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Dedication

Kent den Heyer, *University of Alberta*
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This issue of *Canadian Social Studies* is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Ottilia Chareka, who died under tragic circumstances on 16 March, 2011. At the time of her death, Dr. Chareka was an Associate Professor of Education (Social Studies) at St. Francis-Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Her research focused on the experiences of immigrant youth, and African immigrant youth in particular, and conceptions of democratic participation and their role in political society. Dr. Chareka was interested in better understanding what institutional and societal structures formally or informally enabled or prevented immigrants from participating in Canadian political arenas. We have decided to reprint an article written by Dr. Chareka (with J. Nyemah and A. Manguvo) published by *CSS* in Spring 2010, in recognition of the important research she undertook during her all too brief career.

Memories of my sister-friend

Carla L. Peck

Dr. Ottilia Chareka and I shared an office at the University of New Brunswick from 2001-2003. Ottilia was working towards her PhD, and I was just beginning my Master's of Education. We shared many hours together in our small office, working, talking and laughing, but it is our first meeting that I remember most vividly. Before the term had started, I had heard that I would be sharing an office with someone named Ottilia, who was from Zimbabwe. I learned that Ottilia had already earned two degrees at UNB and that she was coming back to do her PhD. However, I remember there being some uncertainty about if or when she would arrive in Fredericton as Robert Mugabe, the president of Zimbabwe, was making life very difficult for ordinary Zimbabweans, and particularly difficult for anyone who dared to challenge his government or raise concerns about human rights. At the time, Ottilia was an instructor at a teacher's college in Harare and her area was social studies and global education. Human rights were kind of her thing.

At the beginning of the Fall term, I arrived in our office sometime after lunch and found Ottilia at her desk. We introduced ourselves and, seeing that she was busy working on her computer, I got to work getting myself settled in to my corner of our office. It didn't take long for me to notice that something on Ottilia's computer screen had caught her attention and was causing her some distress. Then I noticed that she was crying softly. When I asked her if she was okay, she told me that she had just read a newspaper article from Zimbabwe reporting that one of her colleagues from the Teachers' College where she had worked (and where she had been just days earlier) was shot by government forces after fleeing for his life. He was also a human rights educator.

Needless to say, our very first meeting left a lasting impression on me. Over time, Ottilia and I grew to call ourselves sisters, and as our friendship grew, so did our special bond. I miss her terribly.

Ottilia is survived by her five daughters (ages 4 – 23). A Memorial Fund established for her daughters was set up by the St. Francis-Xavier University community and can be accessed here: http://sites.stfx.ca/education/memorial_fund/

Conceptions of volunteerism among recent African Immigrants in Canada: Implications for democratic citizenship education

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Introduction

This study[2] seeks to contribute more knowledge to the debate of citizenship education, in particular, civic engagement and integration of recent African immigrants to Canada. For the purpose of this study, **recent African immigrants** are those who have been in Canada for 10 years or less, whose last country of residence was in Africa, and who are Black. It also adds to the academic literature on volunteerism among this population segment in the Maritime Provinces of Canada. Volunteerism in Canada has its historical roots from the 18th and 19th centuries when the Aboriginals and First Nations People welcomed and helped European settlers to survive by giving out food, teaching them how to forage, paddle canoes and travel on snowshoes (Lautenschlager, 1992). A Canadian concept of volunteerism is consequently premised on loving neighbors, upholding charitable values or simply the fortunate helping the less fortunate (Lautenschlager, 1992). Certainly, this practice has developed into a culture of creating several immigrant support volunteer organizations across Canada.

It is useful to explore volunteerism as the key concept under discussion and as a form of democratic civic participation. In this study we define volunteerism as one's involvement in groups such as neighborhood associations, faith-based groups, educational associations and ethnic groups, and participation in overseas or international humanitarian work designed as a response to natural or man-made disasters. Volunteerism is also viewed as socially unique because it often entails the act of helping or giving without a sense of reciprocity (Helly, 1997 and Reed & Selbee, 2001).

Several studies have investigated the trends and patterns of volunteerism among immigrants in different parts of Canada, but there is little focus on recent African immigrants in the Maritime Provinces of Canada (Abdul-Razzaq, 2007; Chareka, 2005; Chareka &, Sears, 2005, 2006; Denis, 2006; Nyemah, 2007 and Ramakrishnan, K. & Viramontes, 2006). One would argue that such research is necessary given the contention that citizenship education seeks

[1] Dr. Ottilia Chareka passed away on March 16, 2011. The editors of *Canadian Social Studies* have decided to reprint this article to honour her memory.

[2]Dr Ottilia Chareka would like to thank her former doctoral supervisor, Dr. Alan Sears at the University of New Brunswick for his untiring guidance and for providing funding from his Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Standard Research Grant #410-2001-0083.

to promote citizens' involvement in all aspects of democratic participation to promote a healthy democratic society. There are various forms of democratic participation ranging from voting, running for political office, protesting, volunteering and others.

In the past several years, significant new policies and programs in civic education geared toward volunteering have been developed and implemented in various countries such as England, Russia, Japan and Hong Kong, South Africa and Zimbabwe to name a few. An important aspect for most of these programs is the notion and desire to developing citizens' commitment to civic participation. However research on citizenship in respect conceptions of volunteering as a form of civic engagement among recent African immigrants is still very limited, especially in the Maritime Provinces of Canada. In order to be effective, civic education programs with regards to the volunteerism of immigrants have to be developed with some attention to the conceptions recent immigrants already possess. In other words, their prior knowledge is paramount to the whole process developing the programs, teaching and learning situations.

There is a strong relationship between volunteerism and the integration of recent immigrants into their host society. Ksienski (2004) argues that there is a connection between volunteering and job search by immigrants. African immigrants in the Maritime Provinces of Canada are challenged by a phenomenon of unemployment regardless of how long they have been in the region, and how educated they are. This phenomenon of unemployment among African immigrants stands in sharp contrast to immigrants of other ethnic backgrounds within the Maritime region.

Investigating the trends and patterns of volunteerism among recent African immigrants in the Maritime provinces is relevant because it provides an opportunity for policy makers and those in academia to comprehend the process of inclusion and integration from the vantage point of volunteerism and civic participation. Moreover, African immigrants represent a significant proportion of the total immigrant population of the region. For example, between 2002 and 2006, the highest number of immigrants (38.2%) who arrived in Nova Scotia came from the regions of Africa and the Middle East, followed by immigrants (28.14%) from the regions of Asia, Australia and the Pacific (Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, 2007). Comprehending the social and political behavior of this segment of new Canadians is critical in a region where the impact of immigration is intertwined with political, socio-economic and cultural development.

Therefore, the questions we pose are: What do we know about volunteerism among these recent African immigrants in the Maritime Provinces? What is their prior knowledge on the concept of volunteerism as they arrive in their host country? Why do they volunteer or not volunteer? How are they included and integrated into the political, socio-economic and cultural social fabric of their new society?

The study, selection of participants and research approach

Twenty participants[3] were involved in this study as shown below in Table 1 age and gender, in Table 2 by country of origin and gender, in Table three by their status in Canada and gender.

Table 1

Recent Immigrants by Age and Gender

Age	Females	Males	Total
Adults (30 years old and above)	5	5	10
Youth (16-24 years old)	6	4	10
Total number of recent African immigrants	11	9	20

Table 2

Recent Immigrants by Country of Origin and Gender

Country of Origin	Females	Males	Total
Kenya	4	5	9
Rwanda	2	2	4
Ghana	3	1	4
Tanzania	1	1	2
Botswana	1	0	1
Total	11	9	20

[3]See Chareka, O. (September, 2005). *Conceptions of Democratic Participation among Recent African Immigrants and Native-born Canadians.* Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB.

Table 3

Recent African Immigrants by Status in Canada and Gender

Status	Females	Males	Total
Landed immigrants	6	5	11
Canadian citizens	3	2	5
Refugees	2	2	4
Total	11	9	20

As we were interested in uncovering recent African immigrants' conceptions of volunteerism as one form of democratic participation, we used phenomenographic approach to the research (Marton, 1981). Phenomenography is "an empirically based approach that aims to identify the qualitatively different ways in which different people experience, conceptualize, perceive and understand various kinds of phenomena" (Marton as cited in Richardson, 1999, p.53). The phenomenographic interviews were focused on semi-projective stimuli designed to provoke the interviewee into speaking about the concept under study (Webb, 1997). In our case, the stimuli consisted of a set of pictures culled from popular media depicting various ways of volunteering.

The interviews began with participants choosing one of the stimuli and a conversation ensued exploring the reasons for selecting that particular picture from the set of pictures as opposed to others. Marton (1984, p. 27) argues that phenomenographic interviews should follow from participants' comments and should not have too many questions made up in advance. We followed these procedures allowing each interviewee to set the direction for their interviews.

The interviews were taped and transcribed. In phenomenography, the data is treated as a whole rather than as separate transcripts and the first step in analysis is to identify utterances. An utterance is a portion of a sentence that describes the phenomenon under study. It is also defined as "a verbal manifestation that conveys a meaning or evidence of understanding" (Philip, 1976, p.7). In this study, an utterance was any word or phrase within a sentence related to and reflecting an understanding of volunteerism in relation to democratic civic engagement, and inclusion and integration of recent immigrants. Repeating or recurring points of view or ideas were identified in the utterances, and were clustered and classified into categories of description. These categories of description became the basis for describing the qualitatively different conceptions of volunteerism held by the participants.

Findings and discussion

According to Ksienski, (2004) immigrants define volunteerism as "help" or work without pay. The author further contends that immigrants often choose to volunteer to enhance their skills and gain experience in their new country. Ksienski argues there is a connection between volunteering and job search by immigrants. A key implication here is that immigrants use volunteerism as an entry point into the labour market of their host society. Understanding volunteering to maximize one's opportunities and for work experience was a common trend among some of the recent African immigrants. Most of the recent immigrants said they participate in order to maximize their academic and job opportunities by enhancing their resumés and maximizing their opportunities in getting scholarship awards. This is clearly reflected in the following excerpt by one of the youth participants:

> Interviewer: Why do you like to volunteer?
>
> Participant: It looks good on a resumé. Sometimes I think if you want to renew a scholarship sometimes they require you to have a kind of volunteering experience. They will say volunteering experience is required in order for you to get this scholarship.

Some adult participants, both males and females, also said they choose volunteering so that they get good experience that can be valuable and start to build their resumés. Statistics Canada (2001) claims that many immigrants increasingly volunteer for the purposes of finding paid employment, which is echoed by several authors (Couton, 2002 and Teo, 2004). Schugurensky, Slade and Luo (2008) expand this claim by arguing that a key reason for volunteerism by immigrants in searching for employment is due to a lack of recognition of their education upon arrival in Canada. This lack of recognition of foreign education acquired by immigrants is a critical barrier affecting their ability to get employed in post-migration Canada. A study commissioned by Nova Scotia Department of Education (2004) makes similar conclusions. This view is well summarized in this conversation with one adult participant:

> Interviewer: So, do you see yourself in a position to volunteer?
>
> Response: Oh yes, I've done it several times. Uh… when I was in Vancouver I was um… a volunteer with the Salvation Army and as a matter of fact**,** it was after volunteering with them that they offered me a job, with the Salvation Army at the food bank.
>
> Interviewer: Why do you like to volunteer?
>
> Response: Oh well… the thing about it is that there are several things about volunteering in this country… um, first of all it's a way of building up your resumé… you see, when you arrive in this country you need to understand the system. Because you are not among your own people so you start from scratch, you credentials and academic qualifications in most cases are not valued. And if you come and you don't meet the right who people who

> tell you the right things to do and you go and you start searching for work just to bring your resumé and nothing shows up. You can do it many times as before, and you go home and you say … oh it's because I'm Black … that's why they didn't give me the job. So for me, when I first started looking for a job, that was one of the first things that the preacher made me aware of. It initially sounded strange to me that for me to get a job I have to volunteer! But it worked like magic, after volunteering with the Salvation Army … within months I got a position.

From another analytical perspective, Helly (1997) argues that some immigrants have a preference for informal volunteering over formal volunteering. This could be because formal volunteerism, or participating in activities of registered organizations often requires an official commitment to a defined number of hours per week or month, which is contrary to the less structured format of informal volunteerism. This preference for informal volunteerism appears paradoxical, given that formal volunteerism, or working in registered organizations could easily be used as a pathway for immigrants to enter the labor market. Yet some recent immigrants prefer informal volunteering, especially helping their family members. All five adult recent African immigrant women, for example, said that they would volunteer in the background and support their husbands one hundred percent if they decide to run a political campaign for an elected office, even though they are not interested in this type of politics themselves. One woman said, "If my husband says he wants to go into politics, I will support him hundred percent. Here I am talking like an African woman, I am his wife, I am there for him, and I have to support him in the background."

Some of the participants understood volunteerism as something that is part of a person and that it comes from within. Volunteerism for these participants had to do with making a positive change, an impact, or making a difference in their community. For the most part, participants talked of making a material difference in the life conditions of the poor or less fortunate in Canada or overseas back in their own former African countries. We felt that they were volunteering as highly engaged global citizens. These participants generally situated volunteering as an avenue to make a difference which brings satisfaction. For example, most of the recent adult African immigrants expressed this type of participation as something that comes automatically as soon as they realize that there is a need or issue to be attended to or need to improve nature of humanity at large. This approach was evidenced by the following discussion with the following participant, who said that she was doing a lot of volunteering to make a difference in a community in her native African country even though she was here in Canada.

> Interviewer: Why have you picked that one instead of the rest?
>
> Participant: I picked volunteers fundraising for the less fortunate people in their community because it talks almost directly to me or about me. Since I've been here, I come from a very poor village in Africa… Kenya … and since I've been here I've been looking for ways and means to help the people I left behind and make a difference, and when I look at this picture with these volunteers fundraising… it's exactly what we've been doing… fundraising… sending clothes back home to help the poor and make a

> difference in their lives, so the picture relates to me more than anything else because that is me.
>
> Interviewer: Okay. Can you tell me more about this fundraising thing?
>
> Response: The fundraising… what? Okay, like what we did personally when we collected clothes, we announced that we were looking for second-hand clothes to send to Africa, and some friends put it on the radio and TV, and we got tons and tons of clothes and we got a lot of them. People here in P.E.I are generous and they love me. Now the issue here was how we send them because we have to pay for transport, we have to pay for fumigation, there was so much… it came to like C$7000.00 so what we had to do was look for ways to fundraise. And the way we did it, I offered to cook, because I love to cook. And that's why I'm running a restaurant I guess and we raised the required amount.

Some of the African immigrants repeated the same thought; they will do volunteering here and make a difference back in their native African countries of origin. One male participant expressed it this way:

> But for me the certain interest about volunteering is that I am interested in working with the downtrodden, the poor and make a difference… I saw a lot of poverty back in Africa, and it has always been my desire to help and make a difference back home. In fact, for me one of the greatest influences on my life has been Kessling, especially when I read Robert Kessling's book "Knowledge for What?" … Knowledge for what … I am pursuing knowledge. Why are we acquiring knowledge? I mean all these years from Africa… why are we pursuing knowledge? For me my answer to that question is this. Our pursuit of knowledge must be of benefit to our people and make a difference. And for me I think one way in which I think my knowledge in criminology can benefit our people, is to work with the underprivileged, the poor, the lower class people.

Arguing from another perspective, some writers claim that volunteering helps immigrants in understanding their new Canadian society (Ksienski, 2004 and Brodhead, 1999). This is important given that immigrants, particularly of African descent are confronted with a plethora of social and cultural barriers in their new Canadian society. This line of reasoning was supported by one participant who said that when he was coming to Canada, his mother told him a metaphor. She told him that upon arriving in Canada he should carefully study how Canadians sleep, if they sleep facing North, South or East or West, he should do the same until he understands why they do that. So he said he was volunteering as a way to socialize and to be able to study and understand Canadian culture in general.

The Canadian Volunteer Initiative (CVI) 2001 also argues that there is a need to investigate and comprehend the motivations of volunteers, patterns of volunteerism and the challenges and benefits of volunteering from the perspective of the volunteer. In their study conducted across 16 Canadian cities, Handy, Diniz, and Anderson (2008) focus on analyzing the motivations of immigrants who volunteer within their ethnic religious institutions. The study

reveals that the three most important reasons why immigrants choose to volunteer are to satisfy their religious beliefs, to make social connections in congregations, and to make social connections in the community. We had similar findings with some of the participants. For example, one adult male whose background is in criminologytalked about his volunteering activities by saying: "Oh yes another place I volunteered is in prisons. I talked to prisoners … administered to them to make a difference. I do it through my church. And oh yeah I see myself as a scholar activist. I am a scholar activist and I make a difference."

Most of the participants plainly expressed volunteering participation as a way of making a difference in their community and the world at large. Some saw themselves as global citizens. This was a common trend especially among both male and female adult participants, who identified volunteering in Canada in order to make material and tangible difference in the lives of less fortunate people in the communities where they came from in their respective African countries. This correlates with the cultural practice of Ubuntu, wherein an individual with that if more material wealth has an obligation to take care of the extended family members and relatives. We found this to be a complex notion of citizenship, given that our participants are now living in a society that champions individual rights and material wealth and property. Expanding on this African citizenship of Ubuntu, the recent African immigrants believed that an individual cannot be seen separate from the social context. In fact, a person's individuality is indebted to the society. As Desmond Tutu said in a speech in 1999 at the University of Toronto "… we believe in Ubunbtu- the essence of being human, that idea that we are all caught up in a delicate network of interdependence. We say a person is a person through other persons. I need you in order to be me and you need me in order to be you." African communities view citizenship from a communitarian perspective. Citizenship is seen as a way for people to give priority to social or society claims over individual good, as a means of fulfilling responsibilities with respect to the traditions and values of society. We wondered how our participants were able to reconcile the two cultural notions and different meanings of citizenship upon their arrival in Canada. Exploring this concept requires separate research.

It is worth noting that over the years, volunteerism by Canadians has been highly influenced by a sense of compassion – the fortunate helping the less fortunate. show that racism and other forms of discrimination are affecting integration of immigrants within their neighborhoods. Some immigrants do not feel the sense of 'loving neighbors or community.' Racism and other forms of discrimination are affecting integration of immigrants within their neighborhoods (Denis, 2006; Abdul-Razzaq, 2007 and Nyemah, 2007). This sense of racism and discrimination also emerged from our study. Some of the recent African immigrants said that while they wanted to participate in most activities, especially volunteering, they sometimes felt unwelcomed or excluded. They reported feeling that, in general, White Canadians were friendly, but unwilling to fully include immigrants in their friendship circles. Recent African immigrants found it difficult to be part of 'true' Canada, and did not freely participate together with White Canadians, as evidenced in this interview excerpt:

Interviewer: Why do you think they don't call you?

> Response: Well I filled the forms to volunteer long time ago. I feel bad because I like to volunteer but they never called me and now, I said to myself relax… they don't want me to volunteer. Well may be because I'm Black or something, may be they think my culture is different from theirs, and so they don't want to take the time to include me in their volunteering. Maybe that's the reason. I don't know . . . may be it's because of my English, because a lot of people say that I have accent in my English and may be the Canadian people can't understand, that's the main problem. Because I don't know why they can't call me. People here are friendly, but they do not want to widen up to other people, include other people in their circle of friendship. Oh they just say Hi, Hi…some sort of a smiley thing, but that's just outward. You can see an expression on the face, but you don't know inside. They need- like open themselves, invite us somewhere, ask to have coffee together or something, and then through that get to know this person and get involved with that person in certain ways, you will find immigrants just being involved in so many things. Yeah.

This feeling of exclusion or being excluded was a disturbing trend, as nearly all of the adults in this study expressed some form of discrimination and racism which made integratation and participation in all forms of Canadian society quite difficult

Patterns of volunteerism vary from culture to culture (Pruegger & Winter, 1997). This perspective is important to discuss given that our study was exclusively focused on recent African immigrants. Researching volunteerism among various immigrant groups in California, Tong (2006) found that race or culture had very little influence on volunteerism among immigrants. In our study, however, we found that there were some cultural differences in terms of how volunteering is done here in Canada than how most recent African immigrants participated in volunteering back in their native African countries. Furthermore, there were differences in their whole meaning and understanding of citizenship.

Some recent African immigrants felt that at times they are forced to participate even if they do not want to. For example, participants reported being forced to participate in community service in order to gain Canadian experience that is required by most employers and now seems to be a Canadian societal cultural norm. Some African immigrants said that they felt coerced to donate money to charity organizations because there is a cultural imposition and implication or hidden agenda of tax reduction if one donates money. Some said that at times, they donated because they feel it is part of Canadian culture and they want to be the same. At other times, they feet it was compulsory, and expected of them to give. For example, some participants said reported unspoken coercion at their workplaces. In the words of one participant, "Action speaks louder than voice. The way my boss collects money for United Way, is just indirectly telling you to give. So I give because I fear to be victimized and lose my job." Another African immigrant who used to work at the same company but has moved to a new job, summarized the whole issue of volunteering here in Canada being different from the African volunteering culture by saying:

> When you talk about fund-raising, what I found different about the way fund-raising is done here and in Africa where I come from is that here people volunteer at times to show that you did it. It's not done quietly. Whereas back home you … people volunteer,

> people give things and many times you never know who did what. Here, they even had competitions for volunteering things. Even if it's money it has tax implications, so maybe the more you give, the more you save in terms of tax, while back home it doesn't matter. You just give. Sometimes you feel it's almost compulsory to give. Recently, at my former place of work we were supposed to give for one of the charity organizations called United Way, but instead of being given the option to give or not to give you almost feel you're coerced or forced to give because it comes in a personal envelope and you are told that it's going to be deducted from your pay or you write a personal cheque. The fact that there is a personal form for you to fill, we have no option. You almost feel like if I don't do this, what will happen to me? Because it's something you fill out and take to the supervisor, you feel like, it will be known that I did not volunteer, even if the supervisor doesn't say anything, he or she will know that so and so, out of the whole team, did not volunteer. So there is a lot of volunteering done here but sometimes there is a bit of pressure.

It seems there is a cultural difference in the way people from various cultures perceive and understand volunteerism though more in-depth research needs to be carried out to solidify this claim.

Another finding in our study was that children-youth who had parents who frequently volunteered, also volunteering more than their counterparts. As Tong (2006) astutely contends, parents who volunteer pass on the necessary resources for volunteerism to their children. This was also common among the participants whom we interviewed including parents and children. The children-youth were mostly volunteering or in their view they were helping their parents.

Some studies show that the patterns and trends of volunteerism vary along gender, age and religious lines among immigrants. (Scott et al., 2006) claim that in 2001, women regardless of whether they were Canadian or foreign born, were more likely to volunteer than men. The rate of volunteering among women was 23% compared to 19% for men. Though in our study we did not particularly quantify this, from the conversations held, women talked of volunteering in more organizations and other places than their male counterparts who mainly just volunteered with one organization at a time.

One surprising finding in our study was that none of the twenty recent African immigrants mentioned or talked in any way, or even slightly suggested or showed understanding of volunteerism as a form of democratic participation or conceptualized it as political. They all saw it as helping, a way of making a difference, or something to help them maximize their own personal advancement in society. Not a single person openly mentioned volunteering as one form of political participation except for the one who mentioned in passing that he was a scholar activist. It was even more shocking when the women talked of volunteering by helping their husbands if they were to campaign for political office. These women-wives never saw themselves as being involved in politics or seeing it as political participation. There was a great sense of conceptualizing and understanding volunteering as an informal activity. Even among the men who volunteered with registered organizations never saw it as a formal process or civic participation (see Chareka, 2005, Chareka & Sears, 2005, 2006).

Despite the barriers mentioned by some of the recent African immigrants, they concurred in most cases that volunteering was a way to help them integrate into the Canadian society. Some expressed wanting to participate more than their current levels if Canadians were to be open and become 'true friends' by genuinely including recent African immigrants in their 'friendship circles.' We also found that prior to their arrival in Canada, nearly all the adult participants had never thought of, or had any prior knowledge or understanding of volunteering as way to gain experience which will in turn help them in getting jobs or getting scholarships. The reverse was true for most of the recent African immigrant youth. They were actually surprised, with most of the participants reporting that it is now the first thing they tell any new African immigrant they meet or other immigrants if they are struggling in getting a job.

While our study offers no evidence of what types of programs or activities will help recent immigrants to understand volunteering as a form of democratic participation and one type of political participation, it does raise some important questions for program developers, especially federal agencies responsible for welcoming newcomers, and schools in which most of the youth study when they arrive. A significant body of research demonstrates that prior knowledge is a key factor influencing learning. Ausubel (1968) points out that meaningful learning depends on organizing material in a way that connects it with the existing ideas in the learner's cognitive structures (see Chareka, 2005, Chareka & Sears 2005, 2006 and Peck, Sears & Donaldson and Peck & Sears, 2005). Our study presents evidence that it should not be assumed that immigrants understand a Canadian way of volunteering, or that they are even expected to participate and to understand volunteering as a form of democratic participation. Educational citizenship programs, whether offered by federal agencies or Canadian schools, should take into consideration the prior knowledge these immigrants bring with them as they arrive in Canada.

From research and literature on prior knowledge, some scholars use terms like alternative frameworks, misconceptions, and naive theories to refer to the conceptions learners bring with them to learning situations. Work on young children's understandings of shelter and food, for example, portrays spotty and tacit knowledge, characterized by misconceptions and relatively low levels of sophistication (Brophy & Alleman, 2002; Brophy, Alleman & O'Mahony, 2003). The authors of that work argue that, "…discovering valid prior knowledge that instruction can connect with and build upon" is fundamental to effective teaching" (Brophy & Alleman, 2002, p. 461). The point is not to change immigrants' thinking but to understand their prior knowledge and use it as the starting point for teaching and learning process (also see Peck, Sears & Donaldson and Peck & Sears, 2005). The uncovered prior knowledge in this study about recent African immigrants' conceptions of volunteerism is of paramount importance because it provides educators, policy and program developers with a clear picture of what African immigrants think or understand about volunteerism as they arrive in Canada. It provides a good starting point to develop or adjust the civic programs for immigrants. Long (2002) conducted research on political conceptions of Latin American immigrants to Canada and writes:

> Canadian research on political integration is scant and little is known about how newcomers make the transition toward participation in Canadian political life. Theoretically, we know that newcomers inevitably interpret the landscape of their new country through the lenses of their previous experience. In learning theory, this is widely

> referred to as their 'prior knowledge'…. While this condition can be appreciated theoretically, no systematic effort has been made to map the prior knowledge or cognitive schemata that immigrants bring with them to Canada (p. 273)

Our study has explored the prior knowledge of volunteerism among recent African immigrants in relation to their schemata. We found that recent African immigrants often go through drastic changes in their experiences, ranging from their socioeconomic status, cultural shock, education and political participation, to mention just a few. As newcomers, they face challenges in their everyday lives when trying to learn, negotiate and integrate into their new society. As discussed earlier, in terms of information processing, the schema theory approach shows that people are limited information processors, and that they develop ways of dealing with new environments, for example, volunteering decision-making and what it means in the case of this study.

Recent immigrants are often faced with a vague political world complicated by unknown political issues. For example, in the Canadian political landscape, recent newcomers have to learn new political systems, norms and behaviors of democratic citizenship in order for them to be able to perform their political obligations. However, some of these immigrants arrive in Canada with limited knowledge, stereotypes or even ignorance about the Canadian politics. They have to engage in a long learning procedure to process the information to be able to make political choices and decisions. What helps these new immigrants to process the information is crucial. Hamil and Lodge (1986) contend that prior knowledge and affective experiences about a particular concept affect and influence what people see, remember, how they interpret it and how they act. People make political choices or think about it through event-oriented (affect-laden) or memory-based processes. The affect-laden aspect is functioning when people with no stored political information engage in political reasoning based on a present event being faced. The memory-based aspect applies when people are faced with new incoming political information or situation. They will examine and evaluate it in relation to their prior political cognitive structures. Therefore, their political cognitive structure of schemata has an important influential role in the whole learning process.

Some scholars also argue that human beings are not mere reflectors of situations or information. They have complicated minds and emotions that continuously interplay with their surroundings and how they react (Manguvo, 2007). Schemata determine what information is pertinent or applicable to a particular political action (see Hsu & Price, 1993 and Markus & MacKuen, 1993). Yet, the political cognitive schemata might include shared stereotypes, misconceptions, and naïve theories (Byrnes and Torney-Purta, 1995). It means these recent African immigrants have to learn and re-build or re-construct their cognitive structures in order to function in their new society. These recent African immigrants have to select and discard some information, then put it together and categorize those aspects that share common attributes, encode and store them in their memory somehow (Hamil & Lodge, 1986).

Lodge et al. (1989) also point out that when faced with a new political environment or information, people who have developed political cognitive and memory ability (political schemata), merely retrieve what they have, update it and store the new modified information.

Similarly, Hastie (1986) found that cognitive schemata directs people to focus on a specific political stimulus in extracting appropriate information and storing it. Given the fact that democratic citizenship is threatened when society fails to develop the ability and competence of all its members to participate in one way or the other, democratic participation conceptions in terms of volunteering, held by these recent African immigrants as learners are essential to the whole process of teaching and learning if they are to integrate well into Canadian society. Another major finding in this study was that recent African immigrants do want to participate more, and want to integrate in to all aspects of Canadian societal fabric, but at times face various barriers. Participants cited obstacles rooted in racism and discrimination, which is consistent with the work of Kymilicka (1998) who argues that while the integration of racial minorities remains a realistic goal for Canada, Black immigrants face more distinctive barriers to integration. Radwanski and Markovic (2000) also found that Black immigrants face many more barriers than other immigrant groups when trying to participate in politics.

Conclusion

The pursuit of social cohesion is of paramount importance to Canada as a multiethnic and mosaic society. Social cohesion is a juxtaposition of belonging, inclusion, participating, recognition and legitimacy, all of which are necessary ingredients for a favorable society. As a liberal democracy, social inclusion is especially important for Canada.

Social inclusion opens doors for all citizens by creating equal access to the means of good life as defined by our society. Discrimination, on the other hand, weakens citizenship values, grinds down the concept of social inclusion, and under-utilizes the social capital that immigrants bring. Continued discrimination could alienate recent immigrants, resulting in less participation or complete withdrawal from participating in any other forms of democratic life. Thus, there should be ways to fully include immigrants into the political arena of their host country.

It is of paramount importance for a country like Canada which is multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual to make sure that recent immigrants understand and are involved in its political institutions and processes. Educational programs in schools or those implemented by surrogate agencies that facilitate the integration of immigrants should therefore examine and correct the perceived barriers. At the same time, civic education programs for native-born Canadians should also examine the perceived barriers of immigrants, as most native-born Canadians may not realize how immigrants perceive the political system, and why it is important to continue volunteering even well after they settle.

Nevitte (2004) found that in general, most recent immigrants to Canada are more involved in social organizations than native-born Canadians. Nevitte also found that as immigrants stay longer in the country, their level of participation in these social organization levels with that of native-born Canadians and decline as time goes on. The findings from this study offer a partial explanation for the levelling off of volunteerism. As most of the participants in our study told us, they hope to secure either employment or educational scholarships through their volunteering. As they gain employment and settle in, they might not see the need to keep on

volunteering more, except in cases where they can fundraise, or gather material goods to help their extended family members and relatives back in their native African countries of origin.

The study reported here demonstrates that recent African immigrants participate and are engaged in substantial community based activities, though they do not view volunteering as a form of democratic participation or political participation. This correlates with work of other scholars who have argued that rhetoric about alienation from participation in civic life may be over stated, or at least over simplified, and that perhaps there is need to focus on the motives of what we would like to refer to as the meaning and morality of political participation. The results also demonstrate that the participants have limited conceptions of what constitutes "politics" and political engagement, and see their own participation as non-political and simply philanthropic (Chareka &Sears, 2005). Civic education policies and programs need to educate citizens, in this case recent immigrants, about volunteerism and what activities count as political.

Finally, it should be noted that the scope of this study was restricted to a total of twenty recent African immigrants, nine youth and eleven adults, and was conducted in the Maritime provinces. Other researchers might want to carry out similar research involving more participants from other Canadian provinces and territories. The findings of this study have, however, revealed the nature and extent of some fundamental factors affecting recent African immigrants' understanding of volunteerism and the important role of prior knowledge to the whole process of developing, teaching and learning civic education. As mentioned earlier, phenomenography is about describing things as they appear, that is, making deductive rather than inductive statements or conclusions that go beyond what the participants say. Therefore it should be clearly understood that we do not claim that conclusions drawn from this study can be generalized to 'all' recent African immigrants. Nevertheless, further research with other recent African immigrants in other parts of Canada would add important insights to those discussed in this paper.

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How should citizenship be integrated into high school history programs? Public controversies and the Québec *History and Citizenship Education* curriculum: an analysis

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Introduction

From 30 July to 2 August, 2009, over 2,000 North American tourists had prepared to go to Québec City to re-enact an episode of the Seven Years War: the battle of the Plains of Abraham in Québec City, where two European colonial powers had clashed on 13 September, 1759. As is usual for this type of lay gathering, everything that has fascinated 20th century history scholars was excluded from the planned spectacle, such as issues of family, material culture, and the social structures of the people involved. Such an event illustrates the interest a number of people have, worldwide, in a particular approach to the past, based on what Barton and Levstik (2004) call the *exhibition stance*. According to Rosenzweig and Thelen (1998), Létourneau (2008), and Conrad, Létourneau and Northrup (2009), such activities are widespread, and might illustrate the centrality of the past for the re-enactors' identities. This particular event especially encapsulates the popular appeal of this kind of relation to the past, inasmuch as the re-enactors devote considerable time to learning their re-enactment roles and spend significant financial resources to buy the accessories they need.

The purportedly inconsequential project planned in Québec City nevertheless led to a verbal altercation, with some opposition members of parliament (at both the federal and provincial levels) taking offence upon noting that the commemoration was bestowing a festive character upon a morbid event (there were 1,200 deaths), with some among them suspecting that a federal plot had also led to this "commemoration" of the defeat of the French – or "our defeat", as Bernard Drainville, a member of the provincial legislative assembly declared (Lessard, 2009) – by the English, and to the revision of the 2006 Québec high school history program (Robitaille, 2009a, 2009b). The re-enactment was eventually cancelled.

This controversy constitutes a manifestation of what Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (2008) have named *memory wars*, referring to a phenomenon which has generated widespread analysis since Nora published his article on collective memory (1978) and edited the first volume on the realms of history (1984) that it has become trite in public debate and in the academic world. Similar discussions have persisted in other countries. Indeed, a continuous public debate in Australia relating to post-1788 European colonization has involved well-known historians (Macintyre & Clark, 2004). Throughout the world, memory, commemoration, past and history have become major political and media issues. Using history for political purposes, however,

is nothing new – the idea of *history* itself most plausibly owing its inception to political purposes. While it remained for a long time an instrument of states, political parties and their leaders, history used for political ends has moved to the periphery and to the people.

The debate regarding the Québec history curriculum, which raged on through 2006, is but another manifestation of such a memory war. It began with the 27 April, 2006 publication of misleading excerpts of a draft version of the *History and Citizenship Education* program by a *Le Devoir*[1] journalist who claimed it would promote Canadian unity (Robitaille, 2006). Many French-speaking Québec historians and indeed, members of the public at large participated in a fight against the supposedly new excessive focus placed on the cultural plurality of their society and on the influence of "British thought" in developing parliamentary institutions, as well as against the alleged concealment of events (the British conquest of New France), or institutions (French language and culture, Catholicism, etc.) that have shaped Québec (Bouvier, 2007). History educators countered that such hand wringing was unfounded, because the program would cover the development of critical skills rather than the consumption of a single narrative, itself historically and socially defined (Cardin, 2007; Dagenais & Laville, 2007). The protesters' arguments prevailed, leading to the ministry's resolve to publish an unexpectedly amended program by June (MÉLS [ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport du Québec], 2006) listing events and characters familiar in popular historiography, as well as an additional chapter on the Conquest. This appeared to have put an end to the debate, without, however, fully calming the critics (Angers *et al*., 2007; Courtois, 2009).

In spite of the weakness of the arguments against the program, and in spite of our own uncertainty about how real the influence of school subject content might be on society, this debate serves as a reminder of how much the national question weighs on perceptions of history education. Despite Robitaille and Bouvier's misinterpretation, the implementation of *History and Citizenship Education* program is not an attempt to indoctrinate students in Canadian nationalism. This article demonstrates this point, mainly through an analysis of the national high school history program in Québec and of the actual nature of this program.

This article is divided into two sections. The first section reviews the national high school history programs in Québec from 1905 onward. It focuses on the national and civic identity developed through the programs, as well as on political wrangles over their identity-building goals. Because the Québec public school system was denominational, and because French-speaking Catholics constituted approximately 86% of the province's population at the time (these figures still stand today, although their meaning has changed), we will only examine history taught in the French-Catholic public school system, headed by the Roman Catholic Committee of the Council of Public Instruction. Although the system became increasingly secular from 1966 onwards, Article 93 of the

[1] This daily newspaper occupies a political position comparable, in Montréal, to that of the *Guardian* in London because it is the only large-circulation newspaper in Quebec that is not owned by a media conglomerate and because it is often regarded as having a left-of-centre political stance.

1867 British North America Act prevented Québec from abolishing the denominational system. A secular system was finally established in 1997 when a constitutional amendment was promulgated.

The second section of this article continues with an analysis of the actual nature of the current program and looks at its claim to be promoting an autonomous, critical citizenship focused on social justice. Through the use of a descriptive typology, this part of the article seeks to provide an answer to the question: What kinds of citizens is the *History and Citizenship Education* program aiming to educate in Québec's schools? Finally, it reviews the program's limitations and the gap separating the goals of the programs from teaching practices.

This article thus constitutes a modest attempt at describing and analyzing a specific case of educational aims and discourse – namely the Québec history curriculum. It does not attempt to compare it to other cases, nor to situate it in relation to empirical or theoretical research regarding the relationship between history and citizenship. Such an enterprise could not fit within the constraints of a single article.

The school history program in Québec

This first section is divided in two parts. To begin, we outline the evolution of school history in Québec, and the social and political context from which the history programs arose. We then examine the discussions that preceded the creation of the most recent curriculum, by analysing the values it conveyed, as well as how it was received by the Habermasian identity-building ideology at its core.

The teaching of history from 1905 to 2003

This era can be divided into four distinct periods: 1905-1965, 1966-1968, 1969-1981, and 1982-2003. Between 1905 and 1965, the history "catalogue program", which identified as a list of items the content to be taught at each school level (Charland, 2005) sang the praises of the trinity of family, church, and land. It dwelt on the "glorious past" of New France, while skimming over the following centuries. "The teaching [of history] should highlight… both the apostolic and national goals pursued by the discoverers, the founding fathers, the leaders of our country; the purity of our French-Canadian origins; the religious, moral, heroic and idealistic nature of our ancestors." (DIP [Département de l'Instruction Publique], 1959, p. 481-482). It was centred on the *telos* of an unchanging and homogeneous nation of French-Catholic farmers who resisted acculturation, and propagated Catholicism throughout America. It considered the pupil a vessel, and learning a receptive process, where students were "filled" with knowledge, and tamed. It should be noted, however, that French-Catholics were not the sole bearers of such indoctrinating practice: Anglo-Catholic and Anglo-Protestant programs also vested the social sciences with a similar mission, as was the case elsewhere during this period (Lenoir, 2002, p. 138).

As the province entered a period of massive social upheaval between 1966 and 1968, there was a reversal in the official discourse on education in Québec. This can partially be explained by the fact that average personal income in Québec was low in the 1960's, far below Ontario's, even though it was increasing significantly, albeit unevenly. Indeed, the Abitibi and Gaspé Peninsula regions remained quite poor and average income varied considerably throughout Québec, depending on ethnicity. The average income of First Nations people, Italian immigrants and French-Canadians represented from 42 to 64% of the average income of English Canadians. Moreover, merely 6.7% of the 985 men comprising the Canadian upper bourgeoisie were Francophones, though the latter represented about 25% of the total Canadian population (Linteau, Durocher, Robert, & Ricard, 1989, *passim*). This period of social effervescence coincided with the intensification and success of the student movement, as well as Québécois' marked sympathy for labour, and anticolonial, revolutionary and civil rights struggles in the United States, France, Algeria, Cuba, Chile, and Vietnam.

It was in this context, from 1969 to 1980, that a "framework program" dominated by Carl Rogers' humanist psychology, proposed a pedagogical state of mind rather than specific subject content (Martineau & Gauthier, 2002, p. 8). From 1969 to 1974, the history program was not compulsory. This flexibility – which reflected the winds of social and national change sweeping through Québec in the 1960's and the first half of the 1970's – gradually and partially vanished at the beginning of the 1980's. At the end of an acrimonious debate fed by social and national ferment in 1974, an early target of the new rigidity in education was history: its teaching once again became mandatory. Nonetheless, while this sometimes reduced students' choices in selecting the courses they wished to take, teachers still benefited from a great deal of leeway, as the curriculum remained flexible. In addition, and for the first time, the same curriculum applied to all students regardless of which school system (Catholic, Protestant, Anglophone or Francophone) they attended, which meant that there would no longer be "separate but equal" history programs, but a single common (flexible) history program for all.

Following a vast public consultation, the Québec government formulated a new educational policy, which led to another curricular reform in the early 1980's.
The programs published in 1982 and 1984 instituted a history curriculum characterized by the intent to lessen a double historiographical and educational gap (Cardin, 2006). On the historiographical front, curriculum designers had hoped to put an end to an event-centred approach to history, which often focused on political facts pertaining to the formation of nation-states or the life of the elite, who were most often dead white men. The historiographical gap was bridged threefold by connecting with daily life, mentalities and socio-economic structures, by studying the world and the contemporary period, and by tracking anti-Irish, -Black, -women, -worker, -Native biases. In so doing, the program was actually more in keeping with what historiography had more or less become worldwide between the 1930's and 1980's, in curricular prescriptions as well as in academic historical writings.

Despite this new curricular approach, classroom practice still straggled, with most history teachers continuing to concentrate on political facts pertaining to the nation (Laville, 1984). The educational gap in the program was closed by proposing – once more (Cardin, 2009) – to replace teaching practices focused on students' memorizing the narrative provided by the teacher with relatively new methods, then considered by a majority of educational researchers to be good practice: teaching by objectives, giving prominence to high-order thinking skills, handling of first-hand sources, and modifying course packaging (dialogue in lecture courses, use of audio-visuals, etc.). These pedagogical propositions did not, however, substantially improve teaching; most history teachers still focused more on *their* account of the "grand narrative" than on their *students*' skills development (Coron, 1997; Lenoir, 2002; Martineau, 1999).

The 1980's brought sharpening inter-imperialist economic competition, growing depression-like, and deflationary conditions worldwide, as well as unrelenting but weakened resistance by labourers throughout the world. This contradictory context resulted in the international ideological backlash associated with the election of the Thatcher and Reagan governments in the United Kingdom and the United States (Apple, 2004; Berthelot, 2006). This international backlash was translated in Québec by policies such as budget cuts in public services and salaries, aimed at decisively weakening the trade unions and raising the profit margins of the ruling capitalist families.

The values promoted by the 2004 history program and how it was received: politico-legal patriotism and other conceptions of national identity in Québec society

By the end of the 1990's and through the first years of the next decade, these policies were followed by an ambivalent educational reform (MÉQ, 1997; MÉQ, 2001) combining socio-constructivist and cognitivist approaches, and entrusting history with two conflicting missions.

On the one hand, the new history program aimed to prepare students "to assume [their] responsibilities as citizen[s]" (MÉQ, 2004, p. 297) and realize "the need to make any decision on a critical basis" (p. 298). Therefore, they should learn to formulate questions about contemporary society, to doubt ready-made answers, to investigate facts, to question sources, and to deliberate respectfully and tolerantly, rather than yielding to prejudice, hasty generalizations or the interpretations of others (p. 337-338, 344, 348). This view of history education, inspired by Dewey (1933) and Dalongeville (2001), amongst others, reaffirms some tenets of the 1982, and 1984 programs, and rejects the type of political socialization with which history teaching was traditionally loaded: "teaching citizens about their national identity, as well as the validity of the social and political order" (MÉQ, 2004, p. 337).

On the other hand, paradoxically, school is also to play "… the role of agent of cohesion by contributing… to the development of a sense of belonging to the [Québec] community" (MÉQ, 2001, p. 3) and the study of the past should support this role, because it helps "… to discover the foundations of identity" (MÉQ, 2004, p. 348). In fact, history

participates in "… structuring the student's identity by giving him or her access to points of reference allowing him or her to grasp his or her belonging to a community sharing common values, notably those related to democracy" (p. 295). Official program documents go on to specify that: "… the challenges to be taken up, under a pluralistic society, are those searching for shared values based on shared reasons …" (MÉQ, 1997, p. 33). Therefore, it must be insisted that "a set of shared values be promoted and a sense of belonging [to this 'pluralistic society'] developed" (MÉQ, 2004, p. 28). So, while students must determine for themselves the historical roots of their social identity (p. 341), they ought not, however, to develop any values other than those designated as the basis of Québec society, leading them to exercise their " … role as citizen[s], in [their] immediate community, school, and within the larger community" (p. 295-296).

The history course must therefore fulfil a mandate of social integration. In other words, "the disciplines of the social sciences offer multiple opportunities to enrich the activities involving the development of an 'integration into Québec society'" competency, which immigrant students must develop (p. 150). School must explain to these students that they must respect public institutions and the democratic values upon which they are based, such as gender equality, etc., as if no immigrant prized democratic values, and all Canadian-born did (p. 156-157).

All students should consequently identify with provincial public institutions and the democratic values which they embody. The Groupe de travail sur la réforme du curriculum [Curricular Reform Work Group] (MÉQ, 1997, p. 34) explicitly identified these values (equality, justice, freedom, tolerance, civility, solidarity, responsibility, respect for the law and institutions), which were subsequently ratified by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, the independent public advisory body mandated with the critical analysis of education-related issues ([CSÉ], 1998, p. 24). Such a specific statement of civic identity underscores the type of social reproduction at work in this program and the previous ones: it is the state (or its territory) that is to be respected, not ancestors' common historical experiences or cultural and ethnic origins.

This comes indirectly from Habermas' political-legal patriotism (Dufour, 2001). Because one of the principal themes of the representation of Québec identity is linked to paradoxical constitutional options, we believe it is more sensitive to avoid the consecrated term (*constitutional patriotism*), which, in the Québec environment, might be construed as prejudiced in favour of a particular cause (in this case the federal constitutional status quo), and being unfairly unfavourable to another cause (Québec sovereignty). In addition, the term patriotism is currently often associated with a love for homeland for which patriots are ready to sacrifice themselves, whereas in the Québec program, this political-legal patriotism is somewhat more akin to Habermas' conception, and is a matter of integrating and promoting universal and political principles concerning democratic institutions, and participating in them to make them more rational. It is in fact derived from the liberal constitutionalist model based on the belief in the neutrality of the state relative to individual or community concepts (Rawls, 1993/1995). All memories can thus converge on the "imaginary political community" (Anderson, 1991/1996) of

Québec, defined on the basis of Québec's democratic institutions, because this "imaginary" community emanates from a concept of the constitutional state intended solely to protect the abstract civil liberties of individuals who are linked only by their respective interest in preserving their person and properties (Marx, 1843/1968).

In short, history education is limited to transmitting shared liberal values. Citizens' adhesion to these values should enable them to perceive themselves as parties to a supposedly just social contract, motivating them to assume their enlightened responsibilities for social participation (MÉQ, 2004, p. 338). Identifying with the French Canadian ethnic group then becomes optional for becoming part of the Québec nation. Nonetheless, patriotism by any other name is still patriotism. Striving for political-legal patriotism might comfort the will of citizens to fight for a righteous bourgeois state under the illusion of its defending universal principals of liberty, equality, solidarity, justice, peace and love.

As the 2006 debate on immigration and national identity showed, a majority of Québécois of French-Canadian origin have considered politico-legal patriotism insufficient, even irreconcilable with their self-assigned national identity. In 2006, for instance, the management at a Montréal gymnasium agreed to frost the windows of an exercise room, at the request and expense of a Hasidic group wanting to prevent their young boys from seeing women wearing workout outfits. The management later reversed their decision out of respect for the equal rights for women. It nevertheless triggered a debate over immigration in every region of Québec, a debate which took on a particularly xenophobic and racist (particularly anti-Muslim) tone. The media sensationalized both the Montréal gymnasium story, as well as other isolated incidents of the same nature. Some politicians framed the debate over what allowances should be made for immigrants' religious and cultural practices, and even set women's rights against immigrants' rights or attributed a hypothetical extinction of "Québécois of French Canadian culture" to immigration.

Against a pre-election background, the party PLQ, then in power in Québec, referred the matter in February 2007 to a commission headed by two established academics, Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor. The commission's mandate was to hold a public consultation on what place to give practices accommodating cultural differences, within the public sphere. Particular attention was to be paid to "reasonable accommodations," since such accommodations are covered by case law and aim to relax the application of a norm which favours an individual threatened by discrimination due to individual characteristics protected by law (Baillargeon, 2007; Simms & Prairie, 2007).

The debate stimulated the emergence of various, and sometimes irreconcilable, conceptions of Québécois identity. In spite of such variety within a single referenced territory, many views on national identity expressed during the April 2006 debate appear to share the notion that the nation consists of the descendants of the French settlers, notwithstanding their current social differences, and that any underestimation of this French Canadian essence is evidence of a federal, anti-Québec, national identity. The

traditional view of Henri Bourassa (1866-1952), and, to a lesser extent, that of Lionel Groulx (1878-1967) – considered all Catholic descendants of the French settlers to be a people, wherever they lived within the Canadian territory. Eventually, the reference territory was reduced to Québec. Furthermore, according to the results of a study by Létourneau and Moisan (2004), students' narration of the history of the Québec region insisted – as was the case for several historians whom Rudin (1995) and Bouchard (2004) studied – on the status of the French Canadians as *objects* of exploitation and oppression.

This ethnic nationalist viewpoint differs from the "official" civic nationalist conception, which is a more inclusive, less tragic, though more romanticized, narrative leading to a happy and grandiose conclusion. For example, the provincial PQ [Parti Québécois], which is a self-proclaimed bulwark against federal nationalism, promotes a territorial citizenship on the sovereignty section of its' website which includes all inhabitants of the national territory such as French Canadians, Anglophones, immigrants, etc. It also celebrates heroes closer, in some cases, to a conqueror-type figure than to the colonized or to the dissident figure: "The cultural success of Cirque du Soleil, Robert Lepage, Céline Dion, Marc-André Hamelin, Denys Arcand, Arcade Fire … are a source of pride and international influence for our people … This culture of which we are all so proud epitomizes our national identity" (PQ, 2007). In the 1970's, the PQ's program already professed a form of territorial nationalism, at the time accompanied by affirmative action measures (Lévesque & Parizeau, 1970/2007).

Some have attributed the ambiguity of the recent high school history program to tensions between different ethnic points of view (Zanazanian, 2009). This means that while the province includes some 700,000 Allophones, 600,000 Anglophones, and 6.4 million Francophones, this latter group would constitute a minority, considering the role that speaking English plays in individual upward socioeconomic mobility in North America. Consequently, Anglophones and Francophones both feel they are the oppressed minority of the other. Others have attributed it to tension between competing social interests camouflaged by the independentist and social-democratic discourse of a fraction of the Francophone elite, which is consolidated by the reinforcement of the Québec state, concomitant with the social struggles in the 1960's-1970's to improve the lot of the Francophones. This analysis assumes that elites normally seek to maintain the stability or promotion of their hegemony rather than social justice, but that this stability would be better guaranteed in a cohesive political "community." In turn, this cohesiveness is stronger when, as Bourdieu has shown, no one realizes that the corresponding educational system is promoting social cohesion and stability, while the social system is in fact based on social, political, and economic injustice. This false vision of the "self" divides the oppressed: the numerous French-speaking workers do not see their common interest with English-speaking workers or those of any other language (and vice versa), while they imagine having common interest with their oppressors who they happen to speak French (Dugré & Penner, 1991). Still others see the effect of a social representation of history teaching as the transmission of a true cultural heritage narrative, which students should learn by rote, instead of learning historians' heuristics, concepts and attitudes (Laville, 1984). This representation echoes the attitude of the student who, in Ionesco's *The*

Lesson, memorized the results of mathematical operations rather than learning how to perform the actual operations, as though it was better to teach *what* to think than to teach *to* think.

From the issue of nationhood to fostering citizenship focused on justice: educating critical, competent citizens through the teaching of history

On what grounds is citizenship education connected with the means and the ends attributed to history learning? Educators such as Dewey (1916/1976) have argued that successful citizenship education is dependent on the relationship between teaching, school experiences, and social life experiences (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1998, p. 46), which is to say that one can only become a citizen through the practice of citizenship. Anyone can get to know his or her particular interests, and can learn to defend and express them so that they are understood by others. On an academic level, this leads to considering the advantages of implementing a pedagogical approach that will open a dialogic and participative sphere, which will actively integrate students to the normative management of the educational institution. "Enlightened political engagement is not easily achieved, and it is never achieved for all time; one works at it continually (path), in concert with others (participation), and intentionally with others who are of different ideology, perspective, or culture (pluralism)" (Parker, 2008, p. 68).

As a matter of fact, it would be incoherent to conceive of a pedagogical approach aimed at the development of future citizens' collective deliberation without simultaneously offering the concrete conditions that allow, in a class of student-participants, the exercise of argumentative deliberation when it comes to the common resolution of what should be mutually requested, allowed and prohibited. Such an exercise is the occasion to really put forth one's needs and particular interests, which will be clearly explicated to others, and to oneself, during the deliberative exercise.
In what follows, we examine the links between citizenship education theories and history teaching in Québec. First, we briefly explore the theoretical setting of the problem, that is, we look at the debate about the way to approach citizenship models, and explain why we have opted for Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) analytical tool for describing and categorizing types of citizens. To determine which citizenship models, social and political practices history programs are promoting, we then adapt Westheimer and Kahne's taxonomy based on their study of various kinds of citizens educated by the schools to ensure what the latter consider to be the right direction for democracy. Next, we expressly consider the competencies prescribed by the Québec program, with special emphasis on the third competency, which refers explicitly to citizenship education and justice-oriented deliberation. Finally, we ask whether what is done in school is consistent with the convictions that the decision-makers claim they are including in it, whether the teaching of history and its tools truly allows for the development of citizens focused on justice and reciprocity.

From the complexity of the current citizenship debate to Westheimer and Kahne's analytical tool

The notion of citizenship is embedded within a polemic debate about its predominant conceptions (Habermas, 1998, p. 259; McGrew, 1992, p. 22). Moreover, since citizens can find their greatest contentment in the so-called "apolitical" sphere (such as family, art, or religion), a liberal democracy must respect a large spectrum of conceptions of good (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 296-300, 328; Strike, 1994, p. 8; Rawls, 1980, p. 540). These conditions inevitably have an impact on the complexity of an educational project for citizenship, but in the restrained perspective of this article, we should make clear that our intention is not to review in detail conceptions of citizenship such as have shaped the history of modern and post-modern politics. Other authors have already done this work brilliantly and thoroughly; we leave those concerns to historians, sociologists, and other experts in social studies education to continue their pursuits. We refer, for example, to domestic or international anthologies or studies on citizenship education (e.g.: Arthur, Davies & Hahn, 2008; Jutras & Duhamel, 2005; Sears, Clarke, & Hughes, 1997) or on youth political and community activism (e.g.: Avery, 2007; Sherrod, Flanagan, & Kassimir, 2006; Torney-Purta, 2002), and to the work of sociologist Schnapper (2000), who traces the principal developments of the concept of citizenship through the study of the historical transformation of nations, while also presenting the great texts of the founders of political theory, past and present.

What attracts our attention in citizenship literature is the centrality of education in general, and of history teaching in particular. "Political scientists subsume education within the concept of political socialization, and therein are concerned with unconscious social reproduction; educators are concerned to intervene in history and to intentionally shape society's future (Gutmann, 1999) – that is, with conscious social production" (Parker, 2008, p. 69). In fact, all sanitized, uncritical and edifying versions of history in the service of civic education (Galston, 1991, p. 244) are antithetical to the recommendations of the great majority of history education specialists (e.g.: MacMillan, 2008), who consider history as a means for allowing citizens to understand and, if need be, to criticize the way their social institutions, justice system, legislative and executive procedures, democratic regime, or universal suffrage work (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 310). The political order should not depend on deception, whether it is based on historical illusions or other erroneous beliefs which, along with the ideological biases of those who interpret them (MacIntyre & Clark, 2004), would rely on the pretence of institutions' democratic functioning (Rawls, 1993/1995, p. 99). While this type of critical analysis is certainly taught in the schools, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) have revealed two other predominant types of citizens promoted in public education.

A tool for describing and categorizing: what types of citizens are being educated in school?

To determine which citizenship models secondary school history programs are promoting, we have adapted Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) taxonomy which is derived

from their study of various kinds of *citizens* are educated by schools to ensure what their administrators consider to be the right direction for democracy. Westheimer and Kahne studied the civic goals of ten United States school programs. They observed how these schools operated and how their administrators and personnel subscribed to the stated goals (p. 240). They then distributed the latter into three non-mutually exclusive categories. The goal of the first category is to train "personally responsible" citizens. Personally responsible citizens conform with what society asks of them: they are charitable, polite, placid and sober, give blood, recycle, obey the Highway Code, pay their taxes, work assiduously, vote in elections, enlist in the army, carry groceries in an organic jute tote bag, consume fair-trade coffee, etc. This conception of a "responsible citizen" would still be welcome in several undemocratic societies, including Duplessis' Québec (under whose leadership school history programs were to educate personally responsible citizens) or Salazar's Portugal, for instance.

The purpose of the second category is to educate "participatory" citizens who engage in social and community life by running for office, do volunteer work, coordinate a campaign in their neighbourhood to collect recyclable waste, or to raise awareness about responsible consumption, ecological commitment, prevention, effort, respect for others, cooperation and so forth.

The third category seeks to educate "justice-oriented" citizens, that is, citizens who collectively attempt to identify the social factors behind abusive individual experiences and behaviours and who, by organizing an election campaign, petition drive, strike, or other event, try to reform society to counter injustice. Such citizens regularly perform large and small deeds aimed at saving the planet, building union solidarity, helping the poor living in neo-colonial countries, defending freedom of the press, gender equality and so on. Most importantly, citizens of this category characteristically share a focus on the general causes of injustice and on taking disinterested initiatives towards establishing justice.

This typology, however, does not include a separate category for citizens who would fight in a revolution to overthrow the established order, whether it relied on or generated exploitation and oppression. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that establishing justice would be in the best interest of a majority of citizens and require, if need be, their involvement in actions of a collective nature aimed, for instance, at changing the form of ownership of the means of production and rendering power and social relationships reciprocal at various levels. In short, this taxonomy seems to somehow downplay the category of the socialist revolutionary citizen.

Having briefly described the competencies prescribed in the Québec program, we will use the above typology to analyze whether the Québec education system can educate citizens capable of transformative praxis.

Do the competencies of the History and Citizenship Education programs contribute to educate students for justice and reciprocity?

Putatively participating in this deliberative movement, one of the major educational aims of the Québec curriculum for junior high school students (MÉQ, 2004, p. 4) focuses on the training of autonomous individuals capable of acting as engaged, critical citizen. In the same breath, it asserts that this task falls, first, to *History and Citizenship Education*, although the latter, as it adds later, needs the help of other subject-areas to train "responsible citizens, capable of using their minds and competencies to serve the common good" (MÉQ, 2004, p. 21). Indeed, the junior high school curriculum's 612 pages mention the basic word *citizen* or its derivatives (*citizens, citizenship*, etc.) 247 times; half of these occurrences concern the history program. The same is true of the high school program (MÉLS, 2006).

The *History and Citizenship Education* title in fact represents two courses which, with minute differences, both include the same three competencies. As previously stated, the first program is taught in grades seven and eight. While it strives for "universal" history, it specifically focuses on Western European and North American history. The other program is taught in grades nine through eleven and focuses on the history of Québec in particular.

The first competency involves formulating problems and questions in a historical perspective, about past and present social phenomena (MÉQ, 2004, p. 344), such as the *American and French revolutions*. The second is titled *Interpreting social phenomena using the historical method* (p. 346). It implies that students need to actively research documents to establish facts. This involves occasionally finding, and classifying documents, analyzing and assessing relevant data, comparing the points of view and interests of actors, witnesses and historians, and exposing and criticizing frames of reference, assumptions, and ideological underpinnings of texts (p. 347). Students are expected to develop an active relationship with knowledge and become gradually involved in deconstructing the discourses of global cultural narratives and notions of objective truth. Of course, the program does focus on the idea that the history course allows for historical events to be contextualized by considering the various perspectives of the actors involved, but there is no statement about the historical approaches to be used to identify and assess the biases or prejudices of the authors of the documents which students will have in hand.

The third competency, *Building one's civic awareness through history* (p. 348) which for grades nine to eleven becomes *Consolidating the exercise of one's citizenship through history* (though both versions of this competency are viewed here as complementary), is closely connected with the practice of deliberation, as a constraints-free, structured discourse founded on well-reasoned arguments: "To develop his or her competency, the student should learn how to reason based on facts and to justify his or her interpretation through argumentation" (p. 346). For one of the authors to whom the programs refer, the history class can and should accomplish this by offering students occasions for theoretical, complex reconstructions, called problem situations:

> The situation is complex, because it brings into play several [historical] points of view, which may be concordant, divergent, or strictly contradictory, so resolving the problem does not reside in the simplistic victory of one of the points of view, but rather by stepping outside the dialectic, to integrate several of the points of view. (Dalongeville, 2001, p. 276, authors' translation)

This would allow students to participate in social debates, which would be seen as "problems" to be solved (MÉQ, 2004, p. 360). Deliberation would be all the more important, because students need to debate the issues confronting values and putting social behaviour into question.

Are history classes really entrusted to prepare students to focus on justice and reciprocity?

Considering the magnitude of the mandate given to the history class, and the fact that the optimal developmental level of these competencies cannot be reached in only four years, the Québec history program aims to educate citizens capable of arriving at their own opinions and building their own identity rather than indoctrinating them into a specific ideology by subverting history. History should not be submitted as such to citizenship education. According to the authors of the program, there would be no such indoctrination of students. In fact, the civic competency would depend on two other competencies (the historical competencies), to the extent that "… as students learn about the contribution of past social phenomena to democratic life today, they ask questions that, in turn, contribute to new interpretations of social phenomena" (MÉLS, 2006, p. 23). In this spirit, each student should methodically examine and interpret various social phenomena, while establishing his or her opinion and civic consciousness on historical bases, grasping the impact of human actions on the course of history and becoming aware of his or her responsibilities as a citizen (MÉQ, 2004, p. 337-338). Finally, the study of social phenomena should provide students with "… the opportunity to decontextualize the concepts studied and to transfer them appropriately" (p. 350) to their lives as citizens.

According to the *History and Citizenship Education* program, good citizens should necessarily express their competency by choosing to adhere to predetermined principles ("such as the constitutional state or universal suffrage", MÉLS, 2006, p. 22), by prioritizing certain values ("such as justice, freedom or equality", etc.) and by adopting behaviours ("such as participation, commitment or taking a position", etc.) nominally consistent with the established order (even though the program's authors may be unaware of it).

While the *History and Citizenship Education* program at the junior high school level does not define the term *common good*, it nonetheless uses it 152 times in association with the reciprocity of social, political and economic bonds. It mentions these unambiguously in sentences such as: " … the shared values of Québec society … are equality, justice, freedom and democracy" (MÉQ, 2004, p. 156) and students must

identify " … human actions which prove to be economically equitable, respectful of the environment, socially just and adapted to the culture of the societies occupying the territories" (p. 312). Similarly, the use of terms associated with asymmetry in social, political or economic relationships such as "poverty," "racism," "sexism," "discrimination" and "exclusion" further indicates a favourable disposition towards reciprocity. Such words appear 26 times.

When debating a social issue, the MÉLS expects that students who have completed the upper grades will grasp the benefits and drawbacks of each position (MÉLS, 2006, p. 24). Yet, it rarely formulates students' recognition of the socially and historically situated dimension of discourse. The MÉLS (2006) states only one expectation in this regard, that the student's depth of questioning is revealed when he or she "displays a critical sense of sources and interpretations" (p. 13). This aspect can determine, in whole or in part, the favourable or unfavourable nature of the positions expressed in more or less regulated contexts of deliberation, whether in or out of the classroom. For example, racist discourse might not have the same validity in the eyes of people who profit from the effects of racism as it does for those people who suffer from it.

A "sense of mutuality" and a "desire to justify to others" are described as elements of the deliberative reciprocity principle (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996, p. 52-53). Such an ideal supposes that citizens are seeking an agreement concerning rights which can be justified by mutually acceptable reasons, under deliberative conditions of equality and inclusiveness. Those implications are translated into pedagogical requirements, whereas a dialogic practice which transforms students from submissive objects into active subjects of their citizenship and their history allows for the development of truly critical citizens capable of transformative praxis. The Québec *History and Citizenship Education* curriculum implicitly and partially draws on deliberative theory, which conceives of democracy as a self-correcting, historical process.

This idea at times reaches Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) third category of citizenship. However, McAndrew (2004) points to the perceived ambiguity of the curriculum's citizenship components with regards to the critical approach needed to study its concepts. Such ambiguity might perplex teachers and other actors who may wish to avoid social debate on non-consensual dimensions of citizenship, or it might lead them to a "common sense" interpretation which is incompatible with the demands of democracy, pluralism, and social solidarity. Citizenship education could hence be reduced, in its application, to memorizing grand legal principles and how public institutions work (p. 34).

Whatever one might think of notions of legislative democracy, what could it possibly mean to students who have no say on the limits of freedom of expression in school media, for example? What could judicial and executive democracy mean to those without the power to affect the definition and the application of rules and sanctions? Indeed, the history sections of the curriculum submit the institutions of the Québec parliamentary system as the very measure of liberal democracy, which as a political

system cannot be surpassed. The competency titled *Strengthens his/her exercise of citizenship through the study of history* presents students with the opportunity to reinvest historical knowledge in order to "recognize", "identify", "grasp", "make connections between", and "examine" institutions, values, issues, and societies. Being a citizen thus boils down to having rights and institutions which protect them, participating in any process which may have an impact on the life of the community, belonging to a political community, and behaving in a way which conforms to values promoted by the community (Marzouk, Kabano, & Côté, 2000, p. 31). These values themselves are not objects of deliberation, and do not guarantee social justice; the expectation of conformity prohibits their being questioned, and their injustices to be corrected. This can be partly explained by the fact that while the Québec secondary curriculum insists on the importance of applying principles of democracy to managing the classroom and the school, its designers remain reluctant to integrate in class real issues of a political or socioeconomic nature, whose scope far exceeds the framework of the school (McAndrew, 2004).

In the Québec *History and Citizenship Education* program, students can nevertheless be made aware that " … that in spite of a democratic egalitarian discourse, real inequalities endure which he or she will have to face and on which he or she may have to take a position, … that social change depends on human action" and that the role of responsible citizen demands " … involvement in the debates on social issues" (MÉQ, 2004, p. 348). We can nonetheless wonder, as previously mentioned, whether the history being taught will truly lead students to transform and improve their community.
In any case, it appears that the 21 verbs used to define the components of the third discipline competency might, in fact, have described the behaviour of Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) first category of citizens, which is identified as the personally responsible. In the pages devoted to history, we notice a reverence toward Québec's current parliamentary system, elevated as the model of liberal democracy. The omission of some verbs from the program will no doubt distress some and hearten others; absent are such ideologically slated verbs as *assessing* the consequences of social organization modes on social differentiation, *fighting* for the interests of the disenfranchised, or *influencing* the trajectory of the world of adults and youth.

On the one hand, as would be expected, the Québec curriculum *in theory* favours critical thinking and consciousness of the diversity of cultural perspectives. On the other hand, the danger of such a focus is to render other types of conflict or division insignificant, such as is the case of socioeconomic divisions.

Further exploration of the logic underlying the institution of school demonstrates, however, that it is perfectly coherent with the superstructure under which it was conceived, and which is entrusted with the mission of social selection. Regulated as they are by the hierarchical structure of school, interactions in the classroom cannot easily be reconciled with education for democracy and egalitarian relations (Allman, 1999; Giroux, 1981; McLaren, 1999). While the twentieth century saw a vast movement toward pedagogical projects based on active learning, their impact on the political socialization

of students has been minimal and cognitive and affective gains difficult to measure in this regard (Palonsky, 1987, p. 509). Even in school contexts referred to as deliberative, notions of democracy may constitute nothing more than a diversion which exacerbates differences, rather than an exercise in analyzing oppression as the tool of the powerful, who dictate norms against all others by dividing and setting them one against the other (Éthier & Lefrançois, 2007; Lefrançois & Éthier, 2008).

It is undeniable that the superstructure of schooling reproduces and reifies social and economic infrastructures as material conditions of social existence such as competition, consumption, coercion, subordination, impacts of economic crisis, absence of independent, coordinated action of labour unions working in solidarity – in short, all forms of habitus, frame individual and collective mentalities and ethos. If these observations are correct, why would students then desire, indeed, why *should* they desire, to become agents in the regulation of their own individual behaviour, especially considering that they have little or no control over their school and social environment, in spite of what the institution of school may claim to be democratic practice (Howden & Marguerite, 2000, p. 124)? This leads to questions about the ability of schooling, through the deliberative practice and learning of history in the social sciences and humanities curricula in particular, to create the relational dynamics among students likely to promote the collective development of norms and actions to compensate for inter-subjective inequality and allow for the resolution of problems of community life.

The citizenship education program implemented in the United Kingdom since 2002 claims to be founded on principles of participatory democracy, that is to say on the search for compromise between the interests and values of groups through democratic institutions, with the goal of achieving a more inclusive citizenship (Crick, 2007). However, as Leighton (2004) points out, the British program seeks to increase participation in the established system rather than put into question the inequalities it creates. Using Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) typology, it can be concluded that the absence of challenges to the structure and of critical examination of the forms of power that sustain it make the possibility of correcting and reforming it in favour of social justice improbable. As school is but a link in the chain of social reproduction, there is reason to believe that the matrix of power outside of it is inherent to it, such as language, content selection, etc., and that it is therefore reproduced by the oppressed who are unaware of their contribution to the status quo. By reproducing hierarchical power relations while promoting an official curriculum favourable to social justice, schools may be condemned to systemic incoherence. Overcoming the limits of the school structure may consequently require that the roots of hegemony in schools such as teachers' authority, assessment, etc., and beyond its walls, such as social selection of students, relations of production, etc., be uncovered.

Conclusion

Although the educational objectives for training Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) "personally responsible" and "participatory" citizen are present in the Québec *History*

and Citizenship Education program, its claim is to be promoting the "social justice" citizen. It explicitly identifies the education of "justice-oriented" citizens as its goal, and rejects moralistic, instrumentalist, mechanistic or static views of knowledge and politics. It also emphasizes reasoning and debate as the social factors of individual problems, as well as for practices which might render social, economic or political structures more just. In spite of its ambiguities and contradictions, therefore, the program appears to be in line with educational research on the importance of historical thinking (e.g.: Barton, 2008; Lee, Ashby, & Shemilt, 2005; Seixas, 2010; Wineburg, 2001).

Curricular objectives cannot, however, be seen to translate the reality of the classroom or of school in general, as fifty years of research into the sociology of education have shown. For at least twenty years now, researcher's observations have consistently shown that teachers rarely adopt what research has revealed to be "best practices" (Barton & Levstik, 2004). On the contrary, most teaching practices at the middle or high school levels, including that of some otherwise excellent teachers with strong pedagogical content knowledge and a refined conception of historical thinking, focus first on discipline and behaviour management or on ensuring that all the subject-area content has been covered, even if those classroom practices contradict the approaches to inquiry that were discussed in their methods course (Barton & Levstik, 2004; van Hover & Yeager, 2007).

Why teachers do not apply these best practices in class is the subject of much speculation. Barton and Levstik (2004) provide three concurrent answers to this question. For some researchers, such a situation would indicate that teachers are doing what they can, with whatever available means, to survive under difficult teaching conditions. For others, the rejection of innovative practice reflects the influences of expectations of parents, colleagues, media and decision makers, whether or not they are openly stated, as the effect of social determinants. For others yet, it means that teachers' university education has not convinced them of the legitimacy of the educational aims and epistemological positions of academics, even though they may have adopted the vocabulary of the latter's dominant theoretical discourse. While the analysis of the curriculum's official documentation is necessary to evaluate the foundations of this discourse, it remains insufficient. Further study of the social contexts, manner and conditions in which the curriculum is transposed is required to glean a greater understanding of the processes through which curricular aims are selected, enacted or (mis)appropriated by the social agents of school.

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"Why do we learn this stuff"? Students' views on the purpose of social studies

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Introduction

I've been teaching pre-service elementary social studies teachers for over 20 years and one thing that always astonishes me is how *fuzzy* they are about why we teach social studies as a subject in schools. When I ask this question in my undergraduate social studies methods classes, I usually get specific content-focused responses such as: to learn about history and geography, Canada and the world, other people and cultures, government and politics, or current events. Learning to be a good citizen is rarely mentioned even though social studies programs across Canada have a long history of citizenship education as their primary goal (Clark & Case, 2008; Gibson, 2009; Osborne, 2008; Richardson, 2002). When I explain that social studies is the school subject that aims to develop our children's understanding about what it means to be a good citizen, my students are genuinely surprised. Few acknowledge being aware that they were learning about citizenship when they were taking social studies in elementary and secondary school. Is this true of most children and youths' experiences in school?

A Review of the Literature

A scan of the literature on teachers' and students' perceptions of social studies as a school subject from the last three decades would seem to suggest that this lack of overt attention to citizenship education is typical. A number of research studies consistently found that social studies is often the least liked course that children and youth take in school and the one that they feel most lacks relevance to their lives (Chapin, 2006; Chiodo, & Byford, 2004; Egan, 1980; Heafner, 2004; Schug, Todd & Beery, 1984; Steffay & Hood, 1994; Thornton, 2005; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). For example, in Zhao and Hoge's (2005) study, they interviewed 300 children from kindergarten to Grade 5 and discovered that, "Most children who do not like social studies say 'it is boring and useless,' 'it's reading the textbook' and 'it doesn't apply'" (p. 3). More positive student reactions to social studies have been found in classrooms where the teacher has clearly articulated goals and a strong sense of purpose as well a personal enthusiasm for the subject (McCall, 2006).

Sears (1996) attributes the problem with social studies to a mismatch between what is reflected in the official curriculum and the way in which it is being represented in the classroom. Aoki (2005) sees this mismatch occurring because the teacher is caught in the "zone of between" (p. 163) in which she or he is "indwelling in two curriculum worlds" (p. 165). One world is the curriculum as planned; the other is the curriculum as lived in the classroom. Curriculum as lived is described by Rogers (1989) as "those

things that a student chooses to emphasize, elaborate on, ignore or omit as he or she recounts learnings from a class or a field trip – the learner's personal meanings. [These] make up the experienced curriculum" (Rogers, 1989, p. 715). This gap between taught and experienced curriculum occurs because "prior to and during its enactment, teachers have great leeway to interpret prescribed curriculum" (Thornton, 2005, p. 11). Cuban (1992) adds that, "the gap between what is taught and what is learned—both intended and unintended—is large" (p. 223).

Most teachers tend to be content driven with the larger intended curricular goals often getting lost. Brophy and Alleman (1993) claim that, "teachers appear to proceed [with curriculum implementation in the classroom] by asking what knowledge, skills and values are emphasized in the state and district guidelines for the grade level and then make sure that these are covered, especially the ones that are likely to be tested" (p. 28). Often, "knowledge content gets fragmented into disconnected bits that can be memorized but not easily learned with understanding of their meanings or appreciation of their potential significance" (Brophy & Alleman, 1993, p. 28). As a result, Dewey (as cited in Boydston, 2008) warned, "the supposed end for which they [the social studies] were introduced--the development of more intelligent citizenship …will be missed" (p. 185).

An important step that teachers need to take to address this problem, according to Thornton (2005), is to begin to see themselves as "curricular-instructional gatekeepers." Such a view of the teacher's role requires that they concern themselves with the bigger picture and not just with transmitting the officially sanctioned knowledge in the curriculum" (p. 6). Being a curricular-instructional gatekeeper "requires consideration of educational purposes" (p. 6), which according to Thornton is "a task some practitioners prefer to avoid. They may judge aims talks as unnecessary and they may resist it--their job, they might say, is to deliver instruction. Such a view, however, is untenable" (p. 6). Osborne (1991) concurs that, "Good teachers possess a clear vision of education and of what it will do for their students. They are not simply technicians who take a prescribed curriculum or textbook and work their students through it" (p. 119). Does grade-specific social studies content continue to dominate teachers' focus? If so, does this focus override students' understanding of the bigger purpose for learning social studies? Does it matter?

Social Studies Teaching and Learning: The Alberta Context

In order to examine some of the questions arising from the review of the literature, I will focus specifically on the newly implemented social studies curriculum in the province of Alberta context. The first ten pages of the Alberta Kindergarten to Grade 12 Social Studies Program of Studies, known as the 'front matter,' are the same for all grades. Here, the purpose of and vision for social studies in the province are outlined. The purpose of social studies is described as providing "opportunities for students to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge that will enable them to become engaged, active, informed and responsible citizens" who are "aware of their capacity to effect change in their communities, society and world" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 1). The overarching

knowledge, skills and attitudes considered essential to the development of Albertan students as citizens are also delineated here. These outcomes are considered to be cumulative, so that each year of schooling builds on the previous one so that Grade 12 graduates have what they need to be citizens who "effect change in their communities, society and world" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 1).

The front matter also addresses pedagogy. Here students are described as learners who "bring their own perspectives, cultures and experiences to the social studies classroom. They construct meaning in the context of their lived experience through active inquiry and engagement with their school and community" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 5). Thus social studies experiences should "provide learning opportunities for students to develop skills of active and responsible citizenship and the capacity to inquire, make reasoned and informed judgments, and arrive at decisions for the public good" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 5). These skills are to be developed through "an issues-focused approach [which] presents opportunities to address learning outcomes by engaging students in active inquiry and application of knowledge and critical thinking skills" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 5). According to these statements then, a focus on citizenship education, identity, perspective taking, inquiry, issues, active engagement of learners, critical thinking and decision-making should be central to all social studies programs in Alberta.

Province-wide implementation of the new social studies curriculum at the elementary level in Alberta's schools was phased in over five years beginning with kindergarten to grade three in the 2005/2006 school year, grades four and seven in 2006/2007, grades five, eight, and ten in 2007/2008, grades six, nine, and eleven in 2008/2009, and grade twelve in 2009/2010. As of this writing, elementary teachers have had three to six years of experience with this new curriculum in the classroom, depending on which grade they teach.

How much of this new vision for social studies is evident at the classroom level? What are children's experiences in school with this new social studies curriculum?

The Research Study

During the 2009/2010 school year, which was four years after the initial implementation of the new social studies curriculum in Alberta, I was lead investigator on a research study examining how elementary school teachers in one school district were handling the implementation of the new social studies curriculum. While the main focus of this study was on the effectiveness of the professional development that the teachers received prior to implementing the new curriculum, the data also pointed to some relevant findings regarding the teachers' and children's experiences with the new curriculum. As a part of this study, I had the opportunity to speak to the district curriculum coordinator, classroom teachers and students about their thoughts on social studies as well as to observe in classrooms while social studies was being taught.

Procedures.

Elementary classroom teachers in the school district, all of whom had participated in the district-level formal professional development program on the new social studies curriculum, were asked to volunteer to be interviewed about their thoughts on and experiences with the new social studies curriculum. Those who agreed participated in an initial, one-hour interview between September and November of 2009, with a second follow up interview scheduled from April to July, 2010. Researchers also conducted a mid-year classroom observation and facilitated focus groups with students to uncover what the children believed they were being taught in social studies and why. Artifacts including lesson plans and samples of student work were also collected and field notes were kept during the class observations.

Participants.

Ten teachers from four of the possible eight schools with elementary grades in the district agreed to be interviewed. Four were primary teachers (Grades one and two), one taught a split three/four, and the others were upper elementary teachers (Grades four to six). Two of the teachers had taught for less than ten years, while the rest had teaching experience ranging from ten to over thirty years. All but one had taught at different levels in the elementary program and all had previous experience teaching the new social studies curriculum. Of the ten teachers who were interviewed, four agreed to a classroom visit between March and April of 2010. These four teachers taught social studies to grades one, two, five, and a three/four split. Two focus groups of four to five children each were held with students from each of the grades that were observed.

Data analysis.

A content analysis procedure was used to examine the data collected through the interviews, focus groups and observations (Creswell, 2008). Line-by-line coding was used to analyze the first sets of transcripts. These codes were then organized into categories. The categories were combined into themes and patterns, which were used to guide the examination of all subsequent transcripts in order to gain an understanding of the individual participant's views on the new social studies curriculum. Classroom observation field notes and classroom artifacts were also examined for evidence of these same categories and themes.

Findings and Discussion

i) Teachers' views on the new social studies curriculum.

As part of the district professional development plan, all of the elementary teachers in the district spent an afternoon looking at the front matter of the Program of Studies where the goals and purposes for social studies are laid out, including

addressing the important role of citizenship education: According to the district curriculum coordinator who facilitated the district's PD plan,

> I think the one aspect that worked really well [in the district PD plan] is the fact that we got all the [elementary] teachers in-serviced in that they all looked at and worked a little bit with the front matter. That I really was proud of because sometimes they just never bothered to read it.

Despite this emphasis on understanding the goals and purposes of social studies, the majority of the teachers in the first interview talked about how the most significant changes to the curriculum were changes to the specific grade level content that they were responsible for teaching. A few acknowledged the new emphasis on "big ideas" and concepts such as 'perspective' and 'diversity', but none of the teachers identified the purpose of social studies as developing "active, responsible citizens" or "global agents of change" that are identified as goals in the Program of Studies front matter. Only one teacher mentioned the key core concepts of 'citizenship' and 'identity,' which also appear in the front matter (Alberta Education, 2005).

Many of the teachers also expressed concern about these specific grade-related content changes that they saw in the new curriculum. One such concern was in relation to the difficulty of some of the concepts.

> I believe that reading, writing and math should take priority over the other subjects. The new social studies program is quite demanding and is difficult to teach to young children. I like the idea about teaching about other cultures and being aware of life in other countries; however, not all children at this age can understand these concepts.
>
> I am disappointed. Why do children in grade three have to study Tunisia, India, Peru and Ukraine. I understand the relation between these countries and our culture in Canada, but most students in grade two don't even know about their own country.

Another concern voiced by the teachers was a perception that there was "content overload" in the curriculum.

> In grade four, sometimes it feels a little bit like cramming it down their [the students] throats because there's a lot more to be covered. If there is a way to pare it down a little bit that would be a joy... It's almost like you're skipping a rock across the pond to get to the other side and you don't get time to actually get your feet wet.

These changes in the curriculum content affected the teachers' comfort level with teaching it at times because of their own lack of knowledge about some of the topics.

> Where's Tunisia? I don't know about Tunisia! It bothers me that they [the curriculum developers] picked a country that there's not a lot of information on.

The biggest change as noted by teachers, however, was in the pedagogical underpinnings of the curriculum. The teachers talked about the new curriculum being more "student centred" and "connected to the children's lives". There was also a recognition that the emphasis in the curriculum had shifted from learning content knowledge to skill development and an inquiry focus.

> … the pedagogy is quite a bit different. It really does lend itself to inquiry, in fact it demands it. So for me that's the major change. It's not the content; it's how it's delivered.

The shift to an inquiry approach was also flagged as a concern for some teachers.

> Teachers know how kids learn and are really nervous about inquiry without structure and are struggling with that too.

> I think there are teachers who are maybe a bit more apprehensive to just let kids go at it [inquiry].

> I'm positive there are teachers out there who aren't teaching with the new pedagogy. I know there are because social studies isn't their only subject. As an elementary generalist there is a focus on math and language arts, and social and science are sort of those thematic add-ons if they've got time to plan something super fantastic.

One concern with the move to an inquiry approach was the lack of support in the prescribed resources.

> [The curriculum is] really relying on inquiry and all the things that go with it but there is not a lot in the textbook to drive what you are doing and that's really tough.

While the teachers generally didn't acknowledge a heavy reliance on the textbooks, all of the children in the focus groups talked about using them frequently in social studies alongside other resources such as children's story books, artifact kits, and the Internet.

> [In social studies] we read it from the textbooks. (Grade three student)

> Sometimes [in social studies] you get a [text]book and just look at different things in the books. (Grade two student)

> Sometimes it gets boring cause we read the textbook a lot. (Grade four student)
>
> We try and find answers to the questions in the textbook cause you're searching for this page and no it's not in this page. So you're kind of spending most of your period and trying to find out the first question and where you would get it from. (Grade four student)
>
> We write it in our booklets for social studies. Our teacher, Mrs. C. makes up a booklet for us and we have to answer the questions when we learn. Like we have a different booklet for each chapter [in the textbook]. So you have to answer the questions after you've read the pages that you need to read to answer the questions. (Grade three student)
>
> [Social studies is] copying off the board and working in the social textbook and studying for all the tests. (Grade three student)
>
> We did something called an inquiry question for the whole entire unit. So we would read textbooks and do all our research and then we answer the question. (Grade five student)
>
> Mr. B likes to use the [social studies] textbook a lot. (Grade five student)

Classroom observations also revealed teachers using worksheets provided in the teacher materials that came with the recommended textbooks. Students mainly relied on textbooks to answer teacher-generated questions in each of the classes observed. Our observations indicated that there was little engagement of students in "active inquiry and application of knowledge and critical thinking skills" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 5) as described in the Program of Studies.

ii) Children's views on social studies.

Students in each focus group were asked, what do you learn about in social studies, and, why do you take social studies in school? Their responses to the first question are provided by grade, while the responses to the second question are presented by theme.

a) What the children are learning in social studies. Focus group discussions focused on what sorts of things they were learning about in social studies. The children were generally quite articulate about the topics and content they were currently studying.

According to the grade five students, in social studies they were learning:

> … about the different cities and countries and about different people and what they do and how they live in their culture.

> … about the history, what people did way back then and how it's changed in the future from the past.
>
> … about the Native Canadians and the European fur trade and just learning about Canada and it's history.
>
> … about continents and sometimes it just history.
>
> …about where you're from and what it used to be like where you're living now.
>
> … stuff about the world.

An examination of the learning outcomes for grade five social studies in the provincial program of study shows that at least the first few students were quite accurate regarding the content they were studying, but not necessarily about the purpose for studying it.

> Grade 5 students will examine how the ways of life of peoples in Canada are integral to Canadian culture and identity. They will explore the geographic vastness of Canada and the relationships between the land, places and people. As they reflect upon the stories of diverse Aboriginal, French, British and immigrant experiences in Canada over time, students will develop a sense of place and an awareness of how these multiple stories contribute to students' sense of citizenship and identity. (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 1)

Some of the responses from grade four students included:

> … you learn about the history of Alberta, aboriginal, Francophone, Métis, Canadians, and other people that were in Alberta and Canada.
>
> …you learn about how things have changed over time, like what happened in Alberta long ago and about the fur trade and about Francophone, Métis, and British.
>
> …you learn about people from the past and what did they do and what their language was.
>
> …you learn more like culture and more about other people and the history, like the Sundance of the aboriginal people or the catholic missionaries and the Métis and the Francophones.
>
> … it [social studies] teaches about our history and about culture and how life was in Alberta.
>
> It's all about geography and the past of many different countries and who the first people were there.

All but the last student response reflect the grade specific focus outlined in the Program of Study.

> Grade 4 students will explore the geographic, cultural, linguistic, economic and historical characteristics that define quality of life in Alberta. They will appreciate how these characteristics reflect people's interaction with the land and how physical geography and natural resources affect quality of life. Through this exploration, students will also examine how major events and people shaped the evolution of Alberta. (Alberta Education, 2005)

Grade three students understood social studies as a subject where they learn about "other kids and other different places," "the world," "services are in other places like Peru, Tunisia, and India," "other countries and the people that are living in those countries," and, different countries' food and their clothing." Here too, the students' comments reflect the grade focus for the most part, however, no mention was made of Canada's involvement with these countries or of learning to be a global citizen.

> Grade 3 students will investigate life in four diverse communities around the world. The contemporary communities examined will be drawn from India, Tunisia, Ukraine and Peru. Students will inquire into how geographic, social, cultural and linguistic factors affect quality of life in communities in the world. Students will enrich their awareness and appreciation of how people live in other places. Their understanding of global citizenship will be further developed and they will recognize Canada's involvement in other parts of the world. (Alberta Education, 2005)

Grade two students talked about social studies being about "back in the olden days," learning about different communities like "Nova Scotia, Acadian, Iqaluit and Saskatoon", and "how some of the communities are different from ours". These responses also demonstrate awareness of some aspects of the grade two overview in the Program of Study.

> Grade 2 students will investigate life in three diverse communities within Canada. Based on their understanding of their own communities, students will explore characteristics of selected rural and urban communities in Canada: an Inuit community, a prairie community and an Acadian community. They will apply their understanding of various aspects that define communities, such as geography, culture, language, heritage, economics and resources, in their investigation of how communities are connected. Students will discover how people live in each of these communities and will reflect upon the vastness of Canada and the diversity of Canadian communities. Students will also be given the opportunity to study the past of their own or one of the other communities

> studied. Throughout the study, emphasis will be on the contribution of individuals and groups to a community. (Alberta Education, 2005, iii)

The grade one students had more difficulty than did their older counterparts in identifying what they were learning about in social studies, which is made obvious in the following excerpt from one focus group conversation:

SG (Interviewer) – Patty, what do you learn in social studies?
Patty – I really like to play the games that Mrs. M. [the Grade 1 teacher] lets us play, like cards.
SG – Like you were playing today when I was in your class. Why?
Patty – Because like Go Fish you have to say a number and you have to try to guess if they have that.
SG – So what does that teach you about when you're playing cards?
Patty – It teaches you how to play it.
SG – Why are you learning how to play cards in social studies?
Patty – I don't know.
SG – Do any of you know why you're learning to play cards today in social studies? Fanny do you have an idea?
Fanny – No.
SG –Gwen do you know why she was teaching you to play cards today?
Gwen – Because [long pause] I don't know.
SG –Patty do you have an idea why now?
Patty – Maybe because my Dad teaches me to play cards and then Mrs. M. teaches us how to play cards.
SG – So it's something you do at home then with your family?
Patty – Uh-huh.
SG – So you're learning about things that your family likes to do together. Is that what you're doing?
Patty - Uh-huh

The grade one teacher later described her purpose for playing cards with the children in this way, "I wanted them to find out these family rituals that we have and to see that traditions are still really important in this day and age." This focus on the concept of tradition is reflected in the following statement from the grade one Program of Study:

> Through inquiry into their social, physical, cultural and linguistic environments, Grade 1 students will see themselves as part of the larger world. They will have opportunities to share their personal stories and explore traditions and symbols that are reflected in their groups or communities. (Alberta Education, 2005)

The teacher also noted that this was her third lesson in which she had been addressing the concepts of time and past, present and future. The children seemed to have a solid understanding of these concepts. Here is a conversation with the same student:

SG (Interviewer) - You were also learning about pirates and making pirate maps in social studies. Do know why you learned about pirates?
Patty – Cause it was in the past.
SG – So the pirates lived in the past. Is learning about the past part of social studies then?
Patty - And the present and the future.
SG– And pirates are the past?
Patty – Uh huh and the present is like we are doing right now. And then the future is what we're gonna do tomorrow.

b) Children's thoughts on why they take social studies in school. Most of the student responses to the question of why they take social studies in school represented a view of "schooling as preparation for the future":

> You need social [sic] cause if you wanted to be a teacher you would need to know that stuff. (Grade five student)
>
> …because when you grow up you could be like a tour guide for the museum and when people ask questions about the history of Canada or other places, then you could actually answer them. (Grade five student)
>
> It's important for when you grow up. (Grade four student)
>
> In social studies you learn about new places and when you grow up you might want to move to that place. (Grade five student)
>
> It's important to know about because when you grow up and you're in university then you might need to know that stuff in the test or something. (Grade four student)

Included under this theme is the view of social studies as preparing the children to be world travelers:

> So if you, wanna ever go to one of these countries you're gonna know what their language is and like you're gonna know what did they do and what kind of stuff they used. (Grade four student)
>
> It's useful because then if you go to one of those countries then you know what their history is and all that type of stuff. (Grade three student)
>
> If you go to those places you know if stuff is bad or dangerous so you wouldn't go near it. (Grade three student)

A second theme in the children's responses was the importance of social studies for "success in school":

> Well because we can learn more and we wouldn't know anything if we go to a higher grade. (Grade two student)
>
> If you have social [sic] you would get a better education and know more about your country. (Grade five student)
>
> So you can get good on your tests. (Grade three student)

The third theme in their responses addressed the development of historical and geographical understanding.

> We probably have it so we learn about history, geography and parts of the world and how they started. (Grade four student)
>
> …cause so we can explore places and know more about the place. (Grade four student)
>
> We make maps…cause you could have maps to travel somewhere if you don't know where to go. Like if you're looking at a campsite. Mommy and Daddy had a map so they know which campsite to look at first. (Grade one student)
>
> I think that we need to know about it is because you don't want to just know about our province, you might want to learn about other provinces in Canada. (Grade two student)
>
> It's important because it helps you to learn about the way things were. (Grade four student)

One particularly astute Grade three student was able to see the importance of studying history to learn from mistakes made in the past:

> …because if we didn't have social studies we wouldn't know where our past have been. Like what has changed…cause sometimes our past tells stuff about us like what we have done in the past, like what has been like the good stuff and like the bad stuff.

Lastly, some children saw the importance of social studies as being more socio-cultural in nature.

> I think it's really important to learn about other communities in the world because in case you have any relatives from there and you know why they do things like my uncle he's Scottish so I know why he wears a kilt. (Grade three student)
>
> …so you know how other people do things. (Grade three student)

> I think that we have social studies in school is that we can learn about different communities in Canada so you know all about like Edmonton and Alberta. (Grade two student)
>
> I think learning about other communities is important because we wouldn't know anything about other communities. (Grade two student)
>
> We learn about communities …cause it's a place where people live (Grade one student)
>
> You learn about groups…what groups you're in…like soccer (Grade one student)

One student was able to talk about "helping others" as part of the impetus for learning about other people.

> I think it's important to learn about different communities beside ours because we could help them. (Grade two student)

While this comment came the closest to the vision of good citizenship articulated in the Alberta Social Studies Program of Studies, no direct reference was made to the concepts of "citizen" or "citizenship" in any of the children's responses.

Summary of Findings

Participating teachers in this school district generally saw significant changes in both the content and the pedagogy of the new Alberta social studies curriculum. In terms of content, the main changes recognized were in the grade specific topics and concepts that they were responsible for teaching. Some teachers reported struggling with the difficulty of the new content and questioned the age appropriateness of certain topics. Others expressed concern over the abstractness of some of the new concepts. Even though the teachers had examined the overarching goals and purposes of social studies in the Program of Study during their professional development sessions on the new curriculum, no mention was made of the important role that citizenship education plays in social studies.

Pedagogically, a renewed emphasis on inquiry and students' thinking and questioning was noted by the teachers as being a significant change in the new social studies curriculum, as was a shift to skill development. A general lack of confidence in implementing inquiry-based learning was expressed by some of the teachers and attributed mainly to the shortage of age and topic appropriate resources. For the most part, however, the teachers relied heavily on the prescribed social studies textbooks and there was little evidence of inquiry, as defined in the Program of Studies, in action in the classes observed.

It is not surprisingly then, that the students did not mention learning to be an active, responsible citizen as a reason why they take social studies in school. Rather, social studies was seen as the school subject that either helped them prepare for their future; taught them about geography, history and society, or was important for success in school. For the most part, the children were conversant about the topics and concepts that they were currently studying in social studies. While their responses about what social studies entails reflect some aspects of the specific grade-focused content, a foundational understanding of the reason why it is important to learn about culture, history and geography is not apparent in their responses to why they study social studies in school. There was scant evidence of active engagement in inquiry in the focus group discussions.

Concluding Remarks

The findings from this study of the implementation of the new social studies curriculum in Alberta point to some continuing challenges in teaching social studies in elementary schools. Big picture thinking about goals and purposes for what we do as teachers appears to be continuing to take a back seat to specific grade level outcomes (Thornton, 2005). It would appear that Dewey's earlier prophecy of missed opportunities to promote "intelligent citizenship" has been fulfilled (Boydston, 2008). Curriculum implementation is a very difficult process and struggling to implement curriculum change without a deep understanding of purpose exacerbates the challenges it poses.

As Brophy and Alleman (1993) assert, "the key to improving social studies is the individual teachers' understanding of social studies education--not just as social studies content to be covered but as a coherent citizen education effort" (p. 31). Listening to our students' voices about how they make sense of their school experiences is an important first step in understanding the impact of what happens in our classrooms (Erickson, et al., 2008; Thiessen & Cook, 2007). If educating for citizenship is truly the *raison d'être* of social studies, then it should be understood as such by both our teachers and our students. We need to start conscientiously sharing this important purpose at every opportunity in order for social studies to be recognized for the critical role that it has to play in schooling.

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Situating radical pedagogies in social studies classrooms: An extended review of *Critical Theories, Radical Pedagogies, and Social Education*

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Introduction

As a student and teacher of social studies curriculum and pedagogy, I have encountered a range of conceptions of social studies, by experiencing and witnessing it as both practice and as praxis. Social studies pedagogy, at least in scholarly discourse, is contested, complex, evolving, dynamic, and amorphous (Clark, 2004; Nelson, 2001). As a school subject, it offers multifold potential to be a site of insightful and enriching engagement in the life world contexts that students inhabit, as well as a venue for purposeful and deliberate agency, encouraging students and teachers to engage in transformative action (den Heyer, 2009; Richardson, 2002; Sears, 2004; Segall & Gaudelli, 2007; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Social studies pedagogy in practice, however, is often conservative, reified, and stultifying. Its Deweyan democratic promise is largely undermined through covert class and race-based streaming that serves, more often than not, to sustain the status quo rather than encouraging students and teachers to overcome it (Apple, 1986; Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2006; Kahne, Rodriguez, Smith, & Thiede, 2000).

The scholarly literature critiquing social studies pedagogies is vast, rich, with the most provocative critiques emerging out of neo-Marxian inspired perspective. *Critical Theories, Radical Pedagogies, and Social Education: New Perspectives for Social Studies Education,* edited by Abraham DeLeon and E. Wayne Ross, is a refreshing collection of essays that offers a range of critical and radical voices which are generally marginalized in the critical social studies 'mainstream.' The editors argue that there is an urgency to transform social studies pedagogy and activate students' and teachers' potential to be agents who can address and overcome economic, social and political disparities in power, wealth, and access to resources, especially in the context of current global economic crises (DeLeon & Ross, 2010).

Critical theory-inspired pedagogies are eclectic and can prove difficult to reconcile with each other. Essays in this collection concurrently complement each other while challenging each other for pride-of-place in the struggle for attention and justice, sometimes leveraging power in ways that harm other marginalized communities and causes. What is evident in reading these essays is the intellectual and emotional challenge of grasping the complex challenges and tensions teachers encounter when their commitment to social justice is overwhelmed by a torrent of injustices. A further complicating reason that justifies teachers' resistance is the demand for a depth of understanding of political, social, and economic theories beyond anything that teacher education programs provide.

What is common among these essays is their critiques of neo-liberalism and marketplace logics. As an increasingly experienced reader of this genre, I have learned to both expect a bit of the unexpected, but to also encounter the familiar. The familiar is that these essays challenge readers to think and reimagine teaching practice and praxis, yet they are, collectively, light on remediation. The consequence is an audience problem. While there is much here for people in the academy, the counter-neoliberal discourses in these essays are short on deliverables for practicing and pre-service teachers, an irony I am sure is not lost on this books' editors. This collection is a good read with valuable insights that can impact teaching practice. Critical social studies pedagogies demand intellectual engagement and imagination if teachers are to make their subject area about fostering a desire to learn and act for change. While teachers may not *buy,* fully, into what is offered in these essays, readers have the chance to play with ideas they might not have otherwise encountered.

Working through the chapters

In chapter one, Abraham DeLeon (2010) argues for the inclusion of anarchistic radicalism in social studies. He points out that previously edited volumes of radical theory infused critical social studies pedagogy and omitted anarchist praxis. In this essay, DeLeon offers a critique of neo-Marxian critical theory's "over-reliance on a mythical state coming that may or may not come into being" as a temporal condition that tantalizes agents with the potential for change in an imminent future time (p. 3). Anarchism, instead, demands that teachers and students be autonomous agents to facilitate change both now and in the immediate future. He suggests that anarchism's potential stretches beyond neo-Marxian inspired critical theory by promoting action and sabotage to address, undermine, and overcome economic oppression. He writes that social studies teachers must imagine a praxis where sabotage-as-pedagogy is thought of as "creative and hopeful in remaking our world into something new," and that sabotage can be a "model for direct action" (p. 3) in social studies classrooms.

This sense of urgency runs through the whole collection of essays, yet, talk of a crises in social studies, especially in regards to engaged citizenship is not new (Sears & Hyslop-Margison, 2007). Current economic conditions both in North America and globally are aggravating economic and political disparities at a faster tempo than just a decade ago, but this receives insufficient attention in social studies classrooms. DeLeon argues that exploitive neo-liberal education has made "the lived reality of social studies is one of innate boredom where students are drilled about dates, dead white men are deified and worshiped, history is offered as a totalizing narrative and [students] are fed a decontextualized and sanitized curriculum" (2010, p. 5). As a counter-argument, DeLeon offers a subversive, infiltrating vision of social studies. His most radical idea is infiltrationism.

Infiltration must be a long-term commitment to secure the credentials and tenure necessary for subversion. While there may be committed individuals willing to invest the time, infiltration seems like a strategy unlikely to succeed. For the radical pedagogue,

sustaining a cover identity long enough to infiltrate a school and secure tenure runs contrary to the urgency at play in this essay. Further, the language of sabotage is likely to be understood in reductive ways, limiting the scope of what it might mean. Recognizing these opposing tensions, DeLeon's anarchism is tempered by pragmatism later in the chapter which renders some of his ideas more palatable to risk-taking teachers. For instance, 'micro-resistance' pedagogies with rhizomatic potential can encourage students to challenge assumptions, market logics and the authority of Western epistemologies.

In chapter 2, Nirmala Erevelles takes on the ostensibly *open-mindedness* of the academy that is too often a cleverly cloaked closed-mindedness clothed in liberal idealism, good will, and altruism. Too many faculty and students seem unable and unwilling to move from conversation about to praxis for social justice. A central issue is the convenient invisibility of domains that many students and scholars, myself included, have little exposure to. Erevelles helps unpack a range of intertwining domains of invisibility by employing a transnational feminist disability studies perspective to reveal how the privilege-to-not-know is reinforced by market logics that pit marginalized identifications against one another in a struggle for pride of place.

Some genuine intellectual work is necessary to ascertain Erevelles' pedagogic implications for social studies education. Readers are challenged early in her essay to take on the nature of privilege that opens the door to pity, revulsion, and surprise at the conditions in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Although questions central to purposeful democratic discourse and critical historical engagement likely permeated many social studies classrooms in the aftermath of Katrina, especially regarding the responses by various levels of government, what understandings might students and teachers have taken from classroom conversations, research, and action? Did Katrina-focused pedagogy lead to meaningful changes in the ways students live with each other and understand their capacities to act to transform their communities and the world?

Many teachers and students likely explored difficult questions about how governments responded, or the historical, political, social and economic circumstances led to the conditions in New Orleans, or critically analyzed the media coverage. While these avenues of inquiry are necessary and important to explore, Erevelles pushes readers to ask important critical questions likely left out in many classrooms: To what extent was the objective of government intervention the restoration of the status quo and the re-concealment of categories of the marginalized? What is the function of pity? Why is it that remediation after a crisis functions to re-conceal those we typically fail to see? How might we reconcile our indifference to the invisible with our rhetoric on equality?

Erevelles argues that marginality and invisibility are hierarchical, meaning that pride-of-place struggles take place beyond the gaze of the middle class. Critical disability studies offers an avenue to grasp how sublime taxonomies pathologize difference, forcing marginalized individuals and communities to cleave difference along imposed categories of gender, race, and ability/disability, competing for scarce resources and the attention of power, and denying access to means and opportunities to exercise collective political, economic and social power, themselves.

Pride-of-place in critical discourses frequently comes into play in social studies pedagogy, and justice-focused remediation as pedagogy crosscuts many domains. Which crises and injustices get our attention? How can we know, understand, and share with students the complexity of crises that are simultaneously distinct and integrated? How might the blurring of lines between and among the crises be an opportunity for democratic learning and living? Which pedagogies justly treat the multitude of injustices?

In chapter 3, Rebecca Martusewicz and Gary Schnakenberg make a case for the immediacy and divisiveness of ecojustice in public discourse. They argue that social studies classrooms are especially well suited to its pursuit concurrently with social justice and democracy. They open their chapter by articulating the goals of ecojustice pedagogy, among which is the necessity for students to engage in:

> an analysis of the linguistically rooted patterns of belief and behavior in Western industrial cultures that have led to a logic of domination leading to social violence and degradation, and secondly, to identify and revitalize the existing cultural and ecological "commons" that offer ways of living simultaneously in our own culture, as well as in diverse cultures across the world. (Martusewicz & Schnakenberg, 2010, pp. 25-26)

The revitalization of the commons is tied to countering the effects of a culture of violence embedded in capitalist neo-liberal logics. This, of course, is no easy task for teachers. Martusewicz and Schnakenberg argue that the ecological crisis is actually a cultural one tied up in transactional nature of language which reinforces status quo structures and epistemological assumptions in schools

Interrupting and challenging epistemological and disciplinary constructs that inhabit social studies is necessary for students to appreciate the possibility that other logics might govern human/human and human/environment relationships, but it is a pedagogic minefield for insufficiently committed and prepared teachers, students, and administrators. Importantly, this is where this chapter's authors tread into a critical site of resistance for social studies education – the challenge to extend our gaze to recognize the limitations and situatedness of our worldview. The dominant Western worldview posits capitalism and consumerism as inevitable products of progress. Its historical legacy of colonialism, racism, and oppression are too often characterized as unpleasant practices of less enlightened prior generations subsequently eliminated through legislation and social change (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2006; McMurtry, 2002). For teachers and administrators to alert students to the nature of the market logics that scaffold their worldview and encourage them to imagine alternatives, they must become political in ways that put employment and funding at risk. Following from the first essay in this collection, perhaps ecojustice might benefit from the notion of micro-resistance.

As a form of micro-resistance, for example, teachers might exploit neo-liberal logics to provoke critical engagement. How might critical pedagogies become more

appealing? What if we regarded them as entrepreneurial opportunities for justice rather than as subversive acts that undermine the security of the status quo? While I offer this somewhat facetiously, the struggle to overcome the resistance of teachers and public education to radical and transformative pedagogies seems ironic, since teachers, as a category of labourers, and "are by far the most unionized people in the USA, [with] more than 3.5 million members" according to Rich Gibson (2010, p. 43). Yet, in chapter four, Gibson notes that unions no longer function in dialectic tension with those in control of the capital funding for education. His Marxian analysis employs dialectical materialism to reveal the historical tension at the heart of the public education project, where the discursive freedoms of school occur in an environment in which capitalism and exploitation operate in both sublime and significant ways that inhibit and suppress students' capacities for agency and engagement. He writes that the "relationship of school to society where schools are, for the most part, capitalist schools is a reality ignored by liberal and even radical educators, particularly in the field of social studies" (p. 44).

While Gibson engages in a momentary ad hominem treatment of President Obama as "the demagogue," and US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan as "Chicago's education huckster," in the early stages of his analysis of capitalist education, the name calling is politically purposeful (p. 45). He argues that democracy, so central to civics and social studies in schools, is taken up in schools in ways that dilutes and diminishes collective will, eroding community-mindedness. Capitalism appeals to individual desires, consumption, and competition. He suggests that the agenda for public education under the current administration has become more corporatist than prior administrations, and that standardized curricula and a passive-aggressive relationship with teachers reinforces economic stratification along race and gender-based lines.

His analysis infers that the vision of schools as sites of Deweyan democracy and possibility are illusory manifestations of a capitalist curricula where freedom and critical engagement are tantalizing promises meant more to satisfy the rhetorical needs of policy makers than provoke engagement. Much of his critique of the capitalist agenda for public education is not new. What is new to me is where he takes his analysis in relation to unions and the diminished character of their antagonistic relationship with capital, especially in public education. Teachers in the United States, and, for that matter, Canada, are largely white and middle class. Historically, unions emerged to maintain the whiteness of labour and the professionalization of teaching moved teachers' unions into securing and sustaining middle-class status for practitioners. As teachers' wages rise, job security and the freedom to consume makes advocacy of a radical agenda difficult to reconcile with the class interests of teachers.

Like the authors of the previous chapters, Gibson argues for the necessity of recognizing, understanding, and challenging the epistemic and ontological assumptions. Similar to other authors in this volume, Gibson advocates for pedagogies that encourage and foster collective interests to displace ones that overtly and covertly train students to

be consumer citizens by limiting the potential scope of agency and participatory citizenship to consumer-like decisions.

Citizenship is a thematic concept central to social studies curricula that is semantically slippery, simultaneously possession and practice, yet in many classrooms its complexity is likely reduced in the interests of clarity and accessibility (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994; Osborne, 2005; Osler & Starkey, 2005). When citizenship is filtered through a liberal egalitarian middle-class lens and shared with students as an enlightened progress narrative, the extension of citizenship to the previously disenfranchised is celebrated as resolved rather than unpacked and analyzed. In chapter 5, Anthony Brown and Luis Urrieta Jr. take up another important body of constraints limiting the scope of personal agency and engaged citizenship through a comparative analysis of the enfranchisement of African Americans and Mexican Americans. The history of citizenship as a possession in the United States is an ongoing story still permeated by race. Brown and Urrieta Jr. employ racial contract theory to argue that the extension of citizenship to African Americans and Mexican Americans only occurs under conditions that advance white interests and always comes at the price of sustaining marginality.

As they trace elements of the African American citizenship narrative through manumission societies and segregated schools, and the history of Mexican and Latino/Latina citizenship in the US, Brown and Urrieta Jr. strike notes that hit analogous registers in Canadian citizenship narratives. Limiting the extension of citizenship rights to marginalized communities has long been based on notions of White Anglo-Protestant notions of moral superiority in both the United States and Canada (Banks & Nguyen, 2008; Willinsky, 1998). While this gets plenty of attention in scholarly writing and increasing attention in curriculum documents and textbooks, citizenship as a racialized discourse operates in tension with a powerful legislation-transforms-reality fallacy which posits that once a notion becomes law, lived reality is fundamentally and permanently transformed, therefore resolving the injustice. In my own experience as a teacher and teacher educator, I have encountered many students for whom egalitarian rights legislation has closed the book on racism as a current phenomenon.

Brown and Urrieta Jr. point out that egalitarian legislation sublimely extends white privilege, yielding legislative and administrative opportunities that draw on judicial decisions to re-secure the marginal status of racialized communities. What emerges out of this chapter is a rich historical appreciation of how whiteness continues to manifest itself as normative condition in curricula, rather than as a category of identification, thus avoiding meaningful interrogation in schools as it operates as the frame through which students are taught to perceive themselves and the world.

Throughout these essays, readers are regularly reminded of how market logics erode community-mindedness. In chapter 6, Kevin Vinson, Wayne Ross, and Melissa Wilson both sustain this theme and depart from the expected. Their essay takes up critical social studies education in relation to Guy Debord's notion of *spectacle* for which they

provide readers with sufficient explanation before transitioning into their conversation about social studies.

Debord's *spectacle* offers an interesting frame for unpacking and understanding human interaction with and in relation to streams of images encountered in the everyday consumer world. Despite being articulated nearly half-a-century ago, Debord's works is still timely, as images increasingly reach us through multiple and converging vectors, aggressively marketed to complement, supplement, and supplant one another.

Fundamentally, for social studies teachers and students, is learning how to understand and counter(balance) the effects of the *spectacle*, especially in how it erodes community and human-to-human relationships. Vinson, Ross, and Wilson make clear that rather than being Luddites, they appreciate the ways that technology can be purposeful and valuable. Their critique is that interactions inside and outside of schools are over-mediated and that "we simply e-interact as if there were no other choice. This is Debord's "pseudo-world," his "autonomous movement of non-life"" (p. 86).

Critical to understanding and addressing the challenges posed by the ways that capital-driven technologies and marketing shape human interaction and purposeful citizenship, teachers and students need to learn together to understand how *spectacle* functions through the dominance of images that elevate virtual experiences over lived ones. The *spectacle* is alienating as it mediates the boundaries between people, making them spectators in their own lives, subjecting them to marketing as a key element of almost any interaction. When *spectacle* takes on the appearance of life and supplants real life, it diminishes possibilities for community cohesiveness to exercise political, economic, and social agency.

This provides a foundation for the authors to offer a vision for critical social studies pedagogy, resituating it in the living world of people and their communities. To counter the powerful neoliberal thread of the *spectacle*, where individualism and narrow parochialisms suppress and deny community, critical pedagogy returns to its roots, to some extent, complemented by a range of *traditional* and contemporary critical perspectives and frames, such as drawing substantially on the work of Joe Kincheloe. They do offer a more current vision of critical pedagogy as theory and praxis which ties in well with the visions for social studies pedagogies offered throughout this volume and other recent articulations of purposeful critical engagement (den Heyer, 2009; Segall & Gaudelli, 2007).

This leads to the articulation of a Debordian vision of critical citizenship, a radical, playful, and purposeful reimagination of community-minded interaction and engagement, which emphasizes the humanness of community. Its *constructed situations* are intended to be playful and game-like, not governed by market-like competition rules. The intention of the game is to imbue human communities with life in the pursuit of liberation, countering the effects of the *spectacle* that diminish engagement. *Constructed situations* are one of three elements necessary to engage in Debordian citizenship as

praxis. The second element, the *dérive*, is an especially urban element of the playfulness of this vision of citizenship, involving walking or strolling in your community, not guided by a desire to necessarily reach a destination, but meant to facilitate encounters with the communities where we reside, restoring our connection with the people and places where we live. The idea of the *dérive* is to counter the *idiocy* of separation emerging out of the technological boundaries we purchase and erect around ourselves, and, instead, engage in a living critique of the *spectacle*. The final element is the *détournement*, "a mode for subverting the normal, [and] of contradicting or negating accepted behavior" (p. 105) such as squatting or occupying a public park to disrupt and reconstruct the ambiance of public spaces.

So, where does this fit in relation to radical social studies pedagogy? The authors argue that teachers must help students develop critical competencies that will help to ground them in recognizing and resisting the institutional and neoliberal mechanisms that perpetuate the *spectacle* and promote community fragmentation. Debord's writing offers avenues to engage in necessary inquiry about how our lives are shaped by the ubiquity of technology, especially how it mediates our connections and relationships from micro to macro levels, interrupting, controlling, and constraining what information reaches us by distracting or redirecting our attention while normalizing the capitalization of our gaze.

Technology as *spectacle* is increasingly central to curriculum and pedagogy by replacing and bypassing libraries, changing the ways students research and write, adding technology-based outcomes and standards to programs of study, and filling classrooms with expensive equipment that must be integrated into pedagogy. But how might technology's pedagogic value be extended beyond content sharing and mediating students' relationships with information? Students in technological societies implicitly recognize progress narratives as consumers of media devices. In chapter seven, Brad Porfilio and Michael Watz take on the place of progress and critical history in unpacking the progress narratives of industrialization, particularly how such stories operate to construct non-white *others*, concurrently suppressing and concealing inequity and injustice while celebrating technological advancement.

They begin with a consideration of world and state fairs to explore the *naturalness* of progress narratives that employ industrialization as evidence of the superiority of white Euro-American culture. Such fairs render an image of industrial progress and commercial output as natural material manifestations of human desire that ignores and erases the presence of underclasses and non-white others in the process of rendering a fantasy encounter with a promising present and glorious future. Porfilio and Watz argue that teachers and students need to take advantage of critical history opportunities to develop skills, values, and dispositions that contribute to the critical literacies necessary to redefine and reimagine themselves and their communities. In social studies and history education this means sharing the tools and understandings that allow them to unpack 'progress' to appreciate the absence and ignorance of other narratives not present in the narrative they know (den Heyer & Abbott, 2011).

Sounding a familiar critical pedagogy refrain, albeit a necessary one, Porfilio and Watz identify key zones of resistance in the American context that are extendable to other domains. Standardized exams and neo-liberal competitiveness policies tied up in programs like *No Child Left Behind* and *Race to the Top* deny social studies pedagogic time and resources, as well as critical literacy, in favor of functional literacy and numeracy. Further conservative pedagogic practices in social studies tend to render history as a stream of information celebrating the progress narrative and its ethno-racial and gender-limited gaze, which results in social studies and history classes being perceived as dull, resolved, uncontested and meaningless.

Their critical history of fairs and sporting events as *spectacle* is insightful, as they draw on Debord, neo-Marxian analysis, and critical race and gender theories. They argue that the bombardment of the working class with spectacle after spectacle is intended to stupefy and limit the scope of participatory citizenship to marketplace decisions. The authors offer insight into large-scale sporting events, gender-coded as male, such as the Olympics, that follow the market logics of competition and superiority tied to tremendous capital power. This capital is employed to overcome and suppress the interests of marginalized communities and transform cityscapes and landscapes by displacing the poor and others who have limited political and economic power.

Sporting events, though, are only one form of *spectacle* taken up in their chapter. Political *spectacle*, too, warrants attention as a rich site for the application of critical literacies by students and teachers. Here, readers encounter an unpacking of fear-mongering as a national, political and economic discourse, the normalization of the erosion of privacy and other sublime and overt policy actions, all complex and confusing, and all conveniently distilled down for the stupefied consumer by media outlets driven by advertising and powerful interests. Unquestionably, Debord's *spectacle* offers an alternative lens and playful manner through which students and teachers can critically encounter, understand, and engage with corporate power. Fundamentally, the playfulness of *constructed situations*, the *dérive*, and the *détournement* offer avenues to humanize communities and address injustices, and are potentially appealing in social studies classrooms because they seem to lack the overtly anarchistic edge of other radical pedagogies. But, in the light of the *Occupy* movement's moment in the sun, its *détournement* of disruption and parody, interrupting neo-liberal logics, fell victim to the *spectacle* itself. Its transformative power initially exploited technology to humanize the movement, but was too static to sustain momentum. The ubiquity of media avenues for the *Occupy* movement to reach their audience operated in tension with the deliverables-based expectations of a consumer audience. *Occupy's* disruption served as a distraction rather than an interruption of the ambiance of the public space. In some respects, the message acted to reinforce the *spectacle* and diminish individual and community agency.

The challenge that critical social studies pedagogy comes up against with students is not only continuing to hold their attention, but in viewing and participating in disruptions of the *spectacle*, youth need to perceive that change is taking place and that somehow their participation contributes to change. While *constructed situations* like the

Occupy movement may wake them up to possibilities, an absence of perceived transformation and agency risks alienating youth from commitments to critical engagement. When media coverage whithers and the *détournement* is no longer trending, students', teachers', and the community-at-large lose interest.

In chapter 8, *The Long Emergency*, David Hursh writes that the dominant approach to social studies pedagogy in the United States is to offer a myopic and exceptionalist vision of American society as the best of all worlds and the rightful terminus of the Western telos. He argues that social studies must be an interdisciplinary venue where students take on the essential question of our time: "How are we to create a world that is environmentally and economically sustainable?" (p. 139). The structure of the question opens curricular opportunities for students and teachers to engage in environmental and social justice oriented citizenship that impacts both themselves and their communities, by engaging a question worthy of resolution through purposeful transformative pedagogies (den Heyer, 2009; Henderson & Gornik, 2007; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). As a central question around which teachers can build their pedagogies, students are positioned as agents capable of sharing in the resolution of the challenges rather than being, largely, receivers of others' wisdom.

We must include children in resolving the *long emergency* because their future is at stake. Collectively, the challenges are deep-rooted in the physical, temporal and ideological realms of the Western episteme, and solutions, even if they come soon, are too late to prevent damage (Hursh, 2010; Smith, 2006). Hursh notes the lack of political will to make schools into sites of research, imagination, and action for change, in an education system where neo-liberalism is ubiquitous, unacknowledged and uninterrogated. The notion that economic choice is the key means of exercising one's democratic franchise has permeated the language of schooling, government policy, and public discourse to the extent that students, teachers, and the public have accepted the atomism of neo-liberal subjectivity as normal.

In chapter 9, William Aramline builds on this by arguing that schools must offer opportunities for horizontal democracy where students can imagine themselves as engaged agents. This means that students must develop intellectual capacities to understand the contextual complexities necessary for purposeful participation in the polity. Armaline, like Hursh, argues that students need an appreciation of the complexity of the challenges they face as members of communities, but he shifts the centrality of social studies inquiry to human rights rather than the environmental and economic foci of the previous chapter. Like Hursh, Armaline's approach to social studies is a form of pedagogic *détournement* in the sense that students and teachers extend the parameters for decision-making beyond the mundane choices normally offered to students, negotiating with the curriculum rather than consuming it.

In fostering students' intellectual and democratic capacities, Armaline envisions schools as preparing students to understand and appreciate the complexity of their political, social, geographic, historic, and economic contexts. This vision is one that is

intended to undermine the hidden curricular notion that schools are there to train a workforce and sustain status quo inequalities (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2006). Aramline draws on Joel Spring's advocacy for education as a human right as well as a human rights discourse, emphasizing an emancipatory education to counter sublime and ignored narratives and assumptions that maintain the status quo.

In chapter 10, Wayne Au examines critical reflective practices in social studies education. His essay speaks to the potential of social studies praxis in accessing the ameliorative capacities of education to address social, political and economic inequalities and injustices. He begins with an accessible introduction to a dialectic theory of consciousness and its relationship to praxis and the generation of knowledge. Drawing on the work of a number of theorists, he argues that appreciating the dialectic tension of consciousness in relation to the material world is necessary to understand human capacities to both change the material world and to adapt to it. Au, drawing on Freire, points out that praxis emerges from the tension of being and consciousness that is inseparable from the world. Further, drawing on Vygotsky, being cannot be sustained as a solitary act; it is relational, acting as a foundation for language, thinking, and community, and praxis is the conscious human capacity to adapt, reflect and transform material reality so as to reveal "how external relations impinge upon our praxis – our thinking and acting – and considering whether such relations contribute to or liberate us from forms of oppression" (p. 169). Critical reflection must be introspective and retrospective, seeking to ensure that praxis does not result in the reproduction of oppressive conditions. The point he is making is an important one – students and teachers must appreciate that they have the capacity to think and act in ways that challenge the assumed order of things.

The collection of essays concludes with a brief chapter by Stephen Fleury where he offers his own critique of the essays in this book and speaks to the need for critical and radical pedagogies for social studies, as well as for the larger educational project. Social studies, it seems, is bereft of theory and lacks a coherent social vision and ethic. This is consistent with the critiques of social studies to which we are all familiar – it is a subject area where engagements with the social world seldom engage, account for, or interrogate the epistemological frame through which knowledge and understanding of the world are encountered and developed. The stories shared with students are linear, national ego-massaging, and reflective only to the extent that they are shared with students as enlightened and redemptive narratives already resolved by scholars and intellectuals for students to consume.

Fleury reinforces a point that permeates the text and the title of this collection, that approaches that critically challenge status quo practices are inevitably considered subversive. Social studies has long had an identity crisis that reinforces it listlessness (Clark, 2004; Nelson, 2001). The authors of essays in this collection still see possibility and promise in social studies as a subject area that can be a site of transformative engagement and that can interrupt conventional and conservative knowledge acquisition.

Appreciating how neoliberal thinking permeates this review

A book review inescapably functions to assess the potential value of a piece of writing for the field. While this collection is interesting, theory rich, and a challenging read, as a reviewer, I struggle with trying to figure out who the audience might be for this book. Some content is approachable for undergraduates in teacher education programs, but many essays require readers to have a good handle on theory and a solid grasp of the nature and evolution of social studies curriculum and pedagogy. While I read these essays as a researcher and teacher educator, I also tried reading them as a classroom teacher looking for the kind of pedagogic deliverables these essays are trying to counter. For better or worse, there are few deliverables that yield discreet and deployable pedagogies. I did find congruencies with my thinking, theorizing, and teacher education practice, but my experience with the latter tells me, anecdotally, that pre-service and practicing teachers will be the most strident resistors of the kinds of critical engagements taken up in this book.

The knowledge-as-commodity model is a feature of Western (and Western-style) education that is very difficult to disrupt, a point made by directly and indirectly in throughout this book. Further, the logics that reinforce status quo economic, social and political divisions and maintain conditions of injustice are ontologically well entrenched in the Western episteme. Essay authors know that what they are offering is a *hard sell*, and that transforming practice is daunting, feels risky, and, potentially, compromises the middle-class safety.

As a Canadian, I found these essays had an especially American flavour, particularly in relation to national education policy and standards, but also in relation to the nature of the narratives in which critical and radical pedagogies were grounded. A certain amount of intellectual work is involved in identifying and articulating analogous narratives in politically, socially, economically, and geospatially in Canada. This, too, might make it a more difficult sale in Canada.

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Teaching history with big ideas

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Grant, S. G., & Gradwell, J. M. (2010). *Teaching history with big ideas.* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Education. 220 pp.
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History is a word about which people will have strong opinions. For those who are intrigued by past events or individuals, history will emanate questions and interest. For others, the word alone will instill fear accompanied by confessions of dislike, a negative classroom experience, or lack of understanding. Various history classes are required in school curricula throughout students' academic careers, whether they like it or not. Regardless of how the majority of the population feels about history, there are two issues often found in classrooms. First, many students will ask why they have to learn about the past since they assume it has nothing to do with them, and secondly, teachers face the challenge of making history relevant and meaningful to students in a standards based classroom. S. G. Grant and Jill Gradwell's new edited book *Teaching history with big ideas* seeks to explore and address these two issues through the eyes of eight practicing history teachers, who the editors consider ambitious teachers.

As a history teacher and doctoral student from Virginia who is familiar with the Standards of Learning and the need for students to perform well on state-mandated tests, I was initially drawn to Grant and Gradwell's book *Teaching history with big ideas*, simply because of the title. Teachers in high stakes, standards based classrooms are always looking for methods to bridge theory and practice, which the editors propose can be done through ambitious teaching using big ideas. I was curious to discover the editors' criteria for one to be considered an ambitious teacher, as well as their definition of a "big idea". In terms of the ambitious teacher, Grant and Gradwell assert that "good history teachers take no single shape, teach in no single fashion, and assess their efforts with no single measure" (p. 2). They propose it will take courage for teachers to transform to classrooms guided by big ideas. Ambitious teaching is "less about the instructional practices a teacher uses than it is about what a teacher knows and how she or he interacts with ideas, with students, and with the conditions of schooling" (p. viii). For students to better understand history and have a desire to learn about the past, the editors propose that it needs to be relevant to them. Students of history need to understand how past events influence their lives and can impact the future.

While Wiggins and McTighe (2005) suggest that big ideas are the "... 'core' of the subject; they need to be uncovered; we have to dig deep until we get to the core" (p. 67), Grant and Gradwell view big ideas as a "question or generalization that is intellectually honest and is cast in a manner that should appeal to the students" (p. vii). They further assert that teachers should pose the big idea question to students at the beginning of a unit, with the goal being to discuss it fruitfully upon completion of the unit. This pedagogical shift changes the role of the teacher from lecturer to facilitator. Students' roles will change from observers to active

participants in their learning through engagement in activities and research, the use of historical documents, role playing, debate, and writing.

Teaching history with big ideas focuses on eight of the editors' former university students who now teach in the state of New York. These teachers are as pedagogically diverse as the schools in which they teach. The contributors consist of five high school and three middle school teachers, who range from beginning to experienced teachers. They teach in varied environments, with three in suburban schools, three in city schools and two in city charter schools. What they share however, is a required state mandated standardized exam in history. *Teaching history with big ideas* consists of case studies written by these teacher contributors, who share their experiences of ambitious teaching with big ideas in the classroom. Each essay is followed by an analysis and evaluation by the editors. Both Grant and Gradwell appear to understand the pressures faced by teachers. Their goal is to assist classroom teachers to meet and exceed these pressures by offering strategies using big ideas to improve pedagogical practices.

Grant and Gradwell have been on both sides of the academic fence as classroom teachers and in the realm of university academics. They acknowledge that teachers are not always receptive to new pedagogical suggestions because there is a "mistrust and miscommunication between classroom teachers and university academics" (p. v). Teachers often feel that university educators are out of touch with life in the classroom, and that many of the strategies they promote appear successful in print but not in practice with adolescent students. While the editors recognize this tension, they maintain that the teachers who use big ideas not only assist students in developing higher level thinking skills, and in becoming better writers and historians, their students will also perform just as well on the high stakes tests.

The first contributor, Michael Meyer, is a tenth grade global history and geography teacher who can attest to the pressure teachers face. As a new teacher in a wealthy, suburban school, he was told by the principal, "Just so there is no confusion about whether or not you should be teaching to the tests, let me be clear: teach to the test—it is how you will be evaluated" (p. 23). As an ambitious teacher, however, Meyer followed Grant and Gladwell's advice to "carve out pedagogical paths that aim toward more powerful teaching and learning" (p. 9). Meyer was beginning a unit on Africa and he "began to see how the fact that we know so little about Africa reveals much about history and our modern views on the world" (p. 27). He implemented a big idea question by challenging the students to understand "why we don't know anything about Africa" (p. 27). In an attempt to avoid having his high achieving students respond to the big idea with what they thought he wanted to hear, Myer relinquished some of his classroom didactics to have students address bigger issues and gain knowledge necessary for the state-mandated test. He achieved this with KWL charts—what the students *know*, what they *want* to learn, and what they *learned*—primary sources, student-generated PowerPoint presentations, projects, and culminating essay tests for assessment.

For Meyer, ambitious teaching is "doable as long as you look at it as a continual process" (p. 23). After many changes to his unit, Meyer saw evidence that student learning is taking place. For instance, when students were asked why they were learning about Africa, one wrote, "Learning about Africa is important because it might change how we view people of color

today" (p. 34). Of course, not all students glean the same degree of knowledge to answer the big question, as evidenced by two students who answered the same question by writing, "It doesn't" (p. 35). Although not all students have demonstrated success, Meyer was encouraged by the students' progress and plans to add more big idea units. Central to his argument is the claim that, if teachers allow for it, students will take responsibility for their own learning and know more than the minimum required for a state mandated test.

As a first year teacher, Megan Sampson had high ideals and planned to prepare her students "to succeed in a world of standardized tests and high expectations" (p. 39). She taught Global History II in a charter school with racially and culturally diverse students. For the second semester of her career, Sampson was assigned to prepare a small group of students who had previously failed the state's Regents test. Since Sampson was reviewing two years of information in less than one semester, she decided to prepare her students by teaching with big ideas.

Sampson divided her semester into nine units with each unit having a big idea question. She admits that her students were initially skeptical, but found they did respond to questions "related to their lives" (p. 47). While Sampson does not focus on her pedagogical methods in this book, she does share a chart that includes each unit's big idea question, as well as some of her own daily questions (p. 45-46). She witnessed increased student participation as they addressed each big question through class discussions and writing. It became apparent to Sampson that all class members were gaining confidence. Unfortunately, the students were not successful on the state mandated tests. She was not, however, held to be responsible. She surmised that her colleagues had no expectations for these students to succeed regardless of teacher or classroom organization.

Although Sampson's students did not pass the standardized test by her teaching with big ideas, she states history is now real to them. As she reflects, the students started to think independently, related the class to their personal lives, and it was evident they were "invested and interested in the material" (p. 53). Sampson states she benefited from teaching with big ideas, and reports that her and the students' self-efficacy increased. Big ideas will continue to be a part of her pedagogical practices as it was through this experience she found history became "meaningful for my students" and "that ancient history did not have to be dull and lifeless" (p. 54).

Joseph Karb and Andrew Beiter suggest that students can learn to value human life through big ideas. When their curriculum specialist advised them to "cover a little less content in more detail rather than try to skim everything" (p. 58), they essentially had institutional permission to implement big ideas with their eighth grade rural middle school classes on the Holocaust and other genocides. Rather than pose a question for the unit, they challenged the students with a big idea which was to "construct a 'recipe' for genocide" (p. 59). As they taught about the Holocaust, they wanted the students to be able to identify the warning signs of genocide, but simultaneously needed to be cautious because the Holocaust is a sensitive topic to teach. Student empathy is important, but teachers need to be careful with Holocaust simulations so there is not a risk of psychological damage to the students or a minimization of the

experiences of the victims. They began their unit with the Treaty of Versailles to help students understand the mindset of the German people.

Karb and Beiter contend that by beginning in Versailles, the students were "beginning to understand the psyche of the German people" (p. 63). Through teaching with a big idea, the students had a recipe for genocide by beginning with a society in turmoil, as evidenced by the Treaty of Versailles, and added the causes and the people involved. Karb and Beiter encourages empathy by using biographies of Holocaust victims and inviting a Holocaust survivor as a guest speaker. Through this, they could "help students understand the early warning signs of mass murder so they would be better equipped to prevent such occurrences in the future" (p. 59). Ideally, they hoped that their students would apply this knowledge by being proactive against injustices in their own lives. In implementing big ideas, Karb and Beiter suggest that their students were better able to understand the causes of the Holocaust, the roles of resisters and bystanders, and recognize that genocides continue today, thus making these lessons relevant to their students' lives by creating "a connection between the Holocaust and what goes on in the hallways of a typical school" (p. 69).

Tricia Davis uses big ideas to make learning relevant to her students and asserts that, though there is less emphasis placed on test preparation, she believes students will be successful on state-mandated tests. However, Davis states she continued to assess her students with criterion-referenced tests formatted to match the state-mandated Regents test. She was concerned about test scores and, like many teachers, fell into the trap of teaching to the test. Davis taught for fifteen years at a parochial school and public high school until she moved to a progressive urban charter school (recipient of a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation). The grant funded cross-curricular literacy teaching through the Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Model. Davis admits she had previously been "intimidated by the thought of teaching students how to write…we did not have time to teach writing and it was the English teachers' jobs anyway" p. 85). The school used "Role, Audience, Format, Topic, and Strong verb" (RAFT) to encourage students to write from a point of view other than their own. The first step for Davis was to develop big ideas and subsequent guiding questions to investigate the encounter the Native Americans had with the Europeans. Her unit goal was for the students to understand the acquisition of power, how it is maintained, and its impact, but her long-term goal was to use a big idea so students will "remember in ten years, not just for the exam" (p. 88). She proposes that when developing guiding questions in a big idea lesson, the "guiding questions may be unanswerable or have a variety of answers, but they lead to the big ideas" (p. 88). By teaching with big ideas, Davis expected higher student motivation if learning was relevant to their lives.

Davis' students did exhibit empathy, sometimes at the risk of focusing so much on the emotion of an individual that they did not fully answer the question. Their writing demonstrated that they were able to understand the relevance of what they had learned. Although students did not write exactly as Davis had hoped, she nonetheless found the RAFTS model beneficial. "Most students evinced an enjoyment of writing about history through the voices of historical people, they demonstrated their knowledge of the content, and they performed well on the high-stakes New York State exam" (p. 104). She does note that the special education students did not

benefit as much as the other students did. However, "reaching beyond these exams has made me a better teacher and my students are better writers and thinkers" (p. 104).

Sarah Foel teaches at a suburban middle school where students typically perform well on standardized testing, and administrators support the academic freedom of the teachers. During her first year of teaching, she was disappointed that both she and her honors students became confused and frustrated in their attempt to analyze Civil War documents regarding slavery. She realized she had placed more emphasis on the activity than on the essential goal of identifying perspectives of slavery. She redesigned her lesson to focus her students on the big question: "Was slavery a necessary evil or just plain evil?" (p. 112). Foel states that although she did not realize it at the time, she had found the benefits of teaching with big ideas by focusing on a broader question.

Foel incorporated big ideas into all of her lessons and ambitiously developed themes based on people and events, rather than teaching chronologically. Class discussions focused on student questions around documents they analyzed, and the big ideas benefited all of her students regardless of academic capabilities. Although her test scores remained unchanged, history became more relevant for her students. Foel states that teachers need to "embody students with the power to think and to love learning, to see that they have the ability to shape the future" (p. 123).

While pursuing her undergraduate degree, Julie Doyle was exposed to big questions by a political philosophy professor. Through big ideas, she found a connection to her other courses and discovered that her studies were relevant to her own life. This changed her outlook as a student, ignited her desire to learn, and ultimately improved her grades. Doyle was encouraged by Gradwell in a graduate teaching course to use big ideas in lessons, and quickly became a fan. In her tenth grade teaching position at a rural high school, she "expected to see this methodology light up the faces up [*sic*] apathetic youth, provoke the gifted child to work harder, and cause parents to wonder where I had been hiding" (p. 127). Although this did not happen, she continues to use big ideas because she notices that "students take on the big questions of history, they become engaged, make connections, and acquire confidence as they become more than humble consumers of historical material…they develop the ability to approach the media with a critical eye" (p. 129). Doyle used big ideas to investigate whether or not Native Americans benefited from imperialism. To make this relevant to the students, Doyle made connections between current events and historical issues. She asserts that by doing this, "students are more likely to retain historical ideas and to be able to see historical concepts as events unfold in our world (p. 130).

Students used photographs, generated speeches, and developed differing viewpoints, all of which allowed them to see history through various perspectives and develop their own. Doyle incorporated technology into her lesson through a blog assignment, where "students offered rich, unique, and insightful assessments on the impact of imperialism" (p. 135). She knows from personal experience that big ideas both validated and challenged her journey as a student. Teaching with big ideas seemed to flow naturally for Doyle; however, it was not the same for the final teacher contributor of this book who admits it was a struggle.

An eleventh grade teacher in a suburban school, Mary Beth Bruce had tried big ideas without success until the concept finally clicked for her. She states, "I cannot imagine teaching without using big ideas…I always begin with the end in mind" (p. 143). The majority of the teachers in her school who incorporate big ideas into their units teach elective courses without a high stakes test. She adds that although administrators "support more ambitious teaching through the use of big ideas and performance tasks, on the last day of school, the only things celebrated are Regents exam results" (p. 145).

Bruce teaches AP United States History and wants her students to learn more than facts. She realizes that "history is subject to multiple interpretation [*sic*] and that there is not always a right answer" (p. 146); therefore, she wants her students to come to their own conclusions about historical events. She had completed a unit around the big idea of "'Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution?'and'Reconstruction: A Race to Reunite or a Never-ending Fight?'" (p. 147). Bruce designed a historiography workshop whereby the students created their own big idea and completed research to develop their own Reconstruction discourse. Her goal was for the students to improve their understanding of historical events and to do so, she had to trust the "students' intellect and their ability to think and be creative" (p. 163). Students read documents and examined the viewpoints of others in order to develop a historical narrative that would support their big idea. She attributes the students' hard work and success to her willingness to allow them to take ownership in their own learning.

Teaching history with big ideas suggests that students need to take ownership of their learning if they are to see history as relevant to their lives. This requires teachers surrendering some of their control of the content and the classroom and trusting students to develop skills and gain experience to think more critically. Students will still be able to recall facts, but they will also be able to understand history as a powerful and relevant way to think about the past in relation to their own lives. Grant and Gradwell propose that ambitious teaching is not about instructional strategies a teacher uses, but her interactions with students and teaching. I agree that the interaction between a teacher and her students, colleagues and community are very important; however, I assert that the strategies a teacher uses determines whether she is ambitious or not and instructional strategies define the type of teacher one becomes. Throughout my teaching career, I have seen many of the techniques the various teachers used in this book incorporated into many classrooms. My initial reaction is that some of the contributors in this book are not truly ambitious since what they do is not sufficiently different from what I have seen many teachers do in their own classrooms. It is also possible that those teachers I did not consider ambitious are more ambitious than I had initially presumed.

Students enter classrooms with varying skills and levels of comfort and although they are on the other side of the desk, the same is true for teachers. KWL charts or student generated PowerPoint presentations may not appear to be representative of an ambitious teacher to many, but it may be so for a novice teacher, or one who lacks self-efficacy. If teachers have the courage to try something new, then by Grant and Gradwell's standards they are ambitious. I propose, however, that ambitious teaching needs to be more and be seen as a continual process of growth and becoming. To be ambitious, teachers need to be willing to consistently step out of their

comfort zone, be open-minded enough to try new things, not allow failures to deter them, and persevere to challenge themselves, their students, and status quo. I agree with Grant's (2003) assertion in an earlier work, that "teachers who choose to teach conservatively face an easier path than those who choose to push hard themselves and their students. With even a modest effort, the former can expect little challenge or resistance or reward. Ambitious teachers can expect all three" (p. 185).

While the contributors demonstrate the benefits of teaching with big ideas, there is disappointingly little focus on assessment. All of the teachers incorporated at least one valid measurement of understanding from Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) "six facets of understanding" (p. 161), but more details on their assessments and the use of rubrics would have been more beneficial to the reader. It appears that the teachers did assess in a "complex, opened and authentic way" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 170), but I am not sure to what extent this occured. Although all contributors lauded the benefits of teaching with big ideas, there was a disparity in the Foel's and Davis's achievement levels of special education students. As an educator, I am curious why the editors did not surmise the reasons for this. It would have been beneficial to other teachers if they would have delved deeper into likely reasons for the inconsistent levels of special education achievement, and possible solutions. It would also have been useful to include those teachers who tried and failed with big ideas, which could have helped other teachers avoid the same pitfalls.

The question now is whether teachers should incorporate big ideas into their classroom. I have heard teachers comment that the pressure of the implemented standards restricts their flexibility in the classroom. Many express that they are teaching to the test due to the limited time they have to cover the required material. However, Wiggins and McTigue (2006) argue that teachers do not need to teach to the test for students to learn the required content. They propose that "a focus on big ideas, robust assessment, and a focused and coherent learning plan makes it likely that state standards are addressed and met" (p. 306). As the contributors to this book indicate, ambitious teachers refuse to allow standardized testing to become their tyrant. This book proposes that "if one teaches with big ideas and in other ambitious ways, student achievement will improve" (p. 24). Some teachers may be hesitant to make these changes, whereas teachers of elective courses may be more willing to try big ideas. Standards-based teachers fear the change could jeopardize their current test scores. Bruce found the irony that "although district administrators seem to support more ambitious teaching through the use of big ideas and performance tasks, on the last day of school, the only things celebrated are Regents exam results" (p. 145).

I will be the first to admit that I, like many other teachers, have difficulty relinquishing control in the classroom. Many times, as educators, we do not believe students are capable of learning on their own and that we must spoon-feed them all of the information. Maybe it is time for us to stop enabling them and allow them to take responsibility for their own learning. As I read this book, I kept wondering how my pedagogical strategies would have been different if this book had been published earlier in my teaching career. Would I have tried teaching with big ideas? Yes, although I would have been very nervous doing so with the state-mandated testing

looming over me. Will I implement big ideas in the future? I will, although not as aggressively as Sampson, but in a slower approach more akin to Meyer's. Eventually, after gaining confidence to teach with big ideas, I may push the limits and include throughline questions, which move beyond Grant's ambitious teaching to cross a boundary into "dangerous teaching […] "necessary for the health of schools as cites of critical thought" (den Heyer, 2005, p. 2).

Overall, this book is a worthwhile read for all secondary level history teachers and administrators. I have recommended this book to friends willing to try new pedagogical strategies, as well as to friends whose enthusiasm for teaching has somewhat diminished. Although big ideas may not be the operational tool for the success of all students, I believe this book can serve as a source of reflection and motivation to encourage teachers as they negotiate the difficult terrain of teaching history in high stakes standards based classrooms. Foel's comment especially powerful in this regard: "Some teachers are scared to move away from teaching to the test. But shouldn't you be scared not to?" (p. 119). We must remain oriented to where we are now and ultimately where we want to go as ambitious history teachers in this era of standards and high stakes tests.

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