary school data also revealed an association between religion and experiences of violence, with those from a Muslim, Sikh and 'Other' religious background reporting higher frequencies of name calling and rumour spreading, with those from an 'Other' background reporting the highest levels. Further, those from an 'Other' religious background also experienced higher levels of physical violence. Children from a Christian or no religious background experienced lower levels of violence. Numbers of pupils in the 'Other' and Sikh categories were fairly low; therefore conclusions are difficult to draw. However, pupils from Muslim background were a large group, indicating that these forms of violence are a feature of their school experiences. Whilst, children in this age group's understanding of the questions may have been somewhat limited and we cannot be certain they were accurately reporting these forms of violence occurring because of their ethnicity, as opposed to another reason, the findings reveal an association that merits further study.

In line with other literature in this area (e.g. Smith and Shu, 2000), levels of violence due to ethnic background experienced in the sixth form cohort were lower, with the highest frequency of violence experienced being 20% of all students reporting having experienced name calling. In addition to lower levels of violence, the lack of association between religion and experiences of violence in sixth forms, points to older pupils showing greater understanding and tolerance of others' faiths and backgrounds.

As levels of reported safety in school were high and not associated with pupils' religious background in either primary schools or sixth forms, it would appear that respondents were not afraid in school and that such experiences were not definitively defining the majority's school experience. Such findings highlight the difficulties in researching interethnic violence and underline the need for more detailed analyses into children and young people's lived realities of interethnic relations and how they interact with one another.

We are hopeful that evidence from the focus groups and interviews with staff will draw out a richer detail of pupils' experiences.

Within the school environment, pupils feel religion to be equally respected, despite evidence of primary school pupils of a Muslim faith alongside pupils of other faiths (Sikh, and 'Other') reporting higher levels of some forms of peer violence. However, outside of the school and local area results reveal a different pattern as perceived by sixth formers who felt the media did not provide a particularly respectful portrayal of religion. When analysed by religion, all groups reported this perception, but significantly more Muslims, as identified by previous research (Cesari, 2006; Poynting and Mason, 2007; Lambert and Githens-Mazar, 2010). Particularly in sixth forms, there was a marked difference in the way respondents felt Islam was respected in the media, where a high percentage of students of all religious backgrounds felt Islam was not treated respectfully. Primary school children did not report this perception; perhaps their younger age means they are less likely to have such an awareness of the media.

This article covers only the first stage of the research and the quantitative findings reveal a pattern of fairly harmonious schools where religion and diversity are largely respected and where there are strong institutional processes and procedures to ensure that any discriminatory practices are dealt with promptly and effectively. However, the schools we worked with may well skew data in that all the schools were very multicultural with a strong Muslim presence and they could be more committed to race equality given that they agreed to take part in the research. One would assume that schools suffering from problems of interethnic violence would be less likely to wish to participate in a project of this nature. Thus, the picture might not be the same in different sorts of schools (e.g. less urban, faith schools; schools with a higher proportion of white pupils).

The research findings underline the importance of accepting and celebrating a multi-layered identity as central to effective citizenship in schools and in the wider society. Where the schools embraced diversity as positive and something to celebrate and had developed positive strategies to promote equality and combat inequality and discrimination, pupils felt safe and valued within their school environment and levels of violence were fairly low. In this sense, we may be in a position whereby pupils experience a form of citizenship in schools that is at odds with the wider society.

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## **Activating Citizenship – the nation’s use of education to create notions of identity and citizenship in south Asia**

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### **Abstract**

Identity in south Asia was anchored by, on the one end, community, and on the other, an appreciation of sub-continental (geographical and cultural) space. People, historically, drew their identity as part of communities, which in turn existed in continuity to each-other in the seamless regional expanse of south Asia. Imagination as nationals - a post-colonial construct - faced contestations, both, from community affiliations and spatial imagination contrary to the territorial - modular form of nation-state. As a response, the state fabricated the idea of ‘patriotic-citizen’ and used nationalist historiography to create citizens who are taught to believe the nation as prime-marker of self-definition and act like soldiers, guarding national identity against alternative imaginations. Education has become the most potent devise through which this is achieved. The article, on the basis of textbook narratives in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, would demonstrate (i) how educational practices build a militarist idea of citizenship and, (ii) in doing so co-opts the demands of community by showing the nation as vindication of community-aspirations and on the other hand erasing conceptualisation of a south Asian space from cognitive maps of its subjects. The idea of ‘active’ citizenship understands ‘active’ as responsible citizenship, emphasising a right based discourse. On the contrary education in south Asia is used to ‘activate’ citizenship which is relational in content - based on ideas of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ – instead of allowing critical understanding of rights and identities.

**Keywords:** Active citizenship, identity, South Asia

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### **Activating Citizenship – the nation's use of education to create notions of identity and citizenship in south Asia**

The article is a modest attempt to understand and disentangle the complex relationship between identity, citizenship, nationalism and education in south Asia. This comes as a response to put in perspective - if not be able to answer - the central problematic towards which this particular issue of the journal is devoted - which is - the idea of active citizenship and the role education can play to promote the same; this essay tries to contextualise the idea of citizenship and education in case of the south Asian sub-continent.

This makes it imperative to begin with some insight into what it means to say 'active citizenship'. From the literature that has been produced on the issue it is difficult to extract a single definite definition of the term 'active citizenship' or enlist its exact criterions; but for the present article I understand it as an idea which looks at citizenship not just as entitlement to constitutional rights and duties, but as an idea which assumes citizens to be something more than being mere recipients of norms entrusted upon by state functionaries; it understands citizenship as predisposition and empowerment to participate in rule/norm making and reforming processes and something involving a more action based discourse of enacting change and enforcing rights; moving beyond mere governmental or statist scriptures. Active citizenship would therefore be about overcoming passivity and not confining citizenship as an institution/ function of receiving state conferred norms and remaining bound by the same. The concept of active citizenship is definitely therefore about transcendence; it involves critically reflecting upon present discourses on citizenship and making necessary interventions to produce (desired) future transformations. In Europe, with its trans-national visions and politics, the transformation might already be in progress, though its actual content may still need further reflection. Away from the European context this essay seeks to talk about the south Asian geo-political space. Notions about citizenship are intrinsically woven with notions about inter-subjective identity, therefore any attempt towards transforming meaning and parameters of citizenship would necessarily entail transforming primary notions and contents involving collective identity. With this problematic in mind the essay seeks to understand the identity construction process in south Asian countries and reflect upon how citizenship is perceived in the south Asian context.

The article traces the shifting posts of identity in south Asia through making a historical analysis of how bonds of affiliation and identities were perceived in pre-colonial south Asia and how the axis of identity and belongingness were altered by the imperatives of the post-colonial nation-states. It looks at how in the post-colonial times nation-states in south Asia created identities and notions about being citizens through a vigorous process of *otherisation* and demonization of other identities to anchor citizenship into a discourse of confrontational nationalism. The means and method to achieve this was to create belligerent historiographies of the shared south Asian past and for doing so, as the article intends to demonstrate, nation-states made use of public education to disseminate versions of nationalist history where the central agenda was to create citizens who would perceive their national identity as defiance of or opposition to significant others. The article shows how school education and curriculum were used, and especially school textbooks were written, to produce and re-enforce identities within the framework of 'us' against 'them' which not just confines the target audience to perceive a citizen as necessarily being a model of a patriot-martyr but also, and as a consequence, limits their vision of any trans-national or emancipatory understanding of citizenship and collective identity. Having demonstrated that, in its concluding observations, the article tries to make few preliminary comments on the challenges and possibilities of a trans-national understanding of citizenship in south Asia and on a possible post-national transcendence.

With that in mind the essay has been divided into three parts – in the first part we look at the nature of pre-colonial community in south Asian societies and understand how identity and the south Asian region itself was imagined in pre-modern and pre-colonial times. The second part of the essay, involving the central discussion of this article, looks at how school textbooks have been used by post-colonial nation-states in south Asia to build and disseminate a nationalist history in order to create particular content for national identities and construct future citizens. The third part of the essay attempts to be prescriptive, suggesting the need for overcoming nationalist teleology and re-defining identities.

### ***Part-I: Identity in pre-colonial south Asia.***

Nation as a form of political unity and nationality as a marker of self and collective identity are colonial advents in south Asia. In pre modern, pre-colonial south Asian societies the ‘community’ was the source of identity but at the same time identity was not situated to a singular, uni-dimensional definition rather it was in a flux and this sense of community can best be described as being, to borrow social scientist Sudipta Kaviraj’s term, ‘fuzzy’. Kaviraj seems to have given a remarkable understanding to the identity complex of pre-colonial south Asian societies. In explaining pre-modern, pre-colonial basis of identity Kaviraj says -

The traditional sense of community... was fuzzy in two senses. It was fuzzy first in the sense that the construction of individual or collective identity depended very heavily on a sense of context. Belonging to varying layers of community was not seen as disputable or unreasonable. Given different situations, a pre-modern person could have said that his community was either his religious or caste or occupational group, or his village or his region. He might find it difficult to render these varying communities, to all of which he belonged, into some unimpeachable hierarchy, either moral or political. (Kaviraj, 2010: 13-14).

At a different place Kaviraj further explains, “The arrangement of identities is fuzzy in the sense of being indeterminate in rank order; though, paradoxically, this allows for greater precision and flexibility in the social identification of persons, and is more complex than the modern unidimensional assertion of a national tag.” (Kaviraj, 2010: 95) The second sense in which Kaviraj understands these communities to be fuzzy is equally important and insightful. He suggests that they were fuzzy because they did “not have clear territorial boundaries, or a map in the way modern societies must have. It is a world of a much finer, graded, and more complex organization of difference, much like the way one tone of colour would shade off into another in a spectrum.” (Kaviraj, 2010: 95-96).

Thus the understanding that we get about pre-colonial south Asian society is that, traditionally, social, economic and political life in south Asia was composed around the community but these communities existed in seamless continuity to each-other within the south Asian regional space, where the geo-spatial imagination was de-territorialised. This further means that there was neither any concept of borders cutting across the region nor an imagination of a territorialised identity. Thus identity was, while on the one hand, purely communitarian, on the other hand, it was also not bound by limits of territories. Hence though there might not have been an explicit realisation of the exact regional expanse but it was a de-territorialised regional imagination, that is, an imagination of a continuous geographical space where movement was unrestricted and identity was in a flux. The possibility of free flowing, virtually unrestricted, movement of people and goods is testimony of such an understanding of the physical/ geographical space. This is also not to suggest that instead of a territorialised (or nationalised) identity there existed any notion of a south Asian identity, but simply to propose that identity was sourced in the community and the communities themselves were not strictly demarcated and territorially differentiated from each-other. What is important to underline here is that in the pre - colonial times one did not derive or lay claim to any form of (social, political, economic/ individual or collective) right only by virtue of being part of a territorialised entity and hence, and what is more significant for the present discussion, did

not fear any possible loss of the same with loss of territorial identity. Thus, on the one hand, communitarian identity was one end of the spectrum, while imagination of a de-territorialised space was the other end, together characterising the identity spectrum of pre-colonial south Asian society.

The idea of a nation-state as a form of political community entered south Asian political imagination with the coming of the European colonisers and consequently with the introduction of western modernism and philosophy of enlightenment. The imagination of the nation-state was a derivative of modernism and enlightenment philosophy. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there grew a sizeable constituency of English educated elite class in the south Asian sub-continent who were read in European philosophy and had internalised the language and logic of modern rationalism and also its dominance and superiority over traditional systems of social and political organisation. Nationalism grew as a reaction and response to colonial rule which, for the new nationalist elite, seemed to be the primary obstacle towards fulfilment of the promise of modernity and enlightenment.

Thereafter, with the end of colonialism in south Asia, the anti-colonialism inspired nationalism was left with the task of creating the nation and a sense of national identity where there existed none before the advent of colonial rule. Further the south Asian sub-continent, at the wake of its independence from European colonial rule, was dissected into separate territorialised entities by the logic of geopolitics and partition. This new post-colonial reality meant that the otherwise geographically continuous south Asian space was now composed of numerous territorial nation-states, each with the task of building definite national identities within the confines of their newly acquired territorial boundaries. To achieve this was the foremost critical and daunting task for the south Asian nation-states in the immediate post colonial times. Community affiliation and the seamless geographical space, the two axis of pre-colonial identity, seemed the two major impediments, which the nation-states had to override. Nation-building was an unfinished project at the time when European colonisers departed from the south Asian scene; consolidating a national identity and re-enforcing it in the manner of creating a sense of sacredness and perpetuity about the nation and national identity were the most urgent and essential tasks for the architects of the nation-state. This consolidation of national identity had to be accomplished by the states - within themselves and at same time against each-other.

The challenge was duly met by the nation-states through the adventure of writing their own pasts, crafting their own historiographies, where a nation recounts the story of its own making to its own (alleged) people. And in this mission of educating its people about its own past, school textbooks seemed to become the most potent weapon to forge the (nationalist) identity. The pre-modern community affiliation and de-territorialised imagination of the sub-continental space were two primary ideas and imaginations which the nation had to confront and, more importantly, override. To this end it used a double sided weapon – in its rendition of history it justified the community as being the nation itself, narrating how community was a sort of immanent nation waiting to rise to its consciousness and freedom with the formation of the nation-state, and by the help of the same discourse erased from the cognitive maps of its audience the imagination of a south Asian region as a possible geographically continuous space. The latter impression was achieved by the nationalist ideology through immortalising the existence and antiquity of borders, where, historically speaking, there existed none. Hence to community and to de-territorialised identity, the nationalist ideology had devised its unique responses. In its historiography, the nation manages to erase a regional imagination of space; one seldom finds references to any concept of regionalism and globalism in school textbooks, while the nation is juxtaposed over the communitarian imagery but minus the flux and the fuzzy, the non-hierarchical, multi-dimensional character.

Thus the past that the school textbooks are made to narrate have no reference to possible historical organic connectedness of south Asian people and communities. As the following section would show history is recounted as a play of communities struggling against each-other, existing in oppositions and binaries and the present day (modern and invented) conception of borders seeming immutable and eternal.

### ***Part-II: Identity in post colonial south Asia***

Public education is an extremely potent device and, historically, has always been put in excellent use by ruling powers to manufacture opinion and interest in its favour. In light of contested identities and deep roots of the community in shaping collective identities, the newly formed south Asian states found historiography to be their best bet to counter oddities. Histories were written and re-written to rationalise the nation and school textbooks were found to be the best means to disseminate them.

In the following pages I intend to make a documentary analysis of school textbooks and curriculum frameworks to demonstrate how textual representations are fabricated about issues relating to community relations and national security revealing how the audience for nationalist discourse is created and secured through symbolic and representational means. In the following demonstration one can see how the nation-state creates its citizens by narrating to the targeted audience stories about how the nation itself is vindication of community aspirations and hence safeguarding the nation-state is tantamount, and the only means, to protect the community. The stories about the nationalist past are juxtaposed on tales about community relations creating citizens who internalise a nationalist identity which is anchored on a sense of communal identity but necessarily involving a negation and detestation of yet other community identities. Thus is created a citizen whose point of self-reference is the nation and who finds in the nation his/her source of collective security, sense of survival and identity. Hence the citizen is always the soldier who is taught through textual images and representation who his/her fellow mates and outsiders are, who are to be considered friends and who are the foes; clearly drawing the line between 'us' and the 'others'. As mentioned before such a making of citizenship discourse, mandating imaginations to develop in terms of oppositions and binaries, does not allow readers to appreciate the inherent nature of south Asian societies and geography.

In this regard the most interesting areas of investigation and de-constructing nationalist narratives are where the south Asian nation-states re-create stories about nationalist history belonging to the shared past. It is revealing to see how such stories about similar incidents, belonging to the same past, are craftily constructed to produce antagonistic reactions.

In our analysis of textbook narratives the first case we look at are two instances from Bangladesh school textbooks. The excerpts are instrumental in understanding how Bangladesh creates a Bengali Muslim ascription for itself as the defining aspect about its national identity through narratives which are necessarily exclusionary in nature and build on negation of other community identities. In the first instance, and also later in other passages, we would see how a Bengali Muslim identity is consolidated and securitised by a tale of betrayal by a Hindu community (belonging to the territorial limits of present day India). Further, in the second instance, we would look at portrayal of the Punjabi community - the dominant group in present day Pakistan - vis-a-vis Bengali Muslims belonging to the territory of present day Bangladesh (east Bengal during the colonial rule in south Asia).

Any standard secondary level school textbook in Bangladesh would initiate its narrative on modern history with a description on adverse effects faced by Muslims due to introduction of western education and reform policies by the British colonial rulers. The narrative would be explicit in its verdict that introduction of education in English language and modern sciences benefitted only the Hindus of the region while the Muslims suffered at

the hands of British as well as the Hindus. It would explain how Hindus were allowed to obtain all high salaried jobs while Muslims were denied of their traditional livelihoods. Texts would, in their introductory passages, narrate instances of Hindu exploitation over Muslims with the help of British policies. For instance a passage in a secondary level textbook in Bangladesh describing an agrarian taxation policy (known as the permanent settlement policy) introduced by the British would read as follows –

During the period of British rule in Bangladesh most of the zamindars (landowners) were Hindus. British through the Permanent settlement policy destroyed the traditional Muslim landownership. Muslim landowners used to collect tax through Hindu workers. British ended up recognising the tax collectors as owners of the land. This is how the Muslim class of zamindars were eliminated and a class of British enthusiast and devoted Hindu zamindars was created...This brought about impoverishment of the Muslims. The Muslims were exploited by their Hindu zamindars. They had to pay several illegal taxes to the zamindars... (Bangladesh School Textbook Board, 1977: 261-262).

This is illustrative of how a Hindu community is projected to be an adversary to that of Muslims and a sub-text being implicit in the narrative that Muslim identity would prosper only through opposition to Hindus. This further show how school textbooks are made to initiate their history of colonialism with a tale of community dispossession and suffering at the hands of the significant *other* community so that the national identity created defines itself as involving the negation of this chosen 'other'. Thus from the very beginning a story conducive to the making of a patriotic citizen who perceives national identity as necessarily relational in terms of having friends and foes is forcefully entrenched.

Having created a certain imagery of the Hindus, textbooks in Bangladesh move on to their portrayal of the Punjabi community, another significant 'other' in the construction of the nationalist identity of a Bengali Muslim. In the following passage we can see how Punjabis are described as virtually being traitors in the 1857 revolt – the first major anti-colonial uprising in south Asia - while the narrative upholds a sense of Bengali Muslim martyrdom and victimhood.

The passage says –

Because of the fact that the movement (of 1857) first got ignited from the soil of Bengal, the British government began to treat the people of Bengal with suspicion... as a result, after 1857, the British started recruiting soldiers for the national army only from Punjab. The Punjabis, due to their persistent support to the British, began to acquire place in the army in huge numbers. On the other hand the people of Bengal were abused. (Bangladesh School Textbook Board, 1973b: 145).

Another textbook for a different age group of students had the following to say about the same event.

The supporters of Britain helped them in various ways. The Bengali Hindus, Punjabis, Nepalese, Gorkhas, Nizam of Hyderabad...unequivocally helped the British... By supporting the British rulers, Punjabis became their closest. (As a result) in the army the presence of Punjabis kept increasing and thanks to the British government, irrigation and other developmental activities began in Punjab. (Bangladesh School Textbook Board, 1973a: 333 – 335).

Arguably reading such passages would invariably create an adversarial imagery of Punjabis of Pakistan and Hindus of present day India in the impressionable minds of the young readers of Bangladesh.

In the following passages we can further see how Hindus have been demonised in the textbooks of Bangladesh, describing in great details the extent of exploitation of Bengali Muslims at the hands of (Indian) Hindus. These are passages about the incident of Bengal Partition of 1905. Thereafter we would look at passages from Indian textbooks about the same incident but examine how they produce almost contradictory impression of the same past.

The Bangladesh textbooks have the following to say to its readers about the 1905 partition –

Lord Curzon for the sake of administrative convenience and for economic and overall advancement of the Muslims of the east Bengal in 1905 divided Bengal into two parts... the Hindu community and the Congress launched a massive agitation against Lord Curzon's decision. Muslim support for Bengal Partition and strong protests by Hindus against the same brought to surface Hindu – Muslim differences in the most glaring manner... (Bangladesh School Textbook Board, 1973a: 340; 1977: 278-279)

Similarly, a later re-edited version of the textbook says –

Lord Curzon could understand that since the very beginning of the British rule until then the administration of Bengal was entirely Kolkata centric. As a result east Bengal was always neglected and in every sphere – from trade and commerce, industry, transportation to education – it remained under-developed and backward. The inhabitants of east Bengal were exploited by Kolkata based businessmen, industrialists, zamindars, bureaucrats and lawyers. Lord Curzon thought that creating a new province in east Bengal would help reduce the administrative disparity and other inequalities between east and west of Bengal... But severe protest to the Bengal Partition was registered from the Hindus. The upper caste Hindu community of Bengal build a massive agitation against the Bengal Partition. Their moneyed, businessmen, zamindars and intellectual community took active part in this agitation. They had exploited the poor and the neglected lot of Muslims of east Bengal in various ways. Now (with Bengal Partition) they realised that with the institution of the new province their opportunity to exploit would cease. Kolkata's affluent, businessmen and lawyer community felt insecure anticipating the future of their businessmen. All India National Congress dived into agitations to impede and repeal Bengal Partition... Even a generous leader like the then chairperson of Congress, Gokhale, supported a movement which was against the interest of the Muslims of east Bengal. In this way the Hindu community increasingly made this anti-Bengal Partition movement, antithetical to Muslim interests, strong and dynamic. Muslims of east Bengal under their leader, Dhaka's Nawab Saimmullah's leadership, continued their agitation to defend the new province. But the Hindus, in order to attain their objective and vested interest, at the end turned the anti-Bengal Partition agitation into a terrorist movement. Ultimately the British government succumbed to the Hindu nationalists and terror driven agitation. (Nation Curriculum and Textbook Board, 1984: 164-165; 1987: 171-172)

Apart from the larger story of describing one community exploiting the other, which is apparent and clearly reveals itself to be the core agenda of the write-up, one also needs to note the recurrent territorial references made. The passage is set about a time when the present national territories and borders did not emerge, but nonetheless there is continuous hammering about imaginations of the same, referring to territorial confines of east Bengal (present day Bangladesh) visa vie the west (present day India). Notions about territoriality, which might not have been that obvious and strong in the imaginations of the time that the narrative speaks of, are yet made explicit and repeatedly uttered for the sake of feeding the imaginations pertaining to present day nation-states. This validates what educationist Krishna Kumar said about history narratives in school books; claiming that what we see in our

textbooks “is not about the past but about the present”. It is about “a vocal sense of continuity of the present with the past”. (Kumar, 2001: 81)

An Indian textbook account of the 1905 Bengal Partition would have a completely different picture to draw. In Indian texts the 1905 Bengal Partition is understood as a manifestation of the ‘divide and rule’ policy of the colonisers and there would be no reference to the possible legitimacy of the fact that Bengali Muslims living in the eastern part of Bengal were far removed from the site of the capital which was located in Kolkata and hence share administrative motive might have prompted the said policy. Without refereeing to any possibility of distress among people of eastern Bengal, the Indian texts simply account for an assumed colonial intention of weakening the Indian nationalist movement as part of its description on 1905 Bengal Partition.

A standard Indian textbook narrative on 1905 Bengal Partition would read as follows –

His (Lord Curzon’s) most unpopular act was the partition of Bengal. The object of the measure was given out as administrative convenience. The leaders could clearly see that it was actually a measure to divide the people. East Bengal was to be a Muslim majority province and the West a Hindu majority province. The partition was designed to... thus weaken the nationalist movement. However, the effect of the measure belied the hopes of the British government. It provoked an (united) agitation and such angry reaction against British rule that the partition measure had to be annulled. (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1989: 62-63)

‘History’ in school textbooks of Bangladesh come to close with almost graphical descriptions of Punjab dominated West Pakistan’s exploitation on Bengalis of East Pakistan, later to become Bangladesh after independence in 1971. Any history text in Bangladesh would provide detailed account of how Punjabis exploited and carried brutal repression on Bengalis and consequently how Bengalis realised that their security and freedom could be maintained solely through opposing the Punjabis and forming a separate Bengali nation-state, the only way to vindicate Bengali identity. Students are made to read pages after pages of such descriptions in a fashion that protecting a threatened ‘Bengali’ identity is still the primary task and mandate for those belonging to Bangladesh.

Some of the passages from old and recent school textbooks in Bangladesh read as follows –

In an independent state the mother tongue of majority of its citizens is the national language. In Pakistan 56% of the population’s mother tongue was Bengali... Yet through completely undemocratic means Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan and many non-Bengali bureaucrats tried imposing Urdu as the sole language on Pakistan... In protest the great agitation that was initiated in Bangladesh is known as the language movement... Hundreds and hundreds of students were arrested and the beating of protesting students with the help of Muslim League supporters aroused deep suspicion in the minds of Bengalis... one has to understand the conspiracy that revealed in front of the people of East Bengal... a story of exploitation and false claims and Bengalis started feeling alien... (Bangladesh School Textbook Board, 1973a: 421-430)

They (the leadership of West Pakistan) demonstrated extreme disregard towards East Bengal. ... 65% of Pakistan’s population resided in East Bengal. Yet among the positions of Governor-general and Prime Minister none were given to a Bengali... (National Curriculum and Textbook Board, 1984: 178)

To deteriorate the state of law and order a severe riot was purposely instigated between Bengalis and non - Bengali workers. To the extent that East Bengal’s sole armed military unit was removed... and was put under the control of Punjab... people

of East Pakistan demanded self-rule and independence and (in response) rulers of West Pakistan tried crushing such demands of justice. They did not hesitate in labelling Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (nationalist leader of Bangladesh) and the patriotic population of this region as anti-nation. (National Curriculum and Textbook Board, 2009: 110-113)

It is easy to see the parallels. One has to substitute the story about Hindu exploitation of East Bengal with that of West Pakistani and Punjabi suppression of East Pakistan, and the overall narrative intent of '*otherising*' one or the other community to lay the foundations of a Bengali identity remains the same and evident.

So far we mostly examined identity construction in textbooks of Bangladesh. A similar process of identity creation can be traced in textbooks of Pakistan and India.

A class V textbook in Pakistan has the following to say about Hindus -

The British had the objective to take over India and to achieve this, they made Hindus join them and Hindus were very glad to side with the British. After capturing the subcontinent, the British began on the one hand the loot of all things produced in this area, and on the other, in conjunction with Hindus, to greatly suppress the Muslims. (Cited in Khan, 2008).

On the other hand an Indian textbook shares with its readers the following expression about Muslims and Muslim League, the founding political party of Pakistan -

However, in spite of the fact that many Muslims had joined the united (Indian) nationalist movement, the influence of the communal elements among Muslims became strong. Many (Muslims) leaders still looked for concessions from the government to promote the interest of the newly emerging middle class and upper class economic interests... The encouragement given by the government to upper class Muslims and thus to communal politics is evident from the events which led to the formation of the Muslim League. On 1 October 1906, a Muslim delegation led by the Agha Khan met Governor-General Minto at Shimla. Agha Khan, religious head of a Muslim sect, was an extremely wealthy person. He led a life of luxury, mostly in Europe. Another important leader was Nawab Sallimullah of Decca (now Dhaka). The Governor-General encouraged the deputationists and within three months, on 30 December 1906, the Muslim League was formed. (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1989: 67-68)

At another instance an Indian textbook narrative says -

An unfortunate development after the calling off the Non-Cooperation movement was the growth of communal riots... The communal parties were not concerned with the freedom of the country but wanted to get concessions for the upper classes of their communities. You have already read about the Muslim League which cut itself from the Congress in the 1920s and started pursuing communal demands... These tendencies hampered the nationalist movement. They diverted the attention of people from the need for independence from foreign rule... Many communal riots occurred in various parts of the country as a result of the activities of communal organisations and the encouragement they received from the British government. (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1989: 74-75).

Again, a few pages later, the textbook has the following to say about the Muslim League -

You have read earlier about the rise of communal parties... The Muslim League fared badly in the elections of 1937... However, soon communalism raised its head again,



this time in a more sinister form and led to tragic consequences for the people of India... the Muslim League led by Jinnah claimed that India consisted of two separate nations - Hindus and Muslims. Politics based on this theory led to tragic incidents and ultimately the partition of the country... The 'two-nation theory' was a total falsification of the entire history of the Indian people. In 1940, at the Lahore session of the Muslim League, the demand for a separate state of Pakistan was made... The Muslim League was encouraged by the British government to press its demands for a separate state and played the game of British imperialism which had the effect of disrupting and weakening the movement for independence. When the Congress withdrew from the provincial governments in protest against British attitude to the demand for independence, the Muslim League celebrated the event by observing what is called the 'Deliverance Day' and tried to form ministries in the provinces although they did not have a majority in any provincial legislature. (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1989: 87-89)

The story of creating conflicting nationalist identities and communal images that we are talking about is best reflected in a title of a class V textbook of Pakistan. Political scientist Navnita Chadha Behera (1996) in one of her studies reveals how a class V textbook in Pakistan had a chapter titled "India's Evil Designs Against Pakistan".

Like the case of descriptions about Bengal Partition of 1905, the mutually contesting representations about the 1947 Partition of the sub-continent in textbooks of India and Pakistan are revealing about the nationalist project. A Pakistan textbook described the violence during partition riots in the following words – "Hindus and Sikh, enemies of mankind, killed and dishonoured thousands nay thousands of women, children, the old and the young, with extreme cruelty and heartlessness." (Mutala'a-i-Pakistan, published by NWFP Textbook Board, cited in Behera, 1996). On the other hand an Indian text finds Muslim League and its 'communal' demand for Pakistan as the reason for all violence. It says-

...the Muslim League declared that it would bid goodbye to constitutional methods and observe 16 August 1946 as 'Direct Action Day'. As a result, some places in East Bengal, Calcutta, Bihar and Punjab witnessed riots, murder, pillage and arson. Nearly 500 Indians lost their lives. About one lakh Indians became homeless. This is one part of the story. The other was the refusal of the Muslim League to take part in the elections to be held in July 1946 for the purpose of setting up of a Constitutional Assembly. In short, the Muslim League communalised the country's political situation which, in its turn, produced disastrous results. (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2002: 56-57)

Thus the discussion so far reveals the process of demonizing other communities, vilifying them, situating one's own community identity as a struggle with the other. And all this is done through the medium of public education.

The above discussion brings to light some important aspects about citizenship. Beginning with the obvious – it anchors one's self-references in singular/ unidimensional identities – a Hindu, a Punjabi-Muslim, a Bengali- Muslim – and weds them with national identities and territories. Hence any sense of threat to one's identity is perceived as threat to one's nation and is further considered an existential crisis and, as a result, what are produced are 'militant-citizens', ready to kill, plunge and be martyrs in name of the nation. The second, and more important, aspect about such discourses on identity and nation is that such discourse result in deep sense of exclusion among many of those who inhabit the territorial boundaries of these nation-states - they might be legal citizens or at times vying for such status but denied - but do not share the community identity associated with the nation and the nationalist discourse. It is important therefore to ask how a Muslim reader living in India would perceive his/her citizenship on reading Indian texts about Muslims and the kind of historicization

Muslim League receives in the above cited texts. Similarly a non-Bengali living in Bangladesh is quite at a loss to make sense of his membership of Bangladesh, a state claiming in its historical autobiography to be created for the interests of Bengalis only. Notion of citizenship for a Hindu or a Bengali- Muslim living in Pakistan is equally troubled. The counter-narratives of these communities, living almost as if in exile, is never made part of the nationalist historiography, opening avenues for the making of, if not, 'patriotic-militant-citizens' but potential 'unpatriotic-militants'.

### ***Part-III : Last thoughts***

This article, as hinted in the beginning, was a response to try and answer what it would mean to introduce discourse on 'active' citizenship to education modules of classrooms in south Asia. A module which would instil in students' psyche an appreciation of one's rights and duties - politically and socially - as part of a larger trans-national milieu; characterised by a sense of citizenship as meaning to be predisposed towards participating in change and being active as members of one's socio-political contexts, perceived quite apart from the passivity of being mere non-active recipients. How is one to contextualise this positive, responsible transcending sense of (active) citizenship in south Asia where education modules are stuffed with perceptions of struggling community identities and national loyalties?

In place of a responsible and civil sense of (active) citizenship, we found how educational discourses in south Asia, in a way, 'activate' citizenship, understanding membership of a polity as necessarily entailing a constant state of preparedness to guard frontiers and homogenise notions of national identity, irrespective of the fact that they always can be plural in nature. Even if not for an actual war, citizens are expected to be constantly prepared to defend national identities and its emblems – the anthem, the flag, the borders as markings on paper. Test for citizenship is readiness to sacrifice and achieve martyrdom. And this discourse on citizenship is propelled through what is taught and learnt as part of education.

Thus the article intends to end with the submission that the crippling teleologies of nationalism need to be surpassed in what is read and taught in south Asian schools and educational premises. A fresh lease of life needs to be pumped into historical narratives that are tutored in schools. More fundamentally the region – the south Asian space – needs to be re-looked for more organic imaginations to be built in place of an imagination which looks at south Asia simply as a physical – political map bifurcated by territorial lines and imaginary borders.

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## **Establishing a general framework civic competency for European youth**

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### **Abstract**

This paper proposes a project that aims to construct a general framework of civic competency that will help understand civic competence as a blended measure of civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, behavioural intentions and behaviours. By distinguishing between civic potential, civic behaviour and civic outcomes, with empirical datasets from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) on 14 year-old European students, the framework will describe how these constructs are related and measured, and show their impact on future civic competence and active citizenship. In this project, by considering the effect of different social, political and cultural contexts, the framework will accommodate measures of civic dimensions that are common to all societies as well as those specific to particular societies and regions. This will challenge the quest for a universal model for civic competence. Given that cultivating civically competent citizens ready for active citizenship is an important educational outcome for many educational systems, this paper has the potential to expand understanding of citizenship, citizenship education and the relation of the two.

**Keywords:** Civic competency, European youth, citizenship education, civic knowledge

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## Introduction

Active citizenship is an important educational outcome intended in curricula of citizenship education across societies. According Hoskins, d'Hombres and Campbell (2008), active citizenship is defined as “participation in civil society, community and/ or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy”. In achieving this, students should be equipped with necessary abilities and dispositions to enable them to participate effectively and actively in the societies when they become adults as citizens expected of more responsibility and commitments. In other words, adolescents should prepare to possess civic competency for their active citizenship in the future.

This proposed project aims to construct a general framework of civic competency that will help understand the civic competency of adolescents across societies in Europe. By testing the theoretical adequacy of the empirical results, the field of citizenship education will be moved forward to embrace a general framework for understanding students' civic competency as a blended measure of civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, behavioural intentions and behaviours. It will also investigate methodological approaches that will provide valid and reliable assessment of civic competency in the future. By distinguishing between *civic potential*, *civic behaviour* and *civic outcome*, the framework will describe how these constructs are related and measured. By taking into the consideration of different social, political and cultural contexts, the framework will accommodate measures of civic potentials, civic behaviour and civic outcome that are specific to particular societies and regions, with representations from both common and specific civic dimensions. This will challenge the requirement of large scale assessments for a universal model conceptualizing and measuring civic competencies. From the perspective of comparative citizenship education, given that cultivating civically competent citizens ready for active citizenship is an important educational outcome for many nations, this project, therefore, has the potential to expand understanding of citizenship, citizenship education and the relation of the two to the nation in the European region. This study will draw on the analysis of the datasets from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS; Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). The results will provide an empirical test of whether there is support to the notion of a unique European perspective of students' civic competency. Its comparative methodology will highlight the significance of understanding citizenship issues in a comparative perspective.

## Review of literature on civic competence

Researchers in the past decades have attempted to conceptualize the idea of “civic competence”. Since civic competence is a contested concept, however, scholars in different times have used different conceptions and definitions. For example, Hoskins and Crick (2010) adopted a composite concept of competence as a “complex combination of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that leads to effective, embodied human action in the world”. In particular, some went further to define “civic competence” as a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that enables a person to take part in active citizenship (Hoskins et al., 2008, 2011). Back to the 1960s, in their classic publication *Civic Culture*, Almond and Verba (1963) mentioned the term “civic competence” referring to it as attitudes and norms that individuals have to acquire to be competent and active citizens in the societies. Fratzak-Rudnicka and Torney-Purta (2002) have argued that the requirement of good citizenship varies with the different political regimes, and discussed the notion of “civic competence” with competencies particularly necessary for “democratic citizenship”. Torney-Purta and Lopez (2006) identified “three strands” of civic competencies, that is civic-knowledge, cognitive and participative skills (and associated behaviour), and core civic dispositions (motivations for behaviour and values/ attitudes). This is a similar conception adopted by

Hoskins et al. (2008, 2011) who divided civic competence consisting of four broad domains, which are citizenship values, social justice values and attitudes, participatory attitudes (behavioural intentions) and cognition about democratic institutions. It can be seen that these researchers in general have conceptualized civic competence to include both cognitive and non-cognitive component. Recently civic and citizenship competencies have been linked by some scholars in a broader sense with students' preparedness and competencies in the workplace. For example, Torney-Purta and Wilkenfeld (2010) have emphasized the overlapping areas between civic and citizenship outcomes and workplace performance. They outlined how various civic outcomes could be analyzed to inform the workplace competencies in future. Besides their analysis using the IEA Civic Education Study (CivEd; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001) data they linked the relevance of the civic and citizenship dimensions with competencies that adolescents need as they move to the workplace as adults. , There are currently some international studies being carried out linking civic competencies with the "21st Century Skills", such as the *Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills* in 2009, and *Partnership for 21st Century Skills* in 2006.

From a comparative citizenship education perspective, some researchers have already done a comparison of levels of "civic competence" among the countries in the European context (see Hoskins et al., 2008, 2011). They analyzed the data of a total of 22 European countries and created a "composite indicator" to measure the adolescents' civic competence from the large scale assessment of the CivEd. They called such an indicator "Civic Competence Composite Indicator" (CCCI) and have published several works on the measuring and monitoring of civic competence in Europe. In their work, civic competence, in the form of a composite indicator, can be further conceptualized as contribution from four separate domain indicators: citizenship values, social justice values and attitudes, participatory attitudes, and cognitions about democratic institutions. Recently, Hoskins Villalba, & Saisana (2012) did a similar work on the ICCS 2009 (see more details below). Since they have analyzed the data from those European countries cross-nationally, they have shown cross-country similarities and differences on both overall performance and domain-specific scores among these countries, and offer some explanations from the perspectives of education, economic development and political history of the countries.

### **Civic competence or civic competency?**

Occupational Personality Questionnaires used by industrial/occupational psychologists differentiate these two constructs: job competency (now measure) and job competence (lag measure). I think this distinction is also true for studies on youth civic competency. Similar to the concepts of competence and competency in the field of industrial/occupational psychology, "civic competence" and "civic competencies" seem very similar in wording, especially in the current literature they are often used interchangeably by scholars to refer to the same concept. In this project, I would argue they represent very different concepts and should be made clearly distinguishable to make subsequent discussion more meaningful. Civic competence, I would argue, should refer to the actual level of competence as reflected in adolescents' or citizens' performance of civic engagement in the societies, and it should be determined by a pre-set standard of competence against certain satisfying criteria and outcomes. Competency, on the other hand, should relate to the underlying attitudes, values, cognition, motivation and behaviours citizens should possess in order to achieve the desired outcomes of civic engagement (see, for example, Torney-Purta and Lopez, 2006). In particular, for young adolescents, the focus should be on "civic potential" (see details below) to predict what they would be able or would like to perform when they become adult citizens in the future. Civic competence, in whatever period of time or stage; however, civic competency should be regarded as a record of blended attitudes, knowledge, and performance of civic engagement at a particular point of time. In the following section, I shall describe the

three components of the general framework of civic competency, i.e. civic potential, civic behaviour, and civic outcome.

### **Civic potential**

It should be noted that the current conceptualization of civic competency is a blended measure of civic knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, attitudes, behavioural intentions, and actual behaviours. In particular, in understanding behaviour-related measures, consideration should be given to differentiating between behavioural intentions and behaviours themselves. The behaviours and other civic dimensions that the students are currently demonstrating should be understood as civic behaviour whereas the behavioural intentions and other civic dimensions which are about aspiration for civic engagement in the future should be understood as civic potential.

Kennedy (2006, 2007) has indicated that youth are actually preparing to become citizens. Some researchers have also pointed out that in the legal sense they are yet to be citizens since they are not allowed to exhibit voting behaviours, which are the fundamental participatory action of active citizenship (see, for example, TorneyPurta and Amadeo, 2011). Therefore, young adolescents, by its nature and definition, are bound not to be able show their full possible potential of civic competence until they are in their adulthood. Therefore it may be more appropriate to talk about their level of “civic competence” at a later point of time when they have moved from adolescence to adulthood.

In the study proposed here the concept of “civic potential” will be introduced to represent the civic characteristics of youth in their young adolescence, where civic attitudes and civic values are in the formation stage and where some of civic behaviours that are relevant to society can still be exhibited and measured. As some psychologists and sociologists do, Flanagan (2008) showed a consistent view of “adolescents are becoming citizens” by describing the adolescence period as “politically definitive period”. Adolescence is regarded as the time for youth to learn and acquire conceptions that have considerable effect in the future directions of their civic lives.

It should be recognized that in the current literature, in particular in Hoskins et al.’s work (2008, 2011), the domain “participatory attitudes” are constructed as collective measures of the “behavioural intentions” (such as via the students’ expected adult participation in political activities). Some may argue that such “behavioural intentions” measures are not actually measures of actual competency; rather it should be conceptualized as some potential measures or disposition that will have effect on the future civic behaviours. This latter is the main idea behind the concept of civic potential.

The current literature has focused on civic competence of the adolescents who are not existing adults. It does not consider the fact that as the adolescents grow, the social, economic, political contexts they are living do undergo changes rapidly. As Higgins-D’Alessandro (2010) has pointed out “concepts of citizenship, civic engagement, and civic responsibilities are multifaceted and they are understood differently by different generations”, thus it should be expected that when the adolescents grow into adults, they would be living in a society that could have different social, economic, and political contexts that it had in the past. Therefore, as the contexts of the society change, the civic outcome and thus the desired civic competency are also expected to change too. It can be imagined, for example, that a high level of civic competence exhibited in very civically competent young adolescents in a particular society may not necessarily be the same civic competence shown at another point of time. Besides, at a given point of time, it is not uncommon that there are various forms of desired civic competence across different societies.

### **Civic behaviour**

In this proposed study and under the framework, civic behaviour refers to the current engagement and involvement of European adolescents in the community and in school. That may include activities such as participating in activities related to environmental protection in the community, and join in a debate for establishing a student union in the school. These are indicators how much the youth are currently engaged in a civic life in various parts of their lives during the period of adolescence.

### **Civic outcome**

Civic outcome refers to adolescents' future participation as adult citizens in the future. It includes measures such as the adolescents' expected participation in future protest, formal and informal political activities, and electoral-related activities. These measures are important indicators of active participation of citizens in the society. Based on the above descriptions of the three components (i.e. civic potential, civic behaviour, and civic outcomes), Figure 1 shows the proposed general framework of civic competency.

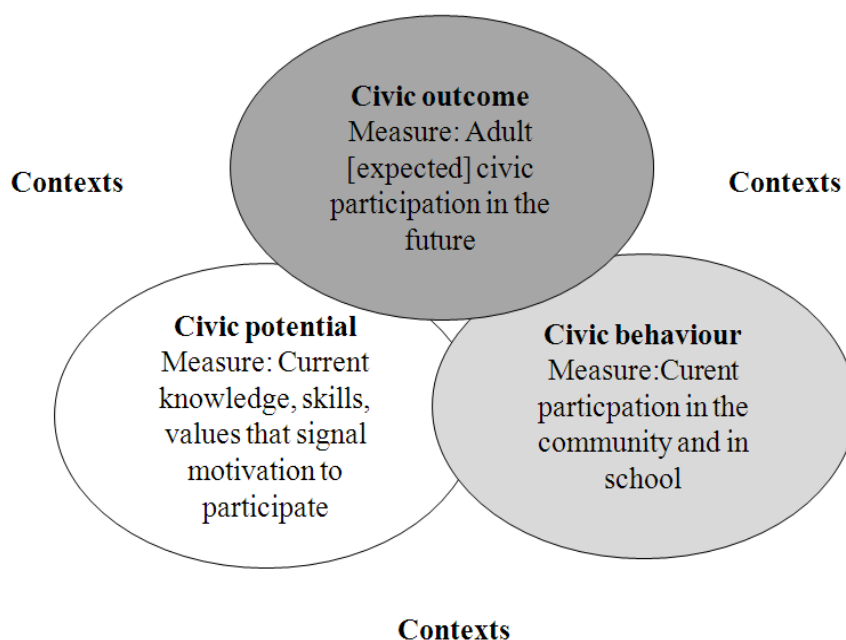


Figure 1. *A general framework of civic competency*

### **The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)**

The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) was a large-scale assessment project carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) in the years 2008 – 2009 in 38 educational systems (Schulz et al., 2010). It aimed to investigate the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their roles as citizens across a range of societies. It assessed over 140,000 grade 8 students, of ages around 14 years old, from 5,300 schools from the participating societies. The instruments were created in accordance with the ICCS Assessment Framework to capture four content domains: (1) society and system, (2) civic participation, (3) civic principles, and (4) civic identities. These instruments will be administered in the form of 80 cognitive items (which have correct and incorrect answer) and 121 attitudinal items (which do not have right or wrong answer) (Schulz et al., 2010).



The issue of how ICCS data might be useful to conceptualize civic potential of European adolescents remains an open question, although some attempt was seen recently (see Hoskins, Villalba, & Saisana, 2012). Because of the age cohort of the study, approximately 13-14 years old, ICCS can be seen at the very least as providing indicators of junior secondary students' political and social attitudes. A particularly important feature of ICCS was the inclusion of 24 European societies so that such indicators can be examined in a distinctly European context and may serve as a guide for policy makers in the region concerned with how young people may undertake their future roles as citizens. The benefit of the proposed work is that it can take on a comparative perspective looking both within and across societies. Such further studies will take the form of secondary data analysis that has the potential to provide additional evidence and inform new theoretical perspectives as well (see, for example, Kennedy, Hahn, & Lee, 2008).

Table 1.  
*Sample distribution in the 24 European societies*

Participating countries	Schools sampled	Students sampled
Austria	135	3385
Belgium (Flemish)	151	2968
Bulgaria	158	3257
Cyprus	68	3194
Czech Republic	144	4630
Denmark	193	4508
England	124	2916
Estonia	140	2743
Finland	176	3307
Greece	153	3153
Ireland	144	3355
Italy	172	3366
Latvia	150	2761
Liechtenstein	9	357
Lithuania	199	3902
Luxembourg	31	4852
Malta	55	2143
Netherlands	67	1964
Poland	150	3249
Slovak Republic	138	2970
Slovenia	163	3070
Spain	148	3309
Sweden	166	3464
Switzerland	156	2924

Source: Schulz et al. (2010)

## Sample

In this study, the data were collected from 13-14-year-old students from 24 European societies, which have completed both the International Cognitive Test and International Survey that the students in all the other 38 countries have answered, and the specific questions posed in the European Regional Module. A total of 75,747 of 13-14-year-old young adolescents from 3190 schools in these 24 countries have participated in the ICCS study. The

sample sizes for these 24 European countries range from 357 to 4,852 students for each country. Data were collected in first half of 2009. The sample distribution of the 24 European societies is presented in Table 1.

Among 24 European societies, they share both similarities and differences in terms of political history, economic development, and education systems. The inclusion of a European Regional Module designed for European students only has tapped specific views of European citizenship and created the possibility to investigate empirically European students' conceptions of citizenship, in particular, civic potential in this proposed study.

### **European Regional Module**

By questions that capture some special issues of citizenship that are of interest in the contexts of Europe, the European Regional Module (ERM) consisted of questions that were believed to tap from the European students some of their conception of citizenship that are particularly important in understanding citizenship in Europe, which are not assessed in the international survey. Similar to the questions on the international survey, these eight questions in the ERM were asked in a four point Likert scale. They were asking students questions such as: Students' sense of European identity, participation in communication about Europe, attitudes towards freedom of migration within Europe, attitudes towards equal opportunities for other European citizens, participation in activities or groups at the European level, attitudes towards common policies in Europe, attitudes towards European unification, self-reported student knowledge about the European Union, and attitudes towards further expansion of the European Union.

### **Research questions of the proposed study**

This proposed study has mainly four research questions as follows.

1. What is 'civic potential' and how is it measured among European adolescents?
2. What is the relationship between civic potential, civic behaviour and civic outcome?
3. How is 'civic potential' affected by specific European citizenship values?
4. Is there a "European" citizenship perspective?

### **Expected research outcomes of the project**

In responding to each of the above research questions, it is expected this project will provide research outcomes as follows.

#### *A general framework of civic competency established*

I expect to show how different civic dimensions, i.e. civic potential, civic behaviour, and civic outcome, will contribute to the civic competency and how the latter should be constructed. I shall establish a general framework of civic competency that considers the possible civic dimensions, which integrates both the affective components and cognitive components.

#### *An inclusive framework for assessment that works in different social, political and cultural contexts*

It is suspected that it is difficult to achieve a universal framework for civic competency that fit all the societies equally well. As a consequence, I would construct a framework that allow the possibility of representing measures of civic dimensions that are specific to societies of

particular social, political and cultural backgrounds. This project will test with empirical data to determine the specificity of the civic dimensions that are common in countries in the European region and evaluate the implications of such specificity on the construction of the notion of European's civic competency.

#### *Geographical patterns of level of different civic dimensions*

Hoskins et al. (2008, 2011) evaluated the European adolescents' civic competence and their attitudes towards various important citizenship issues and found some geographical patterns in European identity, support of personal and public citizenship values, and support of civic values. It is expected in the proposed study to observe some geographical trends in levels of overall civic potential and its sub-domains. For example, societies of Eastern Europe, may show differences in domains of civic outcome, such as aspiration for civic engagement in the future, from societies of Western Europe.

#### *Variations of characteristics of civic dimensions accounted for by social, political and cultural context*

Kennedy, Mok and Wong (2012) have demonstrated how adolescents' trust towards political institutions may be accounted for by social, political and cultural contexts across a range of countries. I should expect to see different levels of civic dimensions across European countries affected by socio-political and cultural factors.

### **Implications for the proposed study**

International large scale assessments of student performance have been managed for comparing educational achievement among participating countries. This is one of the useful resources for studies of comparative education. For decades, the discussion on performance of international large scale assessment and its implications have been focused on traditional areas such as science and mathematics. Assessment projects include the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA's) assessments, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), and other well-known international assessments such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

One of the major outcomes of these assessment projects is "leagues tables" which offer ranking of the students' performance among the participating countries. The score and rank often have implication for government officials regarding their policy making in the educational area of interest. As described by Rutkowski and Engel (2010), the governments are often confronted with question of "how are doing" when compared with others. Therefore, large scale assessments, as previously demonstrated by projects such as PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS, have potential to become influential tools that have substantive impacts on educational policy through their emphasized scoring and ranking systems. The authors have categorized such assessments as 'hard' measures because they provide governments with the opportunity to realign their education systems as part of the process of seeking 'world class status'.

They further suggested the "shifting" of large scale assessment projects from those traditional subject areas mentioned above to the area of civic and citizenship, in the forms of the Civic Education Study (CivEd) and the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS). While PISA and TIMSS have demonstrated the potential of large scale assessment to influence curriculum and pedagogy (Ringarp and Rothland, 2010), ICCS has

the potential to go beyond educational settings to demonstrate how citizenship itself can also be conceptualized as measurable knowledge, skills, and values. In this connection, the project described here has potential to re-orientate ICCS 2009 by introducing students' "civic potential" and "civic competence" as another area educational achievement for comparison among various countries. Similar in other comparative education research, this project, therefore, has the potential to inform educational policies too (Watson, 2001; Mok, 2005).

Given the significant role that Europe plays in economic and political events, the purposes of this project are to evaluate the European students' preparedness to be citizen in terms of measures of civic competency as they become adults in the future. The general framework of civic competency will enable us to investigate the students' conceptions of citizenship from multiple perspectives, compare these attitudes both within the region and beyond, and assess the implications for understanding not only the nature and purpose of civic and citizenship education in European contexts but also the possible influence of such conceptions. The results of this study will provide baseline data on European students' civic competency. It will also provide insights into the way future citizens have prepared in one of the most strategic regions in the world. Importantly, the results will also provide the basis for comparisons with young people in other parts of the world, such as Latin American and Asian countries.

The inclusion and secondary analysis of the ERM will enable researchers to check whether there is empirical data support to the importance of the impacts of the specific attributes (as mentioned above) in building the civic characteristics of youth in Europe. The results will help give response to the research question 3 listed above. Hoskins, Villalba, and Saibana (2012) have worked on ICCS data to establish the CCCI-2 but in their work the questions in the ERM were not included. By analyzing the ERM, this study will therefore advance the current literature on civic competency by investigating the specific Europe citizenship attributes' impacts on European students' civic potential, civic behaviour and civic outcome.

Data analysis will be carried out in accordance with the combinations of the components and indicators in the general framework as illustrated in the Figure 1. Although the results of such analyses are not reported in this article, it is recommended that the quality of data-model fit will be assessed by some rule-of-thumb of statistical analysis test of goodness-of-fit. Results of either good or unsatisfactory fit of the proposed model to specific individual countries' data will be reported on both the overall level and in specific domains of civic potential, civic behaviour and civic outcome.

Along with the 2013 European Year of Citizens for Europe, this proposed project will enable us to take a picture of the European adolescents' (from data in the above countries of ICCS) preparedness of their various civic dimension to see how much they have prepared to be active and participatory citizens in the society.

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# Miscellany

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