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About ‘Citizenship Teaching and Learning’

The Journal focuses on citizenship teaching and learning in all contexts, for all ages within and beyond schools; international, global and cosmopolitan with a commitment to academic excellence within diverse democracies.

Citizenship and civics education are diverse and contested fields encompassing, amongst other matters, social and moral considerations, community involvement and political literacy. The Journal appeals to those large academic and professional populations within the field of social studies education. The Journal exists as an international forum in which researchers, policy makers, administrators and practising professionals in a range of local, national and global contexts and age-related phases within and beyond formal educational institutions report and discuss their on-going or completed work.

Previous issues can be downloaded for free from http://www.citized.info/e-journal.

Linked to the Journal is an international conference on citizenship education – an annual conference that takes place at venues across the world drawing together experts on citizenship education from across the globe.
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Citizenship and Teacher Education
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Editorial

IAN DAVIES, University of York, UK and Deputy Director of citizED

Citizenship Teaching and Learning is concerned with the promotion of understanding about citizenship education across the world. We are interested in all countries, a very wide range of academic perspectives and all age-related phases of education. We are interested in local, national and international contexts and actively wish to explore necessary and desirable global and cosmopolitan perspectives. If citizenship education is to be meaningful, inclusive and secure in its contribution to the development of a democratic and diverse global society it must not become the preserve of one geographical or political context. This issue of Citizenship Teaching and Learning contains articles from around the world. Authors’ institutional bases and the subject matter explored in their work in this issue show immediate and obvious connections with Australia, Canada, Hungary, Malawi, Singapore, Slovenia, Taiwan and the United Kingdom. The dissemination of Citizenship Teaching and Learning is consistent with this wide-ranging focus. This issue is launched at citizED’s 3rd international conference at the University of Sydney in April 2007 and distributed in hard copy through our strong relationship with cicea (children’s citizenship and identity in Europe association). The Journal is, of course, also available to a global audience through the web (www.citized.info/ejournal).

In this issue there are, following analyses of a wide range of data, indications of what is being done and what could – and, perhaps, should – happen in several parts of the world. Simon Clarke compares initiatives by the Association of Education in Citizenship established in 1934 and the Programme for Political Education launched in 1974. He argues that although these initiatives have been interpreted as representing different models of political education, there is some evidence to indicate that they had more in common than is immediately apparent. Irrespective of the interpretation placed on the two initiatives' rationales, aims and outcomes, their experiences serve to demonstrate some of the circumstances that influence sustainability of reform in political education. Raymond Nichol and Jasmin Boon-Yee Sim analyse the situation in Singapore to suggest that there are challenges associated with the goals of National Education. They argue that “within limits, more empathy, appreciation and respect for other cultures and religions, must be developed”. Joseph Jinja Divala following a discussion about developments in Malawi “proposes that a deliberative conception of democracy is necessary to improve the way democracy is presented and lived, thereby creating active democratic citizenship”. Alistair Ross – following work undertaken together with Marta Fülöp and Marjanca Pergar Kuscer - compares the discourse of primary and
secondary teachers in England, Hungary and Slovenia related to the use of cooperation and competition in their teaching. The very different patterns of belief and action suggest much that is relevant for the ways in which citizenship education may develop in different contexts. Jennifer Wenshya Lee discusses issues arising from research with young people in Taiwan. She suggests that young people’s conceptualization of citizenship emphasizes obedience and loyalty more than active political participation. Rhys Andrews and Andrew Mycock examine the development of citizenship education across the 4 nations of the UK. Their paper concludes by arguing that great care is required to ensure parity of provision is upheld across the evolving multi-national education system.

*Citizenship Teaching and Learning* places a high value on book reviews. Mark Evans, as book reviews editor, pursues an innovative approach that adds great value to the journal. We wish to develop variety so that, on some occasions, we replace the standard format of several distinct single book reviews. In this issue we are fortunate to have a review essay by Elizabeth Frazer that explores some of Derek Heater’s work in the field of citizenship. Heater’s contribution to the development of a clear and insightful understanding of citizenship education is enormous and the review essay included here encourages us all to look again at his impressive body of work.

The global reach of citizenship educators will continue to be represented in these pages. The next issue – to be published in December 2007 – will be guest edited by Judith Torney-Purta. Her international profile and involvement in so many significant projects guarantee that it will be a publication of worth.

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The Trajectory Of 'Political Education' In English Schools: The Rise And Fall Of Two Initiatives

SIMON CLARKE, The University of Western Australia

ABSTRACT This article tracks the trajectory of political education in English schools by comparing the experiences of two initiatives that have occurred in the last seventy years, namely, the Association of Education in Citizenship established in 1934 and the Programme for Political Education launched in 1974. Although these initiatives have been interpreted as representing different models of political education, there is some evidence to indicate that they had more in common than is immediately apparent. Irrespective of the interpretation placed on the two initiatives’ rationales, aims and outcomes, their experiences serve to demonstrate some of the circumstances that influence sustainability of reform in political education. Consideration of these circumstances is germane as Citizenship enters its fourth year as a compulsory National Curriculum subject in England.

Introduction

In the wake of the review conducted by the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools (1998), citizenship was introduced for the first time as a compulsory component of the school curriculum in England. From August 2002, Citizenship was included as a national curriculum foundation subject for pupils in all year groups at key stage 3 (11-14 years of age) and 4 (14-16 years of age). According to Kerr (2003), this development was attributable to a complex interplay of factors determining that it was very much an initiative of its time. In particular, Kerr (2003) mentions a growing concern about the decline in traditional forms of civic cohesion manifested in alienation among young people from public life and participation. Another vital catalyst for the development was the existence of a strong political will that came from the then Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett and the new Labour government.

These were favourable times for the proponents of political education (Morris et al, 2003), but it has not always been the case that educational policy makers in England have been quite as sanguine about incorporating explicit political education in the curriculum. From a historical perspective a number of reasons have been suggested in the literature for the neglect of political education in English schools (Davies, 1999; Heater, 1977, 2001; Stradling, 1981:85). First, has been a prevailing opinion that political education is unsuitable for children because it cannot possibly be understood without some practical experience of life. Associated with this view
was the belief that politics is a somewhat dubious activity engaged in by political parties and from which the ordinary individual is excluded except during elections (Hailsham, cited in Stradling, 1981:85). Indeed, the notion embedded in the British political culture that the system was representative rather than participatory, resulted in an attitude that citizens only required limited political knowledge and skills. As a consequence of this lack of tradition in political education, there was no group of professionally committed teachers prepared to advance the cause of this area of the curriculum (Heater, 1977, 2001).

However, according to the literature, perhaps the main reason for the traditional neglect of political education in English schools has been the fear of indoctrination (Oakeshott, 1962; Heater 1977; Brown; 1980; Stradling, 1981). Heater (1977) argued that parents, headteachers, and authorities have always been preoccupied with the idea that political education is especially vulnerable to abuse by individual teachers who can exploit it as a means to indoctrinate their pupils. In similar vein, Oakeshott claimed that:

*political education has fallen on evil days; in the wilful and disingenuous corruption of language which is characteristic of our time it has acquired a sinister meaning (Oakeshott, 1962:112).*

The combination of these factors determined that, historically, political education had never been considered worthy of inclusion in the school timetable in its own right. If it existed at all, it tended to be provided on a piecemeal basis and indirectly through established subjects and the ‘hidden curriculum’. In addition, the tendency was to regard political education as synonymous with socialisation, in other words as a means to exert social control over the individual. Heater summed up this orientation well in his comment that:

*civic education for the masses remained virtually confined to the annual flag-waving ritual of Empire Day (Heater, 1977:58).*

Notwithstanding the rather pessimistic diagnosis of the condition of political education in English schools throughout most of the twentieth century, two episodes stand out because of their contribution to promoting debate about political education and their attempt to improve its provision in the country’s schools. In 1934, the Association for Education in Citizenship (AEC) was established by Sir Ernest Simon and Eva Hubback with the support of a number of Fabian and liberal intellectuals including G.D.H. Cole, Harold Laski, William Beveridge and Barbara Wootton. Although the AEC faded in the aftermath of the Second World War, interest in political education was revived with the launch of the Programme for Political Education (PPE) exactly forty years after the founding of the AEC. During the 1970s the PPE represented the most prominent campaign for serious political education in schools (Frazer, 2000).

As Kerr (1999) has pointed out, there is potentially a great deal that can be derived from revisiting past approaches to political education for informing current policy and practice. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to chronicle and compare the experiences of the AEC and the PPE with particular reference to their origins, aims, strategies and outcomes. In doing so, an evaluation is made of the two initiatives’ contributions to the advancement of political education in English schools. In addition, the circumstances are illuminated that affected the two
initiatives’ capacity to make an impact on policy and practice of the day. Finally, the implications of the circumstances identified for the future trajectory of political education are discussed.

Origins of the two initiatives

As far as the genesis of both organizations is concerned, it is possible to identify two clear catalysts for action. First, there was a belief amongst ‘stakeholders’ that political education needed more attention to ameliorate what was perceived to be circumstances of political crisis. Secondly, there was a profound sense of disillusionment with current practices in the teaching and learning of political education within English schools.

The AEC was originally set up in 1934 in response to several countries throughout Europe succumbing to dictatorships (Whitmarsh, 1974; Heater, 1977). Sir Ernest Simon and Eva Hubback, the founders of the AEC viewed with horror the way in which representative systems could be subverted with such apparent ease and committed themselves to encouraging political education in schools as a way of preventing the same thing from happening in Britain. Hence, as Heater (2001) has observed, the threat of extreme government from both fascist and communist persuasions prompted a desire to use schools as a means of strengthening liberal democracy.

In addition to representing a panic response to the rise of dictatorships, the AEC was just as importantly a product of disillusionment with existing arrangements for the teaching and learning of political education in schools. Simon (1935) for example, lamented the inadequacy of political education for young people at a time when he believed governmental policy was becoming more complicated and difficult to understand and he emphasised the necessity to train people for their duties as citizens.

Likewise, the PPE was a consequence of growing societal angst about impending political crisis as well as educational concerns about the efficacy of existing provision of political education in schools. Fuelling speculation about political crisis was the rapid decline in membership of the main political parties, especially amongst young people, indicating a disconcerting level of political apathy. In addition, alienation from mainstream politics was suggested by increased support for extremist parties. On the far right of the political spectrum, the National Front had been organising effective recruitment campaigns both in schools and at the football grounds (Stradling, 1981) that had been counteracted on the far left by the mobilisation of the Socialist Workers Party.

Educational factors were also brought to bear on the creation of the PPE. After the raising of the school leaving age from 15 to 16 in 1968, there were calls for a greater emphasis in the curriculum on the social dimension of education and the preparation of young people for life after school (Stradling, 1981). This belief in the desirability of a more instrumental curriculum was given further credence in 1970 when the voting age was lowered to 18. Consequently, as Davies (1999) has observed, a situation had now arisen in which some upper school students as well as others in full time education were eligible to vote, the majority of whom had received no formal political education whatsoever. For the minority who had encountered formal political education, it tended to be in the guise of pedestrian, content-based approaches adopted by traditional ‘politics’ courses such as ‘British Constitution’ with which teachers were becoming increasingly disillusioned (Heater, 1977).
It was against this background of political pressure and a changing educational climate that in 1974, the Nuffield Foundation provided a grant of forty thousand pounds over three years that enabled the Hansard Society, in collaboration with the young, but influential Politics Association to launch the Programme for Political Education. In brief, the Programme comprised curriculum development schemes and evaluation of innovations aimed at enhancing the ‘political literacy’ of young people in secondary and further education.

The circumstances surrounding the origins of these two initiatives are analogous. Both emerged from an atmosphere of impending political crisis that had highlighted a perception of ‘civic deficit’ in the sense that levels of political understanding and involvement were considered to be inadequate (McLaughlin, 2000). It is also fair to say that both movements arose out of profound dissatisfaction with the existing provision of political education in English schools and were intended to correct the situation.

Aims and aspirations

The AEC has been characterised as a conservative movement in the history of political education (Whitmarsh, 1981) whose main aim was to prepare pupils for rights and duties. The PPE, however, has been mainly associated with a liberal reformist model of political education (Crick & Porter, 1978), which was predicated on a desire to develop a critical awareness of political phenomena rather than an uncritical acceptance of the status quo.

Much of the literature produced by the AEC (Hubback & Simon 1935; Leeson, 1935) supports the view that the movement was conservative in its orientation. Hubback and Simon (1935) for example, summarised the aims of education in citizenship as being: a sense of social responsibility; a love of truth and freedom, the power of clear thinking in everyday affairs; and a knowledge of the broad and economic facts. These aims emphasised the developing of specific virtues that were thought necessary for ‘good citizenship’ and sought to mobilise support for the established political system.

Nevertheless, elsewhere in the AEC literature (Zilliacus, 1935; Stewart, 1938), it is possible to discern some consideration of a more critical outlook in the approach towards political education. In this regard, Zilliacus mentions a need to develop independent judgement and an inquiring mind as a means of seeking the truth. Likewise, Stewart (1938) was convinced that the teaching of citizenship should aim to develop critical awareness. According to him:

A democracy has a conscience, that is to say citizens can arise within the state and question the morality of the government’s actions. Teaching, particularly the social sciences awakens and strengthens this conscience. (Stewart, 1938:13)

This tentative adoption of critical awareness apparent in some of the AEC’s literature was embraced more fully in the rhetoric of the PPE. Simply put, the PPE had two main aims. It intended to raise the status of political education within the curriculum. It also sought to provide a theoretical basis for political education that was manifested in the concept of ‘political literacy’. According to Professor Bernard Crick (2000) who was the chief instigator of the PPE, this term was invented by the
then prominent political scientist, Professor Graeme Moodie and stolen by Crick and his colleagues to be developed into the following meaning:

*The knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to make a man or woman informed about politics, able to participate in public life and groups of all kinds, both occupational and voluntary; and to recognise and tolerate diversities of political and social values.* (Crick & Porter, 1978:1)

It seemed, therefore, that the ‘motif of political literacy’ (Frazer, 2000:90) had the potential to establish a consensus on an approach to political education that had been lacking in the case of the AEC. In reality, the ambiguity of the concept meant that it provided shelter for myriad different protagonists of political education, many of whom had different objectives (Whitty, 1979).

One of the main concerns about political literacy was that it failed to foster sufficient critical awareness (Whitty, 1979). However, Porter (1979:105), no doubt influenced by the thinking of Gilbert Ryle (1949), claimed that political literacy, in common with all education as opposed to instruction, involved three modes of understanding. First, propositional knowledge, or knowing that. Secondly, procedural knowledge, or knowing how and finally, wondering whether and wondering how, of reflecting upon, looking critically at and making explicit hidden assumptions, of questioning evidence and of considering alternative explanations. This third mode of understanding, Porter (1979) emphasised, was integral to political literacy, and set it apart from previous approaches to political education that were firmly embedded in propositional knowledge.

**Curriculum and classroom: strategies for educational advancement**

The strategies employed by the two initiatives for the educational implementation of their aims in schools may be examined from the point of view of curriculum provision and the pedagogy envisaged in the classroom.

**Curriculum Provision**

The AEC had some of its boldest proposals to make in the area of curriculum provision and advocated a direct method of education for citizenship to replace existing arrangements that relied on traditional subjects in the curriculum and the ethos of the school. Hubback and Simon (1935) were particularly enlightening on this aspect of the AEC’s programme. They were convinced that for the effective teaching of citizenship, it was essential to introduce new subjects such as Politics, Public Affairs, Economics and Current History. Although recognising the contribution that conventional subjects could make to the advancement of citizenship, they considered these subjects to be an inadequate vehicle in themselves because of the restriction of time and a tendency for political topics to be covered from a narrow perspective. In order to introduce new subjects for promoting political education various proposals were suggested such as reducing the time given to individual subjects and even rearranging the whole curriculum according to project methods (Hubback & Simon, 1935).

The PPE’s strategy for accommodating political literacy in the curriculum was reminiscent of its predecessor and was summed up by Crick and Porter on the following lines:
From the beginning we intended to advance in two ways: a massive frontal attack, combined with permeation and infiltration aimed at specific targets behind the lines. (Crick & Porter, 1978:9)

This strategy amounted to a combination of persuading schools that political education had a stronger claim to be on the timetable than other more established subjects as well as demonstrating that political education could be infiltrated into other subjects. In contrast to the AEC, considerable thought was devoted to the practical accomplishment of curriculum provision. Schemes of work were to be produced for the classroom, the use of which was to be carefully monitored and assessed. Working groups of teachers were also to be set up for producing curricula in each conventional subject to demonstrate how political literacy could be enhanced through the discipline.

Both movements then, proposed an open curriculum for accommodating political education in schools that consisted of a combination of direct methods as well as infusion within the established subjects.

Pedagogical Considerations

Given that the AEC was largely motivated by a desire to defend the established political order (Heater, 1977), it would be expected that the pedagogy advocated would be of a conservative nature. In other words, an approach to the teaching of political education that emphasises factual knowledge of political institutions and carefully avoids issues that may be construed as controversial or value laden.

Notwithstanding the AEC's desire to shore up the system in the wake of European political upheaval (Tapper & Salter, 1978), it is possible to discern within some quarters of the movement an exhortation to promote relatively progressive approaches to the teaching and learning of politics. Mention has already been made of the proposal to foster a sense of 'critical awareness' (Zilliacus, 1935; Stewart, 1938) amongst young people. In addition, there were other suggestions for approaches to political education that would have been quite amenable to the PPE's cornerstone of political literacy. Hubback and Simon for example, seemed to be advocating more than a factual, descriptive approach to politics in their comment that:

The older boy and girl enjoy dealing with real issues and can be encouraged to go beyond mere description to tackle questions relating to the work of our institutions in general and to the wider aspects of problems such as the value of democracy and the equality of public opinion. (Hubback & Simon, 1935:17)

Hubback and Simon (1935) also proposed that this analytical consideration of issues should be drawn from the boy's or girl's own knowledge or experience in order to arouse more interest.

Some acolytes of the AEC (Zilliacus, 1935; Stewart, 1938) went further and recommended that issues dealt with in the classroom needed to be of a controversial nature. Zilliacus, (1935) for example, considered controversial topics to be an essential ingredient of political education for developing the proper use of critical powers. The fear of bias, which had traditionally discouraged the teaching of controversial issues, did not seem to concern Zilliacus. He pointed out that it is
impossible for teachers to be completely objective in the presentation of a topic and provided some practical examples of how teachers' prejudice may be avoided. In this respect, Zilliacus suggested employing a heuristic device of encouraging pupils to compile their own material, mainly from newspapers, on a particular issue with subsequent discussion.

Stewart (1938) was also convinced of the necessity to study controversial topics, particularly as an instrument to overcome civic inertia. Indeed, the AEC expressed some awareness of the need for schools to encourage the acquisition of participatory skills in their pupils. Once again, Zilliacus was most explicit in his ideas when he advocated:

> the school itself should be as four square with real life as possible where the youthful members can have abundant opportunity for practising as well as discussing citizenship (Zilliacus, 1935:22-23)

It could be claimed that it is possible to deduce from this comment the notion of the school as a micro-political organisation entailing a capacity to facilitate direct experience by pupils of inherently political situations.

The pedagogical assumptions embraced by the PPE's cornerstone, political literacy, bore some resemblance to those of the AEC, although it may be argued that they were better articulated, more consistently adopted and had greater persuasive power. Political literacy, or the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the individual's political efficacy, comprised a number of key characteristics (Stradling, 1981:95-96) with implications for pedagogical practices. The first key characteristic of political literacy was that it incorporated a broad view of politics concerned with conflicts of interests and ideals at any level. The study of politics should not confine itself to the affairs of state, therefore, but should investigate group behaviour in the school, the work place, the community and other aspects of everyday life.

The notion that conflict and controversy are the stuff of politics also informed the second major characteristic of political literacy which was an emphasis on issue-based learning. An understanding of political reality, it was argued, could only be developed by means of analysing political issues that would by definition be controversial. Moreover, these issues would be understood better with the aid of a sketch map of basic concepts. This conceptual dimension to the knowledge acquired by political literacy was another of its major characteristics.

Most importantly, political literacy also emphasised the acquisition of practical knowledge and politically relevant skills. To this end, it was envisaged that the classroom should afford opportunities for pupils to participate in activities such as discussion, role-play, simulation and drama. It was also anticipated that schools should facilitate pupils' genuine experience of internal decision making processes.

Finally, political literacy set out to promote certain attitudes in the form of 'procedural values'; namely, freedom, toleration, fairness, respect for truth and respect for reasoning. These values were intended to provide a kind of blueprint for any genuine political education rather that determining substantive political beliefs.

Both movements made a contribution to the advancement of a pedagogic rationale for the provision of political education in England’s schools. It is possible to argue that in each case a rationale was articulated that represented a progression from a conservative emphasis on the factual knowledge deemed necessary to understand the function of the present political system, to a more liberal position of critically understanding society and developing participatory skills.
Spreading the word: political strategies

The political strategies adopted by the two movements for advancing their objectives may best be described as pressure group tactics on the part of the AEC and as a curriculum development exercise in relation to the PPE.

In order to disseminate and implement its ideas about political education, the AEC developed a strategy that was in the first instance levelled at the grassroots or the teachers, and secondly at the educational policy makers (Whitmarsh, 1974). For the purpose of connecting with the teachers, a Council was established with the chief objective of disseminating AEC doctrines. It also endeavoured to assess the teaching that was going on according to those doctrines. This exercise was pursued by collecting information about what was happening in different institutions in citizenship education; comparing methods to stimulate new curricula; exchanging ideas through conferences and the press; compiling a bibliography of suitable textbooks and encouraging new ones to be written; and approaching authorities and individual institutions to encourage the development of citizenship (Hubback & Simon, 1935).

The operation of the Council has not been well documented. Whitmarsh (1974) however, has claimed that seven branches of the Council were founded with the same objectives. Certainly, there were a number of conferences organised on different aspects of citizenship education from which pamphlets were derived (eg. Leeson, 1935; Zilliacus, 1935; Gooch, 1936). Some of these conferences were addressed by eminent people (see, for example, Russell, 1937) who helped to improve the standing of the AEC. A prolific amount of literature was also produced, especially before the Second World War.

In addition to this grass roots strategy for promoting education in citizenship, the AEC also targeted the very centre of the policy making process. Whitmarsh (1974) has documented the machinations of this process well. Pressure group tactics were employed to induce leading politicians and the Board of Education to support the AEC's substantive proposal for direct citizenship education in schools. An opportunity was presented when in 1934 a Board of Education advisory committee was convened to investigate the organisation of secondary education. Four of the eighteen members of the committee were members of the Council of the AEC, including the chairman, Sir Will Spens. Notwithstanding these encouraging signs for the AEC, the committee was more impressed by the conservative arguments of Dr Norwood who rejected the idea of direct education in citizenship. In consequence, the Spens Report of 1938 favoured an indirect approach to the teaching of citizenship, particularly through History and Geography.

As the Board of Education was suspicious of the leftish political complexion of the AEC, Sir Ernest Simon was advised by Spens to increase the representation from the Conservative Party in the AEC to give it a better chance of success. The opportunity arose when the President of the AEC, Henry Haddow died, and Stanley Baldwin who had retired, accepted an invitation to replace him. Baldwin, however, turned out to be a severely moderating influence on the operation of the organization. Certainly, Michael Stewart's pamphlet (1938) intended to be a policy statement by the AEC, advocating direct education for citizenship through controversial issues had to be watered down because of Baldwin's objections. He was not comfortable about the pamphlet being offered as a public statement of the AEC's policy.
Simon's last resort of organising an international conference to be attended by ministers for education from Western democracies had to be cancelled because of impending war. Nevertheless, the epitaph on the AEC’s quest to introduce direct education for citizenship was effectively delivered by the Norwood Report of 1943, which reaffirmed the traditional approach to citizenship through normal subjects of the curriculum and the ethos of the school.

The AEC then, had been penetrated by the government of the day (Whitmarsh, 1974) that resulted in a rejection of the AEC's fundamental doctrines and heralded a renewed emphasis on established forms of citizenship training.

Whereas the AEC may be defined as a pressure group, the PPE can be judged as a curriculum development exercise. After the launch of the PPE, a working party was set up in London under the chairmanship of Professor Bernard Crick. According to Porter (1985), the Working Party comprised about twenty people of whom only two were teachers and one was a headteacher. The remainder of the group was derived from the Higher Education sector. Furthermore, very few of these people had met before the Working Party was convened and they had negligible experience of curriculum development in practice.

The Working Party was given a brief to design the broad principles of political literacy and to provide exemplars that would enable teachers to develop their own schemes for use in the classroom. To that end, the intended procedure was for the Working Party to articulate broad principles so that groups of teachers could produce schemes within each conventional subject that would illustrate how political literacy could be enhanced through their particular area. Individual teachers could then trial these schemes of work in their own classrooms.

An independent Research Unit was also set up at the University of York under the direction of Professor Ian Lister. The Unit aimed to monitor the effectiveness of the main recommendations of the London group when trialled in schools as well as studying independently examples of good teaching practice that could be used for generating case studies to be employed by teachers.

In practice, the London and York based groups operated more autonomously than originally anticipated, a *modus operandi* that undermined the project’s overall coordination. Furthermore, in general, the teachers’ working groups failed to produce the required schemes to trial in the classroom. This failure determined that teachers experienced difficulty in translating the abstract theoretical framework of political literacy to the classroom and militated against its adoption.

In sum, the AEC pursued pressure group activity to legitimate and implement its substantive ideas about appropriate education for citizenship, whereas the PPE was ostensibly a curriculum project. Both movements however, failed to make any significant progress in implementing their theoretical doctrines and it may be argued that little impact was made on political education as it was understood and practised in schools.

And in the end…

Taking cognisance of the difficulties encountered by both movements in the implementation of their fundamental ideas, what impact did they have, if any, on the trajectory of political education in English schools?

As far as the AEC was concerned, its objectives for the provision of education in citizenship in schools were dealt a considerable blow by the onset of the Second World War. Indeed, as Whitmarsh (1974, p.135) has pointed out, the war did more to shore up the established order than any programme for political education could
ever achieve and it became dangerously unpatriotic to challenge the ‘national interest’. Attempts to revive the AEC after the war were largely in vain. Although the movement managed to stagger on until 1957, it was essentially moribund during the post war period.

In 1949, the Ministry of Education published *Citizens Growing Up*, which was at least an official publication specifically devoted to the topic (Heater, 2001). Nevertheless, this policy statement also advocated an indirect approach to citizenship in schools as encapsulated in the intransigent comment below:

> It is the work in Geography and History which gives the most direct opportunity for providing the future citizen with the information and understanding he [sic] should possess. (Ministry of Education 1949:23)

The failure to achieve its fundamental goals and the manner in which the AEC withered away after the Second World War, has led some observers to dismiss the efforts of the AEC to advance the cause of political education in schools (Davies, 1999; Heater, 1977, 2001). According to this perspective, the AEC was merely a reaction of fear rather than a deeply-seated positive belief in the value of political education for its own sake (Heater, 1977:59).

This view, however, underestimates the fact that the AEC was not only a response to the rise of dictatorships in Europe, but was also stimulated by a desire to improve the teaching of citizenship in schools. From this desire, there emerged, what was by the ‘academic rationalist’ standards of the time, the prescription of a progressive pedagogy. It may be argued that this would not have occurred had there not been, at least in some sections of the movement, a strong belief in the value of political education for its own sake.

Indeed, the progressive pedagogy that may be discerned from the AEC's broad literature on citizenship education (Hubback & Simon, 1935; Zilliacus, 1935; Stewart, 1938) could be interpreted as representing a tentative move away from traditional arrangements in that area of the curriculum. That is, a shift from a conservative level of knowing how the government works and knowing the beliefs that are thought to be part of it to the liberal or participatory level of developing knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for active citizenship (Crick & Porter, 1978).

Just as the AEC's capacity to implement its ideas was severely handicapped by an unsympathetic environment, circumstances were also unfavourable to the PPE. The economic depression of the 1970s inevitably restricted educational budgets and by the end of the decade the annual inflation rate was somewhere around 17 per cent. Furthermore, in 1979, the Thatcher government was elected with a commitment to cutting public expenditure. The educational climate also turned against the PPE’s fortunes with a renewed emphasis on basic skills being taught in the traditional manner (Tapper & Salter, 1978). Indeed, Kisby (2006) has argued that the Thatcher government was deeply suspicious of the PPE, fearing the possibility of political indoctrination of pupils by teachers.

Given the adverse economic and educational conditions with which the PPE had to contend, Tapper and Salter (1978:87) were of the view that the movement was destined to failure and commented that:
in spite of a great deal of huffing and puffing by the ardent spokesmen [sic] for political education they had missed the boat.

As far as the implementation of political literacy in the classroom was concerned, it would seem that this verdict had some validity. An assessment of innovations in political education conducted by the Curriculum Review Unit four years after the completion of the PPE’s work (Stradling & Noctor, 1981), concluded that the vast majority of lessons observed by researchers had little authentic connection with political literacy.

Viewed as a curriculum development exercise then, the PPE had only a limited impact. Nevertheless, if viewed as a promotion campaign, it may be argued that the movement’s achievements were far more spectacular. Perhaps the most important accomplishment of the PPE was to legitimate political education in schools. In this regard, the fundamental characteristics of political literacy provided political education with a new respectability. Wringe expressed this development well in his comment that:

The large element of factual content, the assertion that it is not the job of teachers to influence pupils in their substantive beliefs and the unimpeachable procedural values the project advocates, should recommend the scheme to all but extreme reactionaries. (Wringe, 1984:96)

It may well have been that the perceived respectability of political literacy contributed to its increased official support. For example, the Department of Education and Science commented that:

although the idea of political education is suspect to many people, there are nevertheless compelling reasons for asserting its importance in the 11-16 curriculum (1977:56).

There was also evidence to indicate that the introduction of political education was supported by a larger number of local education authorities in the wake of the PPE’s activities. In addition, an increasing number of schools were claiming to offer some kind of direct political education within their curriculum (Stradling, 1981).

It can be argued, therefore, that as an exercise in curriculum development, the PPE’s achievements were disappointing. In particular, the failure to generate practical teaching materials thwarted the adoption of political literacy in schools (Davies, 1999). Nevertheless, viewed as a promotion campaign, the evidence would indicate that the movement’s accomplishments in gaining acceptance for political education were out of all proportion to its modest level of funding.

Concluding comments

As Heater (2001) has cautioned, any attempt to draw lessons from the past tends to be hazardous. It is fair to say, however, that an analysis of the experiences of the AEC and the PPE helps to illuminate circumstances that encourage the initiation, implementation and sustainability of reforms in political education.

First, the experiences of the two movements illustrate how political education initiatives tend to be galvanised by perceived crises in society at large. Indeed, Frazer (1999) has suggested that:

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The history of ‘political education’ looks very much like the history of a wave of moral panics (Frazer (1999:2).

The AEC owed its genesis to the threat of dictatorship and a desire to use schools as a means of strengthening liberal democracy and the PPE was prompted to some extent by concerns about levels of political apathy, ignorance and cynicism, especially amongst young people. If, however, a prevailing sense of impending political crisis dissipates, the prospects of sustaining broader community interest in political education are likely to diminish. The AEC, for example, lost its momentum once the threat of dictatorship had receded after the Second World War.

Closely related to the observation above is a highlighting of the need for political will (Kerr, 2003) in the form of intellectual and financial support from the government and especially educational policy makers. This support is more likely to eventuate, of course, if policy makers perceive a level of ‘civic deficit’ amongst young people that could lead to their disengagement from the political system. In spite of the societal concerns about political behaviour and efficacy that prevailed at the time, neither the AEC nor the PPE was able to mobilise the policy makers’ locus of decision-making in any convincing fashion, which was one important reason why the initiatives withered away.

A third factor that is likely to influence the impact of reform in political education is the degree of consensus among protagonists about the reform’s aims and educational strategies. It is particularly apparent, for example, that the AEC failed to achieve agreement within its ranks about how political education should be defined and approached in the classroom. Similarly, although the concept of political literacy seemed to offer the PPE a clearly articulated theoretical basis for developing political education, it was sufficiently ambiguous to provide shelter for many different proponents all pushing for opposing objectives. It was partly this protean characteristic of the concept that made its translation into classroom practice problematic.

In light of the observations above, it might be argued that four years after Citizenship was included as a national curriculum foundation subject in English schools, circumstances are more favourable to its continuation than they were at the time of the AEC and PPE. The political appetite for supporting the subject seems to have been sustained, and ‘the wave of moral panic’ (Frazer, 1999) throughout society has reached tsunami proportions in the wake of developments such as the threat of terrorism and mass immigration. There is, as a result, a heightened sense of democracy’s fragility and a growing realisation that citizens need to be engaged in developing and sustaining cohesive communities (Ostler & Starkey, 2005:1). It is unclear how the nature of political education in English schools will continue to be reformulated against the background of these challenges, but it seems reasonable to speculate that after the splutters of political education reform in the twentieth century its upward trajectory in this century is more assured.

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Singaporean Citizenship, National Education and Social Studies: Control, Constraints, Contradictions and Possibilities

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ABSTRACT This paper examines the relationship between social studies, citizenship education, multiculturalism, and national education in Singapore. In many countries, including the United States and Australia, the social studies curriculum has been given the task of preparing young people to be citizens (Gonzales, Riedel, Avery and Sullivan, 2001; Nichol, 1995; Print, 2000). Social Studies in Singapore is seen as an instrument of nation-building, as a vehicle for inculcating the six National Education (NE) messages concerning a sense of belonging and patriotism, racial and religious harmony, a meritocracy without corruption, economic opportunity, efficiency and prosperity, and developing a secure, confident, forward-looking, cohesive citizenry. While NE continues to be the core, there are initiatives designed to ‘open-up’ the subject, to make it less focussed on purely Singaporean Studies, more creative, analytical and questioning. It is to “…instil a sense of national identity as well as global awareness” (Ministry of Education 2005a). Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, in 2004, called for empowering youth, “to give them a say in their lives, to make them feel they can make a difference”. However, tensions and contradictory messages are surfacing between forms of governance, NE policy, and educational reform and practice. Some of those charged with this responsibility question how education can be opened if society is still relatively constrained. Singapore lacks many democratic processes and is threatened by fraught relations with neighbouring countries. We argue in the paper that, within limits, more empathy, appreciation and respect for other cultures and religions, must be developed. Also, if students are expected to accept ideas uncritically, they will not be prepared, affectively and effectively, to meet Singapore’s future cultural and national challenges.

Introduction

“As born Singaporeans my family and I have learnt to accept the idea of living hand in hand and side by side with others of the different races. Those before me had practised this before the Japanese Occupation in Singapore. In fact the races have been inter-depending on each other in terms of providing goods and services and keeping peace on the
island. Maintaining peace and stability in the country is not the work of a single race” (Malay Singaporean Teacher, 2003).

Any discussion about the education of children from disparate cultural and religious backgrounds is basically about assimilation, integration, or pluralism. The essential question, deceptively simple in form, but in content vast and potentially explosive in its implications and ramifications, is, ‘What kind of society is Singapore going to be?’ Is Singapore to continue with People’s Action Party (PAP) domination, allowing only muted opposition? Conversely, is it to move towards a more democratic and inclusive society and polity, with an active, participatory citizenry, reflecting the Prime Minister’s objective that young people ‘feel they can make a difference’? Either future will both reflect and shape Singaporean education, particularly social and citizenship education. This paper draws upon a literature review and research with teacher trainees and practising teachers undergoing professional development, to examine ethnic and cultural perspectives affecting educational policies and outcomes.

The Research

The research was mostly ethnographic, based on participant observation in university and schools, documentary and literature review, and academic, teacher and student contributions, including on-line discussions, using Blackboard. It was a purposeful sample, chosen from ‘information rich’ student teachers and in-service teachers and social studies co-ordinators. The participants had chosen to study and work in the fields we wished to research - national and citizenship education, social studies and ethnic, multicultural Singapore- and proved keen and able respondents to the questions and tasks devised. We surveyed, interviewed and assessed the responses of over three hundred undergraduate and approximately fifty postgraduate students. The latter were experienced teachers and social studies co-ordinators. They responded to a variety of purposeful tasks- for example, on-line discussions of their childhood experiences of ethnic and ‘race’ relations, what it is to be Singaporean, and their critical analyses of academic tracts concerning national and citizenship education. More detailed explanation of the research is found later in the paper, for example students’ and teachers’ responses to lectures, seminars, articles, assignments and questionnaires, concerning ethnicity, citizenship and national education.

The Ideology of ‘Shared Values’, ‘Race’ and Multiculturalism

A perceived absence of shared values has long concerned Singapore’s rulers (see the Shared Values White Paper, 1991). From independence in 1965 Singapore adopted an ideology of pragmatism, of economic development, with a focus on infrastructure, education, training and employment. By the late 1970s most of the nation’s economic needs had been met. In the context of rapid industrialisation in the 1970s and 1980s, there was growing concern among the political leaders that, with the widespread use of new forms of science and technology, increasing use of English and an English-dominated education system, younger Singaporeans were becoming too westernised. It was perceived that western values, which emphasized the individual over the community, would ‘de-culture’ Singapore, individualising the society (Hill & Lian, 1995). This led to promotion of ‘Asian values’, as an
antidote to the perceived evils of ‘Westernisation’. A Moral Education programme, based on ‘Asian values’, and promotion of bilingualism, teaching the respective ‘mother tongues’ as well as English, was designed to blend ‘the best of east and west’ (Hill and Lian, 1995:196-198).

The 1991 Shared Values White Paper argued that a “common, unique culture” is needed to bind Singapore’s citizens together (see pp. 2-3). It expressed a need to identify common, key values, in the expectation that, in time, all racial communities would develop “more distinctively Singaporean characteristics”. The White Paper also stressed the secular nature of the state and its religious neutrality (see pp. 6-10). There is a strong, controlling political agenda in the document, designed to shape change in approved directions (see Clammer, 1993:34-51). It is intended to steel the populace to cope with internal and external threats, such as the Asian economic meltdown, terrorism, Severe Acute Respiratory Acute Syndrome (SARS), and so on.

The sociologist, Chua Beng Huat, sees Shared Values as promoting a ‘communitarian’ ideology, combining survival and pragmatism (Chua 1995:210). He describes an ideological consensus, where the ruling group’s ideas are usually accepted and reproduced by Singaporeans as part of their “natural reality of everyday life” (1995:128). There is a strong emphasis on harmony and consensus. Western values of individualism are seen as threats that could destabilize society. Is this overdrawn, too dichotomous? After all, there is a Western tradition of the commonwealth, the public good, which is not inconsistent with communitarian values and outcomes.

Our own reading, experience and research indicate that most Singaporeans do support the PAP approach and are prepared to make sacrifices for the common good. However many expressed, in private, their disquiet about what would happen to social cohesion if the economy took a very severe downturn. Also, many expressed concern about the level of indoctrination and top-down processes, stating that promoting civic education and active citizenship would be far better, in the long run, for national identity and cohesion. Citizenship education in Singapore, in practice, “…is…values inculcation and an acceptance of the status quo” (Adler and Sim 2005:2). It is clear that the concepts of citizenship and citizenship education are highly contested. Is the goal the ‘good citizen’, one with a commitment to the state, or the ‘active citizen’, who has highly developed critical faculties and who participates in civic action? Or, as we argue, following Engle and Ochoa (1988), it requires elements of both. The PAP government clearly favours the former. “In Singapore, the notion of citizens actively engaged in conflict with the establishment is likely to be unacceptable” (Han, 2000:69).

**Education in Singapore**

In general, by world standards, for Singaporean education, teacher accountability is high, very comprehensive and professional. Student achievement, particularly in mathematics and science, often leads the world. There is a high level of cohesion and forward planning, for teacher education, schools and schooling. A particular example of this, in late 2003, was ‘Blue Sky’, an educational planning and consultation meeting. Almost all of Singapore’s teacher educators, the senior officers of the Ministry of Education (MOE), and every principal and deputy-principal in the nation, met under the one roof. This is possible in a nation-state-island of 4.3 million [2]. Some of the deliberations and recommendations from this consultation are referred to later in the paper.
The following examines potential questions for research in the Singaporean social studies curriculum. It provides the reader with an introduction to some of the issues, tensions and concerns we have observed, or were conveyed to us by colleagues, teachers and students. They are tentative, and some are examined more fully later in the paper.

Social Studies Education

Debate over the place and purpose of social studies has a long and contentious history (Nelson, 2001; Evans, 2004). Some of the issues facing social studies teachers in Singapore are: What should be social studies’ place and role in relation to National Education (1997), Moral Education, Citizenship Education, Multicultural Education, Community Service and Independent Projects? The curriculum and syllabi have allocation for all of these and, in practice, they often contradict the seeming cohesive planning. As noted above, national education is almost code for nation-building and racial cohesion [3], in a time of considerable tension, and with memories of past riots, bombings [4], and religious intolerance. The Islamist terrorist spectre is omnipresent. These and other threats and challenges, real or perceived, include few natural resources, economic competition, especially from China and Malaysia, a low Chinese birth-rate, emigration to Malaysia, to Australia, particularly to Perth, and another SARS-type epidemic.

The present Primary Social Studies course (2000) is content driven and almost all Singaporean Studies rather than social studies. It is currently under review. Can and should social studies be the vehicle to shape and coordinate all of the above approaches in this field? Is there an absence in the curriculum of the opportunities to develop the skills of critical thought considered crucial to active citizenship?

An issue examined later in the paper is that Chinese/Mandarin, seen as having considerable commercial value, is studied almost exclusively by Chinese Singaporeans. Some Malay Islamic and Tamil Indian parents argue that this is restricting their children’s future.

Pedagogy for social studies and National Education is another concern. In the opinion of the authors it is too often didactic and narrow, perhaps responding to the arguably rather strident NE slogans. It needs to be more responsive, wide-ranging, relevant, cooperative, creative and inquiry-based. All questioned (curriculum specialists, teachers and teacher educators) agreed regarding the need for a more creative pedagogy- but seemed unsure as to how to achieve such outcomes. Many of the teachers of social studies in schools have no formal qualifications in this field. This will change, as the new undergraduate programme requires all teacher trainees to be prepared for social studies pedagogy and curriculum.

The History of National, Multicultural, Citizenship, and Social Studies Education

While NE, as expressed above, was promulgated in 1997, education has always been seen as a key plank in the building of a nation. Lee Kuan Yew’s People’s Action Party (PAP), formed in 1959, which has ruled Singapore for nearly 50 years, has always seen education as playing a key role in civic and citizenship education (CCE), and in the forging of a nation from disparate cultures, with differing religions, traditions and customs.

Singapore does not have a stable integrated society… So we hear so many discordant voices. And the divergences of beliefs and customs are probably greater.
in our plural society than among any other population of equal size. Much of this confusion is strongly reflected in our schools today...teachers...have a whole generation of children to mould into a national pattern (People’s Action Party 1959: 4-5).

Consequently, social studies and related disciplines, such as history and geography, have been designed to play a key role in forging a Singaporean identity and allegiance, through citizenship education in schools. Objectives embedded in the syllabi for primary and secondary social studies reflect this aim. ‘Important to the Singaporean conception of citizenship education is the development of pride in and loyalty to Singapore’ (Adler and Sim 2005:3).

Quite overt expression of NE in the social studies curriculum can be seen in the recent, examined, upper secondary curriculum, 2005 [5]. It is a clear response to the PAP political leadership’s concerns about young Singaporeans’ supposed lack of appreciation for the sacrifices and achievements of the older generation, their lack of knowledge of the nation’s history and of current issues, especially the geo-political position Singapore is in. Add to that, the Asian economic downturn, the threats from terrorism and SARS, and you have a leadership determined to instil national cohesion, determination and confidence [6]. This is expressed in terms of fostering a sense of identity, pride and self-respect, knowing the Singapore story, how it succeeded against the odds to become a nation (expelled by Malaysia, virtually no resources other than its geographical position, its people and their trading, entrepreneurial tradition, and British colonial institutions and infrastructure), understanding the unique challenges, constraints and vulnerabilities, and instilling the core NE values, and will to prevail, that will ensure continued success and well-being (MOE, 2004, in Wong 2005).

The upper secondary syllabus is based on the six national education messages. Concerns expressed about these are similar to those expressed about ‘the American way’, or ‘the Australian way’. How can one be critical and creative if the material is based largely on didactic sloganeering? One teacher trainee, of Chinese descent, keen, articulate, very positive about her future in teaching, and highly committed to her studies, reflected with an ironic smile, “I can never be sure about Singapore, are we communist or are we fascist?”

Conversely, are any of the six NE messages not admirable, particularly in the light of regional and global threats from terrorism and rapid economic and technological change? So, it is the practice, the experience of the citizens, and those charged with delivery of the policy, that is most revealing. And the policy has been modified in recent years, including the ‘Blue Sky’ planning, with more emphasis on inclusive education, critical thinking and active citizenship. This reflects an easing of restrictions in what is a highly regulated society. Students are encouraged independently to access and evaluate information, to develop them into “…citizens who have empathy towards others and who will participate responsibly and sensibly in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society” (MOE, 2000). The term assimilate is not to be found in more recent documents, reflecting considerable change from the sentiments expressed in 1959.

As noted above, it is practice and outcomes that matter, and the following passages outline and analyse some of these. They draw from interviews, discussions and documents provided by Singaporean educators, often social studies co-ordinators, mostly Chinese, but also some with Indian or Malay Islamic heritage. Some of the co-ordinators and teachers responded to an article they were asked to critique, Cherian George’s (2000) ‘Neglected Nationhood: Singapore Without Singaporeans?’ It was chosen because it raises many of the issues we are interested
in, and ensured a wide range of reflections and responses, concerning race, identity, multiculturalism, assimilation, integration, pluralism, governance and nationhood.

We also make some observations, criticisms, and recommendations, about governance, National Education, multiculturalism, social studies, and citizenship education for Singapore.

Outcomes and Recommendations

Essentially, the data analysis indicates that some Singaporeans argue for higher levels of social integration, often bordering on assimilation, while others, particularly from minority groups, stress the value of pluralism and looser forms of multiculturalism. The latter also express concern about the future employment and economic prospects for their communities. The frequently heard ‘minority’ perspective, is summed up well by a Malay teacher, as follows:

Every race in the country has a culture that is unique... If we are to adopt the model of ‘Singaporean Singapore’ melting pot, then the uniqueness will disappear. I disagree with the movement of wanting to create a culture common to all Singaporeans. With globalisation, Singapore receives people from many parts of the world who have their own unique cultures and I do not think they would want to be included in the ‘Singaporean Singapore’ melting pot, which means losing their own culturally distinct characteristics...

Before independence, most Singaporeans lived in kampongs or villages, which they recall had a strong spirit of community self-help. Many of the older teachers and other older Singaporeans said that kampong residents of different ‘races’ lived, worked and played together. Reading about early Singapore indicates that they were not always as mixed as fondly recalled. ‘Chinatown’, ‘Little India’ and the ‘Geylang Serai/Kampong Glam’ Malay Muslim district did not suddenly appear. A Malay Muslim teacher’s personal account contradicts the notion of earlier mixing of races and religious groups. She also, tellingly, from experience, supports integrated schooling:

As a Muslim teacher in multi-cultural Singapore, I grew up in a predominantly Malay environment. I had no chance of developing relationships outside of my race. It was only when I was in secondary school that I was able to form multi-ethnic relationships. It was not out of reluctance from my part. I believe that I was hampered by my inability to speak English properly. Now, I see my first daughter mixing well with people of all races. Her close friend is a Chinese girl. My second daughter, on the other hand, went to a religious preschool run by a mosque. She has no problems in speaking English, but she has more Malay friends compared with my first daughter who went to a childcare centre that caters for children of all races and religion.

There is more than one factor that contributes to a person not mixing with other races, as shown by my own example and my daughters. The reasons might be language, lesser opportunity or other factors.
Singaporean Citizenship

...government emphasizes more on the minority race to mix with the majority but nothing is done when the opposite happens, as seen from the disparity in numbers in some sections of the military and private housing estates.

Today, kampongs have vanished and the majority of residents are housed in high-rise public housing, with others in private dwellings, also high-rise, but with superior architecture, landscaping and facilities. The dramatic change in housing has resulted in changing race relations in the country. As each household became more insular, and mixed less with their neighbours, knowledge and understanding of other cultures was reduced, as different races had less opportunity to mix and mingle. Schools and work places have become the common ground for the different races to socialise. School is increasingly becoming the first place of contact with a child of another race.

Minorities are dispersed among the HDB, a deliberate strategy to promote integration, to prevent the possibility of racial disintegration in the country, and, for the more sceptical observer, to ensure their political voice is muted:

Cherian George raised many important and related issues. If you ask a Chinese about the subject of racism, he or she will probably reply that there is no racism in Singapore. But being part of a minority group in a Chinese-dominated country, I felt that the author had truly given voice to many of our muted concerns. For example, the public housing scheme and ethnic residential quotas. In the past, minorities such as the Malays lived as a community, settling in kampongs. However, the public housing scheme...splintered the Malay community in housing estates throughout Singapore. The ethnic quotas were introduced in 1989, on the pretext of preventing the emergence of ethnic enclaves that might harm racial harmony. These measures were undertaken to ensure no ethnic group, especially the minority groups, can gather enough electoral support to push for their agenda. (Social Studies Co-ordinator, 2003).

Thus, the inherent tension and contradiction is clear. A person charged with developing NE objectives, and genuinely wishing to develop better cultural relations, sees ‘top-down’ policy ‘splintering’ minority groups. Of course, this is one perspective and many argue that so long as the government ‘delivers the goods’, that is achieves impressive economic development and employment, effective educational and health provision, and promotes racial cooperation and integration, the vast majority of citizens will support the PAP.

Opposing Cultural Models and Tensions

Cherian George (2000) discusses the opposing models of a ‘Singaporean Singapore’ melting pot (he favours more integration), and a ‘return to roots’ emphasis on disparate Asian cultures. He argues that the melting pot approach was seen as being “in danger of entrenching the pre-independence dominance of English-speaking, Western-oriented Singaporeans” [7]. This has led to the formation of ethnic-based, self-help groups, which are viewed “…as part of a trend towards greater ethnic polarization, and the end of the Singaporean Singapore ideal”. George identifies three problems with the way the principles of racial integration are put into practice.
The first is the failure to communicate properly the position of Chinese language and culture in Singapore. He argues that the policies have appeared to other racial groups as an attempt to make the country, as a whole, more Chinese. The second is the alarmist terms in which ethnic diversity is discussed (usually connected to fear of Malay birth rates and Islamist terrorism). The third is an over-reliance on laws and policing to sustain inter-ethnic peace.

George argues that the development of citizens’ appreciation of cultural diversity and the establishment of common ground is imperative. He adds that Singaporeans were assured that public schools, HDB estates, and compulsory National Service for all young men, would provide opportunities for mixing and thus promote multi-racialism [8]. However, an increasing proportion of households live in private estates with few ‘minority’ residents, some schools have only Chinese students, and not all sections of the military have a representative racial balance. For example, many interviewees said that nearly all officers and fighter pilots are Chinese. The teachers, mostly Chinese, generally argued that George was too harsh in his criticisms, although some teachers and trainees, mostly from minorities, made comments similar to the following, that, “George’s article surfaces a lot of pent-up feelings that many minorities in Singapore feel…” A Chinese teacher was passionate when she asserted that, “In fact, people of all races express a deep longing for a nation that is more integrated”. The social studies trainees, teachers and coordinators, provided a great deal of evidence that they and their colleagues do provide their pupils with ‘opportunities for mixing’.

Racial And Social Integration In Schools

Discussing the issue of race in Singapore is particularly sensitive and emotional. For years, the PAP government has made the discussion of racial and religious issues a taboo. However, the September 11th destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York City…has thrown open again the whole question of inter-racial relations (Chinese Teacher, 2003).

School policies include the deployment of pupils to classes [9], so as to encourage inter-racial mixing, and to promote school programmes that infuse knowledge and understanding of different cultures. In social studies, the teachers argued, themes of racial harmony are infused throughout the syllabus. Although reading and discussing about other cultures does raise awareness, the literature review and research indicate it is the experience of coming into contact with customs and practices that determines how much and what each child acquires. Thus, social studies planning should identify strategies and activities that make imperative experiential, authentic cultural experience and learning.

Since the publication of Cherian George’s article in 2000 there has been a greater appreciation of the cultures and religious practices of the various racial groups in Singapore, borne of fears of disharmony, even terrorism. The government and MOE, through NE and citizenship education policy and funding, encourages activities at the grassroots level, such as visiting places of worship of different religions, to learn about their religious practices, as well as participation in the festivals of other races. These are positive moves towards the understanding and appreciation of other cultures.
Language Policies

Less positive has been the perceived failure to communicate properly the position of Chinese language and culture in Singapore. Various policies by the government have appeared to be an attempt to make the country more Chinese. For instance, the high profile ‘Speak Mandarin’ campaign failed to specify the target audience, creating an unfortunate impression among non-Chinese. Also, the government does not permit Malay and Tamil pupils to choose Chinese as their second language, even though some minority parents believe strongly that studying Chinese would be in their children’s long-term economic interests. Among the Tamil and Malay minorities there is very real suspicion and resentment about this issue, as the following account, by a Malay teacher, attests:

The ‘Speak Mandarin’ Campaign came under a lot of scrutiny in recent months. A Straits Times reader feels that the campaign is a waste of taxpayers’ money, given the economic scenario right now. I feel the same way as the reader for more reasons than I can explain here. Why must Mandarin be promoted so much by the government? If it is so important that it will overtake English, then why not let the other minority groups take Mandarin as a second language. The promotion of Chinese culture and values in the late 1980s left many minorities, including me, confused.

There were two explanations offered for the promotion of Mandarin. The first was economic, as a result of China’s burgeoning economy. The second was emotional, combining a pride in Chinese heritage and China’s recent development, and a fear of young people’s obvious westernisation.

Language is associated to culture. However, many Chinese Singaporeans especially the younger generation are not speaking the language... Many have adopted the language and lifestyles of the west. The Speak Mandarin Campaign and other activities associated with it are meant solely for the Chinese to remind and to bring them back to their cultural heritage. Other races should not be too sensitive on this issue. (Malay Teacher, 2003).

Social Engineering or Enlightened Leadership?

Another perceived problem with the management of diversity in Singapore, as mentioned above, is an over-reliance on top-down policing to sustain inter-ethnic peace, rather than on developing citizens’ sensitivity, knowledge and skills when dealing with cultural diversity. The government practises forms of ‘social engineering’, such as imposing ethnic quotas in HDB public housing estates. A teacher commented, intriguingly, that this “…strong regulatory emphasis…allows Singaporeans to enjoy the fruits of inter-ethnic peace without having to work particularly hard for it. Hence, most Singaporeans are free-riders when it comes to ‘race’ relations, as no deep commitment to multi-racialism is required either in thought or action.” An outside observer might add that in HDBs they do live it, which is not always easy if one believes some of the accounts in the Straits Times newspaper [10].
It is also questionable whether a regulatory approach is sustainable, as ethnic quotas in HDB estates, for example, will become less effective as the proportion of Singaporeans living in private housing, increases. The teacher added, “With Singaporeans becoming more cosmopolitan, multi-racialism can only be sustained if it is embedded in the instincts of each individual, rather than imposed by authority”.

Interestingly, since 1959 there has been positive support from the PAP for the education of Malay students. In 1982, the government stressed that the educational difficulties and poor performance of Malay Singaporeans were a national problem. Since then, it has taken additional steps to improve their educational performance.

As a Malay student, I received free schooling, which was offered by the government. Such assistance has eased the financial burden of many Malay pupils from lower income families. It also provides more equal learning opportunities for the minorities (Malay teacher, 2003).

In general, the teachers supported the government’s efforts to foster unity amidst diversity. As noted above, many activities in schools provide opportunities for mixing and promoting NE, citizenship and multi-racialism. Racial Harmony Day and Cultural Week, as stipulated in the Social Studies Action Plan, enable pupils to understand the differences and yet, retain the distinctive characteristics of their diverse cultures.

Some specific occasions appear to have more universality than others, as the following Malay teacher’s account attests:

In school, when we celebrated Total Defence Day on 15 February, on the surface it seemed most pupils enjoyed the activities that were shown, but I doubt whether they really understood the meaning of the activities. When shown clips of the race riot, some were oblivious to the tragedy which unfolded. Perhaps this attitude arises from not experiencing this in the first person or it could be factors such as being comfortable in their present life and not believing that such things will occur now… The ‘fault line’ message [of the government] is therefore unnecessary and serves to further heighten the suspicious and distrust of each race against another.

Schooling, Language, Culture

It is clear from our research that certain schools, accepting only Chinese pupils, need to put in more effort to achieve ‘respect for diversity’. Detailed planning must be carried out to expose pupils to the different food, cultures and practices of people from other racial groups. It would be feasible to collaborate and form partnerships with other schools so that student exchange programmes can be carried out. In the teachers’ and coordinators’ opinions, most pupils are exposed, to some extent at least, to the cultures and traditions of their peers from other racial groups. As a Tamil teacher commented, “The minorities feel that the promotion of Chinese culture and language is a biased government’s step, totally against the promotion of multiculturalism”. We argue strongly that the above applies to any segregated educational setting, including Christian, Muslim and Hindu.
‘Race’ Relations and Active Citizenship

Many trainees and teachers adopt a very Singaporean pragmatism [11] when it comes to ‘race’ relations and active citizenship. Minorities do not want to be left behind, hence the resentment at the promotion of Chinese language and the elite, mainly Chinese, Special Assistance Plan (SAP) schools [12], however they value a system that works and which produces economic and material advancement. A Malay Islamic student commented,

When the government refers to race relations as ‘ethnic fault lines’, I agree with Cherian George’s view that why should the government be alarmed? Is there any need? I think the government has really trained us well in the school of pragmatism. Most Singaporeans are just happy and contented to have a well-paying job and being able to enjoy the fruits of their labour. They are not into taking up causes or standing with pickets in front of the Parliament House.

The reference by government to ‘fault lines’, redolent of earthquakes and potential disasters, is a telling indication of top-down concern about race relations in the country. This is borne of the Minister Mentor, Lee Kuan Yew’s memory of traumatic times, of riots, and of Singapore’s expulsion from Malaysia. Add to this the present threat from Jemaah Islamiya, the Islamist terrorist group, exposed initially by Singapore’s secret service, and responsible for bomb threats to foreign embassies in Singapore, the Bali and Australian Embassy, Jakarta, bombings and numerous other outrages in the region, and you can see why there is such desire for integration and shared NE values. However, the tension and ambiguity this places on members of minorities in Singapore should not be ignored, as the following account attests:

*Singaporeans should appreciate the ethnic diversity that we have. ‘Fault lines’ should be treated positively and not be used as a tool to break the multi-ethnic bonds... We should not allow irresponsible individuals or groups to instigate us negatively using the ‘fault lines’...Younger Singaporeans whose feelings and ideas can be easily manipulated should be given proper guidance so as not to be led astray...Singaporeans would not like to live in a similar situation to the ‘blacks’ and the ‘whites’ in the west (our emphasis) (Malay Social Studies Co-ordinator).*

Assimilative attitudes, policies and practices were anathema to the minority cultural groups. They argued strongly for moderate degrees of social and political integration, respect for law, and for high levels of cultural and religious respect and autonomy.

*I believe that the different races and their cultures should be left as they are, as long as they do not infringe the rights of their neighbours. Their uniqueness will make Singapore an interesting and ‘colourful’ place to live in. I also believe that all ethnic cultures teach good values and attitudes... As Malay Muslims we do not feel too restricted in our actions, or discriminated... as long as we conform to the laws (Malay teacher, 2003).*
Conclusion

Most Singaporeans, having lived in HDB flats, are used to having neighbours of different cultures and religions. They more or less understand their cultures, beliefs, lifestyles, religions, foods, and ceremonial practices. This is not to deny the constant tensions and occasional disparagements. Our undergraduate students often expressed views similar to the following, “People are still intolerant in private. They are prevented by rules and laws”. There are stereotyped views of ‘lazy Malays’, ‘clannish, selfish Chinese’, ‘smelly, ‘tight’ Tamils’, ‘snobbish Eurasians and Europeans’. During good economic times and with tight societal controls these views are kept well in check.

As noted in various quotes, you also hear many positive cultural statements, for example, the hospitality, friendliness and family-orientation of Malays, attributes also ascribed, but to a lesser degree, to Chinese and Indian Singaporeans. There is also considerable knowledge and enjoyment of each other’s National Holiday festivals, rituals and celebrations.

The teachers and trainees said that the majority of pupils in schools do not have problems communicating with those of different ‘races’. They added that during play many choose to play with those of the same ‘race’, mainly because they feel comfortable using their own language [13]. However, during school-planned activities, such as games and quizzes, they said, and we often observed, the mixing of races seems natural and spontaneous. In other activities, such as ‘buddy’ reading, ‘buddy’ mathematics, and co-curricular activities, ethnic mixing is normal.

Schools, MOE and NIE, work closely with the government to ensure that teachers and their pupils develop the ‘correct’ awareness of, and attitudes towards, the different races in Singapore. This is implemented in Social Studies Programmes in all schools. The six NE messages, especially multiculturalism- ‘Though many races, religions, languages and cultures, we pursue one destiny’ - are embedded in the texts and syllabuses. Teachers are expected to deliver these important messages to their pupils. All acknowledge the importance of the government’s NE drive and the need to avoid personal bias and to instil correct, approved attitudes and knowledge in their pupils.

The Malay and Indian teachers and trainees are particularly concerned about those pupils who live in private estates, almost exclusively Chinese, while the Chinese teachers and trainees are more concerned with enhancing cohesion, shared values, and want more integration in school and society.

There is clear dissonance and tension between National Education, governmental directives, a closely controlled society, and pluralistic, multicultural, democratic and creative educational objectives. The Singaporean government, particularly in recent years, appears to be encouraging a ‘thinking’, creative curriculum, with a more inclusive and participatory citizenship. A consideration of the teachers’ concerns and voices is a positive start to such change.

Social Studies was conceived as a major vehicle for NE at secondary school level, with a focus on the nation, common culture and shared values…Introducing it as a compulsory, examinable subject in upper secondary schools reflects the government’s continuous, single-minded pursuit of citizenship education to meet national needs (Sim and Print, 2005).

In conclusion, and being more specifically educational, we recommend that the Social Studies Syllabus is the logical vehicle to coordinate these related fields of national, citizenship and multicultural education, and Social Studies Co-ordinators are best placed for implementation and evaluation.
In Singapore, social studies is the key vehicle for citizenship education in the context of NE. Its focus is on the nation, the common culture and shared values, which is essentially socialization. Developing thinking skills is also a major objective of social studies. This is significant because social studies is the context where...citizenship education and thinking meet...social criticism and participation in decision-making by citizens on public issues are desirable outcomes (Adler and Sim, 2005:8).

The coordination could be achieved through a network of specialists to provide more curricula and pedagogical research and development initiatives in this vital field. However, these must predicate on a more participatory democracy.

It is interesting and instructive when seeking to understand the inherent cultural and societal contradictions and tensions examined in this paper to see that many Singaporeans, young and old, ascribe kiasuism or selfishness, pragmatism and economic positivism, as influencing their attitudes and behaviours. If the society and polity is to become more inclusive, democratic and creative, the express aims of the ‘Blue Sky’ policy, then these attitudes and behaviours must be addressed in national education, multicultural and social studies programmes. The challenge is high-stake, in a globalized world of rapid, unpredictable change. If students are expected to accept ideas uncritically, they will not be capable to meet future challenges- social, cultural and national.

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NOTES

[1] 1. Singapore is our homeland; this is where we belong. We want to keep our heritage and our way of life. 2. We must preserve racial and religious harmony. Though many races, religions, languages and cultures, we pursue one destiny. 3. We must uphold meritocracy and incorruptibility. This means opportunity for all, according to their ability and effort. 4. No one owes Singapore a living. We must find our own way to survive and prosper. 5. We must ourselves defend Singapore. No one else is responsible for our security and well-being. 6. We have confidence in our future. United, determined and well-prepared, we shall build a bright future for ourselves.

[2] In 2007 there are approximately 3.5 million Residents/Citizens, and 800,000 Non-Resident/Citizen Workers, the latter often female domestic staff, labourers and construction workers, but including many professionals. (see http://www.singstat.gov.sg/keystats/mqstats/indicators.html).

[3] ‘Race’ is a significant factor in identification in Singapore. From birth to death official forms require one to tick Chinese, Malay, Indian, Eurasian or Other. On television there are the Indian, Malay, English or Mandarin channels (see Lee, C. et al, 2003: 2).


[6] One can quickly see parallels with aspects of Australian education’s move to ‘Essential Learnings’, and the emphasis over the last two decades, in Australia, the USA and UK, on civic and citizenship education.

[7] This group, often Christian, is strongly represented in business and the professions, including the teaching and teacher education profession. Formerly they were known as “The Queen’s Own Chinese”.

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This is clear evidence of the ‘top down’, directive form of PAP governmental ‘social engineering’ practiced in Singapore. It has resulted in a great deal of economic success, a powerful military, and improved educational and living standards, but also many inherent pressures and contradictions, often personal and ethnic.

As minority students predominate in streamed lower-achieving classes, due to their lack of facility in English, inter-cultural mixing is inevitably reduced.

As with other newspapers, The Straits Times focuses on stories about strife, conflict and illegality.

Singaporeans tell you frequently that they are a utilitarian, pragmatic people.

A Chinese SAP teacher (2003) said that “…segregation within the education system does exist…such an institution reinforces the differences between races. These schools are descended from a [Anglo] Chinese [private] school tradition, are almost entirely Chinese in their student-bodies, and are strongly supported by our government. They teach both Chinese and English at first-language level, in a bid to nurture ‘a Chinese elite’ (in the government’s words). The SAP schools tend to have the brighter pupils (given their more challenging syllabi), and are expected to produce future leaders for the private and public sectors. …some study Malay…[but] the pupils very much lack in their inter-racial outlook…National Service is too late…”

In 2003, a university study of multicultural Singapore revealed how little communication in school playgrounds there was between children of different races. This was attributed to preference for their own mother tongue (Lee, C. et al, 2003). The study received considerable coverage in the media. Many Singaporeans wrote letters of concern to newspapers. The response from MOE and government was negative, critical of the findings. It appeared a case of ‘shooting the messenger’.

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Malawi's Approach to Democracy: Implications for the Teaching of Democratic Citizenship

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ABSTRACT The conceptions of democracy, human rights, freedom and development that are presented in the documents which are used for the teaching of democracy in Malawi heavily rely on representative and constitutional forms. I argue that in light of Malawi's current circumstances and political history, these conceptions do not provide enough conditions for the cultivation of active democratic citizenship. The dominant approach that one finds in some of the materials undermines the very democratic dispensation the materials are meant to develop. At the beginning of this article I provide some of the historical background of Malawi and comment on the context into which the materials for democracy are deployed. Through an examination of the dominant themes present in these materials and a provisional theoretical positioning of the democratic discourse, this paper proposes that a deliberative conception of democracy is necessary to improve the way democracy is presented and lived, thereby creating active democratic citizenship.

Introduction

This paper analyses some of the main documents (see appendix) that are used in Malawi for the teaching of democracy after the re-introduction of a multiparty and a democratic system of government in 1993. I argue that the conceptions of democracy, human rights, freedom and development that are presented in these documents rely heavily on representative and constitutional forms. Based on this reading, I further argue that, given Malawi's circumstances, these conceptions do not provide sufficient conditions for the cultivation of active democratic citizens and so undermine the very democratic dispensation they purport to develop. This paper, therefore, suggests the adoption of participatory and deliberative conceptions of democracy as a viable way of teaching democracy and creating active democratic citizenship in Malawi.

The focus of this paper is confined to some of the main materials (see appendix) in use for the teaching of democracy both in schools and in communities in Malawi. It draws on the implications for the teaching of democratic citizenship from a theoretical conception. In order to do this, the paper will analyse some of the frequent and major themes that can be discovered from a close reading of some of the major resources for democratisation in Malawi. It will then attempt to compare these conceptions with what a democratic discourse offers. Nevertheless, this paper does not assume that democracy is one narrowly conceived theory that must be
implemented irrespective of social and historical circumstances. As such, the paper will focus only on elements of the democratic discourse that have been assumed in the democratisation project of Malawi and highlight their shortcomings. In this regard, this paper will discuss forms of democracy, conceptions of human rights and freedom, and the relationship between democracy and development. This is done in order to find avenues where better conceptions of democracy can be proposed.

This paper carries some assumptions which I want to acknowledge. The first is the assumption that the prevalence of democracy worldwide is an indication that democracy is the preferred model of organising society today irrespective of the different geographical positions in which we find ourselves. If democracy is a desirable model for social and political organisation to people of China, I assume that it is very likely that people of Uganda will also find it desirable irrespective of their traditional and economic circumstances. Different conceptions of democracy are relevant only when we begin to consider what precise and practically-based forms of democracy are applicable in each of the different circumstances. Secondly, in this paper assumed labels such as western democracy, eastern democracy, and African democracy will collapse given that my intention is to consider general theoretical positions on democracy and see how these play out in actual democratic discourse and how these may influence the formulation of democratic citizenship education in Malawi.

In this paper, I draw on and consider the implications of the teaching of democratic citizenship using the materials that have been introduced for the teaching of democracy in Malawi. Multiparty politics and a democratic system of government were re-introduced in Malawi through the 1993 general referendum. As such, the materials I will analyse in this paper only speak to developments after the national referendum. But for purposes of my argument, I also provide some background information about Malawi and some account of the way citizenship education has been practised.

Citizenship education and education for democracy in Malawi

Malawi is located in southeast Africa and is surrounded by Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique. Malawi, formerly known as Nyasaland, gained political independence from British rule in 1964. The nation lived under the British protectorate of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland from about 1953. Nyasaland (now Malawi) was mainly a labour reserve that served the economic activities of mining in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and farming in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). At a local level, the colonial administration introduced the Thangata System (Ross, 1996:15). The vernacular ‘Thangata’ means ‘working without expecting any reward’. During this period people were expected to work on plots of land owned by the colonizers without any payment, in the name of developing the nation.

Malawi’s traditional patterns of life have continued to influence patterns of social and political life to-date. Malawi has nine major ethnic groups. In her traditional life kinship dominates forms of leadership and organization. The ruling family and associated families fulfilled the roles of counsellors to the chief. Members of the ruling family exercised full citizenship rights. For example Ngoni traditional life and society in the central region of the country and parts of the south and most of the northern region is patrilineal and members of the royal families enjoy more citizen privileges than others. During the colonial period, the traditional patterns of life were encouraged, not for emancipatory purposes but for easier management of the
ethnically diverse cultural traditions of the country. From a general perspective, it would be difficult to find enabling conditions for democratic citizenship within this historical and traditional background.

Upon gaining independence in 1964, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda became the first prime minister. This title was later changed to president. The dominant political imperative during this time was to unite the nation under one leadership, one party and one ideology against a common enemy, colonialism. This move bred dictatorship and Dr Banda was finally instituted life president of Malawi. The Malawi Congress Party became the only legal political party in the country (Fiedler, 1996:149). After attaining independence, ideals of unity, obedience, loyalty and discipline were adopted as the four pillars for nation building. Education for citizenship was offered through officially controlled and structured courses in primary schools known as ‘Civics’. The four national pillars also became the central themes of Civics. Kasambara (1996:239) observes that Civics also promoted knowledge of the national constitution, and this included responsibilities of a good citizen in relation to the party dictates, and structural differences between local and central government. Despite this observation, Civics was treated like any ordinary subject in the national curriculum for primary schools.

The dictatorial political climate that became evident with the institution of life presidency in 1971 affected the social as well as the educational fabric of society. For instance, schools were not allowed to discuss any politics except that which inculcated the four cornerstones and attributed praise to Dr Banda as destroyer of federation, ‘mpulumutsi’ (saviour), father and founder of the Malawi nation. Attendance at political rallies and buying of party cards became non-negotiable. The state monitored all media and dissenting views received punitive measures. A paramilitary wing of the ruling party, the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) enforced this political hegemony through all national schools.

These control mechanisms did not provide any room for the exercise of substantive freedoms. The environment itself was undemocratic. The state determined the distribution of knowledge of citizenship education in Malawi. Due to the fact that the politics of the day also assumed that the government and the political party were one entity as attested by the famous slogan ‘chipani ndi boma’ (literal: party with government), citizenship education became an apology for the single party state and an advancement of political hegemony. Deviation was understood as treason, punishable by imprisonment without trial. Kasambara (1996) argues that there was a concerted effort to keep the masses ignorant of extensive and active political awareness and participation and to make the masses feel this was their best possible world, which needed their support.

The multiparty general elections that were held in 1994 were preceded by a political wave that advocated a renewed sense of citizenship and democratic rights and freedoms. The materials that have been used since then harbour a specific representative conception of democracy that is in many respects formal and constitutional. I argue that if these materials are to be used for the teaching of democratic citizenship they are very likely to produce passive democratic citizens. Two years before the first general election (that is, in the period between 1992 and 1994), the materials highlighted the advantages of the multiparty system and its accompanying freedoms as opposed to single party political hegemony (Kasambara, 1996:240-243, 251). The materials on democracy education in Malawi narrowly focused on voter education as a way of ensuring that multiparty politics could be instituted. It may be argued that the overemphasis on voter education was necessary because Malawi was emerging from a 30-year period of dictatorship. But little has
changed since then. My analysis of those materials which continue to be used for the teaching of democracy shows that there is still a heavy emphasis on formal and constitutional ideals of democracy. On this basis I argue that the materials do not provide sufficient space for the cultivation of active democratic citizenship.

I now examine some of the recurrent themes in the materials for democratisation in Malawi. I will confine this examination to conceptions of democracy and participation, human rights and freedom, democracy and development.

Democracy and participation

The materials used for the teaching of democracy after the re-introduction of multiparty politics in Malawi have largely been preoccupied with definitions and characterisations of democracy. The discourse fluctuates between terminological definitions of rights, and duties of citizens to the functions of an elected government (Cairns & Dambula, 1996; Teacher Development Unit (TDU), undated; Chirwa, Kayambazinthu & Kanyongolo, 2004). Descriptions of the electoral system rest on the idea that people exercise their choice by putting leaders in power. The materials also largely concede that there is no single system known as the democratic system except what the majority agrees. In one of the sources, which is in the vernacular language (Chichewa), there is a statement that says: “…anthu okhala m’dziko limodzi angathe kugwirizana pakati pao njira yoyenera kuyendetsera demokalase…” (translated as: citizens can agree on an appropriate way of running democracy) (Cairns & Dambula, 1996:2). While no attempt is made to define ‘what is appropriate’ in relation to ‘democracy’, this conception runs into the danger of endorsing anything people agree on as democratic because it concentrates on the methods for promoting democracy as if democracy is already a settled fact. Although the materials contain elements of self-determination, they are not very clear about the processes and implications of democracy in people’s daily lives.

The materials also acknowledge direct forms of participation such as demonstrations, boycotts or mass action, and strikes (Chirwa, Kanyongolo & Kayambazinthu, 2004). Nevertheless, in most cases these forms of participation are often under government scrutiny. This understanding is confirmed by the reference to democracy as ‘state management of the behaviour of the people within its borders and the distribution of resources’ (Chirwa, Kanyongolo & Kayambazinthu, 2004:46). Hence, periodic elections are also seen as a viable way of participating in democracy. As a result, citizens are turned into spectators of their system.

The conceptions of democracy in the materials are not altogether narrow about the prospects of participation in democratic processes. They recognize democracy as a social and political process that is continuous in promoting and respecting people’s rights, and the recognition of people’s aspirations for a better social and economic order (Chirwa, Kanyongolo & Kayambazinthu, 2004:88). While these ideals provide room for a moral dimension and substantive democracy, the materials explicitly indicate that participatory forms of democracy are difficult to arrange because they demand that everyone takes part directly in the exercise of choice when a major decision has to be taken (Chirwa, Kanyongolo & Kayambazinthu, 2004:93). This pessimism defeats the chances of cultivating active democratic citizenship. Representative forms are opted for because of their apparent easiness in implementation.

The basic characteristics of democracy are present in the materials for the teaching of democracy in Malawi. These include principles of equality, tolerance, participation in regular free and fair elections, a multiparty system, rule of law,
accountability and transparency, prevention of abuse of power, human rights and responsibilities, and economic freedoms (TDU:991-995). Nevertheless, equality is regarded more as a fundamental aspect of society than the recognition of difference. The understanding of equality evoked is that which is associated with concepts of a liberal just society such as equality before the law, equal freedoms and opportunities of all people within a nation (Chirwa, Kanyongolo & Kayambazinthu, 2004:89-90).

No further effort is made to explore how recognition of difference can become valued in the democratic process. Instead, recognition of difference is played down, except where it stands as a foundation for tolerance (Cairns & Dambula, 1996:2; TDU: 992). Similarly, democratic participation is conceived of in terms of a citizen’s right and duty such as standing for election, debating issues, attending civic meetings, paying taxes, protesting and preservation of democratic freedoms (Cairns & Dambula, 1996:2-3; Chirwa, Kanyongolo & Kayambazinthu, 2004:110, 322; TDU: 992). This conception would mean that given a situation where there is no abuse of power, no elections, and no problems requiring immediate solutions citizen participation would become unnecessary. Participation of the leaders seems to be the expected norm.

Malawians are also considered to participate in the affairs of their government through the cabinet, the judiciary and the legislature (Chirwa, Kanyongolo & Kayambazinthu, 2004:112-113). I think that the level and manner of general citizen participation in the cabinet and judiciary is far from fulfilling the condition of democratic participation due to the limited number of people who can participate in these processes. Citizen participation is also mentioned in relation to the formulation of national policies such as Vision 2020, the Poverty Alleviation Programme, and the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy. Ironically, although it is indicated that people were consulted, the handbook rightly acknowledges that consultation lacks the essence of democratic participation (Chirwa, Kanyongolo & Kayambazinthu, 2004:110).

Democratic leadership is conceived of in terms of power. For instance, a political party is seen as a group of people who are willing to assume power and to govern the nation. Furthermore, the relationship between the political parties and the people before any general election is presented in such a way that the parties hold meetings and present themselves to the people and explain how they will govern the nation once in power. The Citizens ‘listen and then, during the general election, choose the party which will govern them’. The over-emphasis on the general will unnecessarily leads to aggregative processes at the expense of deliberation and open public engagement. Hence, democratic citizenship education does not create sufficient conditions where people can learn democratic social co-operation while appreciating the perspectives and experiences of others (Enslin, Pendlebury, & Tjiattas, 2001:116). The citizens’ responsibilities are similarly reduced to registration, checking the voters’ roll, gathering enough information on parties and candidates, respecting the rights of other voters, accepting the results, and desisting from fraud etc. (Chirwa, Kanyongolo, & Kayambazinthu, 2004:198-199).

The conceptions I have outlined juxtapose the electorate and the parties as two different sides working to win against each other. Grossly missing from such conceptualisations are questions of continuous citizen participation through public deliberations and meaningful respect of difference. The public sphere is considered as a specialized field.
Human rights and freedoms

Principles and values of human rights and freedoms are at the centre of the constitution of Malawi (Faith, 1999:11; TDU:3). The materials under consideration hold that people’s knowledge of human rights sustains and promotes a democratic culture. Human rights are also regarded as a form of citizen empowerment (Cairns & Dambula, 1996:14; TDU: 981-987). These include the right to life, liberty, equality, respect for human dignity, the right to privacy, freedom of association; the rights of a child, women’s rights; freedom of thought, freedom of the press; the right to education; culture and language; the right to equal access to justice. The materials also indicate that government is expected to protect individual rights (Cairns & Dambula, 1996:3; Chirwa, Kanyongolo, & Kayambazinthu, 2004:40). This conception gives the impression of promoting a ‘clientele’ relationship between the citizens and the state, requiring no major action from the citizens apart from keeping peace; law and order in response to the state keeping its duties of protecting the citizens (Crick Report, 1998:41-42).

The formalistic approach to human rights education in Malawi can further be observed in the promotion of women’s and children’s rights. These rights are accorded equal and formal recognition just as any other rights and without much consideration of the historical and cultural factors, and how this background affects the execution of these rights. The historical and cultural background I have outlined above would necessarily demand a substantive approach to the rights of women and children, and as such the absence of emphasis on women’s and children’s rights negatively affects their promotion. Taylor (1995:225f) argues: ‘presence and absence of a particular group within human rights and how such presence or lack of it appears affects the fundamental defining characteristics of those rights’ The absence of some groups of society in the formal human rights that are taught implies a universalistic application of rights that conceals difference and special need.

The idea that government is expected to protect individual rights speaks more to negative forms of liberty that I have discussed above. When the negative concept of liberty underpins the teaching of human rights in schools, human rights are taught in a vacuum and promote isolation instead of creating respect for mutual respect (Spencer, 2000:25). The formalistic approach misses out the idea that the values should translate into appropriate democratic dispositions enabling the citizens to cultivate democratic skills and aptitudes.

The relationship between democracy and development

The conception of development that is promoted in the materials for democracy education in Malawi is one which is leader-driven. It is said:

*good leaders promote the development of their area whereas bad leaders bring problems that may retard development (Cairns & Dambula, 1996:14).*

While this idea connects leadership styles with development, the framework of the programmes virtually separates democracy and development from each other. For instance, the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE) framework puts citizenship education into two stages, the pre-election stage and the post-election stage. While the pre-election stage concentrates on voter education, the post-election
phase concentrates on HIV/AIDS, environment, gender, health, youth empowerment, and poverty and food security (Faiti, 1999). Surprisingly, the materials are silent on how these are linked to democracy or how any advancement in these elements would be linked to the promotion of democracy. Commenting on the approaches of NICE, Englund (2004:12) observes that there is a consistent shift from being political to being apolitical, thereby divorcing development from politics.

Poverty alleviation programmes in Malawi are referred to as development programmes. Their frameworks can be found in the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MPRS), the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF), the Targeted Input Programme (TIP), The Decentralization Programme, the Youth Fund, and the Free Primary Education. These programmes are designed to address the needs of the poor. Most of these programmes, except for free primary education, are economic in character. Although it is assumed that increased participation of citizens in the economic activities would lead to their development (Chirwa, Kanyongolo & Kayambazinthu, 2004:238-242), nothing specific is indicated as to how the same would encourage people’s active participation in the democratic system. MASAF, for instance is meant to provide “direct employment to poor families to provide safety nets in poor and food deficient areas through food-for-work, among others” (Chirwa, Kanyongolo and Kayambazinthu, 2004:241). In so far as the ends for democratic participation are not clearly spelt out, I think that MASAF will remain an economic model, where civic participation is controlled by the need for survival in economic hardships. Hence, the approach assumes a disjunction between democracy and development. Equally problematic in Malawi’s approach to development and democracy is the growing feeling that democracy requires adequate resources; otherwise one would not enjoy the social and economic rights that it brings (Chirwa, Kanyongolo and Kayambazinthu, 2004). In the event of rampant poverty and disease as is the case in Malawi, this idea would make us believe that democracy, let alone active and deliberative democracy, as I am to propose later in this paper, is impossible in Malawi. But research indicates that there is no necessary connection between poverty and lack of democratic citizen participation (Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No.4). Hence Malawi’s awkward position in cultivating democratic virtues alongside development is only apparent.

**The democratic framework reconsidered**

In this section, I propose a particular conception of democracy in line with the major themes that run through the materials for teaching democracy in Malawi. But I acknowledge that democracy is not one neat theoretical conception. Democracy, which is largely traced from the ancient Greek city practice of direct participation of eligible male members of society in public affairs, has come down to us in different forms. There is a lot of pessimism regarding the application of participatory democracy because modern society has different demographic features from those of the ancient Greek city states. In this section, I will examine some elements of the democratic discourse, and their relationship to conceptions of democracy as discovered in the materials that are used to promote democracy in Malawi. I will finally adopt a deliberative democratic framework as a better option for the teaching and promotion of democracy in Malawi.

As outlined above, the materials that I have examined about Malawi presuppose a representative model of democracy as the main or preferred conception. The theory of representative democracy has developed into various conceptions. For
instance, it is possible to talk of elitist representation and substantive representation. The conception of democracy that comes out in the materials on democracy in Malawi is more elitist than substantive. I show this by examining conceptions from two prominent theorists. These are Joseph Schumpeter (1970) and Hannah Pitkin (1967). Schumpeter wrote from an economics perspective but his proposals are equally important for our considerations of democracy today.

Schumpeter (1970:14-15) proposes elite representative democracy. He holds that there is no uniquely determined common good that is common to all against which chosen representatives in a democracy take as their yardstick of action in representing the people. According to this understanding, there is no definite observable point that can rationally be appropriated and held as good for all. According to Schumpeter, elite competition for position by leaders forms the hub of a representative government in a democracy. Similarly, citizen participation is only necessary during the elections, and for purposes of putting certain members of society into positions of power. Representation is conceived merely as a ‘system of arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for people’s votes’ (Schumpeter, 1970:17). This model does not encourage citizen engagement in public affairs except for their basic knowledge of the statutes and other guiding principles in society. The politician is also considered as the one who produces democracy just as a trader satisfies his / her customers (Swedberg, 1991).

Elite forms of democratic representation assume that representation is a settled fact. In this age, there is a perception that representative democracy means extending the people’s rights to vote through universal suffrage. Hence, democracy becomes associated primarily with electoral systems and political leadership. Elite conceptions lead to the creation of autonomous institutions, like parliament, cabinet, interest groups, etc, as indispensable for a successful large-scale democracy (Dahl, 1989:30). Political parties and their competition for people’s votes originate from this understanding. The conceptions of democracy that are in the materials for the promotion of democracy in Malawi lean towards formal and elite representation. As such, they are ‘Schumpeterian’. On the other hand, some representative models of democracy are substantive. For instance, Pitkin’s (1967) view of representative democracy has substantive ideals. Her model of representation involves many (groups of) people in large-scale social arrangements. The social structure and the multiple patterns of activities are represented at government action level. People engage in substantive control of government through representatives. The model believes in citizen rationality and capacity to manage civic action in government. With regard to citizenship education, Pitkin’s substantive model provides the sufficient conditions for the urgency of individuals. There is also a higher possibility of citizens being educated through their own political participation, than in elite representation. Hence, the substantive ideal of representation is more likely to cultivate active democratic citizenship.

Substantive forms of representative democracy have higher chance of developing an active democratic culture than elite and formal representation. Nevertheless, I argue that the materials that are used for the teaching of democracy in Malawi can provide more room for the cultivation of active democratic citizens if they are framed along deliberative democratic models. Deliberative democratic participation can be traced to direct democracy of the ancient Greeks; in so far the requirement for the participation of all citizens is concerned. But the deliberative model today goes far beyond what was expected in the ancient times. Current conceptions of deliberation require that citizens give reasons and demand reason from each other,
and from those they choose to represent them, in a continuous process of forming a consensus over public issues. The deliberative model also requires that the reasons and the processes of giving reasons should be accessible to people. This in turn produces decisions that are binding in so far as the people themselves hold these reasons to be legitimate and valid. Such being the case, the deliberative model promises several possibilities of change in the processes of life (Gutmann & Thompson, 2005:3-7).

If the above account of a deliberative model of democracy were to be used in the materials for teaching democracy it would be possible to shift from considering ‘people as objects of legislation or as passive subjects to be ruled’ (Gutmann & Thompson, 2005:3). Similarly, the argument that participatory democracy can only apply to small-scale societies, such as clubs and associations as Chirwa, Kanyongolo and Kayambazinthu (2004) propose would not hold. There are fears among advocates of a representative model of democracy that requiring the participation of all would bring chaos in society. There are also sentiments that such a requirement is homogenising because it demands a specific civility of all members, as a capacity to engage in continuous, deliberative and participatory democratic engagement. But such fears can only arise from a misunderstanding of the educative purposes of deliberative and participatory democracy.

The concept of democratic citizen engagement allows the belief that “the extension of opportunities (to participate) will itself change the political nature of many citizens from apathy and lack of interest, which produce withdrawal and ignorance, to involvement and interest, which produce more sophistication and information” (Budge, 1994:33). This approach is founded on the understanding that knowledge is not one piece, neither is it a possession of some privileged group of people in society. Participation is a crucial factor for the cultivation of public virtue or civility. Nevertheless, it does not mean ‘participation equals democracy’. If all forms of participation were equivalent to democracy; then ethnic cleansing could have been democratic. Participation meets democratic criteria when it occurs within an array of conditions such as equality, freedom, respect for difference, public reason, and others (Rawls, 1971; Benhabib, 1986; Young, 1996). In this regard, the materials on Malawi only provide the basics of a democratic system, but for the system to be democratically sustainable there is an urgent need to go beyond the basics. It is possible to consider participation as an end in itself, the public good, and to think that participation constitutes the public order (Miller, 2000; Kymlicka, 2002). This conception would promote the teaching of political involvement or participation as an end in itself. But I propose a conception of deliberative and participatory democracy that sees participation neither as equivalent to democracy nor constitutive of the public good. It is a conception of participation as an essential extrinsic good that enables citizens to acquire civility and other virtues that hold society together and make human life meaningful (Kymlicka, 2002: 294ff; Crick, 1999:343 –346). This model of teaching democracy is better positioned to promote both the individual and the group in advancing the required democratic goals of modern society.

While human rights issues have become central to democratic discourse, not all human rights approaches can promote active democratic citizenship. Human rights discourses are varied and can take the form of framed legal instruments that are universally binding. Nevertheless, a legalistic approach is insufficient because it involves a missing link in the consideration of human rights in relation to civic responsibilities. The legalistic approach concentrates on teaching the universal principles and applications of human rights as a way of protecting individuals’
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rights. This is evident in the materials on democracy in Malawi. This approach relies on a negative concept of liberty. The approach defaces the human person because one sees the self and other merely in terms of what is publicly constituted (MacKinnon, 1993). This is so because the legal approach is always wrapped up in formal and abstract distinctions, and characterization. Berlin (1984:22) further argues that negative liberty has nothing to do with democracy or self-government. He also argues that although self-government may provide better guarantee of the preservation of civil liberties, there is no necessary connection between this form of individual liberty and democratic rule.

Carrim (2000:34-36) suggests that highlighting dilemmas, tensions and contradictions involved in controversial issues and debates is more effective in promoting human rights. Similarly, Pendlebury and Enslin (2000:47) propose that knowledge of the universal statutes should be enhanced by the development of individual capacity to cultivate a sense of self-worth and equal recognition of the rights of others. In other words, education for democracy should have the capacity to cultivate the moral side of human rights. Both moral and legal rights need to be promoted and maintained for an effective culture of human rights and democracy. One way of promoting this effective relationship between human rights and democracy is to remove the distinction that is often placed between private and public spheres of life, and to stop thinking that human rights only involve our general entitlements as human beings. In so doing public reason or scrutiny would be applied to issues such as the family and traditional practices that undermine human rights. This approach promotes a moral dimension in human rights, something that the rights advocacy in Malawi misses.

The relationship between conceptions of democracy and development is equally crucial for the development of appropriate materials for the teaching of democracy. Sen (1999:16-36) proposes that human freedoms should be conceived in relation to the development of human capabilities to live a meaningful existence. This approach moves away from the commoditization of human rights and freedoms, which relies on a disjunction between political freedoms and economic freedoms, thanks to the formalistic and legalistic approach. Van Parijs (1999) proposes a ‘contestatory’ form of freedom which is very close to Sen’s participatory concept of freedom, which considers people as free when they have reason to accept those things they choose in their lives (Sen, 1999:31-32). This conception of freedom should properly be considered to lie within the domain of positive liberty. Within this framework, individuals are conscious of themselves as thinking, willing and actively forming their options with responsibility. It allows the individuals to form choices depending on their acceptable or genuine options and to explain these in terms of their own purposes and goals (Berlin, 1984; Raz 1986). In this sense, democratic freedom becomes a social product of the reciprocal social arrangements and individual capacities to be free.

Sen (1999:4) proposes that democratic freedom is intrinsically connected with development. Within this conception, the claims to freedom can only be consistent when enough effort is put to remove or reduce various kinds of ‘unfreedoms’ surrounding human life. These ‘unfreedoms’ include famines, little access to healthcare, sanitary arrangements, clean water, inequalities between sexes and races, etc. In this case, the approach to development does not have to be apolitical as is the impression created in the materials on Malawi. A positive sense of freedom designates the constitutive ends of human action as the development of elementary human capabilities while at the same time contributing to the general capability of the person to live more freely (Berlin, 1984; Sen, 1999:36-37).
Conclusions and recommendations

Through the examination of Malawi’s traditions and political history I have highlighted the urgent need for the adoption of deliberative conceptions of democracy in the materials that are used to promote democracy in Malawi. I have shown that some of the materials that are used for the promotion of democracy in Malawi largely contain elitist conceptions of representative democracy. They promote basic knowledge about democratic principles with an overemphasis on formal and constitutional formulations of democracy, human rights and freedoms. I have also shown that in some cases, there is a tendency to promote apolitical knowledge of the issues involved and this leads to a dichotomy between democracy and development. While the approach evident in the materials provides some basic requirements for developing democracy, I argue that this approach is very likely to pose serious challenges in the teaching of democracy today.

Instead, I suggest the adoption of deliberative models and practices because they have a high potential of cultivating active democratic citizenship virtues and skills. These values are better placed to sustain a democratic life and an appropriate understanding of the relationship between development and democracy. Such an adoption would also imply that education for democracy should be reframed to enable citizens to find meaning and to discover their freedom in the public sphere where activity becomes the mark of their civic duties. Such an approach is more likely to stimulate people’s interest in public affairs and educate them about public matters. On the other hand, a formal conception of human rights that focuses mainly on the constitution does not encourage citizens to become involved in public affairs. Dune and Pendlebury (2003:208) argue: “public schools are democratic governments single most legitimate and powerful means for teaching democracy and respect for public disagreement to young citizens”. In terms of teaching democracy in schools, the dynamism within the deliberative model can promote a healthy engagement of the dilemmas, tensions and contradictions that issues of human rights and freedoms pose for democratic life in society. The effectiveness of any human rights approach is tested in people’s application of the said bodies of knowledge and their capacity to demand participation in the protection and enhancement of these rights and freedoms. The deliberative model enables citizens to broaden their critical awareness of how differences of social, economic and political position affect their overall social conditions and the freedom to live the lives for which they have reason.

In conclusion, it is important to note that teaching the principles of democracy and human rights alone without “understanding the ways in which common needs and aims are differently realized in different circumstances” (Nussbaum, 2002:296) is tantamount to defeating the very ends of education for democracy in Malawi. Education for democracy needs to consider how learners can be engaged in the learning processes so that difference in life is appreciated and promoted. If deliberative forms of democracy are to be employed in the materials for democracy education in Malawi, the materials need to be characterized by the development of deliberative democratic skills and aptitudes, and the requisite elements of the democratic character such as democratic reciprocity and democratic agency (Gould, 1988). In the same way, talking politics in schools and in development work will enrich people’s understanding and practice of democracy and development.
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NOTES


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APPENDIX

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Teachers’ Constructions of Cooperation, Competition and Citizenship: A Comparison of Teachers in London, Budapest and Ljubljana

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ABSTRACT This paper compares the discourse of primary and secondary teachers in England, Hungary and Slovenia related to the use of cooperation and competition in their teaching. This is linked to dominant educational policy discourses in the three countries. The English system emphasises the achievement of standards and English teachers’ discussions on competition consistently referred to this: competition was seen as necessary to support this, and cooperation was, for the most part, under-conceptualised. In Hungary, the teachers’ discourse reflected how competition is deeply embedded in everyday culture, and perceived as ‘natural’ behaviour: it is therefore a regular part of teachers’ repertoire. Cooperation is barely mentioned. In Slovenia there is a strong and explicit policy discourse that relates to inclusive and egalitarian behaviour, particularly so in the primary schools. This is reflected strongly in the discourse and arguments of the Slovenian teachers: cooperative behaviour is explicitly encouraged, and competition discouraged.

Introduction

The enlargement of the European Union in 2004 brought together countries and societies with different social and economic traditions. Central to the Union are the establishment of a common civic tradition and participating in a regulated but competitive market economy: how possible are these objectives, given the different experiences of some of the newer members of the Union, compared with those of the older members? Citizenship, cooperation and competition appear to be core concepts underpinning the desired trajectory of the Union following the ‘Lisbon Agenda’ – which aimed to develop a “competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy” (European Council, 2000: 1, A §5), but to what extent is there a shared understanding of what these terms might mean?

One way of approaching such questions would be to examine the policies of different state institutions, or to interrogate key actors in the political and economic processes – legislators, union leaders, industrialists, bankers and civil servants. These would give useful insights into policy formation, and allow some evaluation.
of the degrees of convergence that were (or were not) taking place at this level. This paper adopts a different approach: to examine the meanings these terms have for those most involved in the transmission of cultural capital from one generation to the next - teachers. To what extent do teachers, at primary and at secondary level, share understandings of the terms ‘cooperation’ and ‘competition’ across three nations, England, Hungary and Slovenia, and what are the implications for ‘citizenship’?

This research was part of a larger study [1] of how teachers in three countries variously construct the meaning of competition and cooperation and, indirectly, citizenship in their professional practice and their discourse. Our analysis attempted to relate practice and discourse to the different educational policies and behaviours that are found in England, Hungary and Slovenia: we suggest that the differences we describe between teachers and pupils in the three countries are not accidental, but arise from the cultural practices of education that are found in each state. Although not by chance, these differences are not necessarily the intended outcome of policy initiatives: for the most part, they are unplanned, even unnoticed, consequences of educational cultural traditions that are entrenched and largely uncharted. Finally, we seek to relate the way in which these terms are understood by teachers and pupils to broader socio-political concepts within the context of the developing European Union.

These ideas are developed by groups of teachers in different ways under different local conditions, leading to local discourses of competition and cooperation. This differs from understandings of scientific concepts: teachers may indeed misconstruct concepts such as mass and light, but these are common misconceptions that suggest near universalistic ‘common-sense’ (and wrong) views of these concepts which can be ‘corrected’ when teachers are taught the accepted shared scientific constructions. How teachers (mis)construct scientific concepts is not dependent on local variations in culture or pedagogic policies. What distinguishes the concepts of cooperation and competition is that there is in most cases no expectation that teachers will help their pupils construct these concepts, or that they will be constructed in particular ways or with particular emphases. Most teachers had clearly not reflected deeply on their approach to these ideas with their pupils. They could give examples of pupils’ cooperative behaviour and examples of competitive behaviour, but had not thought about their role in supporting pupils’ behaviour in any particular way. For most, patterns of behaviour were a given and they had not considered that there might be alternative constructions, or other kinds of pedagogic practices, that might affect their pupils’ understandings and behaviour.

Cooperative and competitive activities are significant aspects of social behaviour, and of concern to educationalists, social theorists and those concerned with social and educational policy (on cooperation: Slavin, 1983; Johnson and Johnson, 1981; on competition Deutsch, 1990; Van de Vliert, 1999; Fülöp, 2004). In order to focus on the differences and similarities in usages, and to related these to local contingent situations, we adopted a qualitative case study approach, based on a relatively small set of schools, to build a nuanced view of the ways in which individual teachers construct social knowledge and social behaviour. This was set within a social constructionist perspective, examining how teachers embedded these concepts in language-moderated social experience, rather than attempting any essentialized study of the concepts per se (Berger and Luckman, 1966). The way in which teachers operationalize these ideas in their professional practice should reveal their use in contingent social interaction and communication conventions.

Social constructionism aims to account for the ways in which phenomena are socially constructed: it is essentially an epistemological basis for research that
focuses on meaning and power, as these are the only areas we can really claim to know about (Shotter, 1993; Burr, 1995). Many terms are used in very different ways and their meaning is disputed, but these usages develop from ideological and political interests, or power. So this is not a position of a social theory, in that we are not simply saying that ‘competition’ or ‘cooperation’ can be explained by social variables, but that ‘competition’ and ‘cooperation’ are in themselves social constructs. Our focus is the socio-political contexts and milieu in which that construction takes place. We can best understand these terms if we try and locate them in the differing conditions in which they are used: in this case, in the classroom practices of three countries (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999). “Language is not a transparent medium for conveying thought, but actually constructs the world and the self through the course of its use” (Wetherell and Maybin, 1996:220). This study thus illuminates the conditions and discourses of teachers’ work in different countries, and reflects on the differences and similarities in their practices around these two dimensions of cooperation and competition.

The Study

Our prime source of data was through teacher interviews, using a semi-structured approach, triangulated with supplementary direct observations of the teacher at work with a class, and focus groups with the pupils about their views of how they were taught, and cooperation and competition beyond the school. Other aspects of this study are reported elsewhere (Ross et al, 2005; Razdevsek-Pucko et al, 2005; Smart et al, 2005; Sandor et al, 2005).

We selected teachers at two stages in the educational system: primary teachers working with 8 to 9 year olds and secondary teachers working with 15 to 16 year olds. The primary teachers were working with the same group of children all the time. The secondary school teachers were teaching several different ages. We confined our work to schools in the middle ranking of school achievement, esteem and social intake, avoiding schools considered to be particularly ‘good’ or ‘disadvantaged’. In each capital city we interviewed four primary teachers and four secondary teachers (two of mathematics and two of the home language). We told the schools, teachers and pupils that we were interested in different approaches to teaching and learning in the three countries, and were not explicit about cooperative and competitive understanding or citizenship, so as not to prejudice the initial responses of teachers.

Competition

The Budapest and London teachers mention competition more often that the Ljubljana teachers, and the Slovenians rarely referred to students competing over their school studies. London teachers mentioned it, but referred to it in discouraging terms, unlike the Hungarians, who (at best) saw it as inevitable. The Hungarian teachers also frequently referred to social competition, both for popularity (for instance, who plays with whom) and dominance (who is the leader in the class). Teachers in all three countries referred to examples of children spontaneously competing between themselves over grades or points, but more often in Hungary than in England, and more often in England than Slovenia. Examples of teachers setting up structured competitions were mentioned less frequently.

The Slovenian teachers saw competition between individual pupils as less significant than rivalry between classes, but Hungarian teachers particularly referred
to the relationship between individual children competing, winning and losing: they saw children preferring to compete with those who are able to lose gracefully. English teachers related competition with friendship: competition became desirable if it was friendly and unstressed. In this sense, English teachers were able to see competition more positively than teachers from Hungary or Slovenia. They were prepared to support competition in such contexts, while the Slovenian teachers said they never or rarely encourage competitive behaviour.

The English teachers used two distinct ways of talking about competition: the first that it promotes achievement through motivation, and the second that it holds back achievement through de-motivation. They deal with the conflict between these by managing competitive situations so that pupils are able to achieve. A few linked competition to sociological arguments about its inequitable and divisive nature. Rather than refer to winning or losing, they gave coded references to ‘learning to win or lose’. They tended to define competition as occurring when individuals want to achieve a ‘better’ result than others, thus involving both comparison with one or others (individuals or groups) and the desire to be ‘better’. The most common example given was competing to be chosen to answer questions in class.

Some of them had enjoyed competition as a child, being good at sport or academic work, or simply enjoying winning: they were broadly positive towards competition for the individual, though under certain conditions. The three who had not enjoyed competition when younger were less positive towards competition.

All the English teachers acknowledged that there could be positive benefits of competition for their pupils, including enjoyment, pupil motivation, and through this, higher achievement. However there was also generally some immediate qualification:

*I don’t think it does them any harm, most of the time as long as they’re not trying to compete with someone that’s always going to achieve more than them (Mrs Patterson).* [2]

English teachers were concerned about competition in which pupils ‘don’t achieve’: this leads to negative feelings and possibly a withdrawal from competitive situations. These arguments were relatively pragmatic, but two teachers extended the argument to include socio-political ideas. They argued competition was divisive, and that in their own personal experience had produced failure and adversity. They re-defined competition as ‘keenness’, acknowledging the different strengths of everyone. These teachers contrasted competition with niceness: competition reinforces failure. For one, this attitude came in part from her experience of the competitive British education system: it was “an appalling thing to be streamed at the age of eleven, segregated in that way’”, and referred to her childhood as “of an age when there was true competition” in which social class played some part in determining “your place in the hierarchy.” Both suggested competition causes inequality and unfairness.

None of the English teachers talked about their pupils losing, and only one referred to winning. Three made coded references to children needing to learn that they can’t all be good at everything and sometimes they will not be first. None explicitly said children need to learn to lose: there has been a problematising of both winning/losing and passing/failing within the English system (Blair 2005).

Various strategies were suggested to meet the tension between the motivational and de-motivational effects of competition. One was to promote intra-personal competition rather than competition with others; a second was to ensure that
everyone achieves when those of similar ability competing over the same task – they
describe avoiding interpersonal competition and promoting mixed ability group
competition. They use competition to raise achievement and motivate their pupils,
avoiding the negative feelings associated with losing.

The two teachers who reflected on socio-political arguments about competition
would not introduce social division through competition. They regretted the
introduction of competitive practices into teaching:

once upon a time teachers just had ... a wage scale ... you went up on
the wage scale but now we have  ... extra line managers and PRP
[Performance Related Pay] and nobody knows what anybody else
earns and it’s very divisive I think. ... there is a little bit of competition
in school that sort of grates (Mrs Price)

They also disliked the current regime of testing in English schools, and several
teachers reflected on the impact of increased examinations.

SATs and GCSE results and testing - that kind of competition, I hate it.
I don’t think it’s educationally valid ... Why they are putting children
through that I have absolutely no idea and it is a complete nonsense.
Educationally the tests [and] ... the results are unsound (Mrs Shipley)

The Slovenian teachers made far fewer references to competitive situations.
Teachers believed that the little competition in the first years of primary school is
mainly found in physical education, or where points are awarded. There was
sometimes competition between groups, but rarely between individuals. Some
children withdrew in such competitive situations. Pupils liked to compete as a class
against other classes, in activities such as collecting waste paper or for ‘cleaner
teeth’. Otherwise there appeared to be little peer rivalry: teachers spoke of ‘healthy
competition’ in the sense of effort for good outcomes without negative feelings:

though I mainly try to encourage them to compete against their own
previous results, they of course want to compete one against the other,
especially against better students in the classroom with whom they
compare themselves. (PS)

High school teachers also suggested competitiveness is more between classes or
schools than within the classroom, where it was only prominent when students are
collecting points.

Competition is disguised - it is generally believed that it should not be
obvious, but when you play a language game it becomes obvious
because in a game competitiveness is acceptable (Ms. Sivec)

Students were encouraged to compete against their own previous results: it was
encouraged to develop critical thinking and the arguing skills needed in
confrontations.

... they already have the capacity for a personal interpretation, forming
arguments - in this way they are learning the discourse needed in
competition in real life. (Mr. Stanic)
Unlike the English teachers, their own experience of competitiveness while at school appeared less of an influence, and they mostly do not recollect bad experiences:

*Even though I wasn’t always successful I can’t claim that I didn’t like competitive situations. You learn to accept losses, provided they are not constant and alternate with successes.* (PS)

Slovenian teachers pointed out that their syllabuses do not include topics and themes which explicitly encourage competitiveness. However, grades, points, number of errors, and the length of essays were all elements which might inherently encourage competitiveness. But such extracurricular activities as regional and national competitions were more likely to lead to competitiveness.

Competition was more widely reported by Hungarian teachers. The school systems organises school-wide, district-wide, city-wide and nation-wide contests for students all school subjects, and students will participate in them from the first grade of the primary school (Fülöp, 2004). Competition is also present in the entrance exams both at the secondary and higher education. While children go through the educational system the evaluation of abilities, achievement and in relation to these normative comparisons become more and more frequent. There is a growing emphasis on school marks and test results and this strengthens social comparison and competition among children.

When asked in what sort of situations they encourage and discourage competitions, the Hungarian teachers gave more than twice as many examples of discouragement than they did of encouragement. They are particularly likely to discourage competition “when it gets to intensive and serious or when it is not fair” - for example, when children cheat or break the rules. This moral aspect of competition was never mentioned by English teachers. The Hungarians also mentioned discouraging competition in mixed ability groups to protect the weak students. They discourage competition by not giving rewards, not evaluating openly, organising group work rather than individual work and playing non-competitive games.

**Cooperation**

English teachers talked about cooperation in a variety of ways: to indicate good behaviour and students helping each other. While teachers were positive about this understanding of cooperation, they were generally unaware of pedagogic arguments for cooperative learning; they therefore tended to use cooperation ‘for cooperation’s sake’. They vaguely linked this to qualities that might benefit pupils in the future, but none were explicit about their own role in this. They tended to discuss cooperation much more in the context of good pupil behaviour rather as a tool for learning, and do not generally deal with any wider implications of utilising cooperation in the classroom. Some refer to working together, and a few refer to cooperation requiring very particular skills.

This was particularly true for primary teachers: when asked with whom pupils generally cooperate, one responded:

*Me. Normally. Occasionally, there are children in here that aren’t cooperative with me if they’re having a bad day* (Miss Patterson).
Thus when children behave badly they are described as un-cooperative. A similar theme is that of being helpful, on which both primary and secondary teachers comment: cooperation is ‘nice’ and ‘comfortable’: “children engage in it because others think ‘she’s a nice person because she cooperates’”.

Two teachers only saw cooperation as good behaviour, but most expressed ideas about cooperation being pupils helping each other with work or sharing ideas, perhaps with partners or through questioning each other. A minority of teachers went further, constructing cooperation as a more complex interaction requiring specific skills. One talked of cooperation in having ‘critical friends’ (pupils giving each other constructive feedback) and managing group dynamics, skills that have to be discovered and practised. She was the only teacher to suggest that cooperation should not just be between friends.

Another was explicit about the skills needed to cooperate, especially those relating to taking on specific roles within the group. He described cooperation as working together to complete a task, and identified particular problems that could interfere with this, such as one person doing all the work, group members not listening to each other, and disagreements over the best way to proceed. Most teachers felt that they had experienced less group work when at school themselves. One teacher justified cooperation between pupils for pragmatic reasons – she was unable to help all of her students at the same time, and she would rather they cleared up their problem with a classmate than waited for her help. However she also said that: “They’re going to learn a lot from each other. They’re going to push each other on.” Others suggested that learning from each other in this way may be more effective than other learning methods, but did not really suggest how or why. It was also suggested that when children work together they can become distracted and talk about other things, and that cooperation was harder when pupils find the work hard.

Descriptions of cooperation in some cases were simply referring to good behaviour, and in others referred to spontaneous helping each other. None linked cooperation directly to the wider social world or the qualities pupils should be encouraged to develop in order to benefit future society in anything, other than through vague statements such as “they’ve got to learn to cooperate with each other. You know, life skills and all that”.

Many hoped that working together would foster learning and raise achievement, but only two detailed how they expect this to work within the classroom. These findings supports other research (Delamont and Galton 1986, Galton, Hargreaves, Comber, Wall and Pell 1999) that in England cooperation is under-utilised as a skill for learning. Yet recent work in Scottish schools has suggested that significant improvements in interactions were found after training for teachers and the provision of new materials encouraging group work. Most of the teachers in our sample did not seem to be aware of the discussions about how cooperation within the classroom might enhance learning and attainment, and seemed to primarily utilise a narrower rationale for cooperation “for cooperation’s sake”.

In discussions about cooperation in the learning process in Slovenia, the term cooperative learning was often used but did not cover all forms of cooperation in the learning and teaching processes. Slovenian teachers, like the English teachers, did not necessarily use cooperation to include learning in small groups through interactive work towards a common goal, with the positive bonding implied in this (Peklaj, 2001). Terms frequently used were ‘working in groups’, ‘learning groups’ or simply tautological: ‘pupils’ cooperation’.

Asked when pupils were likely to cooperate, Slovenian primary teachers gave examples such as in groups, in pairs, helping the slower ones and those who had
been absent; pupils also explained topics to their classmates who might not have understood them properly; they shared textbooks and other learning aids and worked together organising various activities. Most pupils enjoyed such situations, only a few who needing the teacher’s assistance to join in. Secondary teachers described similar cooperation, but they also believed that at this level solidarity played a stronger role and there was more cooperation among students of non-learning nature.

Slovenian teachers understand cooperation as a social skill which needs to be learned. They referred to pupils needing to learn to be responsible, tolerant, emphatic and able to negotiate: to cooperate is to learn from each other. Through team work they acquire organisational skills, learn to delegate tasks and accept responsibility, discover their own, and their classmates’ weaknesses and strengths, and learn to respect other people’s work, accept criticism and rejoice in their team’s success.

*It is good that pupils gain experiences in cooperation as this contributes towards better quality of life; competitiveness is always present anyway, it is therefore necessary that school provides another experience as well, that is, the experience of cooperation.* (Primary School)

The Slovenian teachers suggested that the curriculum provided many opportunities for cooperative activities (working in groups, pairs, role playing, social games), particularly in subjects such as the Slovene language and environmental studies). They suggested that this depended on the teacher’s ability to organise her work in different ways.

*We are all learning how to cooperate, how to delegate work, to listen, to respect other person’s opinion. We play social games where pupils can experience how it feels when you are at the losing end, when you need help, if someone laughs at you…*

They gave examples of pupils, for reasons such as behavioural problems, not wishing to cooperate with other classmates. Pupils sometimes turned a cooperative situation into a competitive one: they start working for themselves, hiding results from one another; or formed smaller groups which compete against each other.

Primary teachers were more likely to emphasise their own positive experiences at school as influencing their approach, but more important was their positive experiences with pupils now: they see that pupils are successful and happy when using this method and say they are therefore more likely to use it more frequently.

*I enjoyed cooperative tasks [when I was at school] but that was quite complicated as cooperation is not a simple issue. It is often easier to do something on your own, under your own steam, rather than negotiate and worry about how to split something, for example, an award, and how much you should take for yourself.* (Mr. Stanic)

All the Slovenian teachers said that society needs people who know how to cooperate as well as to compete. They appeared aware of both positive and negative factors in both phenomena, but most argued that that it was cooperation that should be encouraged in school: to develop tolerance and openness to different ideas, and
learning from each other. Primary teachers emphasised that cooperative situations enabled the pupil to feel accepted and to enjoy the results achieved by the whole group. They accepted competitiveness that enabled children to be independent, creative and successful, and to test their knowledge: this boosted their motivation, provided this did not threaten a child's integrity. Secondary teachers tended more to emphasise cooperation as mainly being beneficial for less successful students, while competition provided opportunities for students to supported thinking with arguments.

_In Slovenia, people are not used enough either to cooperation or competition. … people will have to get used to quality selections in order to succeed on the European and world stage. (Mr. Stanic)_

**National cultures, educational policies and professional school practice**

There has always been debate about the purposes of education. Education has generally been perceived as a powerful social tool, but sometimes to be used to conserve, preserve and transmit an established culture and social structure, and at other times to transform and change a culture, and be an agent for social mobility. Three major rationales for education are sometimes advanced: education can be utilitarian or instrumental; it can develop individuality and pro-social behaviour in relation to others in; and it can sustain and advance cultural and scientific knowledge, transmitting the content of culture.

These three forms are essentialized types rather than descriptions of actual practice. Most educational systems combine elements of all three rationales, in varying proportions (Blyth, 1967; Lawton, 1975). Any modern educational system – such as the three under consideration in this paper - would claim to be transmitting cultural knowledge, to be developing the individual and to be meeting the social objective of preparing a skilled and industrious workforce. The emphasis given to any of these might vary, but all will be present in some form or other (Ross, 2000). It is instructive and useful to consider how the three national systems may differently emphasise the various characteristics of each model.

The English educational model shows all three forms. The basic principle is that schools should 'provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum which is suitable to the child’s age, ability, aptitude’ and to any special educational needs the child might have. The Education Act 1996 requires a curriculum which enshrines all possible models of education: to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of students in school and society; and to prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (Great Britain, 1996). Overtly, the National Curriculum documentation suggests a traditional content-based transmission model but in practice, this has been used to focus on standards of achievement by pupils. The National Curriculum and its assessment system have been employed to define and measure particular standards. Targets are set nationally, and measured by aggregating pupil results at the school and local authority level. The result is not necessarily a high level of competition between pupils – the standards set are criterion-referenced, not peer referenced - but competition between local authorities and between schools. The funding and inspection regimes make it important that schools are seen to achieve high standards, and league tables of aggregated results are very significant.
These policies, sustained with an unrelenting programme of initiatives, have focussed many teachers’ attention on the discourse of standards and achievement rather than on the nature of what is being taught. Effectiveness is judged very largely by the degree to which pupil reach the various ‘level descriptors’, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This is an objectives-led policy, and the objectives are narrow, closely defined, measurable and prescriptive. In a sense, the ‘content’ of what is taught is subsumed in a set of measurable behaviours. Pupils are assessed so each child is judged to have achieved a particular level.

The PISA study by the OECD created comparative international indices for cooperative and competitive learning, based on student reports. The cooperative indices were based on questions about whether students liked working with others and helping others, etc., while the competitive index was based on responses to questions about whether students liked to do better than others (being the best, learning better when trying to be better than others) (OECD, 2001:114). The study in 2000 did not report on competitive and cooperative learning preferences by pupils in the UK sample: but a later analysis of the data (Haahr et al, 2005), found that in the Reading survey (Kirsch et al, 2002), United Kingdom students scored particularly highly in their preference for cooperative learning (3rd out of 22 states, scoring +0.39, mean 0.0), and also in competitive learning (7th out of 22, +0.18, mean 0.0) (Haahr, 2005). Haahr et al note that ‘paradoxically, many countries where students have relatively high scores on the index of cooperative learning are also the countries where students have correspondingly high scores on the index of competitive learning, and vice versa (Haahr, 2005:128). The original OECD report suggested that it might be that “active learners use both strategies on different occasions, rather than limiting themselves to a single strategy that may not be the best in a particular situation” (OECD 2001:115).

The educational policies in Hungary have some superficial similarities. There have also been a series of major changes, mainly a consequence of the drastic transformation of the wider political, social and economic environment in the country: Hungary too has developed and refined a National Core Curriculum, finalised in early 1996 (Hungary, 1996a). The 1993 Public Education Act defined the objectives of the Nemzeti alaptanterv [The National Basic Curriculum] as honouring basic human rights, children’s rights, freedom of conscience and religion and the values of school education, as well as minority rights. These basic objectives had to be adopted by every school in Hungary (Hungary, 1996b).

However, most of the other priorities were essentially structural: increasing resources and managing these, expanding secondary education, support for special needs, strengthening the teaching force, and developing assessment systems (Hungary, 1998). The entry on Hungary in the Eurydice Information Database on Educational Systems in Europe (Eurydice, 2006a) reinforces this perception. The school’s pedagogical programme is defined in terms that suggest that the curriculum is very largely traditional in structure, consisting of established subjects or bodies of knowledge with some additional grafting on newer disciplines or skills.

There is continuous student assessment, which is the responsibility of the individual teacher who usually enjoys considerable autonomy in this field. Student performance and progress is evaluated throughout the school year and, on the basis of these marks received throughout the year, students receive an end-of-term and end-of-year mark in each subject. There is competition between schools in the outcomes of assessments, based on league tables of the proportions of students entering particular forms of higher education, because:
Student performance and achievement in the general school generally determines the type of secondary school a student will go on to attend. ... Students whose achievements are not judged adequate to attend either the secondary grammar school or a 'standard' secondary vocational school are usually placed in vocational training schools (Eurydice 1997).

In the PISA study (which did not, unfortunately for our purposes, include Slovenia), Hungary scored third lowest on cooperative learning (-0.34, mean 0.0) (OECD, 2001, Table 4.8) and eighth highest on competitive learning (+0.1, mean 0.0) (OECD, 2001, Table 4.9). This is unusual (see the comment above by Haar). Commenting on this, a survey of Education in Hungary 2003 (Lannert and Halász, 2004) suggested that most 15 year old Hungarian students use a memorization-based strategy in studying. The elaboration and linking of various items and their application in different contexts are seldom used by students. Cooperative learning strategies are similarly used to a lesser extent. ... the traditions of the prevalent classroom management ... displays a dominance of frontal teaching. This leads to a competitive, performance-orientated environment – in addition to the process of individualization also perceptible at societal level – in which the youth display less solidarity towards each other and less cohesion is shown among schoolmates, according to the findings of empirical research. (Lannert and Halász, 2004:95)

To conclude, the Hungarian system would appear to be a largely content-driven system, with a curriculum and educational policy designed to transmit a culturally determined set of knowledge and skills, which is normatively assessed but used within schools to refer to pupils' comparative positions. These encourage competition between both schools and between pupils in the schools.

As in Hungary – and for very similar reasons – the educational policies of Slovenia have been through a major programme of modernisation since 1990. The White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia (Slovenia, 1995, English version 1996) established both the policy framework and the overarching philosophy, values and principles that form the basis of this renewal. These, however, were qualitatively different to the priorities identified in Hungary: (1) accessibility and transparency of the public education system, (2) legal neutrality, (3) choice at all levels, (4) democracy, autonomy and equal opportunities, and (5) quality of learning to take precedence over the accumulation of facts.

Changes were designed to achieve objectives which are notable in prioritising an inclusive, near-egalitarian agenda: a greater variety of pre-school education programmes and qualification routes; opportunities to transfer between routes and better access to part-time study; improve functional and cultural literacy among adults; equal educational opportunities for the socially disadvantaged; equal opportunities for both sexes; and to increase the mainstream inclusion of children with special needs.

The content renewal of the curricula specifically included the elimination of ideologies from school subjects and a shift from memorisation of facts to learning skills and problem solving. The new curriculum was intended to ‘pay less attention to content and place greater emphasis on the process of learning and knowledge-acquisition’. There were very specific initiatives in the elementary school sector to
encourage cooperative learning styles. These overall goals were extended into specific aims (Eurydice, 2006b) that contrast with the more instrumental and content-focussed policies of England and Hungary respectively: increased autonomy and professional accountability of schools and teachers; the greater integration of interdisciplinary knowledge; the ending excessive workloads and tiredness of pupils; diverse forms and methods of work; a more active learning role for pupils; a greater role for teachers in directing the educational process; a greater role for schools in pupils’ social integration and to develop the capacity for independent creative and critical reflection and judgement; to train them to face and solve problems.

The Slovenian primary school syllabuses for individual subjects, as in Hungary, often recommend team and cooperative work, project work, work in pairs and small groups. These syllabuses have been in force since 1998.

An evaluation of whether structured learning interaction in the classroom supported cooperation or competitiveness and fostering personal interrelations between children found that teachers were now more likely to encourage various forms of cooperative work among pupils, in particular, introducing project team work, experiments and tasks, and to encourage the exchange of knowledge, opinions and experiences (Gril, 2003). Pupils more frequently work in groups and there is less ‘frontal’ teaching (Lannert and Halász, 2004). Pupils in the final three years themselves noted a higher degree of cooperation. The authors concluded that the curriculum changes had a positive effect on the development of social competencies and communication skills as well as on pupils’ higher evaluation of help and cooperation among peers.

Conclusions

Having reviewed the educational policies in each of the three countries, we can now begin to offer some preliminary conclusions about how these might explain the particular practices and discourses of cooperative behaviour, competitive behaviour, neither or both. It might be expected that these different policy discourses in the three countries’ systems would lead to different practices in teaching and learning styles.

The dominant discourse of standards and targets in the English system emphasises individual learning. The key objective for teachers and schools is not to rank pupils in order, one against the other, but to get each individual to as high a level descriptor as possible. Given the relatively crude nature of the level descriptors – each level represents on average an approximately two year period of study – then teachers whose pupils are approaching the key assessment stages at ages seven and eleven might concentrate their attention on those pupils they judged just below the threshold of the level descriptor. Effort and attention given to pupils above the threshold would not produce a visible ‘result’ unless the pupil could be raised to the level of the next descriptor. So there would be no need to encourage individual pupil competitiveness, or pupil cooperation, unless it could be linked to the specific individual improvement of a pupil in the marginal category. In our analysis of the English teachers’ discussions on competition, there was a consistent reference to the need to sustain and improve standards. Competition was seen as necessary – sometimes seen as a necessary evil – in supporting this. Cooperation was under-conceptualised, for the most part.

In Hungary, on the other hand, the dominant ethos of subject knowledge might lead to a situation in which pupils compete between themselves in a class: the relative insignificance of national standards mean that the teacher and the school,
who have wide discretion in assessment, would be particularly encouraged to make assessments that compared individual pupils in the class or school, and thus to foster competition between pupils. The teachers’ discourse supports this analysis: competition is deeply embedded in everyday culture, and perceived as ‘natural’ behaviour; it is therefore found and utilised in schools. Cooperation is barely mentioned.

The same lack of normative standards applies in Slovenia: but is linked to a very strong and explicit policy discourse that relates to inclusion and egalitarian behaviour, particularly so in the primary schools. This is reflected strongly in the discourse and arguments of the Slovenian teachers: they defend cooperation, and are dismissive of competition – adult society is sufficiently competitive that it need not be reflected in the practice of schools.

We thus see that these differences in policies and cultural practices are reflected in the professional discourses and practices of the teachers themselves. These policies are sufficiently effective and pervasive that they will have a significant impact on classroom practice. Teachers in these countries appear to behave in different ways, and have different values regarding both competition and cooperation, and it they discuss how they manage the processes of teaching and learning in different ways. Examining the way in which they construct the two concepts of cooperation and competition in the classroom illuminates the extent to which these policy discourses are realised in the different countries’ systems. These practices would appear to have some significance for citizenship education: the rights and responsibilities the citizen owes to others are necessarily influenced by the degree to which one competes with, and cooperates with, ones fellow citizens.

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NOTES

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[2] All names are anonymous. The names given to the primary teachers begin with P, and those of secondary school teachers begin with S.

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Youth Conceptions and Experiences of Citizenship: A Case Study of High School Students In Taipei

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ABSTRACT This paper presents a sample of Taiwanese youth’s conceptions and experiences of citizenship. Data from a survey of 577 high school students in Taipei provide a picture of how Taiwanese youth are initiated into the political communities of which they are members, including in- and out-of-school experience. Several characteristics of the Taiwanese youth emerge from this study. Firstly, Taiwan was considered as a national and symbolic community among the Taiwanese youth. Secondly, their current participation was associated mostly with school activities and the majority of the students identified their social groups related to schooling. Thirdly, these Taiwanese students demonstrated indifferent attitudes toward political activities and low trust in political institutions, especially political parties, the national legislature and the local council. Fourthly, the youth highly endorsed obeying the law, behaving morally, being patriotic and knowing the country’s history as qualifications of a good citizen. These characteristics imply that the school is the most important setting for the Taiwanese youth to experience the sense of efficacy and belonging as a responsible citizen and that the youth’s conceptualization of citizenship emphasizes obedience and loyalty more than active political participation.

Introduction

Within societies reshaped by cultural and economic globalization as well as transnational migration, there are three controversial issues with regard to the concept of citizenship: (1) a consistent debate existing between cosmopolitanism and nationalism (e.g., Abowitz, 2002; Feinberg, 1998; Nussbaum, 1996), (2) concerns of various citizen rights and social justice (e.g., Marshall, 1964; Marshall & Bottomore, 1992), and (3) a continuing tension between minority rights and practices of democratic citizenship (e.g., Kymlicka & Norman, 2000). These issues pose important questions about how citizenship and nationality will be defined. What is the community to which individuals develop civic loyalties and own allegiance? What are the processes whereby individuals develop a sense of membership in and commitment to its values?

Since the early 1990s, a renewed research interest in youth political development has dealt with young people’s political understanding and socialization (e.g., Haste & Torney-Purta, 1992; Milner, 2002) as well as the importance of the sociohistorical contexts in which children grow up (Flanagan & Sherron, 1998; Pancer & Pratt, 1999; Seginer, 1999). In parallel, the last decade has seen a resurgence in research with regard to civics/citizenship education all over the world. Early studies “sought to identify the key agencies of political socialization (families, schools, the media, etc.) and to measure the extent to which the values they promoted were inculcated in the recipients” (Cogan & Morris, 2001:2). More recent empirical studies recognize
that civics/citizenship education is complex, not a wholly top-down process, and varies markedly across institutional, national and international contexts (e.g., Cogan & Derricott, 2000; Kerr, 2000; Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald & Schulz, 2001). Several comparative studies in democracy and citizenship education across countries have demonstrated differences in students’ concepts of democracy, citizenship and government (Torney-Purta, et al, 2001), operationalization of school curriculum (Morris & Cogan, 2001), knowledge and values promoted in curriculum (Morris & Cogan, 2001; Kennedy, 1997), and community service involvement (Yates & Youniss, 1999).

Although there is renewed interest in citizenship and citizenship education around the world, there is nonetheless little research which presents the voices of high school students themselves and which examines to what extent political, cultural and educational contexts shape their understanding and experience of citizenship. When seen through sociological and anthropological lens, adolescence is not only a time for learning new adult roles (Mead, 1961), but also a time for learning the situational needs of society (Schlegel & Barry, 1991). On the one hand, high school students are not considered full members of society legally and thus experience limits on independent action that varies from country to country. On the other hand, they begin to activate the opportunities leading to adult citizenship and the world of work through community volunteering and part-time jobs. As a result, the transition to adulthood and certainly age-specific restrictions may create unique perspective, and influence how youth see and interpret the world. Because of these possible age-specific and contextual characteristics, examining high school students’ conceptions and experiences of citizenship from different cultural and political countries may shed new light on the interplay between (a) individuals’ self-construction on both who they think they are and the reality within which they live and adapt, and (b) macro environments (e.g., mass media, politics, economics, societal values and country’s international position) and micro environments (e.g., family, school, peer group, curriculum and neighbourhood).

Part of a doctoral project [1], this paper presents the characteristics of high school students in Taipei regarding their conceptions and experiences of citizenship in terms of descriptive findings of statistical analysis. The attempt is to portray how Taiwanese youth are initiated into the political community of which they are members such as the youth’s senses of civic, cultural and social belonging, views of citizens’ rights and duties, participatory experiences in- and out-of-school, and intention of future political/civic involvement.

**Theoretical Models**

Two theoretical frameworks are employed to investigate Taiwanese adolescents’ understanding and experience of citizenship, and explore the impact of macro- and micro-level environments on youth’s political development. One is the multi-dimensional framework of citizenship (Gagnon & Pagé, 1999) and the other is a person-in-context model developed for the IEA Civic Education study (Torney-Purta et al., 2001).

The spatial representation in Figure 1 [2] provides a visual conceptualization of the interrelation among the various components of citizenship and is not meant to imply a quantitative representation (Gagnon & Pagé, 1999). This framework comprises four major components—national identity; cultural, social, and transnational belonging; an effective system of rights; and political and civic participation. According to Gagnon and Pagé’s (1995:5) definitions, national identity refers to the collective identity of a political community, including “a set of characteristics that all citizens are invited or encouraged to share”. Social, cultural, and supranational belonging presents “the fact that citizens may define themselves in terms of one or several feelings of belonging within a society”. An effective system of rights refers to public norms which define the citizen’s political and legal status (e.g., Charters of rights and freedom,
laws, constitutions, etc.) Political and civic participation “brings together the competencies, actions and steps expected of a citizen” and through displaying his or her commitment to the governance of the society.

Figure 1. Multi-dimensional Framework of Citizenship (Gagnon & Pagé, 1999)

The IEA person-in-context model (Torney-Purta et al, 2001:20-22) views young people as active constructors engaged in a community, and as people whose everyday experiences in their homes, schools and communities influence their sense of citizenship. The public discourse and practices of the society have an impact on the student through contacts with family (parents, siblings and sometimes extended family), school (teachers, implemented curriculum, and participation opportunities), peer groups (both in and out of class), and neighbours (including people in out-of-school youth organizations). In addition to these face-to-face relationships, there is also a broader society that has an impact through its institutions and the mass media. Therefore, the model suggests that learning about citizenship is not limited to teachers’ explicit instruction. The political community itself surrounds and provides a context for developing political understanding. As well, school and neighbourhood are important sites for peer interaction and identity development.
Methodology

The Likert-scale questionnaire of this study was derived and adapted mostly from the *Young Citizens Today: Views of Self and of Society* questionnaire (Pagé, Chastenay & Jodoin, 2000) and the IEA *International Study of Civic Education* questionnaire (Torney-Purtal et al, 2001). It included the following sections: demographic profile, views on citizen rights and citizen participation, current activities in and out of school, interest in current events, intention of future civic and political participation, attitudes toward the state, qualities of a good citizen, senses of group belonging (civic, cultural, and social), factors influencing understanding of citizenship, trust in institutions, learning experience in school and classrooms with respect to citizenship.

The data collection in Taipei was conducted in December, 2003. Seven high-academic high schools in Taipei, including two girls’ schools, two boys’ schools, and three mixed-sex schools, participated in this study. The collaboration of administrations and teachers was key to the recruitment of the participants from these schools. Two class groups of grade 11 students from each high school spent 30 minutes in completing the questionnaire during their civics classes. Having discarded several questionnaires from respondents who failed to answer at least three quarters of the items, the total number of valid questionnaire was 577.

The descriptive findings reported in this paper are described with the group means, except demographic information and participants’ identification with their cultural and social groups. With items measured by the level of agreement from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree, those group means between 2.5 and 4 were considered to be ‘agreement’ and those between 2.49 and 1 as ‘disagreement’.

Profile of Participants

Of 577 grade 11 respondents from 7 public high schools of Taipei, 51.2% of students were male and 48.8% were female. Approximately 98% of students were born in Taiwan. For religious attachment, 65.3% of students reported having no religion, 24.0% were Buddhist and/or Taoist, 6.6% Protestant, 1.2% Catholic, and 2.7% other. The majority of students (57.9%) never attended religious ceremony in the last year, 31.2% of students attended a few times a year, and 10.8% attended ceremonies regularly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Parents’ educational attainment</th>
<th>Respondent’s education aspiration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>29.8% (169)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical institution/college</td>
<td>14.3% (81)</td>
<td>0.2% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>38.3% (217)</td>
<td>11.3% (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>12.3% (70)</td>
<td>34.3% (197)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>5.3% (30)</td>
<td>51.5% (296)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (ie Not Sure)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>100% (567)</td>
<td>100% (575)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Parents’ Educational Attainment and Respondent’s Education Aspiration
According to respondents’ reporting, the distribution of the highest level of parents’ educational attainment is the following: high school diploma (29.3%), technical institution or college diploma (14.0%), university degree (37.6%), master degree (12.3%) and PhD degree (5.3%). Approximately half of the students aspired to pursue a PhD degree in the future (51.5%), a third a master degree (34.3%) and a tenth, to attend university (11.3%) (see Table I). The high percentage of the respondents intending to obtain a PhD degree may be attributed to the valuing of educational credentials in Chinese culture. It is also likely to be influenced by a sampling bias, as five out of the seven participating schools are the top five high schools in Taipei for student academic performance.

Characteristics of High School Students in Taipei Regarding Citizenship

Cultural, Social, and Supranational Belongings

In response to an inquiry about their cultural group, 47.6% of the students indicated Taiwanese as their cultural group, 23.4% Minnanese (whose ancestors emigrated to Taiwan from Southern Fujian province of China before 1945), 11.3% Mainlander (who emigrated to Taiwan from various provinces in China in 1949), 8.4% Chinese, 7.6% Hakka (whose ancestors emigrated to Taiwan from Guangdong province of China before 1945) and 1.6% other.

As for the question “Which best describes you? I am…” 52.3% of respondents identified themselves as Taiwanese, followed by Chinese (24.1%), Taipeiian (13.2%), Asian (3.6%), and other [3] (6.8%). However, 77.7% of the students considered Chinese as ‘people having the same Chinese culture’ and only 22.3% considered Chinese as ‘people living in Chinese mainland’.

The respondents indicated they felt most associated with the following social groups: student in general (57.3%), student clubs at school (12.6%), school (12.0%), social-movement-related groups [4] (5.9%), religious groups (5.2%), and other [5] (7.1%). The majority of the youth seemed to highly situate their social life with the school.

Three quarters of the students (74.3%) agreed that because of modern means of transportation and communication, they felt like a citizen of the world.

Attitudes toward One’s Nation and Trust in Institutions

The majority of the Taiwanese youth had positive attitudes towards Taiwan as a national and symbolic community as shown in Table 2. All group means of the four items were above 3.00, including ‘being proud of what Taiwan has achieved’ (M = 3.31), ‘Taiwan deserving respect from other countries’ (M = 3.24), ‘having great love for Taiwan’ (M = 3.10), and ‘protecting Taiwan against political influence from other countries’ (M = 3.07). They agreed to be patriotic if necessary, including making sacrifices for the good of Taiwan (M = 2.99), and supporting their country even if they think their country is doing something wrong (M = 2.81).
We should be proud of what Taiwan has achieved. 92.7 7.3 3.31 0.65

Taiwan deserves respect from other countries for what it has accomplished. 88.7 11.2 3.24 0.69

I have great love for Taiwan. 85.5 14.5 3.09 0.64

We should always be alert and stop threat from other countries to Taiwan’s political independence. 85.5 14.5 3.08 0.65

Taiwanese should make sacrifices for the good of Taiwan. 83.3 16.7 2.99 0.64

People should support their country even if they think their country is doing something wrong. 69.5 30.5 2.80 0.76

Table 2. Taiwanese Youth’s Attitudes toward the State N = 576

With respect to trust in institutions [6], the school (M = 2.10) was the most trusted institution, followed by the court (M = 2.07) and the police (M = 1.93). The city government (M = 1.86), media (M = 1.75) and the federal government (M = 1.65) received an intermediate level of trust. Political parties (M = 1.04), the national legislature (M = 1.18) and local council (M = 1.39) were rarely trusted. These overall levels of endorsement were generally low, which indicated that, on average, the youth trusted these institutions rarely or some of the time.

Attitudes toward Citizen’s Rights

The majority of students strongly supported the same level of participation for women in government as men (M = 3.38) and tended to agree that having many women active in politics would be good for society (M = 2.77). They disagreed that when jobs are scare, men should have more rights to a job than women (M = 1.78), and that men have better qualities as political leaders than women (M = 1.91) (see Table 3).

Table 3. Taiwanese Youth’s Attitudes toward Women’s Rights N = 576
Taiwanese Youth’s Conceptions Of Citizenship

Reviewing Table 4, the students strongly supported that the employers should train personnel to respect cultural differences ($M = 3.51$). They also agreed that it is the right of employees from minorities to speak their mother tongue among each other ($M = 2.98$), the right of employees to wear visible signs of their religion ($M = 2.91$), and that aboriginal people have special rights and privileges ($M = 2.70$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the world of work, employers have to train personnel in the respect for cultural differences.</td>
<td>97.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the world of work, we have to allow employees from minorities to use their mother tongue when speaking among each other.</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses and the government have to allow employees to wear visible signs of their religion in the work place.</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is fair that First nations have special rights and privileges.</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Taiwanese Youth’s Attitudes toward Cultural Rights N = 577

The respondents strongly supported the concept the government has responsibility for the citizens’ social rights (see Table 5). This included providing an adequate standard of living for old people ($M = 3.37$), providing basic health care for everyone ($M = 3.30$), and providing special treatment, such as facilitating employment and access to public places, for people with disabilities ($M = 3.25$). The respondents also agreed that a society must take care of its needy through government programs rather than through charities ($M = 2.98$), and that the government must provide an adequate standard of living for the unemployed ($M = 2.91$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Government must provide an adequate standard of living for old people.</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The government must provide basic health for everyone.</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is fair that people with disabilities receive special treatment from the government (e.g., facilitate employment, access to public places).</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A society must take care of its needy through government programs rather than through charities.</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The government must provide an adequate standard of living for the unemployed.</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Taiwanese Youth’s Attitudes toward the Government Responsibility N = 577

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Political Exposure and Confidence in Citizen Efficacy

Political exposure was measured by the frequency of seeking information about what is happening in Taiwan and in other countries by reading articles in newspapers and magazines, watching and/or listening to news on the TV and/or radio, and navigating news sites on the Internet [7]. In general, the students used television/radio (M = 3.08) as the most important source of political information, followed by newspapers (M = 2.62 for national news and M = 2.39 for international news), the Internet (M = 2.18 for national news and M = 1.93 for international news), and magazines (M = 1.65 for national news and M = 1.57 for international news).

As shown in Table 6, the majority of students endorsed the effectiveness of citizen participation in the community (M = 3.25), an advocacy group (M = 2.96), and a political party (M = 2.72). However, the Taiwanese students disagreed that expressing opinions on government actions to elected representatives is useful (M = 2.30).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Agree%</th>
<th>Disagree%</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal involvement in one’s community is an efficient means of bringing about positive change in society.</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One can change government decisions by expressing dissatisfaction through personal involvement in an advocacy group.</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we become personally involved in a political party, we can have a real impact on the well-being of citizens.</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is useful to express our opinion on government actions by communicating directly with elected representatives.</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Taiwanese Youth’s Confidence in Citizen Participation N = 576

Current Activities and Future Political/Civic Participation

For current activities in and out of school, the Taiwanese students participated mostly in school activities (M = 2.47) and student clubs (M = 2.43), followed by giving money to fund raising (M = 1.33), participating in school partnership programs (M = 1.28), and giving money to beggars (M = 1.15). All group means of other items (e.g., charity-related, community-related and politics-related activities) were below 1.00, indicating that the majority of the students participated in these organizations or activities only once or never.

As for the intention of future participation, five items were related to political participation, including voting, contacting politicians, participating in protests [8], joining a political party, and volunteering during an electoral campaign for a political party. Five items dealt with civic participation such as giving money to fund raisers, community volunteering, participating in international organizations for human betterment, volunteering for fund raising, and collecting signatures.

The group means of two items, voting every time (M = 2.27) and giving money to fund raisers (M = 2.25), were above 2.00 [9]. The students would probably participate in these actions in the future. Being a political party volunteer during an electoral campaign (M = .79),
being a member of a political party (M = .96) and participating in protests (M = .99) were the three lowest actions.

School Learning Experience of Citizenship

Examining the youth’s confidence in the effectiveness of student participation in school (see Table 7), the majority of students agreed that students can make school better by being involved in groups working on school affairs (M = 3.22), electing student representatives to suggest changes in how the school is run (M = 3.05), and organizing groups of students to state their opinions (M = 3.04).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Agree%</th>
<th>Disagree%</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students acting together (in group) can have more influence on what happens in this school than students acting alone</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electing student representatives to suggest changes in how the school is run makes school better.</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing groups of students to state their opinions could help solve problem in this school.</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 Taiwanese Youth’s Sense of School Efficacy N = 576

The majority of Taiwanese students generally agreed with the open climate for discussion in school. They agreed that students are 1) encouraged to express their opinions in class (M = 3.01), 2) free to express opinions that differ from those of other students (M = 3.00), 3) free to disagree with their teachers (M = 2.88), and 4) encouraged to have their own opinions at school (M = 2.77).

Generally speaking, the majority of students agreed with what they had learned from school curriculum regarding citizenship (see Table 8). The respondents thought that they had a good understanding of the history of Taiwan (M = 2.82). The students agreed slightly that they had a good understanding regarding how political institutions work in Taiwan (M = 2.57). They also endorsed the learning to be a responsible citizen, which included understanding people’s differences (M = 3.12), being concerned about what happens in other countries (M = 2.96), knowing the importance of voting in national and local elections (M = 2.77), forming the national identity (M = 2.74), contributing to community problem solving (2.73), and being a patriotic citizen (M = 2.66).
Table 8. Taiwanese Youth’s perception about Learning of Citizenship N = 574

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Agree%</th>
<th>Disagree%</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teaching I received provided me with a good understanding of the history of Taiwan.</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching I received has helped me understand how political institutions work in today’s Taiwan.</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school I have learned to understand people who have different ideas.</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school I have learned to be concerned about what happens in other countries.</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school I have learned about the importance of voting in national and local elections.</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching I received has help me form my Taiwanese identity.</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school I have learned to contribute to solving problems in community.</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school I have learned to be a patriotic and loyal citizen of my country.</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Taiwanese Youth’s perception about Learning of Citizenship N = 574

Influencing Factors for Understanding Citizenship

The respondents were asked to rank the degree of influence upon their understanding of citizenship based on a list of factors from different sources such as family, school, volunteering, working, politics, religion, media, and popular culture [10].

Among the eighteen items, parents (M = 2.51), friends (M = 2.06), school teachers (M = 2.03), school curriculum (M = 1.77) and media (M = 1.65) were the five highest influencing factors on the students’ understanding of citizenship. The five lowest ones were popular culture (M = 0.32), religious leaders (M = 0.52), youth organization (M = 0.68), school administrators (M = 0.78), and volunteer experience (M = 0.85).

Qualities of a good citizen

The stem of the questions was as follows: ‘A good citizen...’ Six items dealt with the conventional duties of a citizen such as following political news, knowing about the country’s history and world community, being patriotic and loyal to the country, voting, and being willing to serve in the military. Six items were related to the civic duties of a citizen, which included 1) taking part in promoting human rights activities, 2) protecting the environment, 3) participating in activities for community benefits, 4) protesting peacefully against unjust laws, 5) refusing to obey a law violating human rights, and 6) not buying products made by child labour in developing countries. Three items were associated with ethical duties such as obeying the law, behaving morally and ethically, and showing concern for tragedies in other countries.

The three items with the highest group means were: ‘obeys the law’ (M = 3.49), ‘behaves morally and ethically’ (M = 3.34) and ‘is patriotic and loyal to the country’ (M = 3.32).
three qualities receiving the lowest group means were: ‘show respect for government representatives (elected leaders, officials)’ (M = 2.68), ‘is willing to serve in the military to defend the country’ (M = 2.80) and ‘participates in peaceful protest against a law believed to be unjust’ (M = 2.92).

**Discussion**

There has been tension between national identity and cultural identity for people living in contemporary Taiwan. Generally, the majority of people in Taiwan have a sense of dual identity or mixed identity, describing themselves as both Chinese with a cultural sense and Taiwanese with a political sense (Chiang, 1998; Law, 2002; Liu & Hung, 2003; Xia, 1995). In other words, many people living in Taiwan do not identify with the Chinese state in the political sphere and instead identify with their ancestors’ homeland in the cultural sphere. The majority of the youth in this study still consider Chinese as ‘people having same Chinese culture’ instead of ‘people living in Chinese mainland’. It implies that the meaning of Chinese for the Taiwanese youth is continually associated with an extensively cultural community rather than an exclusively political boundary. However, with the on-going process of Taiwanalization promoted in school curriculum, mass media, and daily life, a Taiwanese identity seems to be emerging among the youth in this study.

Overall, the Taiwanese youth seem to have a balanced view of citizens’ rights and duties, at least at the conceptual level. On the one hand, they respect cultural rights of minority groups, support women’s political and economic rights, and require the government to ensure basic social rights of the citizen such as health care and social welfare for seniors, people with disabilities, and the unemployed. On the other hand, the Taiwanese youth believe that citizens should perform certain conventional and ethical duties such as obeying the law, being patriotic, and behaving morally. In the Taipei sample, this kind of confirmation may be attributed to socializing ‘agents’ of influence, such as family, school and mass media, as part of the adolescent’s acquisition of political values and beliefs. Moreover, although the Taiwanese students agree that it is important to participate in human rights, community betterment, and environmental activities, the conventional duties of citizenship are the ones most endorsed by the students. This may imply that the Taiwanese youth’s conceptualization of citizenship is related to the political sphere more than as a commitment to a broader community, and emphasizes obedience and loyalty more than active political participation. However, these explanations need to be further examined and confirmed by analyzing the interview data of this study.

The Taiwanese youth in this study reveal indifferent attitudes toward political activities. They also present low trust in political institutions, especially political parties, the national legislature and the local council. The majority of students do not intend to join a political party, contact politicians, and volunteer in political campaigns when they become adults. These results are consistent with other research findings regarding young people’s political attitudes (e.g. the IEA Civic Education Study across 28 countries). Nevertheless, voting in elections is the most preferred future political activity of the Taiwanese youth. This may be attributed to the fact that voting in Taiwan is defined as a duty in the constitution and emphasized by means of civic education at school. This is interesting in light of the changing context. Due to the progress of political democratization in Taiwan and the highly controversial issue of national identity, political elections in Taiwan have attracted the people’s attention and heightened passion for voting in each election.

The Taiwanese students consider parents, friends, and school teachers the most important factors in their understanding of citizenship. Their current participatory experience is mostly
associated with school activities. Nearly 82% of the students identify their social group related to schooling. It indicates that the school is the most important setting for the Taiwanese youth to experience the sense of efficacy and belonging as a responsible citizen. For high school students, the community and the school are the settings in which a sense of political efficacy can be experienced. With positive experiences in school participation, students’ beliefs in political efficacy may be exercised, which include the belief that government officials are responsive to citizen input and the belief that the individual can mobilize personal resources to be effective (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). In addition, schools are places where students believe that they learn to understand and live in harmony with others because getting along is a daily occurrence. This study supports the argument that the encouragement and effectiveness of student participation as well as the opportunities for learning about citizenship in school are critical for stimulating adolescents’ political development (e.g., Hahn, 1998; Ichilov, 1991; Torney-Purta, et al, 2001).

These findings from the Taipei sample also suggest that the current generation of young people in Taiwan has successfully integrated Confucian values and western values. The Confucian tradition emphasizes 1) rule of virtue, not legal enforcement (de Bary, 1998; O’Dwyer, 2003); 2) the family as a critical cornerstone of building a political community (Schwartz, 1985); 3) high respect for political authority; and 4) loyalty to the nation as the highest endorsed moral. In politics, Confucianism views government as an extended family, with individuals knowing their places and responsibilities. Such democratic values as equality, individual freedom, human rights, and rule of law, which are widely accepted as indispensable conditions for western democracy, receive low marks in traditional Confucian culture (Shin & Shyu, 1997). The formal civic curriculum in some Asian societies such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Thailand is dominated by concern for ‘good citizenship’, ‘the common good’, moral education, and the range of values associated with these aspects of civics (Morris & Cogan, 2001). Nevertheless, with the continuing process of westernization and democratization, Taiwanese society has been deeply influenced by the liberal values of individual liberty as well as western-style constitutions, civil society, and human rights.

Some Taiwanese students’ characteristics of citizenship seem to be rooted in Confucian culture such as the emphasis on family influence, citizens’ responsibilities, loyalty to the country, and moral behaviour of citizens. In contrast, high agreement with obeying laws, supportive attitudes toward women’s rights, distrusting government-related institutions, and low endorsement of showing respect for government representatives and servicing in the military are likely to be a result of integrating western democratic values and the contemporary values of individuality.

Conclusion

The descriptive results of this study have demonstrated multi-dimensional concepts of citizenship developed by Gagnon and Pagé (1999). By linking national identity, differentiated identities, rights, and participation in an investigation, this paper presents a comprehensive picture of the Taiwanese youths’ conceptions of citizenship. Of the four types of group belonging (national, cultural, social, and global sense of belonging), national identity is the most salient for the Taiwanese youth. They are proud of what Taiwan has achieved and have great love for Taiwan. The Taiwanese youth not only endorse social rights, cultural rights, and women’s rights, but also consider participating in certain civic and political activities as qualities of a good citizen. However, the youth reveal low trust in political institutions and low intention to participate in political events in the future. Although this paper present more or less the interrelation among the various components of citizenship (identities, rights, and

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participation), further correlation analysis is needed to provide more solid evidence for the interrelation.

This paper also offers marginal findings to support the theoretical assumption of IEA person-in-context model (2001). For the Taiwanese youth in this study, the school is the main setting for their learning of citizenship. The nature of the formal and hidden curriculum, the opportunities and encouragement of extra-curricular activities, and school ethos and culture are the key elements which impact on youth’s sense of citizenship and participatory experience. These influences are also nested within a much larger set of systems such as families, peer groups, media presentations, government policies, and societal values. Nevertheless, how the individual student constructs his/her understandings and experiences within the influence of macro-level and micro-level environments is worthy of further examination by the integrated analysis of students’ survey and interview data from this doctoral project.

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NOTES

[1] This doctoral project is a comparative study between Taipei, Taiwan and Calgary, Canada, featuring a student survey and individual interviews conducted by the author.
[2] Figure 1 combines Gagnon and Pagé’s five original figures together in order to schematize the macro-concepts and secondary concepts.
[3] Other includes human beings, city other than Taipei, and school.
[5] Other includes sports team, professional group, family, and political party.
[6] These items were measured in the five-point scale, 0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = some of time, 3 = most of time, and 4 = always.
[7] The response scores were 0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, and 4 = daily.
[8] Most protests in Taiwanese society are highly associated with political parties and political issues.
[9] The response options were 0 = certainly not, 1 = probably not, 2 = probably, 3 = certainly.
[10] The response options were 0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = a fair amount, 3 = a lot.

REFERENCES


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Citizenship Education in the UK: Divergence Within a Multi-National State

RHYS ANDREWS AND ANDREW MYCOCK, Cardiff University and University of Manchester

ABSTRACT The recent introduction of Citizenship in England marked an important moment in the history of education in the UK. But to what extent does citizenship education receive equal attention within the four UK Home Nations? And, what are the implications of different approaches to citizenship education? This paper assesses the nature of citizenship education in the four nations of the UK, examining the divergent approaches and attitudes towards citizenship education in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Challenges for the future of citizenship education in the UK are explored, before the paper concludes by arguing that great care is required to ensure parity of provision is upheld across the evolving multi-national education system.

Introduction

The introduction of citizenship education as a statutory foundation subject for pupils aged 11-16 in English secondary schools reflected growing concern regarding the attitudes of young people toward civil society and political participation (Jowell & Park, 1998). Indeed, anxiety about the civic engagement of future citizens has invariably accompanied some perceived social crisis (Davies, 2000). However, supporters of citizenship education across the globe are quick to stress that it is also an inherently valuable feature of a good education, enabling pupils to make significant contributions to a democratic political culture (Kennedy, 1997). This is increasingly important in the UK as young people are subject to an array of legislation that affects them, but over which they have little influence (Frazer, 1999). The intrinsic value of being able to understand issues that affect them, and possess the skills and experience to participate in democratic decision-making thus makes citizenship education a key entitlement for all children. This notion of equal right has particular resonance within multi-national states such as the UK, especially since devolution in 1997 has significantly altered the constitutional settlement. The disparate arrangements for education now found within the four ‘Home Nations’ of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales raise a number of critical questions. Is citizenship education comparable across the UK? What are the implications of divergent views of citizenship education within each national framework for a homogenous conception of UK citizenship, and its accordant civic identity? Should citizenship education within the UK be founded on common principles? Can diverse approaches to citizenship education deliver equitable educational outcomes?

So far, citizenship education in the devolved UK education systems of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales has developed in diverse ways.
This divergence reflects differing views concerning its place in the curriculum, assessment and expected educational and broader social outcomes. Party politics and issues of national identity have also made the content of citizenship education contentious in each Home Nation and in the UK as whole. Nevertheless, although they differ on its status and content, the four nations all concur that citizenship education should increase political engagement amongst young people and encourage an inclusive framework of civic identities. Given this apparent convergence on the purpose of citizenship education, it becomes especially important to assess the disparate arrangements present within each devolved education system. Analysis of the provision of citizenship education in the ‘Home Nations’ has so far been limited, and largely confined to descriptive narratives of different approaches (Phillips et al., 2003; O’Hare & Gay, 2006). This paper explores the drivers of divergent approaches and attitudes toward citizenship education in the four constituent ‘Home Nations’, and identifies the challenges for its future in the UK.

**Approaches to Citizenship Education in the Home Nations**

Traditionally, the UK government had little interest in citizenship education of the populace at large, fearing that it could undermine patriotic loyalty and stimulate radicalism (Mycock, 2004). However, as the post-war consensus disintegrated, disquiet regarding the lack of formal instruction within the compulsory period of education grew in saliency both within political and educational contexts. This led organisations such as the Politics Association and the Hansard Society during the 1970s to advocate the teaching of political skills and knowledge in secondary schools. However, this campaign was implicitly English in its scope. In Scotland, the Modern Studies curriculum introduced in 1962 already encompassed current affairs and the development of political literacy, providing teachers with wide-ranging opportunities to examine citizenship issues (Maitles, 1999).

Divergence from ‘English’ education policy has proved a matter of national pride in Scotland (Brown et al., 1998). In particular, the National Curriculum met determined resistance from policy-makers, teachers and educationalists north of the border. As a result, the citizenship education provided in Modern Studies is less strongly tied to the notion of ‘active’ citizenship as an antidote to the social problems created by New Right policies, which accompanied the implementation of ‘Education for Citizenship’ for pupils of all ages within the English National Curriculum (Crick, 2000). Indeed, the development of statutory curricula in the 1990s did not entrench the English approach in the other Home Nations, but actually encouraged greater national distinctiveness of citizenship provision.

In Northern Ireland, the adoption of a statutory curriculum in 1989 saw citizenship education introduced in primary and secondary schools as a cross-curricular theme. However, the sectarian fragmentation of Northern Irish society and the trauma associated with the ‘Troubles’ of the past thirty years provided impetus for alternative citizenship themes which sought to encourage greater cross-community awareness through ‘Education for Mutual Understanding’. In Wales, the focal point for citizenship education within the National Curriculum was the cross-curricular theme of ‘Community Understanding’, which aimed to encourage pupils to
'contribute, as active, participating, critically reflective members of their communities in Wales' (Curriculum Council for Wales (CCW), 1991a:2). This approach emphasised the role of community and culture, rather than ‘civic society’, and was primarily pursued within the Personal and Social Education (PSE) provided through all key stages in primary and secondary schools.

Despite the acceptance of a need for citizenship education within England, Northern Ireland and Wales, non-statutory provision became perceived to be ‘inexcusably and damagingly bad’ (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), 1998:16). Many schools simply misunderstood or ignored cross-curricular directives, citing lack of resources, timetable space, and trained personnel. ‘Education for Citizenship’ in England was also undermined by the growing marketisation of education. Its lack of clear assessment procedures meant that it could play no significant role in the standards debates which accompanied the rise of school league tables. Consequently, the cross-curricular approach failed to gain the support of parents, pupils or many educationalists.

Although there was no mention of citizenship education in Labour’s 1997 general election manifesto, its first White Paper on education policy, Excellence in Schools (Department of Education and Employment, 1997), pledged to strengthen the teaching of democracy in schools. The Advisory Group on Citizenship, formed under the chair of Bernard Crick, subsequently recommended that citizenship education should be a separate statutory curriculum requirement in England (QCA, 1998). This recommendation was accepted by the government and Citizenship finally became a statutory foundation subject within English secondary schools from September 2002. Citizenship education in primary schools for pupils aged 4-11 was introduced as part of the statutory cross-curricular theme of Personal, Social and Health Education. By making Citizenship statutory, the Labour government could ensure (in principle) that it had substantial standing within the curriculum. In part, this reflected the continued centralisation of England’s education system, which gathered pace with the introduction of the National Curriculum (Barber, 1996). Nonetheless, Citizenship’s place in the curriculum has remained open to vigorous debate owing to the inherently contentious nature of citizenship education as a subject (Kerr, 2001:5).

The increased status of citizenship education within the UK policy-making community reflected the influence of communitarianism (Arthur, 1998) and Robert Putnam’s decline of ‘social capital’ thesis on ‘New’ Labour (Kisby, 2006). Nonetheless, an abiding motivation for the introduction of Citizenship in England was concern about the political engagement of young citizens (Faulks, 2006). Despite inconsistencies in ‘New’ Labour’s understanding of the concept of citizenship itself (Mycock, 2007), there has been a continual stress on the ‘socialisation’ of young citizens (Blunkett, 2001; 2002; 2003). More recently, the focus on socialisation in England has been reframed to address issues of community cohesion, multiculturalism, immigration and identity. The teaching of citizenship in English schools is therefore increasingly justified as necessary for the inculcation of ‘British’ values (Brown, 2005). In the process, Citizenship has become enmeshed with broader attempts to promote commonality in ‘culture and history’ as well as ‘constitution and laws’ (Brown, 2004; 2006), forming the focus of two major parliamentary reviews in 2005 and 2006 (see Mycock, 2007).

While the Advisory Group may have ‘spoken for England’, in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales citizenship education did not receive similar standing within the curriculum. Although the introduction of Citizenship in England has certainly influenced developments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, it has failed to
provoke the intense politicised debate seen in England. As yet, citizenship education has not been explicitly tied to the issues of multiculturalism, immigration, and British national identity, to the same degree. Similarly, the absence of the ‘political patronage’ of major political figures has meant, as yet, that citizenship education has lacked a comparable profile within the media, party politics and policy-making community in the devolved Home Nations.

The signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, establishing the democratic determination of Northern Ireland’s constitutional future, encouraged the promotion of education of citizenship and human rights education to improve community relations. To that end, the pilot programme in civic and political education introduced by the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) focused more attention on diversity, exclusion, equality and justice than the English approach. Central to this approach in Northern Irish secondary schools was an inquiry-based model of learning, stressing that citizenship education should interrogate the ‘concept of citizenship in a divided society’ (Smith, 2003:26).

Following curriculum review in Northern Ireland in 2003, the CCEA responded to concerns regarding the consistency of citizenship education provision by introducing an explicit statutory entitlement. From September 2007, primary school provision will be embedded within the Personal Development syllabus as ‘Mutual Understanding in the Local and Global Community’, while in secondary schools ‘Local and Global Citizenship’ will ‘help young people develop a morally and ethically sound value system based on internationally recognised principles of equality, human rights, justice and democracy’ (CCEA, 2003). This reflects the concern with human rights and internationalism, which has consistently informed the Northern Irish approach to citizenship education, whilst downplaying contentious issues relating to national identity.

The continued presence of Modern Studies within the curriculum has meant that the introduction of citizenship education in Scotland has been less dramatic than elsewhere in the UK. Moreover, the consensual culture of Scottish education policy-making has encouraged greater consultation with teachers, parents, and pupils than in England, lessening the perceived need for a prescriptive statutory framework of learning outcomes and objectives. Nonetheless, it is apparent that citizenship education is an important issue. The Education for Citizenship in Scotland report published in 2002 encouraged a citizenship programme that focused on the rights, responsibilities and respect of young people within Scottish communities (Advisory Council for Learning and Teaching in Scotland (ACLTS), 2002). Citizenship education thus encourages greater emphasis on cultural identity than in England, and is, despite not being a separate subject, well-embedded due to its continued delivery within the Modern Studies syllabus.

In Wales, citizenship education is delivered within the community aspect of PSE as part of the statutory ‘basic curriculum’. However, it is not a core National Curriculum subject and remains unaccompanied by statutory curriculum orders. Following devolution, the Welsh Assembly Government did not seek to establish statutory citizenship education because it was focused on developing institutions and building good relations with local authorities. This reflected the evolution of a Welsh partnership style of policy-making, and the different approach to citizenship
education in Wales in the past (Phillips et al., 2003). In particular, the Curriculum Cymreig (CC) has proven to be a focal point for citizenship education in Wales.

The CC is a cross-curricular theme adopted to convey the ‘Welshness’ of the curriculum, by exemplifying ‘both the English and Welsh language cultures in the country and the whole range of historical, social and environmental influences that have shaped contemporary Wales’ (CCW, 1991:4). Citizenship education thus plays a key role in generating an inclusive sense of cultural and civic ‘Welshness’, drawing on the newly devolved national institutions, whilst remaining rooted in familiar local concerns. Opportunities for building this cultural sense of civic identity are being increasingly extended to young people aged 3-19 through pre-school and post-school policies, and will be more firmly established when the Welsh Baccalaureate is fully introduced in 2008.

The Future of Citizenship Education in the UK

The value of citizenship education has been acknowledged within all four Home Nations, and its presence in curriculum guidance has evidently influenced the language of policy-makers, teachers and educationalists more widely. Nonetheless, the intensity of the ‘citizenship’ debate in England, and its participation within the IEA Civic Education Study prior to the implementation of the statutory Citizenship order (Torney-Purta et al., 2001), has obscured the emergence of distinctive approaches to citizenship education in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. As these become further embedded within school curricula, the opportunity for devolved institutions to shape the political knowledge and skills of future political generations will become more pronounced. Concerns will therefore remain that divergence between each system could have implications for the equal development of political literacy and engagement.

Debates in England have undoubtedly influenced the construction of citizenship education programmes in the other national systems of the UK, if only to provide a platform for assessing the comparative development of citizenship education. The growth of divergent approaches has so far drawn on particular understandings of civic identity that have been influenced by political priorities within each devolved nation. These are likely to continue to be key drivers of provision. Kerr’s (2000b) review of citizenship education across the globe highlights that there are eight main challenges faced by programmes of citizenship education: achieving a clear definition; securing curriculum status; teacher preparedness and training; adopting suitable learning approaches; resources and sustainability; assessment arrangements; developing and sharing good practice; influencing young people’s attitudes. We now explore how these challenges have and are likely to continue to shape the future of citizenship education in the UK.

Defining citizenship education

During the past two decades, there has been wide-ranging debate about the definition of citizenship education in the UK’s schools. Some education policy-makers, such as Nick Tate former head of the QCA (the body responsible for introducing citizenship education in England), argued its focus should be on the ‘values-teaching’ essential to socialise young people in liberal democracies (Citizenship Foundation, 1997). Many political philosophers (e.g. Miller, 2000; Parekh, 2000) claimed that citizenship education should be defined through its efforts to promote tolerance and mutual understanding between cultural groups, but
others are more concerned with active political participation (e.g. Dagger, 1996; Tam, 1998). By contrast, some traditional educationalists, such as Arthur (1998), have supported a less overtly political approach that focuses on voluntary work and service learning.

Subtle, but significant, differences have emerged in the core principles which define citizenship education within some national remits. In England, Citizenship has comprised of three-strands, promoting social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy. In Northern Ireland, Local and Global Citizenship addresses four key concepts; diversity and inclusion, human rights and social responsibility, equality and social justice, and democracy and active participation (CCEA, 2003). The Scottish approach links cross-curricular and whole-school themes within the Modern Studies syllabus by promoting awareness of citizenship issues, such as rights and responsibilities within local, national and global communities, ethical decision making, and thoughtful and responsible action (ACLTS, 2002). In Wales, the interplay between the community aspect of PSE and the Curriculum Cymreig ensures that citizenship education is infused with a distinctive ‘Welsh’ dimension. Thus, the devolved education systems are shaping divergent approaches to citizenship education which emphasise different notions of citizenship to those found in England: conflict resolution and human rights in Northern Ireland; an independent civic culture in Scotland; and cultural identity in Wales. However, one concept associated with citizenship which has received considerable attention within each nation is that of community.

Martin (2000:3) highlights that it is through the formation of communities ‘around a variety of common identities, interests or issues’, ‘that people experience, collectively, the possibilities of human agency’. Although it is a contested concept which often has a rather conservative flavour, the idea of community can potentially provide an indication of how schools can better understand and promote young people’s political literacy and engagement in all the Home Nations. Careful exploration of the unique interplay between culture, community and democracy in each nation may elicit a model for citizenship education which celebrates national and multi-national identity but is responsive to wider demands of solidarity and diversity. For citizenship education to elicit such a sense of community within the classroom, implies that the subject be accorded substantial status within the school curriculum.

Curriculum time

Cross-national comparisons have suggested that well-structured formal citizenship education is more likely to make young people become active citizens (Torney et al., 2001). By contrast, a fractured or loose approach to citizenship education can actually alienate disaffected groups of young people still further, deepening the sense of crisis regarding their political engagement. Dedicated curriculum time in secondary schools was a central aim of the Citizenship Advisory Group in England. However, the ‘light touch’ approach of the Citizenship Order (Crick, 2002), allowed schools to deliver Citizenship either discretely or to extend the practice of cross-curricular approaches.

This has been interpreted by many schools as meaning the subject lacks academic value or importance (Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), 2003;
Recent reports have suggested that good Citizenship provision is found only in a quarter of English schools (Ofsted, 2005a), and is inadequate in a further quarter of schools (Ofsted, 2006). Indeed, confusion regarding its place in the curriculum, the appropriate medium for delivery, the quality of teaching, and appropriate modes of assessment, has led government inspectors to suggest that Citizenship is the worst taught subject in (English) secondary schools (Ofsted, 2005b). Above all, these problems have major implications for recipients of citizenship education. Research by Community Service Volunteers (CSV) (2004) noted that one in ten pupils were unaware of the presence of citizenship within lessons. Ofsted’s (2005a) subject report indicated that more than half of students in English secondary schools did not know what citizenship education was or could not offer any examples of what they had learned.

Curriculum time is a considerable challenge within the other Home Nations. Research in Northern Ireland revealed difficulties transferring learning about politics across subject boundaries despite the development of effective curriculum planning processes (Harland et al., 1999). In Scotland, Modern Studies is one of three options within the humanities strand, meaning that on average only thirty per cent of students are likely to receive formal citizenship education (Maitles, 2000). While pupils who do not take Modern Studies receive cross-curricular exposure to citizenship issues, this inevitably dilutes the political dimension of their education. Non-compulsory implementation in Wales has meant that citizenship education suffers from curriculum competition, lack of resources and trained staff, and resistance from some within the education system (Andrews, 2001). The existing guidance is also minimal, placing great pressure on schools and teachers to develop their own interpretations. Indeed, concerns remain about the training and support available to help both specialist and non-specialist citizenship education teachers deliver the subject across the UK.

Teacher training

The presence of citizenship education in schools has been progressively accepted by many working within education. However, concerns regarding the level of training teachers receive persist, both within the profession (CSV, 2003; Ofsted, 2005c) and from outside (Kerr et al., 2004; QCA, 2005; HM Inspectorate of Education, 2006). Indeed, significant numbers of Citizenship teachers in England have requested additional training in teaching controversial issues (CSV, 2004). This unease is also prominent in Northern Ireland. Teachers of citizenship education ‘cannot always take the neutral chair but must often enter the situation and... show how arguments are used to persuade people to act in certain ways’ (Brownhill & Smart, 1989:127-128). In Northern Ireland, the demands of the inquiry-based approach (Smith, 2003), and the politicised community tensions it may uncover (Niens & McIlrath, 2005) place additional burdens on teachers of citizenship education. In England, it has been suggested that Citizenship requires teachers to move far beyond their ‘comfort zone’ (Ofsted, 2006:1).

The Citizenship Teacher’s Guide in England emphasises that experienced teachers will not act as ‘the sole authority not only on matters of ‘fact’ but also on matters of opinion’ (QCA, 2001:14). Teachers should therefore configure their lessons according to the circumstances of the subject matter and their pupils – a sensitivity to context which is captured in the notion of ‘pedagogic phronesis’ (or ‘teaching common sense’) (McLaughlin, 1999). More significantly, making it clear that citizenship education is an integral feature of a good education will be essential.
to ensure that pupils see that their input into political life within the school and society is valuable and important. To accomplish this goal, educationalists in each nation will need to develop appropriate and effective strategies for teaching and learning.

Learning approaches

A range of cultural factors complicate the teaching of citizenship education in the UK. In particular, the absence of a codified constitutional framework renders teaching citizenship education a greater challenge for UK teachers than their counterparts in countries with a well-established tradition of civic-republicanism, such as France or the United States. Although a variety of practical suggestions for promoting the development of civic virtues (such as, discussion groups and mock parliaments) have been developed in all the Home Nations, the impact of these is felt less for their being without a constitutional framework.

The need to understand increasingly diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities is another major challenge (Ofsted, 2005b). It is clear, however, that to date there has been little systematic consideration of how divergent approaches to citizenship education in each Home Nation might influence the political identities of future generations of British citizens. Subject guidelines for Citizenship in England pay little heed to how devolution influences identity(ies) within the UK. In contradistinction, both Welsh and Scottish approaches accentuate the relationship between citizens and the newly devolved institutions, steering clear of wider issues of British national identity (National Assembly for Wales, 2003; www.sqa.org.uk, accessed 29th November 2004). In Northern Ireland, sensitivity to the darker side of nationalism has encouraged learning approaches which emphasise global citizenship and human rights at the expense of questions of national identity altogether. The need to clearly elucidate a coherent multi-national conception of citizenship and national identity thus represents a significant challenge for theorists and practitioners of citizenship education across the UK.

In the past, unease about the content of citizenship education led educational elites in the Home Nations to avoid specifying what was ‘political’ rather than ‘partisan’; especially in Northern Ireland (Wylie, 2004). However, a study of teachers’ efforts to deliver an ethos of tolerance and respect in an integrated Northern Irish school found that avoiding controversial and difficult issues was more likely to feed rather than starve suspicion and intolerance (Donnelly, 2004). Teachers of citizenship education in Wales and Scotland have not yet expressed strong opinions regarding this particular challenge, perhaps because of the comparatively low priority attached to citizenship education within the respective curricula. Research comparing teachers’ attitudes towards citizenship education would therefore reveal important information about the differing learning approaches adopted in each constituent nation.

Sustainability

The necessity and legitimacy of citizenship education within all four Home Nations now has broad acceptance amongst policymakers. However, its position within the respective curricula is still not entirely secure. On-going curriculum
review and competition with other policy priorities are likely to continually challenge the sustainability of citizenship education in the future. For example, in England, the Department of Education and Skills’ strategy for improving the wellbeing of children, Every Child Matters, coordinates a host of activities and initiatives, which duplicate aspects of citizenship education. In Wales, a focus on legislation establishing children’s rights to participate in decisions that affect them (including the compulsory introduction of school councils (National Assembly for Wales, 2005) has yet to be matched by corresponding concern for the educational antecedents of effective participation. While all the Home Nations now embrace some form of post-16 provision, suggesting that the remit for citizenship education may expanding, the views of other stakeholders indicate that it holds a precarious position in the minds of the public at large. The introduction of Citizenship in England has encouraged scrutiny from a range of sources including regulatory bodies, voluntary sector organisations, and education researchers. As we have seen, a host of inspection reports have highlighted problems with its implementation (Ofsted, 2004; 2005a; 2006). Moreover, there are growing concerns that educational diversification in England will affect the content and consistency of citizenship lessons (Faulks, 2006). These developments have meant that, only four years after achieving statutory status, the ‘re-launch’ of Citizenship is being mooted by some (Craft, 2006). Despite the faith in its overall value that this implies, not all stakeholders believe that citizenship education can be so easily revivified.

In the 2005 UK General Election, both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties pledged to revise or disband citizenship education provision altogether, highlighting that cross-party support for the subject has dissipated during the past decade. In addition, the media reception for citizenship education in England remains distinctly hostile (see, for example, Furedi, 2006; Phillips, 2006), and many pupils and teachers in England remain uncertain of its values and purposes (Ofsted, 2006). Nor is it clear how further or higher educational establishments should recognise achievement in citizenship education, or whether it will be treated with the parity accorded to other subjects. Indeed, accreditation of citizenship education is a major challenge.

Assessment arrangements

Teachers and education policy-makers face a whole range of issues surrounding the examination and assessment of programmes of citizenship education. In particular, not all educationalists are convinced that formal assessment is helpful for delivering appropriate educational outcomes in citizenship education. Although tests can be devised that reflect pupils’ understanding of politics and citizenship, they may be a crude way of assessing values and attitudes. For example, the very formulation of ‘outcomes’ could simply result in ‘a behavioural manifestation of those values in the supposed interests of standards and objectivity’ (Halliday, 1999: 49-52).

Assessment of citizenship education can also be criticised as a threat to civil liberties: (a) by calling into question the rights of ‘failing’ pupils to participate fully in democratic political processes; and, (b) by undermining democracy because the competence of some participants can be called into question. Some of these concerns are acknowledged in the guidance for Citizenship: ‘[a]ssessment in citizenship should not imply that pupils are failing as citizens. It should not be a judgement on the worth, personality or value of an individual pupil or their family’ (QCA, 2000:2). It is therefore recognised that citizenship education also comprises learning
outside the classroom. This is especially apparent in the post-16 Citizenship Development Programme in England, which seeks to encourage all young people in further education and training to play an active part in their communities.

Differences in approaches to assessment across the Home Nations reflect the relative importance of citizenship education in each country. In England, there has been much discussion over how citizenship should be formally assessed, leading to the promotion of non-compulsory ‘short-course’ citizenship GCSE and GCE AS level qualifications. There is no programme of assessment in Northern Ireland, and it is unclear, as yet, as to whether Local and Global Citizenship will be formally assessed. In Wales, there is no formal requirement to assess any aspect of PSE, though guidelines are provided to maintain a ‘National Record of Achievement’ (Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC), 2000b) and some schools have adopted the English GSCE short-courses on citizenship education. Modern Studies, in Scotland, is assessed through formal examination and coursework, but there are no plans to formally assess the citizenship education component of the subject. Indeed, English approaches to the assessment of citizenship have been labelled ‘crazy’ by a leading Scottish educationalist [2]. This lack of consensus on assessment places a great onus on educationalists, policy-makers and researchers to widely publicise and debate good practice in citizenship education.

Developing and sharing good practice

Citizenship education within the Home Nations has so far reflected differing policy agendas and conceptions of politics and citizenship. These distinctive national approaches to citizenship education could generate healthy debate and new directions for the evolution and development of the curriculum across and within multi-national states. Opportunities for exchanging learning from the varying experiences across the UK would therefore broaden the expertise and knowledge of teachers, planners and pupils of citizenship education. Indeed, some progress was achieved in this area in the Four (now Five) Nations Citizenship Conferences which met under the auspices of the Institute for Global Ethics and the Gordon Cook Foundation. To develop this work further, international collaboration and partnership are now essential for the future of citizenship education (Sears & Hughes, 2005). For example, the Education for Democratic Citizenship programme coordinated by the Council of Europe provides a broad forum for shared learning across different countries. Teachers and policy-makers would also benefit from greater collaboration with relevant professionals working in other UK government departments.

The Home Office coordinates an Active Citizenship Centre and works closely with a series of ‘Civic Pioneers’ - councils with a commitment to civil renewal. Moreover, since 2001, English local authorities have been expected to alert ‘young people to the working of social and public life... and the means at their disposal for influencing local policies’ as part of councils’ wider duty to promote ‘effective community engagement’ (Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, 2001). Indeed, promoting and supporting learning for citizenship has gone hand in hand with the effort to give people more control over their local communities, more generally, as set out in recent central government publications.
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(for example see HM Government, 2005). At the heart of these initiatives, however, and citizenship education itself, is the challenge of effecting meaningful and lasting changes in young people’s attitudes to politics and democracy.

Young people’s attitudes

Recent studies suggest that young people’s interest and knowledge of mainstream democratic politics and political parties has declined dramatically in the last ten years (Hansard Society/Electoral Commission, 2004; 2005). However, it is also true that they are ever more politically active and aware (Park et al., 2004). Although young people have become less likely to participate in democratic politics, they have strong views on a range of issues and want more influence on the broader political process (O’Toole et al., 2003). Their active involvement in informal political networks or groups (Pattie et al., 2005) thus represents a significant opportunity to develop their political skills.

The enthusiasm of young people for concerns that are close to their heart could potentially be ‘exploited in a non-academic, undifferentiated altruism’ (Davies, 1999:134). Indeed, ‘active’ citizenship in schools has sometimes been associated with compliance with authority (Cunningham & Lavalette, 2004) or the notion that a citizen is ‘the kind of person who secures a pension for him or herself’ (Davies, 1999:131). However, it can also enable teachers of citizenship education to build young people’s commitment to participation in a variety of ways within a range of contexts. For example, service learning within the community may provide an additional link between active political engagement and classroom reflection (Annette, 2000). Moreover, pupils may feel more inclined to get involved in those participative mechanisms in which they feel they have a stake, such as school councils. Citizenship education programmes must therefore be sensitive to the political behaviour and attitudes of young people. They should also acknowledge that there are a range of determinants of political participation both within and outside schools, such as ethnicity, socio-economic background, and family environment that may affect the interest of young people in citizenship issues (Whiteley, 2005).

Conclusion

The UK is now a devolved multi-national state with a diverse population. The divergent approaches to citizenship education in the Home Nations mirror aspects of this diversity and are representative of Britain’s post-imperial constitutional framework and plurality of national identities. They also play a crucial part in influencing concepts of citizenship and the political engagement of young people. As a result, there are profound questions about the commonality of overall purpose across the UK that cannot be ignored. In particular, will divergence in approaches to implementation, content and assessment weaken or undermine the status of citizenship education as a citizenship entitlement? Can citizenship education address concerns regarding British national identity and community cohesion within state and sub-state national contexts?

Current debates concerning citizenship and ‘Britishness’ primarily reflect post-imperial tensions within England. For example, recent proposals for citizenship and diversity classes in Adult Skills for Life courses in England are premised on the need to promote community cohesion within a multicultural society [3]. Yet such concerns about diversity and integration lack similar intensity in Northern Ireland,
Scotland or Wales. National calls for greater connectivity between history, identity and citizenship education (Brown, 2006, Cameron, 2006, Rammell, 2006) therefore continue to ignore the plurality of education provision in the UK [4]. The Westminster-centric viewpoint of most UK politicians, means that the bare fact of devolution and the potential for alternative patterns of civic loyalty and identity within the devolved multi-national state is myopically underestimated (Mycock, 2007). Moreover, Anglicised debates about British identity overlook growing pressure for greater emphasis on the national histories of the UK within schools, most particularly in Scotland [5]. Unless the question of ‘Britishness’ is treated in a more sophisticated and inclusive manner across and within the devolved nations, the provision of citizenship education could become increasingly linked to exclusionary or secessionist agendas.

Some commentators claim that substantial commonality within an education system is needed to guarantee an equitable learning experience for all children (Frazer, 1999). Moreover, research has shown that inequality in the standards of education is associated with lower political understanding and engagement (Verba et al., 1995). It is conceivable that the educational divergence that has accompanied the growing sense of national identity following devolution could therefore undermine the status of citizenship education as a citizenship entitlement for all young people in the UK. However, federal states such as the United States and Australia have proven that it is possible to successfully accommodate local and regional difference within education programmes (Bahmueller & Patrick, 1999).

The delivery of an equitable citizenship education within the UK’s diverse national education systems and cultures will thus rely on the ability of schools operating with different curricula requirements to educate pupils to uniform standards. The continued absence of a coherent overarching ‘citizenship’ policy agenda across the Home Nations represents a considerable challenge in this respect. In the future, the relative political engagement of young people in the UK may increasingly become dependent on national contingencies. This does not necessarily mean that policy-makers should tightly prescribe pedagogic approaches or curriculum content across a devolved education system, but indicates that joined-up thinking on how the challenges of citizenship education should be met is needed to ensure parity of provision and outcomes. This paper has identified key challenges facing the divergent provision of citizenship education in the UK. Further research would thus gain most from systematic investigation into how these challenges are being met within each Home Nation.
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NOTES

[1] In an interview with one the authors (14th May 2004), Bernard Crick noted that David Blunkett had responded to the Initial Report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship, published in March 1998, by asking for ‘more democracy’ to be included in the Final Report.


[4] Both Gordon Brown and David Cameron have proposed a greater emphasis on British history within the curriculum rather than the differing national curricula. Minister for Lifelong Learning, Bill Rammell’s announcement of a review of citizenship and history within ‘our secondary schools’ was exclusively concerned with the English education system.

[5] Calls for more Scottish history in the national curriculum have come from leading academics, such as Professor Tom Devine (The Scotsman, 3rd February 2005), and the Scottish National Party (www.snp.org.uk, 30th November, 2005).

REFERENCES


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In the preface to his most recent book on citizenship Derek Heater tells us that it will be his final one. So it seems appropriate now to review his extensive contribution to the literature on citizenship and education, and accordingly this essay examines his last three single authored books on the subject, as well as the earlier Citizenship: The Civic Ideal in World History, Politics and Education (Longman 1990).

Heater’s concern is with the possibility of a liberal democratic, socially just, political order consisting of educated citizens, people who also have other, diverse, ties and occupations. And he is particularly concerned with the place, the role, of political education in schools in that order. His contribution is an examination of the history of citizenship in relation to education, an attempt to put the debates surrounding recent projects of citizenship education into historical context. Readers can go to Heater for a synoptic account of how citizenship and education have been thought about from Plato to the present, in all the ‘isms’ from fascism to liberalism, across continents and regimes.

One problem that Heater is disarmingly frank about is the sheer excess of his material. He comes across in his prefaces with an engaging kind of despair about ordering and structuring it. There simply isn’t space to deal with all the countries relevant to a complete ‘history of education for citizenship’ without making it into a kind of encyclopaedia. Reducing history down to two streams – republicanism and liberalism, as he does in What is Citizenship – is a dramatic oversimplification. But someone must engage in the risky project of bringing the history of the topic into focus. In the preface to A History of Education for Citizenship he justifies his simplified but nevertheless complex account on the grounds that it hasn’t been done before. On the other hand, there is, as he equally fearlessly says in the preface to Citizenship in Britain, the danger of ‘self-plagiarism’. There certainly is a good deal of repetition across the four books, although in each of the later three he attempts to tell a distinctively nuanced and thematised story about some of the problems and paradoxes of citizenship in the context of concrete political ideologies and projects.

They present in a more coherent set of analyses what in Citizenship: The Civic Ideal was a bewildering proliferation of ideas, concepts, problems, arguments and possibilities. In the end that book amounts to ‘the history of ideas’ in the sense of ideas set out in more or less chronological order, in such a way as to show a range
of views about what citizenship means, and how it might relate to education, in a variety of settings from fifth century Athens to Britain post world war two. But that relatively simple project was complicated because Heater also strove to relate this history to political theory. He wanted to show that these disagreements about citizenship are systematically inflected through a series of philosophical conundrums: the gap between the empirical reality of political relations and an ideal of citizenship, the tension between an emphasis on citizen action and judgement and an emphasis on order and obedience, the pull between individualism and collectivism, between the particular and the universal, between public and private life. He capped the book off with an extension of the ideal of citizenship for our times. Beyond a relationship between an individual and a state, this new model of ‘multiple citizenship’ takes into account the individual’s relationship to a range of sub- and supra-national organisations, including the natural environment, the planet itself.

The problem with that book is that the philosophical problems are gestured to rather than really tackled. The proliferation of elements and fragments is set before us with a sunny optimism that the whole thing could be pulled together, somehow, and that the troubled history of inequality, duties and rights, participation and freedom might culminate in education in twenty first century schools that could produce ethically minded cosmopolitan but locally rooted citizens. It really comes across as a triumph of hope over philosophical difficulty, although this criticism, of course, by no means destroys the value of the book for a reader who wants a relevant discussion of specific authors like Aristotle, or hints for further research and reading on ideologies like totalitarianism.

In the three later volumes this unwieldy load of material has been expanded. Heater’s accounts of English radicalism, totalitarian governments, varieties of republicanism, liberal democracy, and so on are more detailed, and we find discussions, or at least mentions, of a much wider range of thinkers from the dead famous, like Aristotle, Machiavelli and J.S.Mill, to the less famous dead, such as Francesco Guicciardini and Thomas Elyot. The level of detail means that some passages read as surveys of fragments of proto-citizenship thought and practice. However, this problem is off set by other passages in which Heater tries to clarify the exact links between thinkers and bodies of thought. For example, in A History of Education one chapter is called the ‘Legacies of the Ancient World’. There are, for instance, some cases of explicit invocation of an understanding of Spartan values and institutions by thinkers who are undoubtedly relevant to Nazism. Another instance is the undoubted influence of a reading of Aristotle on the medieval thinkers of the Italian city states. But there are other cases where commentators attribute a link or a debt by way of a faulty logic of analogy. That a certain institution or project reminds one of Plato does not validate an inference to a link between Plato and whatever it is.

This issue – of how ideas really do connect – is central to both intellectual history and to political theory. In these books Heater is much more critical than he was before about the problems that follow on putting one lot of thinkers and texts together and labelling them ‘English republicanism’ and another lot of thinkers and texts into the box marked ‘American republicanism’. Is the ‘republicanism’ the same thing in both cases, as coffee is in some significant sense the same whether it is prepared for drinking in the American as opposed to the French way? In the case of isms matters are usually much more complicated and Heater’s discussions of these issues are helpful in allowing a number of serious questions about the history of
ideas to emerge, even if they are not decisively answered. There must be a
significant difference, for example, between the case where an idea like
‘citizenship’ has continuous currency through time, and the case where an ideal of
citizenship gains currency and its proponents then look backwards through time, or
outwards to other cultures and systems, for inspiration, or in order to justify it.
Importantly, concepts like citizenship are complex rather than simple, and
systematically but variously connected to a raft of other concepts, like rights, duty,
participation, autonomy, obedience, patriotism and justice. In some places Heater is
very clear that in talking about citizenship he is talking about a political relationship
between an individual and a state, such that both individual and state have a very
specific status vis a vis one another. At other places, the discussion is of a range of
values and concepts which might be prerequisites of citizenship, might be elements
of it, might be contingently related to it in a particular context, or might be upshots
of it. On the whole Heater’s accounts of the theories and projects of thinkers and
activists set the stage, as it were, for more detailed study of what, exactly, is being
claimed or aspired to in and by them. He has in these books made a claim that
certain episodes in the history of thought and theory, certain thinkers, certain
projects, are relevant to our understanding of the citizenships that are institutionalised
today. If these books launch a thousand theses – well, let’s say a hundred - that
won’t be a bad thing.

A question that this formulation begs, though, is that of the relationship
between philosophical thought, practical policy and projects, the ideals that are
incorporated in these, and the later reception and understanding of those projects and
ideals. Heater himself has a vision of a broadly liberal democratic political order, in
which the citizen’s bond to the nation state as such is appropriately loosened to take
account of her proper allegiance with other collectives, local and global, public and
private - this is his model of multiple citizenship. Formal education, schooling, has
a part to play in the enabling and development of such individuals; but so, too, of
course, does education and socialisation in society, in the family, in organisations
like churches. He is a promoter of education for citizenship, in school and
elsewhere. And he is concerned to ensure that this does not mimic the kinds of
projects we have seen, for example, in empire education and patriotism in England,
in the uses of schooling for shaping (or attempting to shape) social and political
subjects like those of the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany. Nor can citizenship
education simply be, as Aristotle sets it out, the shaping of citizens suited to the
regime. The regime itself, including a liberal democratic one, must be reviewed and
criticised, as well as meliorated, improved and perfected. It might be that
‘unsuitable’ citizens are the best for some regimes.

Presented like this Heater’s is a standard exercise in normative political
theory. Here’s where we want to go (multiple citizenship), and here’s how (as well
as education he also touches on law and constitution, and political institutions
themselves). But Heater’s historical researches tell him that relations and ideals can
endure at the level of thought while being only partially or not at all realised in
practice. In A History of Education this point is nicely made in the context of pre-
and post-revolutionary France. This, of course, is a real worry about citizenship
education. There are some hints, in some places, that the problem is not simply a
matter of not doing the right thing, not simply a matter of there being an ideal of
which we fall short. Particularly in the case of liberal democracy, as he himself
notes, the reason seems to be deeply structured. Liberal democracy allows an ideal
of autonomous citizenry to emerge. It relies on this citizenry for the selection of
governors, for the selection of those who hold them formally to account, and for the
more widespread informal accountability that can hold governments in check and can hold states reasonably stable. At the same time, it discourages citizenship. This is not just because in liberal democracies we have a wide raft of opportunities for cultural and social identities, and above all for economic activity and satisfaction. It is also because liberal democracy has trouble with its evaluation of political power (as opposed to interpersonal, economic, and cultural), has trouble with the phenomena and norms of public life and action.

As Heater’s rather quick runs at these and other philosophical and structural problems throughout his work show, he sees that they are, if not insoluble, then at least not just an easy matter of ‘striking a balance’ or some such solution. But they are not, here, treated to the critical scrutiny that must be turned on them, although his discussions do advert to the approaches of contemporary thinkers including Eamonn Callan, Richard Dagger, Geraint Parry, Martha Nussbaum and others. How educators should proceed in contexts of disagreement and uncertainty is one of the preoccupations of this journal. How those who are convinced that citizenship education is more than just a cynical ploy, a cover for ideology, or an irrelevance, should tackle the practical and pedagogical difficulties that face the subject is another. Heater’s historical work shows us that citizenship education is an idea, a project, that recurs in contexts widely different from our own. He shows that in all those contexts, like our own, the idea of citizenship is surrounded by philosophical difficulty, as well as political controversy. Students who are thinking about the difficulties of the project of citizenship education would do well to read Derek Heater’s books with some care, as he asks those who will be writing and publishing after he has finished to take up some difficult problems.

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Notes for Contributors

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