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## Education for National Belonging: Imposing Borders and Boundaries on Citizenship

edited by

*Daryl Gordon*

*Jennifer Long*

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Zafer Kus

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Daryl Gordon, Jennifer Long, Melissa Fellin

## Editorial: Education for National Belonging: Imposing Borders and Boundaries on Citizenship

### Keywords

Citizenship education, immigrant identities, immigration policies, multiculturalism, diversity

### 1 Introduction

This special issue explores the everyday experiences of individuals taking part in citizenship education, as they cross national borders and boundaries. The articles, some of which were originally presented at the 2012 American Anthropological Association's Annual Meeting, provoke discussion about anthropology's role, unique contributions, and limitations in understanding how processes of citizenship education define who belongs and who does not belong within the nation-state. Responding to the need for anthropologists of education to bridge the separation between academic discourses of multiculturalism and citizenship and to "reengage the discourse of citizenship with difference" (Levinson 2005, p.330), authors in this special issue investigate the ways citizenship education both engages and impedes the participation of immigrants and refugees as full, democratic citizens in Canada, the United States, and the Netherlands.

According to Levinson, democratic citizenship education has proliferated over the last 20 years into a "curious amalgamation of programs and activities", highlighting the countless interpretations of important civic concepts and values such as "freedom" or civic "participation" (2011, p.290). This proliferation developed through the implementation of diverse citizenship education projects that range from school-based programs to civil society activism. The articles in this special issue exemplify this diverse understanding of citizenship education using empirical research in a variety of contexts. Citizenship education activities can be described as those efforts to educate members of a democratic public for the purpose of "imagin(ing) their social belonging and exercis(ing) their participation as democratic citizens" (Levinson 2011, p.282). The articles

in this special issue use ethnographic methods to investigate first-hand experiences of citizenship education in its various forms.

Four main themes are explored in this special issue. First, each study questions whether citizenship education acts as an inclusive or exclusive force in society. Second, the authors explore citizenship formation during a time marked by a retreat from multiculturalism and growing concerns about national security and social integration. Third, the articles focus on the infrastructure of immigration. Specifically, the ways immigration agencies, educators (i.e. front line workers, service providers, teachers, and volunteers) conceptualize and enact citizenship education are explored. Finally, the authors examine the negotiation of immigrant identities and languages within the processes of migration and citizenship.

### 2 Citizenship education as transformative or homogenizing

According to Banks (2009), citizens in multicultural nations can be defined as those who endorse, maintain, and work to close the gap between the ideals of the nation-state, such as equality or justice, and the state's everyday practices, i.e., violations of these ideals. From this perspective, citizenship education needs to develop the kind of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that would allow students to make decisions and act in a way that recognize and perpetuate nation-state ideals, while limiting the perceived injustices against their fellow citizens and the nation-state. Banks (2009) further notes that multicultural societies need to teach tolerance and recognize cultural differences among its diverse citizens. However, there is an inherent contradiction within this citizen-making project; how can one teach would-be-citizens about nation-state ideals and proper citizen behavior (an inherently mono-cultural project), and still account for the difference found within multicultural societies?

The project of citizenship education becomes even more complicated when one looks at the everyday practices of those students and teachers involved in this process at the local level. It is here that hegemonic discourses of this nation-state and the diversity of its participants come into sharp focus. The authors in this special issue examine multicultural nations of Canada, the US, and the Netherlands to explore inherent tensions found within nation-states with diverse citizenry.

Scholars, such as Ong (1999), identify cultural citizenship as an important term and describe it as the negotiation of cultural groups' relations with the state and hegemonic national identities. Ong defines citizen-making as a two-way process of "self-making and being made" that is affected by power relations and systems within the nation-state and civil society (1999, p.264). Ong (1999) refers to the importance of one's unique perspective and perceived/ascribed identity as an

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important factor in this process. Ong's (1999) argument aligns with Murphy-Shigematsu's findings, in his study of Japanese citizenship practices. In this study, he argues that one's "racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious characteristics often significantly influence whether she is viewed as a citizen in her nation" (as cited in Banks, 2009, p.12). Therefore, in order to examine the interaction and negotiation between those affected by the practices and policies of citizenship education and the purveyors of nation-state ideals, i.e. the educators, the authors in this special issue explore first-hand experiences of citizenship education from the bottom-up, or from the perspective of students and educators.

Diverse citizenship educational spaces are explored in this issue, and include both formal and informal educational settings, discussed below. Each setting has a set of discourses about membership and their own processes of inclusion and exclusion. Many of the authors focus on how the state's civic interests are represented by the infrastructure of immigration, including multiple non-state actors, such as second language volunteer teachers (Zhu; Mosher) or educators of parenting classes for refugee parents (Fellin). In this way, the authors are able to explore the influence of the Foucauldian concept of "biopower" in which control of subjects of the nation-state is maintained through rules that regulate the conduct of individuals and produce consent (Foucault 1991). Yet, these studies also address the critique of Foucault's lack of recognition of personal agency by exploring the way new citizens engage in the process of "self-making" with regards to their individual and community identities as well as resist those rules and regulations that seek to control their behavior.

Levinson has recently called for anthropologists "to pay close attention...to the educational forms and practices that comprise a spectrum from authoritarian to democratic citizenship" (2011, p.281). In response, these studies encompass a wide range of citizenship educational spaces that include an elementary classroom for immigrant students in a Canadian Francophone school (Farmer, Cepen, and Breton-Carbonneau), a Canadian parenting class for Somali refugees (Fellin), a Canadian government-funded settlement agency for Chinese immigrants (Zhu), a volunteer program in which Dutch language tutors work with Muslim immigrants seeking citizenship in the Netherlands (Mosher), a bicycling program designed to promote the integration of Muslim women in the Netherlands (Long), a summer educational program attended by adolescent children of Southeast Asian American migrant agricultural workers in the US (McGinnis), and adult citizenship classes for adult newcomers to the US (Loring). In so doing, these investigations interrogate how immigrants, refugees and state-actors each engage in processes of identity formation.

While citizenship education has the potential to be a transformative force, inviting immigrants into a dialogue about their social belonging and participation within the nation-state, it often falls short of this ideal. Banks (2008) writes that mainstream citizenship education reinforces, rather than challenges, the systematic

discrimination in society. Similarly Abu El-Haj (2009) voices concern about dominant frameworks of citizenship education which ignore the importance of diversity within education and the impact of such exclusion on students' perceptions of inclusion within the imagined community of the nation (Anderson, 1983). These authors envision transformative citizenship education, which engages students in developing critical thinking skills to identify social problems within their communities and involves them in taking thoughtful civic action to make change (Banks, 2008).

Many of the articles in this special issue explore missed opportunities for transformative citizenship education; instead, they demonstrate how the educational process restricts immigrants and refugees' opportunities to imagine their social belonging by inviting them into a dialogue about their relationship with their new nation. What categories are left available for these citizens-in-waiting (Banks, 2009), are periphery to the imagined community of the nation. This periphery status can be seen, for example, in Mosher's (this issue) exploration of what constitutes a "good citizen" in the Dutch context and McGinnis' (this issue) "model minority" discourse in the context of the US. Hence, the title of this special issue, which highlights how citizenship education can impose borders and boundaries on the potential for citizenship with difference.

### **3 Citizenship education and the retreat from multiculturalism**

Canada, the US, and the Netherlands each hold dramatically different stances toward multiculturalism. Canada is the only one of the three countries that holds multiculturalism as an official state policy enacted through the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988). Multiculturalism and citizenship education are important concepts to investigate together because citizenship education programs in a multicultural society should support a pluralistic conception of who belongs to the nation.

Modood (2011) argued, however, that new immigrant and refugee groups experience difficulty in "writing themselves into a national narrative" (p. 32). Calling attention to the manner in which multicultural governing models do not equally embrace all members of the nation-state, he asserts that nations risk alienating immigrant communities if they do not engage new citizens in revising and reshaping the national narrative (Modood 2011; Meer & Modood 2013). Commenting on this tension in Canada, Fleras (2012) writes that Canada's official multiculturalism "embraces the principle of an inclusive Canada by making society safe for differences, yet safe from differences" (p. 388).

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US, countries have shifted their stance toward multiculturalism (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). Meer and Modood (2013) have described a recent, large-scale retreat from multiculturalism in which European leaders, including Cameron (UK), Merkel (Germany), Sarkozy (France), have declared the death of multiculturalism. It



is in this context that integration agendas have increasingly shifted away from liberal models of civic citizenship that, in theory, promote diversity, pluralism, and multiculturalism and are instead, moving toward a more mono-cultural and assimilationist understanding of national identity and belonging. Meer and Modood (2013) urge investigation into the ways in which “this rhetorical ‘retreat of multiculturalism’ corresponds to public policy developments in different countries” (p. 68). This special issue offers a forum through which to explore the differences in citizenship education across three countries that have responded very differently to this movement away from multiculturalism.

Canada and the Netherlands have historically used multicultural governance models to respond to the increasing diversity within their borders. Multiculturalism has been a strong presence in Canada through-out the 20th century and remains an important identity and policy for Canadians to this day (Mackey, 1999). In recent years, however, Canada has shifted their stance toward multiculturalism. While maintaining a nominally multicultural position, it has adopted increasingly controversial immigration policies, which belie a commitment toward integration and full national belonging of immigrant and refugee groups. In 2012, Canada adopted new policies which favor temporary over permanent employment for newcomers, limited refugee access to healthcare and the ability to sponsor family members, and intensified the focus on language abilities for economic migrants (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2013).

In the Netherlands, Dutch politicians have retracted any multicultural-style policies for immigrant integration and now regularly blame their past “multicultural approach” for the nation’s socio-economic, political and cultural failings (Doomernik, 2005). Their current approach to immigrant integration can be categorized as assimilatory, especially with respect to policies concerning the adoption of Dutch culture while in the public sphere. Meer and Modood (2013) describe Netherland’s “drastic break with multiculturalism” as the most comprehensive retreat from multiculturalism among all northern European countries.

While lacking an explicit multicultural policy on immigration like the Netherlands or Canada, the US has historically advocated a public discourse of acceptance of immigrants. Since 9/11, however, US immigration policy has been defined by a focus on national security, which has led to enhance border security and visa controls on international travellers and immigrants, as well as the utilization of state and local law enforcement agencies to supplement national immigration enforcement (Chishti & Bergeron, 2011).

Winter (2014) calls attention to the fact that many countries, including Canada, the US, and the Netherlands, have tightened naturalization and citizenship policies since 2001. While these changes may be introduced under the guise of enhancing the value of national citizenship or making the citizenship process more meaningful, such changes are often driven by anxiety about national security, the economy, and social

cohesion. Echoing Modood, she suggests that these changes represent a wide-scale retreat from a multicultural society toward a “renationalization”, in which rigid, nation-specific definitions of citizenship predominate (Winter, 2014). Razack (2008) calls attention to the particular impact of this renationalization on Muslim citizens, who are categorically treated differently on the basis of their Muslim identity. These shifts also speak the importance of such an investigation not just to the scholarship on national-building citizenship education but also discussions of global citizenship education. From an international perspective, these “renationalization” trends continue to privilege those traditionally in power worldwide, that is, those White, Christian, Anglophone (even in the Dutch context, see Mosher this issue) citizens of the Western world. Given these recent shifts, Winter (2014) underscores the need to monitor developments that may impede the full integration and participation of diverse immigrants.

The ramifications of these changes have impacted citizenship education practices in these countries. The context of citizenship education at this precise historical moment of economic instability, heightened fears of terrorism, and a hardened stance toward acceptance of communities perceived as different raises important questions for social science education and civic integration.

#### **4 The infrastructure of immigration**

In this issue, we use the term ‘infrastructure of immigration’ to designate the relationship and structure that connects formal citizenship and integration practices on the federal level to the organizations that seek funding and hire educators, whether they are service providers, teachers, front-line workers or immigration officials that deliver the curriculum and interact with those students of citizenship education, either inside or outside classrooms. While organizations funded by federal funding schemes develop rules of access to such education and share responsibility in regulating citizenship curriculum, the actual practice of citizenship education is much more nuanced. The more complicated nature of this relationship is demonstrated in this special issue by Loring’s exploration of citizenship curriculum as it is practiced in Sacramento, US and Zhu’s exploration of first-hand experiences of the infrastructure of Canadian based language program. This issue also explores the importance of funding schemes at the organizational level and their effects on the provision of these educational practices. As funding diminishes from immigration and refugee settlement services across the US, Canada and the Netherlands (Kennelly & Llewellyn, 2011), volunteerism in the social service sector will play an increasing role in immigrant integration in the Netherlands, as demonstrated by Mosher (this issue), and around the world. Therefore, significant changes to the infrastructure of immigrant and refugee integration and settlement will proliferate and the role of the nation-state in citizenship education will be an important and timely area for scholarly attention.



Citizenship educators who not only enact the bureaucratic business of naturalization, but also act as agents to translate the nation's immigration policies to newcomer citizens, shape citizen subjects into the categories considered most desirable to the receiving nation (Ong, 2003). Rather than an overarching program, citizenship education is the combined influence of these bureaucratic figures whose goal is "to produce subjects who can be induced, nudged, and empowered to become self-sufficient and goal-oriented citizens" (Ong, 2003, p.17). The authors in this issue underscore the ways in which immigrants complicate and resist citizenship practices which define and regulate them, reflecting Foucault's assertion that regulatory programs never have a totalitarian effect as subjects resist and negate systems of classification (Foucault, 1977). In this way, this special issue investigates what Miller and Rose (2008) call the acts of 'minor figures', as explored in Long's contribution or, what Ilcan and Basok (2004) have termed the "community as a means of government" as outlined by Fellin (this issue). In this way, contributions to this special issue examine first-hand experiences of citizenship education from the perspective of immigrants (Farmer, Cepin, and Breton-Carbonneau; Zhu), refugees (Fellin; McGinnis), or educators and volunteers (Long; Loring; Mosher).

Immigration officials, front-line service providers, language and citizenship instructors, and educational volunteers conceptualize, enact, and teach about citizenship in everyday life. Zhu's argument with regard to settlement services for Chinese immigrants in Canada aptly describes the experience of citizenship education for many of the immigrants in these articles. She writes of a one-way communication of the government's project of civic education, rather than a hybrid interaction process informed by new immigrants. Long's article about bicycling classes as a civic education tool in the Netherlands demonstrates that citizenship education is not limited to policy makers or curriculum specialists, but includes native Dutch settlement workers and volunteers involved in the integration process, who bring their own strongly held beliefs about what constitutes Dutch citizenship. Fellin explores the role of social workers and settlement workers in positioning Somali immigrant women as trauma-survivors in need of protection by the host country, rather than drawing on the women's abundant strengths and resourcefulness, which has enabled them to rescue their families from Somalia's traumatic past. Farmer, Cepin, and Breton-Carbonneau explore the influence of elementary school education on children's complex conceptions of identity, belonging, and mobility. Mosher's work focuses on the ways in which Dutch volunteer language tutors, who participate in federally funded programs act as "gatekeepers of Dutchness", defining what constitutes "good citizenship". McGinnis explores the ways in which a citizenship education program focuses on "fixing" perceived deficiencies of immigrant youth, rather than responding to their need for a sense of belonging and full citizenship. Loring investigates how citizenship education is discursively

framed by teachers and volunteers engaged in the local citizenship enterprise for adult newcomers.

## 5 Negotiation of immigrant identities and languages

Global immigration and increasing diversity within nation-states raise complex questions about how nation-states can create "civic communities that reflect and incorporate the diversity of citizens and yet have an overarching set of shared values, ideals, and goals to which all of the citizens of a nation-state are committed" (Banks, 2008, p.130). Throughout North America and Europe, citizenship education has historically attempted to integrate immigrants and refugees into the larger national fabric. Yet, such integrating processes often conceal immigrants and refugees' histories and force them to hide their differences and emphasize their similarities to be more like the imagined national community (Phillips, 2000; see also Bannerji, 2000). These processes result in certain worldviews being deemed normative, while others are defined as aberrant (Mackey, 1999; Thobani, 2007). This unbalanced relationship is often glossed over in official multicultural policies which tend to highlight the multiplicity of national residents but ignore the manner in which each of these worldviews are valued.

Fellin's article explores how the perception of refugees as helpless and vulnerable in psycho-educational interventions in North America contribute to a prevailing notion that refugees are not only victims of war, but also victims of their 'traditions' and backward cultures. The focus on the pathology of refugees (Harrell-Bond 1999, Summerfield 1999) further obfuscates the discrimination, poverty, and unequal access to power that is a reality of their lives in Canada. Refugee status is also a theme explored in McGinnis' exploration of Khmer youth in the Cambodian-American context.

The intersections of religious, gender and ethnic identities are explored in the articles. Fellin explores the ways that racial, gender, and "refugee" identities influence the perception of Somali mothers within a parenting course; facilitators adopt a discourse that Muslim Somali women need to be "modernized" and "civilized", portraying women as victims of trauma, rather than focusing on their strengths and agency. Long demonstrates how racial and gender identity influence the perception of toward the Muslim women in the Netherlands, where bicycling courses are designed with the explicit intent to emancipate "imperiled Muslim women" from overbearing husbands and fathers.

Together, the contributors to this special issue examine the cost of belonging to the new national state. Urcioli (1998) has referred to this concept as the "homogenization of difference" which prescribes that newcomer ethnic groups can only differ in narrowly defined ways that enhance national productivity. Many of the articles underscore the interconnections between language, identity, and citizenship education in the creation of this homogenized society and demonstrate how teachers, volunteers and administrators of integration policies reinforce these policies. For example, Long finds Dutch language used as a marker of citizenship, as citizenship

volunteers enact local language policies to speak only Dutch during bicycling lessons. Chinese immigrants in Zhu's study find that their native language is devalued in Canada. Mosher's work focuses most closely on language, exploring how Dutch language use by immigrants is a marker of social belonging. Mosher posits that Dutch language learning has increasingly come to be viewed as the solution to a complex set of social problems that are associated with immigrants.

Two of the authors demonstrate the potential for language to resist this homogenizing tendency. Fellin's work explores how the preservation of the Somali language maintains national and cultural identity. Farmer, Cepin, and Breton-Carbonneau examine how elementary immigrant students reshape the linguistic ideology of French, which has been related to Canadian politics and social values. The students in this mainly immigrant school use French as a lingua franca, which represents their connections to their native francophone countries.

## 6 Conclusion

These articles contribute to the body of empirical knowledge concerning first-hand experiences of citizenship education as they are based on long-term, richly descriptive ethnographic research with immigrants and refugees in Canada, the US, and the Netherlands, all countries with large and growing newcomer populations.

This special issue contributes to scholarship in the area of national belonging of immigrant and refugee groups (Abu El Haj, 2002, 2007, 2009; Banks, 2008; Buck, 2008; Castles & Davidson, 2000; Clarke, 2013; Friedman 2010; González & Rubinstein-Avila, 2009; Gordon, 2009, 2010; Hall, 2002; Ong, 1999, 2003, 2006; Ramanathan, 2013; Suarez-Orozco 2001; Warriner, 2007). It extends the scholarly conversation about citizenship education during a historical period marked by anxieties about social integration and national security, which has fueled an already controversial debate about the future of multicultural citizenship education.

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Yidan Zhu

## Brokering Identity and Learning Citizenship: Immigration Settlement Organizations and New Chinese Immigrants in Canada

This paper examines citizenship learning and identity construction of new Chinese immigrants in a Canadian immigration settlement organization (ISO). I address the gap between the concept of “settlement” and “citizenship” generated by government-funded ISOs and new immigrants’ actual practices in these programs. I adopt Dorothy Smith’s approach of examining the social organization of people’s everyday lives (Smith 2005) in order to unpack the ruling relations behind the immigrant settlement services and to take the standpoint of Chinese new immigrants. Under this framework, I analyze a Canadian federal government’s funding criteria for ISOs and a settlement program’s annual report to unpack the ruling relations behind the texts. I further conduct in-depth interviews with two Chinese new immigrants in a Canadian ISO to understand the ruling relations behind citizenship learning and brokering activities in Canadian ISOs from the immigrants’ standpoint.

### Keywords:

Citizenship learning, identity, ruling relations, standpoint

### 1 Introduction

Previous studies on new immigrants in Canada who access settlement and language programs primarily focus on citizenship education and curriculum development (Carpenter, 2011; Pinet, 2007), immigrants’ identity reconstruction and language learning (Han 2007; Norton 2000; Khalideen, 1998), and immigrants’ settlement and integration into the Canadian labour market (Shan, 2009; Guo, 2010; Zhu, 2006). There is scant discussion of the gap between the concept of “settlement” generated by government-funded immigration settlement organizations (ISOs) and the actual practices of these organizations in interactions with the everyday life of new immigrants. In addition, the majority of the literature on language and settlement programs (Bettencourt, 2003; Gronbjerg, 1993) focuses on federal immigration policies, the non-profit organization’s funding system, the curriculum and organizational development of these programs, and new immigrants’ learning practices from the perspective of a top-down approach. Hence, the literature pays less attention to the hierarchical institutional and ruling relations that should be explored from the standpoint of new immigrants, particularly the experiences of Chinese immigrants who have become a large population in the immigrant body and possess a hybrid understanding of the notions of citizenship and identity. As a result, the complex interactions and social relations between the federal government, government-funded settlement agencies, and immigrants remain unexplored and thus require further investigation.

In this paper, I address this void by examining the identity construction and learning process of new Chinese immigrants in a Canadian immigration settlement agency in Toronto. I intend to unpack the ruling relations behind

the learning and settlement activities in immigration settlement organizations. With this concern, I ask the following research questions: How do the immigration settlement/learning programs organize new immigrants’ practice of citizenship learning and settlement? How are the texts in the programs (e.g. annual report) organized? How do Chinese new immigrants’ understand and experience settlement and learning in the programs?

This paper aims to understand how the brokering activities and citizenship learning in Canadian ISOs are socially organized. While these programs proclaim that their services fit immigrants’ needs, their curriculum is designed to fulfill the federal government’s funding criterion of “building an integrated, socially cohesive society” (CIC 2010), in order to secure funding from the multiple levels of government. By looking at new immigrants’ identity construction and learning practice, I find that the services and activities they provide are “problematic” (Smith, 2005). I use Chinese new immigrants’ experience as an ethnographic example. These new immigrants construct their identities in between Canadian and Chinese through their language, settlement, and citizenship learning; their cross-cultural learning experiences and hybrid identities show that the service these settlement programs provide is homogenized. Such an approach excludes new immigrants’ knowledge and socio-cultural values. I argue that there are dynamic power relations behind the social service system for newcomers. The brokering activity and citizenship learning within the settlement organizations are socially organized to contain messages with race, gender, and class inequalities.

Methodologically, I unpack the ruling relations revealed in government funding criteria and the settlement program’s annual report in order to explore how these texts mediate both the individuals’ and agencies’ everyday activities from local to global. I particularly adopt Dorothy Smith’s approach of examining the social organization of people’s everyday lives, which asserts that our everyday world is socially organized in the sense that people’s everyday practice has been organized in a particular social order (Smith 2005, p. 123). I use in-depth interviews with two new Chinese immigrants in order to understand the social and ruling relations reading from the texts. I aim to problematize the new

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immigrants and brokering activities of Canadian federal government-funded ISOs.

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 Learning citizenship in immigration settlement organizations

Many scholars discuss the concept of citizenship through multiple aspects of understanding. Delanty (2000) defines citizenship as “membership [in] a political community [that] involves a set of relationships between rights, duties, participation and identity” (p. 9). Bloemraad (2006) states that citizenship is not only “a legal status” that contains meanings of rights and benefits, but also “an invitation to participate in a system of mutual governance” that could be an identity, a sense of belonging to a system (p. 1). Klaver and Odé (2009) discuss the understanding of citizenship in both political-legal and socio-psychological respects and the correlation between citizenship and immigration integration and settlement. They investigate the fundamental changes in Dutch civic integration policies and explore how the policies determine the legal and social position of migrant minorities. From the politico-legal perspective, the authors state that there is a specific bond between a person and a state: the person in a legal sense has “a privileged relationship with his state” (Klaver & Odé 2009, p. vii). In relation to the socio-psychological aspects, they believe that the notion of citizenship refers to “a sense of identity (belonging), commitment and capability” (Klaver & Odé 2009, p. vii). They highlight that there are connections and interactions between both aspects of citizenship. Finally, they see citizenship as a “fundamental value” that significantly impacts immigrants’ integration and settlement process in the host society (Klaver & Odé 2009, p. vii).

Citizenship has been discussed as a problematic term for a long time. Marshall (1950) argued that although national citizenship refers to all members of particular societies as having an equal status, there are still injustices between different social classes. Kennedy (2007) discusses this notion through an understanding of how being a citizen can be taken up actively, as a participatory role, rather than simply conferred by a nation state. With these understandings, identity is often seen as a correlated element in becoming a citizen.

Under the Canadian context, Schugurensky (2005) introduces the close relationship and distinction between citizenship and identity. He believes that while citizenship status refers to issues of rights and duties, identity refers to issues of belonging and meaning. Whereas status is about being a full member of a community, identity is about “feeling like a member of that particular community” (Schugurensky, 2005, p. 3). He claims that identity is rooted in factors like a common history, language, religion, values, traditions and culture, which “seldom coincide with the artificial territory of a nation-state” (Schugurensky, 2005, p. 3). Many scholars also believe that the older notion of citizenship ends with the age of globalization (e.g., Falk, 2000). They suggest a transnational and cross-cultural understanding of

citizenship, which should replace its old ties to exclusive territoriality.

While Schugurensky (2005) proposes an understanding of citizenship associated with identity and community, many researchers also discuss the idea of citizenship learning. Joshee (1996) defines citizenship learning as “civilizing newcomers, creating British subjects, promoting patriotism, encouraging awareness of and support for government policy, preparing immigrants for naturalization, and training in language skills” (p. 123). Carpenter (2011) examines the United States federal government’s cultivation of “a politics of citizenship” through the Corporation for National and Community Service and the AmeriCorps program (p. ii). She has three main findings regarding citizenship learning. First, she finds that “politics” have been “actively avoided in formalized learning activities within the program” (Carpenter 2011, p. ii). Second, she argues that these regulations create an ideological environment in which learning is separated from experience and social problems. Finally, she points out that the AmeriCorps program cultivates “an institutional discourse” in which good citizenship is “equated with participation at the local scale, which pivots on a notion of community service that is actively disengaged from the State” (Carpenter 2011, pp. ii-iii).

Stasiulis and Bakan (2005) propose a new understanding of how policies regulate migration within the discourse of citizenship under globalized neoliberal restructuring. They believe that the modern conception of citizenship generates complex and multifaceted relationships of “individuals to territories, nation-state, labor markets, communities and households” (Stasiulis, Bakan 2005, p. 11). They point out that migration and immigration policies of liberal democratic states are “implicitly and often explicitly discriminatory in class, racial, regional and national origins, linguistic, gender and other terms” (p. 11). Thus, selection of immigrants as candidates to “fit” the host society citizenship is largely based on “North-South relations, their class positions, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation” (Stasiulis & Bakan 2005, p. 12). As a result, they argue, “migration policies are not the only mechanisms that render citizenship antipodal in the sense of extending both important entitlements, and yet severe forms of ‘repressive and exclusionary praxis’, they are nonetheless powerful ones in the current historical moment” (Stasiulis & Bakan 2005, p. 12). Meanwhile, they also find that the tendencies of exclusion and hierarchy of citizenship have deepened with neoliberal policies and corporate globalization, and are manipulated by different actors. Therefore, neoliberal policies and globalization have sharpened the “global citizen divide” between citizens in the North, or First World, and poor migrants from the South, or Third World (Stasiulis & Bakan, 2005, p. 13).

Ng (1995) points out that “multiculturalism is an ideological construction” that contains the relations of ruling between different ethnic groups, individuals, and the bureaucratic and administrative apparatuses (pp. 45-46). She argues that multiculturalism is a “taken-for-

granted social fact," and it is not a "naturally occurring phenomenon," but a "through and through artifact produced by the administrative processes of a liberal democratic state in a particular historical conjuncture to reconceptualize and reorganize changing social, political, and economic realities" (p. 35).

Citizenship learning under the government's multiculturalist ideology contains hierarchical social relations; the administrative process, government agencies' participation, and different individuals' or immigrants' identity construction are simultaneously involved in the making of citizenship. Bearing in mind the literature discussed above, I will now explore the ISO's brokering activities by examining Chinese new immigrants' identity construction in their citizenship learning practice.

## 2.2 The politics of settlement service in immigration settlement organizations

Research on immigration settlement organizations pays great attention to history and ISOs' organizational/institutional change (Doyle & Rahi, 1987; Reitz, 2001); funding and delivery of settlement services (Mwarigha, 1997; Sadiq, 2005); immigrants' needs in settlement programs (Beyene, 2000); and formal and informal learning in ISOs (Campbell, Fenwick, Gibb, Guo, Guo, Hamdon & Jamal, 2006). However, there is not enough research that examines the social relations structuring new immigrants' settlement and citizenship learning through understanding immigrants' identity construction and settlement practice.

First, Gibb and Hamdon (2010) discuss how ISOs participate in assisting newcomers in navigating the national employment terrain that requires them "to retrain for their professions" (p. 186). ISOs have provided settlement services for new immigrants, and their administrators and staff have also acted as advocates for individual women and the collective rights of immigrant women in Canada. In particular, Gibb and Hamdon discuss how changes to federal funding structures restrict the amount of advocacy work that "not-for-profit organizations can engage in without losing their funding further, subjecting them to compliance in maintaining inequitable relations" (p. 186). They use Nancy Fraser's (1995, 2001) work on the redistribution of recognition and explore ISOs' practice of building alliances for advocacy with immigrant women and their allies. Using Fraser, Gibb and Hamdon (2010) are able to shift their analysis of how the formal and informal learning occurs in ISOs, and how immigrant women learn knowledge and skills in ISOs, from "the bodies of immigrant women" to "the political and economic structures and discourses" (p. 186).

Furthermore, the funding system for settlement programs in Canada is problematic. Smith (2007) describes how the state has utilized non-profit or community-based organizations for various purposes, such as "monitoring and controlling social justice movements," "diverting public monies into private hands through foundations," "managing and controlling dissent in order to make the world safe for capitalism," "allowing

corporations to mask their exploitative and colonial work practices through 'philanthropic' work," and "encouraging social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than to challenge them" (p. 3). He believes that

The foundations are theoretically a correction for the ills of capitalism, and the actual funding will never go to the programs, services, and institutions that benefit for the poor or disenfranchised, and certainly not affect social change. (Smith, 2007, p. 9)

Based on these theories, this study examines the idea of multiculturalism as a dominant funding criterion and explains how it has been utilized as an ideology, which becomes "common sense" and fails to include new Chinese immigrants in the body of Canadian citizens/immigrants.

## 3 The study background

This paper uses the CultureLink program as a case study and examines how Chinese newcomers participate in this settlement program learning language, culture, and skills for settlement and integration. In this paper, I extended the inquiry by analyzing CultureLink's annual reports and conducting in-depth interviews with two Chinese newcomers from their programs.

CultureLink is a non-profit community-based ISO funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Government of Ontario, the City of Toronto, United Way Toronto, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. It has operated its services for newcomers for over 20 years. In 1988, the HOST program was established in Toronto as a result of recommendations by Employment and Immigration Canada. In 1992, HOST became CultureLink Settlement Services of Metropolitan Toronto. Currently, CultureLink provides two major programs: Employment Services and Community Connections. The employment services program offers newcomers assistance to find jobs. It provides job search workshops, one-on-one employment counselling and referrals, career mentorship, employment seminars, and resume clinics. The community connections program has various activities to assist new immigrants to settle and integrate into Canadian society, including a mentorship program (HOST program), a settlement education partnership in Toronto, a library settlement partnership, citizenship mentoring circles, BikeHost, NEAT walking, a newcomer youth and senior centre, and "Let's talk" English circles.

New Chinese immigrants have become one of the largest groups in the CultureLink program. Many Chinese immigrants have given up their well-paid jobs in China and started a new life in Canada. They approach government-funded settlement services such as the CultureLink program for help. I, as a researcher, have participated in this program as a newcomer and conducted the research with the purpose of unpacking the power relations in immigration settlement programs and addressing social justice for newcomers.

#### 4 Methodology

In this paper, I utilize in-depth interviews from two Chinese new immigrants in the CultureLink program as a “standpoint” in order to understand the social and power relations in organizing immigrants’ citizenship learning and settlement practice in Canadian ISOs. I describe the notion of “ruling relation” and “standpoint,” as below and explain how these notions help me to investigate the brokering activities of ISO from Chinese immigrants’ standpoint.

##### 4.1 Understanding ruling relations and standpoint

The theories of “ruling relations” (Smith, 1987, 2005) and “standpoint” (Hartsock, 2002) enable me to unpack the ruling power from the state and the brokering activities from ISOs, and challenge them by taking the standpoint of Chinese immigrants. Bannerji (2005) addresses the importance of understanding “ruling class” and “ruling ideas” while examining racialized discourses. She points out that the term “ruling ideas” refers to the ideas generated within dominant material relationships, which serve the interests of the privileged groups known as the “ruling class.” The knowledge represents the interests of the ruling class and ruling ideas as “ruling knowledge,” which relies on “epistemologies creating essentialization, homogenization (i.e., de-specification), and an a-spatial and a-temporal universalization” (Bannerji, 2005, p. 54). Ideology in this sense, understood as an epistemology, has the power in the process of conceptualization and involves the ruling relations.

Hartsock (2002) proposes a “feminist standpoint” (1999, 2002) in order to develop the ground for “specifically feminist historical materialism” and to challenge systemic oppression and the ruling relations (Hartsock, 2002, p. 350). She particularly points out that the lives of women contain possibilities for “developing critiques of domination and visions of alternative social arrangement” (p. 351). She argues that a feminist standpoint could be developed to deepen the critique “available from the standpoint of the proletariat and allow for a critique of patriarchal ideology and social relations that would provide a more complete account of the domination of women than Marx’s critique of capitalism” (p. 351). Her proposal of feminist standpoint provides a framework for not only understanding social relations among women’s lives and practice, but also challenging the ruling power within the social structures. Ng (2006) explores the globalized regime of ruling from the standpoint of immigrant workers and discusses the use of “standpoint” to understand the globalized restructuring. She points out that standpoint means a start point outside of the institutions, from which people could challenge conventional scientific approaches and previous “logic of discovery” within the institution (p. 179).

In the following sections, I utilize the federal government’s funding criteria and the ISO’s annual reports to explore how ruling relations have been socially organized. I then discuss identity construction and participation from Chinese newcomers’ perspectives. I aim to

take Chinese new immigrants’ identity construction as a standpoint to problematize ISO organization of newcomers’ settlement and citizenship learning.

##### 5 Unpacking ruling relations: An analysis of government and program texts

In this section, I analyze texts from Canadian federal governments’ funding criteria and an ISO’s annual report to unpack ruling relations behind Chinese immigrants’ settlement and learning practice.

##### Text 1: CIC’s 2011 guideline for funding application

Citizenship and Immigration Canada provides a guideline called *National Call for Proposal: A Guideline for Applicants* (2011). In this guideline, the CIC requires that targeted applicants focus on two themes of the settlement program for projects that are national in scope. They address the themes as follows:

1. Information & Orientation Services: Provides newcomers and prospective immigrants with access to accurate, timely information about life in Canada. Activities include in-person or on-line orientation activities, or indirectly, through advertising, websites, or publications.

2. Community Connections: Supports newcomers in their social engagement efforts, and engages communities in supporting the full participation of newcomers. Examples of services include individual and community bridging, mentoring programs, supporting and encouraging volunteerism, fostering cultural awareness, and welcoming communities and neighbourhood services. (CIC, 2011, p. 5)

Under the two themes, the CIC also provides the following funding priorities:

1. Information and Orientation Theme: Preparing for full citizenship: Building on *Discover Canada* [CIC’s citizenship study guide], projects that create stand-alone curriculum and related tools, as well as provide orientation sessions to newcomers to improve their knowledge of Canada, including its laws and values, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the role of civic participation in Canadian society.

2. Community Connections Theme: Employer engagement: (1) Projects that seek to provide direct services to employers to facilitate their access to the immigrant talent pool. In particular, proposals that seek to coordinate among multiple service provider agencies will be prioritized. (2) Projects that seek to help employers in the active support of settling newcomer employees and their families. (CIC, 2011, p. 5)

The text above addresses two themes and two funding priorities for the application in 2011. The text shows that CIC is concerned about two kinds of themes, “information and orientation” and “community connections.” It clearly points out that the role of a government settlement agency is to provide new immigrants “with access to accurate, timely information about life in Canada,” or to assist newcomers “in their social engagement efforts,” and “engages communities in supporting the full participation of newcomers.” Under both of these themes, the government considered two main

services as funding priorities. One is citizenship education, which needs to “provide orientation sessions to newcomers to improve their knowledge of Canada.” Another is employer engagement, which requires the service programs to engage employers “to facilitate their access to the immigrant talent pool.” One can easily see that the Canadian federal government tried to engage its settlement services agencies to develop a top-down and linear approach to citizenship education and employment engagement in order to utilize new immigrants to strengthen the nation’s economy.

In 2010, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) News reported that the Canadian federal government cut the funding for immigration settlement agencies. It said, “various agencies across Canada have been informed by letter in the last two weeks that their funding will be cut by \$53 million in the next fiscal year, nearly \$45 million of that in Ontario alone” (CBC, 2010). According to the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), Canada’s largest private sector union, “the ten percent cutback in funding was quietly announced just days before Christmas, with most of the cuts falling in Ontario where at least 10 Toronto-based agencies had their funding cut altogether, and 35 other Ontario agencies had their budgets reduced” (UFCW, 2010).

There is a need to evaluate what the government means by “settlement” and “citizenship.” Before analyzing the concept of “settlement,” I briefly describe the historical context of the relationship between the federal and provincial governments in launching and funding settlement services. In 1998, due to funding cuts, CIC signed Settlement Realignment Agreements with British Columbia and Manitoba, in which the provincial governments have full responsibility for immigration settlement and integration service. However, in the rest of Canada, CIC continued to administer the delivery of settlement services. According to a report about immigrant integration in Canada from the integration branch of CIC in 2001, CIC also maintains an enduring federal role in the settlement realignment provinces “to ensure that services are comparable across the country by consulting with provincial ministries on a regular basis and including their service delivery organizations in any national initiatives” (CIC 2001, p. 17). In 2013, CIC cancelled the agreements. It now controls settlement services across Canada.

Here, the settlement service is seen as a part of nation-building, which helps newcomers acquire a second language, learn skills for employment, and build certain networks in order to integrate into the local society and labour market. While local government-funded settlement agencies such as the CultureLink program inculcate immigrants with dominant Canadian values, integrate immigrants into a unified national unity, and intend to utilize immigrants to strengthen the nation’s economy, they overlook immigrants’ identity construction process, and emotional and cultural integration into the local society. Although immigrants learn some Canadian values and culture from these agencies at a local level, they are largely excluded from the nation-wide Canadian

body. Hence, such funding criteria from the federal government again place immigrants at the bottom of a capitalist society and force them to produce wealth for the ruling class and benefit for the privileged groups.

As to the citizenship learning, CIC defines it as to “improve [newcomers’] knowledge of Canada, including its laws and values, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the role of civic participation in Canadian society” (CIC, 2011, p. 5). This project helps new immigrants to learn Canadian values, norms, and culture without any recognition of their identity shift, which affects both the notion of “Canadian citizen” and the practice of settlement. Citizenship, according to the CIC, is the common values, laws, and rights and responsibilities based on a unified understanding of what a Canadian citizen is or should be. The knowledge CIC acknowledges and the rights and responsibilities they believe a citizen should have are based on a white-centred knowledge system in which immigrants’ knowledge is largely excluded. The federal government’s idea of “settlement” and “citizenship” pays insufficient attention to immigrants and their identity construction process.

#### ***Text 2: CultureLink’s 2011 Annual Report***

In their 2011 Annual Report, CultureLink announced their achievement of both increased funding and improved programs. They said:

The year has been a transitional year—a move to accommodate new directions in settlement services and to best serve the newcomers who arrive in Toronto under the new Modernized Approach model, with the goal of obtaining measurable, successful integration of newcomers into society along with the promotion of Canadian citizenship. The Program and Services Committee has worked very hard to manage this transition which included the retiring of the famous HOST program which was an initiative that fostered support and friendship for new immigrants and refugees. We are very proud of our competent staff who develop a new, state-of-the-art, settlement and integration focused program named Community Connections Mentorship Program (CCMP) to replace the HOST program. The new program contains many different components that really engage both integration and Canadian values. We couldn’t be happier with the quality of this model and would be pleased to share it with the sector. There has also been an improvement in our ability to increase and maintain our funding base in the face of global as well as national economic recession. We adapted to the prevailing direction of economic efficiency, effectiveness and sound investment, of limited and scarce resources, to produce a high return and good value for money. (CultureLink, 2011, p. 1)



In addition, they addressed their general achievements as follows:

We created a capacity and an infrastructure that is capable of meeting and measuring the national and regional strategic goals and outcomes for investment in settlement services, including: 1. Newcomers' employment commensurate with their skills and experiences. 2. Host communities provide a welcoming community to facilitate the full participation of newcomers into Canadian society. 3. Newcomers enjoy their rights and act on their responsibilities in Canadian society. 4. Newcomers contribute to the economic, social and cultural development needs of the country. (CultureLink, 2011, p. 1).

The statement above describes two major issues that the CultureLink program focused on from 2010 to 2011: developing programs and fundraising. In developing programs, they set up a goal of "obtaining measurable, successful integration of newcomers into society along with the promotion of Canadian citizenship," and they developed a new program engaging "integration and Canadian values" (CultureLink, 2011, p. 1). In response to the pressure of the federal government's funding cuts, they used multiple ways to manage funding while facing a global neoliberalism. This text is mediated by the CultureLink program, which acts as a government agency by educating citizenship through its local activities and as a service provider for brokering immigrants' learning activity and identity construction. On the one hand, in its settlement, language, and citizenship education services, the program reproduces the ideology of citizenship and multiculturalism under a global, transnational, and colonial context. While they announced that they educate newcomers in Canadian values and help them integrate into the Canadian society, they adopted the idea of nation building in response to their colonial stakeholders. They teach newcomers the Canadian culture, values, history, laws, rights, and responsibilities, but they stand for the colonizers and fail to address the history of colonized people, especially the Indigenous peoples and early immigrants and how they lost their lands, rights, and identities.

On the other hand, by teaching newcomers employment skills and engaging employers, the program cooperates with its funding providers and utilizes newcomers as migrant labourers in order to strengthen the nation's economy under the neoliberal restructuring. The settlement agency localizes a global inequality socially, economically, and culturally. They emphasize the nation's economic needs, and they label new immigrants as human labour for the local society and force them to integrate to the local labour market in the speediest manner. These programs overlook immigrants, who are at the bottom in the hierarchical institutional relations, and their transnational knowledge and skills, their identities, their race, gender, and class, and their actual living needs in this multicultural society.

## 6 Taking the standpoint: Stories from new Chinese immigrants in CultureLink

### *Lee's Story*

Lee is a forty-year-old Chinese immigrant in Canada. He and his family immigrated to Toronto through the skilled workers class in 2008. From 2008 to 2009, he participated in the CultureLink settlement organization, especially in the HOST program. The HOST program is a mentorship program. CultureLink matches each new immigrant with a mentor, usually an old immigrant. The mentor, a volunteer, helps new immigrants to learn the Canadian culture, values, and language. Lee was a marketing manager in a US international company in China with ten years' work experience before he immigrated to Canada. He describes his experience as follows:

In the HOST program, they helped me to find a couple (as a mentor). They looked only a little older than me.... They were very nice, and we met twice. They are immigrants, from South Asia. They immigrated here many years ago.

While Lee participated in the settlement program, he found it was not very helpful:

I think that it's not so helpful because...you know... first, I think my language is very...how to say...they are not very helpful in improving my English. I mean...if my English was at a basic level, they might be helpful. At that time, I was worried about finding jobs, and I think they are helpless because most of the mentors are not in my professional area. They didn't know how to help me...you know...I didn't meet them very frequently... only two or three times. But they are very nice people. They spent a lot of time helping me, but that's not what I wanted. Also, I think it takes so much time in travelling back and forth, even though they live close to us, it still takes time.... When you assess a program, you should see if this program can help you achieve your goal. I think it's very difficult to reach my goal through these settlement programs. Many programs could help people improve their language skills or build certain networks. At least they are not bad. But to me, I think their help was not enough. In other words, they are not very helpful.

As a new immigrant, Lee set a goal of getting a job in his profession. He found that the settlement programs could not help him to achieve his goal. He has some reasons:

Every new immigrant has a very different background. For example, one of my friends, in China, he was a licenced lawyer. But when he immigrated here, it was very difficult for him to find networks with local lawyers. As an immigrant and a former lawyer, he didn't have any chance to connect to local lawyers or to join any lawyers' circle. Similarly, I worked as a professional as a marketing manager in China. After I had immigrated here, I found that many people working in





marketing are white people. They didn't even give me a chance to work as a professional in marketing.

Nowadays, all these immigration settlement service programs are run by all kinds of immigrants. If you go to these settlement service programs and ask them to help you find a mentor in your professional area, they never find you a mainstream mentor. I mean a white, a native speaker, or a professional in a higher social class.... All of these mentors are immigrants. In other words, in the mentorship programs, all new immigrants were helped by old immigrants. These mentors, seen as old immigrants, can only provide you with little tips. They cannot help you to achieve your long-term goals. The HOST program can give you some idea about what a Canadian family looks like, which provides you some interactions with a Canadian family. It may also help you to know Canadian language and the local society better, but I don't care about this. I need to survive in this society. What I need is to quickly find a job.

Lee also talked about his experience of learning English as a second language and Canadian culture in the settlement/language educational program:

First, I think the development of language skills depends on different individuals' learning ability, age, and educational background. I think it is very difficult for an adult immigrant to learn a second language from the beginner level. The HOST program at least provides us with a learning circle with some help. But I think it is impossible to improve your language only chatting with these friends for two hours each week. I believe the HOST program is good for networking, since many new immigrants came to Canada without any friends. It is important for them to meet some new friends. Second, I think the goal of these settlement educational programs is not teaching English. You know, if you want to learn English, it's better to go to the college or start a degree program. Second language learning is not only learning to say hello, but also learning to think in that way...you know.... For example, how to do a presentation, which could not be learned from any settlement programs. Most of the workers in these settlement programs are ordinary people, and even they don't know how to do a presentation. Also, what I need is training in using language in my professional area. So that's why I find the program is useless.

He also discussed his understanding of culture, knowledge, and identity:

For me, I think that culture is personal. Every individual has very different feelings in terms of culture. Even though my mentor in the HOST program wanted to support me and help me to learn some Canadian culture, I found that we had very different sense in understanding culture. They are not Chinese, so they don't know Chinese culture at all. They have been here for more than twenty years. They thought I might be interested in this, but I was interested in that. In the language circle program, the instructor taught us something very helpful in terms of culture. For

example, she taught us the names of five banks in Canada. I think that was helpful. However, I find that all of the "culture" she taught us is only knowledge. For instance, she taught us what "double double" means. I quickly learned these slangs, but, as I said, all of these things the instructor provided us are knowledge, which cannot help you find your identity. Most of the time, the teachers or social workers, especially the local people, didn't require you to acquire this knowledge or force you to change your identity, but I think I couldn't survive without this knowledge and identity.

Lee's interview reveals that the settlement agency has four inner flaws if we examine it from a new immigrant's perspective. First, the settlement agency treats all new immigrants as a collective group of people. It fails to understand them as individuals with hybrid and diverse backgrounds, identities, and needs. In the program, the administrators, instructors, mentors, settlement workers, and volunteers never distinguish these new immigrants from other immigration classes that came with different settlement needs. Second, the lack of funding for mentors causes problems in that those volunteers may not have good understanding of, or receive enough training in helping new immigrants settling in the society. Third, the settlement program mainly focuses on a short period of their settlement process, which is usually the first year after their landing. The program largely overlooks the fact that the settlement procedure could be a long-term process, which includes not only the process of finding a job, acquiring a second language, and learning the Canadian culture, but also a process of building a career, learning to communicate and survive, and reconstructing identity. As a result, the agency fails to attend to immigrants' feelings, identity, and knowledge, and their interactions with the program, the local people, and the host society. The program needs to understand that "settlement service" is not only a one-way communication of the government's project of civic education and nation building, but also a hybrid interaction process with various actors from the bottom, such as new immigrants, old immigrants, settlement workers, ESL instructors, program administrators, and so on.

Lee also spoke about his understanding of citizenship after he participated in the settlement service program:

Personally, I think they [citizens and immigrants] are the same from an economic perspective. But I know that some kinds of jobs only hire citizens...most of them are government jobs. But I think it's OK.... I think the exam for citizenship is very easy, it was necessary to have the exam. I also think the main purpose of this exam is not to test your language, but to teach you the Canadian rights and responsibilities because many new immigrants don't know how to protect their rights. That's good and necessary. Also, many Chinese new immigrants don't have any voting experience, and they don't care. When they are in Canada, they never care about their political rights. I think it is your right and also responsibility and they are combined together.

From Lee's story, I understand that citizenship is an identity, which is hybrid, dynamic, and fluid. It is also an ideology, which shapes people's idea of the world, the nation, and self and others. His understanding of citizenship is from economic and political perspectives, which relate to his employment experiences and his transnational everyday living experience in both China and Canada. Based on his previous knowledge and experience, Lee creates his own understanding of citizenship, which is distinct not only from what he learned from the settlement agents and the government's guiding book *Discover Canada* and his Canadian experience, but also from his previous Chinese experience. The Canadian rights and responsibilities he must learn are based on a Canadian knowledge system as well as race, gender, and class relations.

Finally, Lee provided suggestions for settlement service agencies:

When I first came, I participated in all kinds of settlement programs, such as HOST, TRIEC, and Career Bridge. All of them are government-funded. You know... there are a lot of settlement programs here... including the programs for teaching you how to pass the citizenship exam. I think all of them are helpful, and they are free...but all of them are too basic and similar. I think it is a waste of money. As a skilled immigrant, I don't need to learn ABC here in a settlement and language program. I need a more advanced level of learning. My purpose is to adapt to the mainstream society as soon as possible. I need a stable job, that's my goal. But I also think it is difficult for the government to achieve. You have to practise on your own.... I think the immigration settlement service is necessary, because it is a new field in providing work opportunities for many old immigrants, who could not find jobs in other areas except for helping new immigrants... but for new immigrants, it may not help them to find a job and reach their goals. I think the settlement service needs to improve.

This statement could offer us, as researchers, a reflection about what kind of settlement service we really need. As I stated above, there are quite a lot of inner flaws in these settlement service programs. The ISOs, such as CultureLink, act as an agent dealing not only with the government's funding of new immigrants' settlement programs, but also with the task of helping new immigrants settle in the new country. It is a dilemma that needs to be solved. By taking a new Chinese immigrant's standpoint, I suggest that the participants in these projects, including the government policy makers, settlement agency administrators, settlement social workers or instructors, and other related organizers need to consider to a greater degree newcomers' feelings, culture, identity, and needs, which might not be understood so easily but need to be learned through everyday practice and interactions with them.

### **Du's Story**

Du is a thirty-three-year-old mother with a five-year-old daughter. She and her family immigrated to Canada through the skilled workers class in 2009. She was an instructor teaching media education in a Chinese university in Beijing. After she had arrived in Toronto, she participated in the CultureLink program, and she joined various programs there. In contrast to Lee, she thought this program was very helpful for her integration and settlement, and she provided a positive perspective on the settlement services in Toronto:

I participated in the mentorship program in CultureLink, which is also called the HOST program. This program is a settlement program. I know that the HOST program became the mentorship program around 2009. I participated in both programs. The benefit of the HOST is matching you with a local family in order to help you know local culture better.

In this interview, Du described the three programs she joined, which were the HOST program (2009), the mentorship program (2010), and the English circle program (2010):

Personally, I think my experience in the HOST program is successful. My mentor's name is May, and she is fifty years old. In the beginning, I needed more help in terms of my English language writing and speaking. She helped me to do some proofreading of my English writing. After that, we became very good friends.

After the HOST program, I also participated in the mentorship program in 2010. I think this program is...as I said...more organized. I met my mentor through a meeting like "speed dating." One night, there were ten mentors there, and we spoke to each mentor. After the chatting and filling out of forms, they finally matched me with a mentor. Through this program, I also met a good friend, Betty. This program requires both mentor and mentee to do some tasks, such as participating in a volunteer activity. So my mentor and I volunteered together for more than thirty hours, and we also needed to report what we did.... I think it is because the government needs some data reports for follow-up with the funded programs.

Another program I participated in at CultureLink is the "English Circle" program, also called "Conversation Circle." We meet every Tuesday night in Toronto's Reference Library.... Right now, the Conversation Circle focuses on citizenship education. They provide many fun games for us. For example, they help us to know the map of Canada through guessing the name of each province and watching the maps.

The conversation with Du revealed two ways CultureLink as a government agency performed brokering activities for new immigrants. First, they changed their organization and program content in order to fit the government's funding criteria. For example, they changed the HOST program to a more organized program, the

mentorship program, in order to collect data to examine and report on the effectiveness of the program. Second, CultureLink added citizenship education to its English Circle program in order to fit the government's 2010 application funding criterion of strengthening citizenship education. They also connected to the local public library, which could be seen as the best public space for educating citizenship and helping them to get involved in the local community and society. Here citizenship learning has become a part of language learning project deeply connected to not only the Canadian federal government's funding cuts, but also to new immigrants' language learning and identity (re)construction. The citizenship learning has been manipulated by hierarchical social and power relations involving multiple actors.

Du also introduced her expectations for these programs and her judgment and comparison of the HOST program and the mentorship program:

When I first came here, I didn't have friends, and I also needed to improve my English. So I needed to find a settlement program for making friends, but I didn't have any motivation to look for jobs. I also planned to study for a master's degree. My goal is to learn English and to make friends. I think I reached my goal.... I also find that the CultureLink program is very helpful for assisting me to adapt to the local culture. For example, my mentor May drove us to the farm, where we have never been before. We learned a lot from this trip with her and her family. In the HOST program, May and I became very good friends. I think it was a very good and helpful program. But in the mentorship program, we don't have any long-term connection after finishing the program. It also depends on different mentors. My mentor is very good in terms of keeping our friendship. We still communicate through emails.

According to Du, the changing of the program brings these newcomers very different feelings and experiences of learning. In the previous HOST program, she was more engaged, but she treated the mentorship program as short-term learning and achieving tasks. As a Chinese, she has different needs and experiences:

In the mentorship program, me and another Chinese immigrant are mentees with the same mentor. We are very comfortable working and learning together, because we have the same language and the same culture background.... Sometimes I couldn't understand the politics here...why we need to take an oath when we are becoming a Canadian citizen.... Another thing that I worried about is that Toronto is too liberal.... Sometimes I feel uncomfortable with some local policies, for example, the Bill 13 (Accepting School Act). As a Mom, I am anxious for my daughter's learning environment.... But the mentor always told me that her kids grew up very well in the public schools. She also encouraged me to be more understanding of others and the society. This is my only concern. But I prefer some of the educational approaches here and I learned

how to take care of my daughter in a Canadian way. Even though there are lots of commonalities and similarities [between China and Canada]. For example, May also likes family life, and she likes to teach her children through family education...you know.... Our Chinese people also emphasize education from family.

Last time in CultureLink, I did a reflection after I participated in a volunteer activity. We were volunteers in a Toronto art festival helping the audience. I have some questions about the feasibility or practicability of this volunteer activity because the program treated us as "bilingual ambassadors" and they wanted us to use our own native language to help different audiences. That's their original intention, and it's very good...but, you know, there is distance between your original intention and the reality. After I finished the activity, I found that our Chinese language is useless in that festival. Nobody cares about Chinese, and I think Chinese language is devalued there. Even though we provided a sign, said that we could provide translation or service in Chinese, nobody came, especially in that kind of art festival...you know...there was no audience that could only speak Chinese... After that, I feel so disappointed, and I think my native language is useless here.

When I talked with Du, I found that she really enjoyed her participation in all the CultureLink programs. Her identity shifted back and forth several times, which demonstrates hybridity and fluidity. On the one hand, she wanted to quickly join the local society, so she built networks and made friends with local people and families. On the other hand, she wanted to keep her original identity as a Chinese. She liked to learn and talk with her Chinese peers in the settlement program, which made her feel comfortable and secure. She also feels that it is difficult to accept some local liberal policies. She may believe that a Chinese mother should provide her daughter with a "conservative" learning environment, which she thought was safer. Therefore, she constructed or reconstructed her identities through her interactions with the settlement programs at CultureLink. Du's story tells us that every participant is unique and different. It suggests that while the programs change their ways of organization or practice in order to fit the changing funding criteria, they also need to recognize the changing identities and needs of all immigrants.

In addition, Du's account of her experience at the art festival in Toronto, when she found her Chinese language "useless," clearly shows how she found herself being racialized and excluded in the environment. There is a contradiction for Du between the idea of "multiculturalism," because of which people believe her Chinese language is valuable and she could become a "bilingual ambassadors" at that event, and the actual exclusion process in alienating her language and skills. In taking the standpoint of Chinese new immigrants, I find that their identity is constructed through this contradictory process and has been brokered by the agencies

with the purpose of promoting a Canadian ideology of citizenship.

## 7 Conclusion

Previous studies on immigration settlement educational programs pay much attention to curriculum development, teachers' training, citizenship education, and immigrants' education, identity construction, and language and settlement learning, but little attention to the separation between government policy, settlement agencies' activities, and new immigrants' learning practice. This paper addresses the dilemma that most government-funded settlement agencies face: the funding application and participants' needs. It explores how new immigrants, especially Chinese newcomers, contribute to the program and how their actual practice interacts with the hierarchical institutional relations on immigration in a global, transnational, and new economic context.

By taking the standpoint of new Chinese immigrants in Canada, I argue that the Canadian ISO's settlement services are socially organized and contain unequal social and power relations in new immigrants' citizenship learning and settlement practice. In addition, understanding Chinese new immigrants' experiences and identities could help the settlement agency better reflect on and reorganize its activities and curriculum. This research addresses the need to understand and recognize new immigrants' experience and identity construction process. Finally, the government and program texts and Chinese new immigrants' standpoint show that Canadian federal governments and government-funded settlement service organizations as partners inculcate immigrants with dominant Canadian values and integrate immigrants into a unified national unity, intending to utilize immigrants to strengthen the nation's economy in order to respond to neoliberal restructuring and globalization. These new immigrants easily get racialized and gendered by dominant ideologies while simultaneously being commodified by the administrators within the institutions. Citizenship learning should be seen as an ideological practice of both government and government-agency to highlight a united nation, which assimilates new immigrants' hybrid identities and devalues the knowledge they produce.

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Rhiannon Mosher

## Speaking of Belonging: Learning to be “Good Citizens” in the Context of Voluntary Language Coaching Projects in Amsterdam, the Netherlands

This article explores citizenship education for adult immigrants through informal language education in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Based on data collected over thirteen months of ethnographic research among volunteer Dutch language coaches in Amsterdam, the primary methods used in this study were in-depth semi-structured interviews and participant observation. While the primary focus of this article is on the ways in which informal educational settings contribute to processes of adult citizenship education, this paper also underscores some of the perceived barriers to integration faced by adult immigrants in the Netherlands. Adopting a Foucauldian theoretical approach to governmentality, this paper considers how volunteer Dutch language coaches both reproduce and challenge contemporary discourses around citizenship and belonging in Dutch society. Experiences and expressions of citizenship among volunteer Dutch language coaches reveal how entangled discourses of cultural difference and neoliberal “active” citizenship shape state and everyday notions of good citizenship practice and integration.

### Keywords:

citizenship, voluntarism, immigration, ethnography, the Netherlands

### 1 Introduction

Public, state-funded education has long been considered key to the process of civil enculturation in contemporary nation-states. Anthropologists such as Levinson (2011, p. 280) and Stoler (1995) note that this has generally been the case whether or not educational institutions have made teaching citizenship an explicit part of the curricula. Such institutions have also been key sites for the civil enculturation of immigrant youth (Schiffauer, Baumann, Kastoryano, & Vertovec, 2004). In countries where migrant youth attend the same schools as national citizens, they learn the language, norms and values of their adopted society through the curriculum. In the Netherlands, immigrant youth become eligible for Dutch citizenship upon reaching the age of majority and successfully completing Dutch secondary education. Daily contact with members of mainstream Dutch society also make places like public schools important spaces where migrant youth learn the often unspoken expectations and etiquette for belonging in Dutch society (e.g. how to interact with peers, authority figures and bureaucracy, expectations for civic participation, or the acceptable boundaries of cultural or religious difference in the public sphere). These norms and values are learnt through seemingly unremarkable everyday encounters, yet such interactions flag a whole series of assumptions, discursive habits, and clichés through which the nation is

routinely expressed and reproduced (Billig, 1995; Anderson, 1991). Given their differing levels of exposure to spaces of civil enculturation, adult newcomers present different challenges in the realm of citizenship education. In the Netherlands, adult immigrants are widely perceived by policy makers, politicians, scholars and native Dutch<sup>1</sup> (like my interlocutors) as more isolated from members of mainstream Dutch society than their children. This is often compounded by economic and political marginalization, and is viewed as contributing to adult newcomers’ struggle with understanding and adapting to the expectations, behaviors, and attitudes of Dutch society.

In this article, I draw on 13 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Amsterdam (July 2009-2010, May 2011) to examine how practices of cultural and moral assimilation widely viewed as foundational to newcomer’s claims to Dutch citizenship are both expressed and challenged by front-line immigrant integration workers. By focusing on the infrastructure of immigration in the Netherlands, I address how the state’s program for adult immigrants’ civic integration has been taken up (and in some ways re-worked) by Dutch citizens who work as volunteers with adult newcomers. I first provide some background on how immigrant integration policies have been implemented in the Netherlands, followed by an overview of anthropological approaches to the study of citizenship, and the research design. I then draw on my ethnographic data to explore some of the ways in which model citizenship practices are conceptualized, negotiated, and expressed by the key research participants in this study: voluntary Dutch language coaches. These participants reveal some of the key discursive tensions around immigration, national belonging, and citizenship in the Netherlands. Using a Foucauldian perspective on governmentality informed by the work of Tania Li, Ann Laura Stoler, Aihwa Ong, and Mitchell Dean, I show how citizenship is made in the everyday through the ways in which this particular group of citizens consents to, rearticulates, and challenges state and popular discourses surrounding cultural and moral ideas of Dutch citizenship. In doing so, I analyze some of the impacts that the entangled discursive threads of cultural difference and neoliberalism have had on how “good”

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citizenship practice has come to be understood in the everyday.

## 2 Contextualizing citizenship education for adult newcomers

Immigration has become an important factor for policy around citizenship as well as everyday experiences of belonging in contemporary nation-states like the Netherlands. While concerns about immigrants, their role and place in national societies are shared by many countries, the differing histories of immigration (e.g. in Europe and in New World “settler societies” like Canada and the United States) have been important in how nation-states have responded through immigration and citizenship policy. The waves of postcolonial migrants, non-Western immigrants, and asylum seekers who settled in Europe during the latter half of the twentieth century have often challenged existing national identities and provoked new questions for living together in increasingly culturally plural societies. Such concerns have often been considered unprecedented in the Netherlands and across the European Union. Muslims especially have been positioned in the context of the Netherlands as having dramatically different – even incommensurable – cultural, historical, and political values and norms than the national majority (cf. Long, in this issue; Silverstein, 2005; Duyvendak, 2011; Geschiere, 2009; Stoler, 1995). The challenges for the civil enculturation of non-Western adult newcomers have contributed to the consensus across all sections of mainstream Dutch society that the Dutch government is at least partially to blame for the failure of many newcomers to demonstrate an appropriate fit through language and social skills acquisition. At the same time, support for cultural diversity (including religious diversity) has come under increasing scrutiny.

In the Netherlands, many contemporary social problems have been blamed on immigrants who had arrived during the “guest worker” period of the 1960s to 1980s, especially those from rural Turkey and Morocco. Such problems include the disproportionately higher rates of unemployment, dependence on the welfare state, criminality, lower educational achievement, and marginalization among members of non-Western minority groups than mainstream, native Dutch society. Violent attacks by disenfranchised migrant youth during the 1970s first put the issue of immigrant integration in Dutch society firmly on the political agenda in the Netherlands. Since then, non-Western immigrants’ perceived failure to integrate has fuelled the image of these newcomers as a potential threat to Dutch national identity and culture, as well as social cohesion in cities and local communities. Such concerns have been exacerbated as a result of neoliberal ideologies that increasingly align notions of economic productivity with morally and culturally appropriate citizenship practice (Ong, 2006; Muehlebach, 2012; Hemment, 2012; Erickson, 2012). This has meant that politicians, policy-makers, and my informants view the Dutch citizen as someone who should be self-sufficient and responsible for decreasing their burden on

the welfare state (Björnson, 2007; Ong, 1996; Muehlebach, 2012). These sentiments have been capitalized on by populist, nationalist, right-wing politicians since the early 2000s (Geschiere, 2009; Duyvendak, 2011).

The system of “consociational pillars” that had historically managed Dutch religious and social groups (i.e. Orthodox Protestant, Catholic, secular Liberal and Socialist) proved unsuitable to the needs of the increasingly diverse Dutch population. When transposed in contemporary policy interventions, this historical practice of diversity management (*verzuiling* or pillarization) appeared to hinder rather than aid the integration of non-Western newcomers into mainstream Dutch society. While this approach to managing diversity appeared to work for earlier waves of Dutch-speaking newcomers from the former colonies, non-Western newcomers who had arrived as temporary workers during the 1960s and 1970s were seen to fall through the cracks. Many of the immigrant integration and migrant-youth educational policies implemented during this period have since been deemed utter failures. For instance, under the Education in Minority Language and Culture policy migrant youth left school (often early) with poor Dutch language skills (Björnson, 2007, pp. 67-68). These failures produced or reinforced pervasive, detrimental effects throughout Dutch society that have negatively affected non-Western immigrants and their descendants.

These failures were understood as leading to and reinforcing newcomers’ marginalized position in the Netherlands, as well as creating strain on the welfare state. Located at the epicentre of what the leftist publicist Paul Scheffer (2000) famously called the “multicultural drama” was the notion that all of these social problems could be traced to newcomers’ failure to learn the Dutch language (Geschiere, 2009, pp. 136-137). From the perspective of the late-1990s, the Dutch language appeared as a salve to more recent immigrants’ problems with educational success, employment, social isolation and other anti-social behaviours.

It was not until 1998 that the Dutch government launched its first comprehensive ‘civic integration’ (*inburgering*) legislation directed toward adult immigrants (*Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers*, Civic Integration of Newcomers Act). This legislation mandated all (non-European Union) immigrants be able to demonstrate a lower intermediate level of Dutch and a basic knowledge of Dutch society as a condition of citizenship (Entzinger, 2004, p. 7). The intention of this policy was that immigrants would become self-sufficient, (economically) productive citizens who helped to build Dutch society. Through this civic integration legislation and the development of its associated educational courses and exams, the Dutch language “emerged as *the* key technology of the Dutch state’s integration program” (Björnson, 2007, p. 65). It is important to consider that while the earliest courses highlighted entering the workforce as a key outcome of this training, the primary policy outcome has since shifted to eligibility for Dutch citizenship (Björnson, 2007; cf. Ghorashi & van Tilberg, 2006).

These transformations have occurred alongside neo-liberal interventions which have affected the relationship between citizens and their state(s). These interventions have had impacts beyond the political decisions that since the 1980s sought to increase trade between states while cutting back the welfare state (e.g. in the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands) (Kennelly & Llewellyn, 2011, pp. 898-899). Through a Foucauldian perspective on governmentality, this paper approaches neoliberalism as an expression of governmental rationale, as a systemic way of thinking that sets the conditions for people to do as they ought by following their own self-interest (Li, 2007a, p. 275; Dean, 2010). Neoliberalism has been grafted onto existing practices and programs of government, transposing a governing logic that draws on market principles into all elements of daily life (Li, 2007b, pp. 284-285; Kennelly & Llewellyn, 2011; Muehlebach, 2012). Although neoliberal interventions settle in different ways across different contexts,

neoliberal logic requires populations to be free, self-managing, and self-enterprising individuals in different spheres of everyday life – health, education, bureaucracy, the professions, and so on. The neoliberal subject is therefore not a citizen with claims on the state but a self-enterprising citizen-subject who is obligated to become an “entrepreneur of himself or herself” (Ong, 2006, p. 14).

Alongside redirecting their populations’ conduct through neoliberal rationale, many states, including the Netherlands, have experienced an erosion of federally-funded social services (cf. Muehlebach, 2012; Kennelly & Llewellyn, 2011; Hemment, 2012; Erickson, 2012). This withdrawal has increasingly placed the responsibility for service provision - including immigrant integration services - on the shoulders of local governments, non- and for-profit organizations, and individuals such as volunteers.

### 3 Studying citizenship education

While the importance of the Dutch language has been traced in the goals and materials used in formal citizenship education policy and programming for adults (Björnson, 2007; Verkaaik, 2009), this idea is also widely shared among members of the Dutch public and in civil society organizations. The value placed on the Dutch language for newcomers’ integration in Dutch society is clear in the establishment of many informal language learning projects. Of these various community-oriented initiatives, volunteer-run Dutch language coaching projects have become an important fixture in the landscape of immigrant integration across the Netherlands.

#### 3.1 Research design

I first came into contact with these projects as a non-native Dutch speaker to improve my language skills. Their ethnographic significance as sites where multiple discourses and practices around citizenship coalesce drew me to focus my research on these programs. I focus in

this article on the views of ten key informants volunteering as language-coaches, volunteers doing administrative work for language coaching projects (i.e. to process and pair new volunteers and students), as well as their project coordinators.<sup>ii</sup> Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key participants, typically lasting one and a half to two hours. Some informants participated in an additional interview, or followed up on our interview by contributing additional information via email. I also draw on data gathered through participant-observation as a non-native speaker in one such language partnership (meeting my coach for two to three hours weekly between January and July 2010), and in language-coaching recruitment sessions. Additionally, I use data gathered from related secondary sources, including language coaching projects’ websites, promotional material, organizational and government policy documents related to newcomer integration. Across my data, key issues emerged through recurring themes, especially in the interconnections between ideas of problematic cultural difference, and the role of communication for immigrant integration and good social participation.

#### 3.2 Volunteer Dutch language coaching projects

The first and largest volunteer language coaching program was developed in Amsterdam in 1999 by *Gilde Amsterdam* (Guild Amsterdam). *Gilde Amsterdam’s SamenSpraak* (Speaking Together) project organizes Dutch-speaking volunteers into free, informal conversation partnerships with Dutch language learners. Between 1999 and 2009, similar programs had sprung up in cities and towns across the country, with four others operating in Amsterdam at the time of my research. These projects are organized and supported by myriad foundations, non-profit and governmental bodies, especially the municipal departments responsible for implementing the state-mandated civic integration courses.

The goal of these programs is to help newcomers improve their Dutch language skills, primarily through speaking. This differs from the formal, text-oriented courses most participating language learners will have already completed. These programs are chiefly intended for those with some basic level of proficiency in Dutch, and are seen as complementary or secondary to formal lessons. Speaking partners are usually expected to meet on a weekly basis for approximately two hours over the course of a year. Volunteers typically receive some orientation training over one or two sessions at the start of these programs. This may include some intercultural training as well as advice on how to approach conversation with a language learner. Resources such as Dutch as a Second Language dictionaries or activity booklets may also be provided to new volunteers.

*Gilde Amsterdam* indicated that during 2010 the organization sponsored 327 language coaches and 333 clients from over 86 different countries – although most clients continue to be from Turkish or Moroccan backgrounds (2011, p. 10). Among the language learning clients in *Gilde Amsterdam* and other projects in the city



there were consistently more women (67 %) than men. In 2010 this gender imbalance was slightly higher among those seeking the *Gilde's* language coaching services specifically to help prepare for their civic integration exams (74 % women). Volunteers for these projects are almost exclusively native (white or ethnic) Dutch. With men and women relatively equally represented, these volunteers came from a range of age groups and occupational backgrounds. Most of these volunteers were well-educated (with college or university credentials), and many expressed an interest in both language and other cultures. Like many native Dutch I met over the course of my fieldwork, language coaches frequently spoke multiple languages (i.e. English, French, German, Spanish, Italian).

Teachers of formal language and civic integration courses often recommend voluntary language coaching services to their students, although the onus is on the student to enrol. As early as 2011, voluntary language coaching organizations anticipated the growing importance of and demand for their free services (especially among those required to undertake civic integration) as federal subsidies for formal language study were clawed back, set to be eliminated in 2014.<sup>iii</sup> In my interview with the director of *Gilde Amsterdam*, she described the program's origins as "not completely related to *inburgering*," but seeking to fill a service gap "for people coming from other countries, trying to speak Dutch." As with the formal civic integration legislation, most who seek out these services are considered non-Western newcomers, commonly called *allochtonen* (allochthons) (cf. Geschiere, 2009).

Volunteers working with language coaching projects are motivated by a variety of personal and professional interests. While some are recruited via word of mouth, most of the language coaches I spoke with decided to participate after seeing an advertisement or article in the newspaper, attending an information session, or seeking out such an organization of their own initiative. José, a native Dutch woman in her sixties, volunteered for many years as both a language coach and in helping with the coordination of new volunteers. She discussed how all new volunteers she encountered shared some common interests and motivations. In her experience, everyone who volunteers

thinks that language is important. Everyone also thinks it's important to help outsiders that are new in the society. (...) It is a sort of interconnecting, the non-native speaker and the language coach, from all the language coaches I am sure that this is the most important motivation; the sort of 'language' *plus* 'helping strangers', so that they are no longer strangers.

The widespread emphasis on language as key to social participation has meant that volunteer-based Dutch language coaching projects occupy a unique and important place in the contemporary infrastructure of immigrant integration and adult citizenship education.

#### 4 An ethnographic approach to citizenship

In elaborating upon how acceptable citizenship practice is conceptualized and taught, this article examines citizenship education as it occurs through everyday, informal experiences and relationships. In doing so, I approach citizenship ethnographically as more than simply another trope for belonging. In the Foucauldian sense of "subjectification," I follow the work of anthropologists who understand citizenship as a discursive process of national subject-making that operates as a site where a vast array of meanings and distinctions coalesce (Ong, 1996, 2006; Muehlebach, 2012; Levinson, 2011; Tonkens, 2006). Explicit and banal practices of subject-making are cultivated through complex and pervasive power relations (Ong, 1996, p. 737; cf. Billig, 1995). Citizenship is a relationship between actors in the public sphere, a marker of community membership that carries with it not only legal rights and obligations, but also social and moral expectations. While some of these expectations are dictated by the state through its policies and laws, many more are expressed, cultivated and maintained through citizen-subjects' relationships in the various social spaces in which they live. With this in mind, citizenship is to be understood as "a discursive practice in the sense that citizens actually talk citizenship into being – by defining, including, and excluding certain people and practices" (Hurenkamp, Tonkens, & Duyvendak, 2011, p. 211). Thus, citizenship education is understood broadly: as taking place not only within formal, educational spaces (civic integration or language classrooms), but also through everyday interactions and engagements with others that convey and police the norms, values, and expectations for social etiquette and behaviour among co-citizens. As such, citizenship signifies an analytical field of governmental practice. The "informal practices of compromise and accommodation, everyday resistance or outright refusal" (Li, 2007a, p. 279) by socially-situated subjects give insight into the ways in which citizenship is part of a complex process of subject-making.

In the Netherlands, two powerful, interconnected discourses inform contemporary ideals of citizenship practice at the levels of policy through to everyday discussions of belonging in the neighbourhood, city or nation. These are what have been called the "culturalization" of citizenship, as well as the turn to market principles and logics that have been discussed as an expression of neoliberal governmentality (cf. Ong, 1996; Dean, 2010).

From my observation of statements from mainstream and populist politicians, Dutch policy documents, discussions occurring in the news, in popular journals, in social media, and across the informal social spaces that Levinson (2011, p. 334) has called the "street," aspects of "culture" have become increasingly important in determining claims to citizenship in the Netherlands (Tonkens, Hurenkamp, & Duyvendak, 2008; Schinkel, 2010; Duyvendak, 2011). Although citizenship is always cultural, this phenomenon has been described as "a process in which more meaning is attached to cultural participation (in terms of norms, values, practices and traditions),

either as alternative or in addition to citizenship as rights and socio-economic participation” (Tonkens et al., 2008, p. 6). These discursive practices draw on historical, colonial processes of difference-making wherein often unspoken aspects of race, religion, class, linguistic ability, gendered and sexual difference are rearticulated as morally-charged “cultural” attributes (cf. Stoler, 1995; Silverstein, 2005). These substantive dimensions of citizenship become increasingly privileged over legal status in discussions of belonging in the Netherlands and have become ever more central to federal immigrant integration policy.

These changes have also occurred in the context of the “shrinking” welfare state, where rather than representing a shift to something new, neoliberal rationale has reworked earlier and evolving notions of Dutch cultural practice for new purposes (Li, 2007b, p.284). In transposing the meaning of key terms through neoliberal rationale, certain behaviours and attitudes have become understood as part of a Dutch national cultural ethic – including self-sufficiency, responsibility, and active participation in Dutch society. The worthy citizen in the eyes of the state (and perceptibly among citizens themselves) has been transformed into a new kind of moral subject. This draws on a notion of “activity” presented in opposition to ideas of passivity and entitlement that are now connected to the welfare state. Among my informants, “good” citizenship encompasses contemporary notions of neoliberal “active” citizenship while maintaining ties to older forms cultural belonging (cf. Kidd, 2002; Walzer in Cattelino, 2004; Kennelly & Llewellyn, 2011). Figures in the Dutch populist Right have been quick to marshal these powerful discourses to normalize the notion that the problems associated with minority groups living in the Netherlands today (especially Muslim, Moroccan- and Turkish-Dutch) are due to their supposedly “backward,” foreign cultural or religious beliefs. In populist discourse, such beliefs have contributed to these newcomers’ failure to integrate and their burdening the welfare state.

Historically, the idea of participation or activity that informs notions of morally or culturally acceptable citizenship practice has been strongly tied to conceptions of productive or socially useful work. The most important of these forms of work continues to be remunerative labour, widely understood as key in the process of moulding individuals into proper, or today active citizens (Erickson, 2012, p. 170; Muehlebach, 2012). While remunerative work may be privileged, the idea of productive or socially useful work also encompasses forms of unpaid labour, such as voluntarism. The linkages between notions of citizenship and the growing role of volunteers<sup>iv</sup> in social service provision has highlighted how voluntarism can be understood “as an exercise in statecraft that is as much directed at the volunteers themselves as the people they ostensibly assist” (Hemment, 2012, p. 534).

## **5 Citizenship education in practice: accessing and assessing citizenship in daily life**

Based on the perspectives of language coaching volunteers and opinions expressed through media, from the mouths of politicians, and in conversations during my fieldwork, being a good citizen requires more than completing the formal civic integration requirements. In the following I explore how volunteer language coaches connect culturalized practices to moral notions of citizenship practice. Ethnographic data highlights the tensions inherent in culturalized forms of Dutch citizenship practice, where norms and values are impacted by neoliberal governmentality (Tonkens et al., 2008, p. 6; Björnson, 2007; cf. Muehlebach, 2012). This exploration of citizenship in practice underscores how communication – usually in Dutch – is viewed as key to accessing ideas of good Dutch cultural participation. This conception of citizenship practice also highlights how only certain groups of newcomers are deemed social, if not legal targets for citizenship education. While these discussions bring questions of racial, religious, gendered, and other differences to the fore, they also reveal how ideas of belonging based on these often unspoken criteria are challenged or reconciled by newer threads of citizenship discourse.

### **5.1 What does it mean to integrate?**

Many people in Dutch society, from politicians to scholars, media commentators, and my research participants have been outspokenly critical of how past Dutch governments have handled immigrant integration. Many of my interlocutors flagged how past measures lacked language requirements. Difficulty or the inability to communicate is viewed by many in Dutch society as the major hurdle to newcomers’ integration as Dutch citizens (Entzinger, 2004; Björnson, 2007; Ghorashi & van Tilburg, 2006). This is because communication, learning to speak Dutch, is thought to enable many other forms of valued social participation: holding a job, completing an education, being involved in your child’s education, or otherwise contributing to your community, as through volunteering. Among my informants, these kinds of engagements reflected how the Dutch language is an expression of Dutch cultural integration through a commitment to participating in Dutch society.

With its mandatory language training the introduction of civic integration legislation in 1998 was heralded as an important and overdue measure by many in Dutch society. It has nonetheless received much criticism (cf. Björnson, 2007). It was felt, as by my informants, that the law did not integrate newcomers as active participants in Dutch society in a meaningful way. Research participants’ beliefs about what kinds of knowledge and social behaviours were important in order to participate and contribute to Dutch society differed from (and in some cases even clashed with) the criteria tested through the formal civic integration process. While the civic integration tests emphasized learning Dutch (to a basic working proficiency) and acquiring a rudimentary knowledge about living in Dutch society (i.e. key historical events,



social norms and values, selected legal rights and bureaucratic procedures),<sup>v</sup> there was a general feeling among my informants that “civic integration” (*inburgering*) and “integration” (*integratie*) were qualitatively different; passing the civic integration exams was not equivalent to being integrated into Dutch society. As José framed it,

To civically integrate is an etiquette. You get a sticker on your forehead: naturalized. *So what?* Integration, you see, integration is about seeing how you behave. And that has nothing to do with civic integration. Civic integration is very flattened, very arbitrary criteria.

Other language coaches were also critical of aspects of civic integration, particularly as they related to immigrants’ social integration and participation, their behaviour as citizens. In their critiques, language coaching volunteers recognized some of the structural difficulties that adult newcomers faced that the civic integration requirement was unable to completely resolve.

Civic integration courses did not offer immigrants a “way in” to creating connections with their native Dutch neighbours or other members of mainstream society. Drawing together her past experience as a high school teacher with her experiences as a language coach, Susanne (in her late twenties) commented that integration into Dutch society is often much easier for immigrant children than their parents. In part, this is because youth do not face the same structural barriers to integration. Since these children are enrolled in the Dutch educational system, they learn to speak Dutch and are exposed to many aspects of Dutch society that their parents might not have learned about or experienced. Formal civic integration courses were unable to match the everyday processes of civil enculturation that immigrant and Dutch youth underwent together in the public education system (cf. Schiffauer et al., 2004; Billig, 1995). This is complicated by the recognition by many working in this service sector that Dutch society is not necessarily seen as welcoming from the perspective of newcomers. As Anouk (also in her late twenties) commented, integration or ‘mingling’ as she called it has to go both ways and both sides must be able to accept some cultural differences. Anouk noted how she introduced her partner to other resources, like the neighbourhood community centre (*buurthuis*) where she could meet other people, follow classes and practice her Dutch (for more on these community centres, see Long’s article in this issue). Reflective of Byram’s (2009) advocacy of the “intercultural speaker” approach in foreign language education, my informants described the kind of connections that volunteer language coaches make with newcomers as one way that meaningful social integration can be fostered through language learning.

The importance of volunteer language coaches in facilitating integration as a two-way street is also reflected in how language learning is thought to enable communication, and importantly, cross-cultural understanding. Volunteers come to play a dual role as Dutch

language teachers and as front line citizenship educators. As Bart, a language coach in his sixties, expressed: “when learning the language, you automatically pick up many Dutch things.” That language learning in these partnerships was about more than just speaking Dutch was echoed in the experiences of all of the language coaches with whom I spoke. Through teaching and practicing the language volunteer coaches helped their partners understand Dutch society, its values, norms, and expectations for conduct (cf. Byram, 2009). The significance of Dutch language coaches as informal citizenship educators arose in my research participants’ realization that they were usually one of the only native Dutch people with whom their non-native speaking partners had regular contact. Susanne discussed how in learning to speak Dutch with a language coach, the clients of these programs “also learn from us. So our culture, stuff they do not know about.” In everyday conversations and encounters, language coaches both deliberately and inadvertently flagged modes of participation in Dutch society that they viewed as appropriate, socially meaningful, and productive. What participants described as good citizenship practices were deeply resonant with what has been called neoliberal or active citizenship in policy and scholarship (Kennelly & Llewellyn, 2011; Ong, 2006).

The importance of language coaches as resources and cultural interpreters surfaced in many guises. Anouk found that the husband of her speaking partner would often demand her help to understand or answer letters from the municipal government. Although she found this “annoying,” and a distraction from her partner’s lessons, Anouk felt that she was obliged to help since those letters also concerned her partner. Other language coaches also commented on helping their partners with similar issues, such as writing and formatting a résumé or job application. In addition to assisting their partners in these areas, language coaches acted as guides, helping newcomers understand the idiosyncrasies of Dutch sociality (cf. Byram, 2009, p. 331).

The behaviours and expectations that may constitute important expressions of Dutch sociality are taken for granted by many, and may not be taught in more formal language education or even in civic integration courses. This may be because they are not seen as potential sources of confusion or conflict by native Dutch teachers. José was surprised by a dilemma faced by one of her partners, an Egyptian woman. José’s partner and her husband had recently bought a house and were suddenly thrust into frequent contact with their native Dutch neighbours. José explained that “At a certain moment she came here and sat at the table, and she said, ‘My neighbour came over to me, and he said ‘Hello neighbour.’ And she said, ‘Now, is that good? Or is that not good?’” José was surprised at this question and her partner’s apparent distress over this everyday social interaction. While José explained that in the Netherlands saying hello to your neighbours is “very kindly intended,” in Egypt the same sort of exchange was potentially insulting. As José recognized, these conversation part-

nerships are important resources for newcomers to raise and make sense of cultural differences that may keep them from socializing in ways that native Dutch expect and take for granted.

In their discussion of the benefits of conversation partnerships for immigrants, Anouk and José critiqued the state's civic integration program as inadequate for meaningfully integrating newcomers as good citizens. Yet, through their voluntarism, language coaches effectively extend the reach of the government into the private lives of these potential citizens, while consenting to its operation in their own lives (Hemment, 2012, p. 534; cf. Dean, 2010, p. 38). Newcomers have someone knowledgeable to help comfortably guide them through things like Dutch civil bureaucracy, or making sense of Dutch sociality and culturalised citizenship practice. Meanwhile, language coaches conduct themselves as active members of local and national communities. These partnerships empower volunteers to act, as one program coordinator explained, as (inter)cultural ambassadors in the neighbourhood. By facilitating newcomers' language skills, these coaches helped mitigate what Bart described as a sense of "unease with people you don't understand at all. Not the language, not heritage, customs." In lowering the hurdles to contact between neighbours, volunteers and coordinators understood communication as the ability to speak with others and make oneself understood, but importantly, also a way to convey meaning across cultural difference.

It is through learning about expectations for living in Dutch society that individuals' claims to belonging in the polity are ostensibly assessed by fellow citizens. This comes into sharp focus when one considers the centrality of the cultural and moral dimensions of citizenship practice in the everyday. Volunteer language coaches come to play an important role in how their partners understand Dutch society, how they may construct their identities as Dutch citizens, and in orienting their "moral conduct for group life" among their neighbours and co-citizens (Levinson, 2011, p. 280).

## 5.2 Citizenship is about "seeing how you behave"

The image of citizenship as a complexly layered social, political and economic relationship between people as well as the polity emerged in many different conversations with my interlocutors. José expressed this best when she elaborated on the differing facets of citizenship through what she called the "state citizen" and the "good citizen." She viewed both of these aspects as necessary to understanding the full meaning of citizenship and belonging. The state citizen, predominantly a legal relationship with the nation-state, upheld the laws and "most important norms" of the society, and engaged with the government through the democratic process. For José, the core meanings "regarding the state-citizen are: freedom, equality, fundamental rights, and law and order." To this, José added her idea of the citizen as a culturalised, moral category, as an ethic and engagement with others in society, and not only a formal relationship with the machinery of the state. The good citizen

is a person who to the best of their ability participates in the social and economic life. She wants to trust her fellow citizens, and finds a good upbringing, education and living environment important. He is mindful of his own behaviour and that of others in the public domain. The core meanings here are: solidarity, respect and ethics, including the idea that you treat others in the same manner that you would like to be treated. (José)

For newcomers, access to productive forms of citizenship participation hinged on the ability to communicate. For non-Western immigrants, this meant learning Dutch in order to hold (legal) employment, pursue education, be active in your children's education and upbringing, participate in voluntary work, and build good social relationships with the people you came into contact with on a regular basis, such as neighbours. Bart offered the example of his neighbours to describe when newcomers might be considered Dutch. He viewed his neighbours, former refugees from Croatia who arrived in the Netherlands in 1992, as "fully integrated," having

learned Dutch very quickly. She is a psychologist and he is a technician. They both have work here. Are they Dutch? *Ja*, they have Dutch passports. They speak Dutch. They have a daughter in school here around the corner. They have a double feeling, of course, but I don't object to people having two or more passports. And their home country in their heart. Why not?

In Bart's opinion, good citizens are recognized through how they behave in daily life, where culturalized forms of participation are often seen as more important than legal citizenship status. As José similarly commented, good citizenship practice is more "a qualification of good behaviour" than an question of passport credentials.

The idea of bad behaviour making bad neighbours and citizens is often linked to (potential) Dutch citizens who have non-Western backgrounds. This image was usually connected by language coaches both to individual immigrants' short-comings and to wider structural problems. In particular, language coaches saw many of the social problems faced by Dutch minority groups today as owing to past immigrant integration and migrant-youth educational policies that have left these individuals, as Susanne expressed it, "trying to manage." José felt that these past policies and policy gaps were responsible for "all those Moroccan bastards [*klootzakken*]," who are now "really just criminals." In her opinion, these (often second-generation) Dutch minorities "don't have a cultural problem. They have a social problem." For José, these individuals' poor language skills meant that they did not succeed at school, and in turn were unable to train for a good job. As a result, they resorted to illegal income strategies, such as dealing drugs. "But," José concluded, challenging the populist Right's xenophobic rhetoric, "that is for the most part due to their lack of education. It is really not a cultural problem."

Bart likewise connected adult immigrants' poor Dutch language skills to the creation of social problems among these marginalized groups from an early age:

When you hear or see, for instance, young Moroccan people for instance, you think, "What do the parents do to influence their children?" And we know that parents from Moroccan or Turkish children don't like contact with the schools from their children. Like Dutch people do. It's important to be there, to be in contact with the teachers and the school. And to do the things for *feests* [celebrations] or *voorlezen*.

Pausing briefly to think about a translation for *voorlezen*, Bart explained that *voorlezen* was when volunteers, usually parents, came to

read for children in schools. For children, especially for children from Moroccan and Turkish people who know not enough Dutch when they start at school, that's very important to do. But you can't ask it of their parents, of course.

Bart continued, expressing frustration on two interconnected points: with what he saw as the government's short-sightedness in bringing low- or uneducated workers to the country and not requiring them to integrate; and with these immigrants' lack of initiative and personal responsibility for learning the local language of their new home country. Both of these points strongly reflected the impact of neoliberal governmentality on ideas of morally and culturally acceptable citizenship practice (cf. Ong, 1996).

### 5.3 Targeting "migrant women"

Of all the disadvantaged, marginalized groups of newcomers to Dutch society, non-Western "migrant women" were seen as particularly vulnerable. In this group, Muslim women were frequently considered the most vulnerable, as Islam was connected in the popular imagination (in the Netherlands, and across Europe) with strong patriarchal values and control of women's bodies (Verkaaik, 2009). When language and host-society orientation training was mandated for all newcomers, the civic integration policy architects did so with the intention of specifically targeting "traditional women of Muslim origin" who were seen as at risk of ongoing isolation without policy intervention (Entzinger, 2004; cf. Long's article in this issue; Wikan, 2002; Pratt Ewing, 2008).

The view that migrant women faced multiple barriers to integration and were perhaps in need of more support than other newcomers was visible in the language coaching projects as well as policy. Interestingly, these organizations were more likely to recognize structural barriers to integration alongside cultural impediments to women's learning: the distance of the school, lack of childcare, or physical or psychological illness. By bringing lessons to these women in their homes, the language coach seeks to draw them out of their isolation and enable them to become productive, or at least engaged

members of Dutch society. This view is exemplified in the discussion I had with Anouk. In looking for voluntary work, a women-only language coaching program spoke to Anouk's interest in teaching, but also appealed to her concern for helping migrant women participate in Dutch society. She felt that the lessons might help such women to "also have Dutch friends, and not focus only on their own people." Anouk explained that although she recognized it was a generalization, she saw that some of these women have additional difficulties in "connecting with the Dutch community. ... They're very limited to their possibilities to, you know, have a bike and go out, so you know. So, I'm like, maybe I can narrow that gap. Bridge."

Many of the migrant women José saw come through her organization were often older Moroccan and Turkish women who had lived in the Netherlands for decades but spoke Dutch poorly or not at all. It was José's impression that these individuals come to language coaching projects for help only because they are required to undertake civic integration. These participants are welcomed by language coaching programs, but as was clear from my discussion with José, volunteer language coaches' ability to help them succeed in learning the language is hindered by their coming to this task so late in life. Even so, these projects and their volunteers oriented non-native speakers toward active or good citizenship practices, and helped to narrow the gap between these individuals and others in the city in which they live.

It was the opinion of many volunteers and language program coordinators with whom I spoke that now that more and more non-native speakers are venturing to learn Dutch and to connect with mainstream Dutch society, it was important to provide support and encouragement for them. For some participants, especially non-Western women, this often meant accommodating requests for a coach of the same gender as a cultural or religious condition of their participation in the program. For some of these women it was a matter of comfort, whereas for others I was told that their husbands would not permit their participation unless their speaking partner was female.

Although many volunteers (and other native Dutch interlocutors) felt that gender segregation practices went against their own beliefs and the norms of Dutch society, these requests were viewed as a necessary evil. Gendered segregation would help to "emancipate" these women and through learning to speak Dutch these women would have the skills to participate in the society in which they now lived. As José elaborated, many of the older female language students she and other language coaches had worked with would

never really get the hang of the language, but they are suddenly very outwardly focused. Listen; they carry the burdens of the world on their backs. But they discover the world where they have lived for thirty years. And we help them do that. It is always about the language, naturally. And it is also about where you really live. How is it here, and have you— do you have

the self-confidence to move out of that place [of social isolation]. That mostly happens.

Moving out of that place of social isolation, discovering and most importantly, participating in mainstream Dutch society is understood as being made possible by learning the Dutch language. For all participants regardless of gender, these programs considered fluency as less important than building competency and the confidence to speak Dutch with others. Even these modest out-comes were considered to have an important effect: “contact with a Dutch neighbour and through this contact learning about the neighbourhood, local habits and ways things are done” (Program Coordinator). These important ways of practicing citizenship in the neighbourhood, city, and nation are mostly encountered and learned through everyday experiences, but can be made sense of through contact with voluntary language coaches. As local cultural experts, language coaching volunteers are positioned to intervene in the conduct of their newcomer partners, improving and adjusting their behaviour so that they are able to do as they ought (Li, 2007a, p. 275; Li, 2007b).

#### 5.4 Exceptions to the rule for citizenship education

The understanding that communication enables the kinds of participation associated with good Dutch citizenship practice draws attention to how certain groups of newcomers were considered in need of citizenship education, but also how others were viewed as exempt from such training. In talking about the different modes of participation that were considered socially meaningful and examples of good citizenship practice, language coaches had underscored the importance of being able to communicate with those around you, and the practices that such communication made accessible. This articulation of belonging challenged (or reconciled) discursive processes of citizenship circulating in Dutch society that incorporated notions of religious, racial, and other forms of social difference (Ghorashi & van Tilburg, 2006; cf. Silverstein, 2005). In my observations among both broader Dutch society and language coaching volunteers, the tensions and contradictions of citizenship in the Dutch context emerged in how native- or fluent English-speakers were treated and located in Dutch society. In stark contrast with non-Western immigrants, Western migrants – predominantly English speakers – were widely considered exempt from both learning Dutch and the citizenship education in which such language learning has become embedded.

English has emerged as a second *lingua franca*, not only in Amsterdam but across the Netherlands in international business, science and academic spheres, especially when located in urban centres. As I saw during my experiences in Amsterdam on a daily basis, conversational (if not professional) knowledge of the English language is a valued and widespread skill among the Dutch (European Commission, 2006, pp. 12-13). The prevalence of English in Amsterdam has had the effect of making it a sociable language in the city, and arguably

elsewhere in the country. Quite unlike English, non-Western languages spoken by other immigrants created and marked spaces that native Dutch might avoid or feel uncomfortable in; non-Western languages excluded most native Dutch from the conversation in ways that English (frequently) did not (Duyvendak, 2011). As Bart expressed in his comment about how uneasy people may feel when all of their neighbours suddenly become linguistically and culturally unfamiliar, the social distance and difference that native Dutch associated with non-Western languages produced negative feelings for many in the neighbourhood and across the city. This was especially the case in the peripheral, lower-income neighbourhoods that have attracted many recent immigrants to settle. Although research participants conceded that it was important that people who planned to make the Netherlands their home learn Dutch (even English speakers) this went almost without saying for non-Western newcomers, however long they intended to stay.

The English speakers’ exception to the rule that all (non-EU) newcomers must learn Dutch brings to the fore some of the deep-seated assumptions in the Dutch grammar of difference (cf. Cooper & Stoler, 1997, p. 3). These pertain to how cultural, classed, racial and religious differences continue to undergird ideas pertaining to who, in fact, is in need of citizenship education. As a white, English-speaking, Canadian researcher I encountered many of these assumptions during my fieldwork. My Dutch interlocutors consistently switched from Dutch into English upon realizing that I was not (a native-speaker of) Dutch. English speakers, I found, were often assumed to be temporary, highly-skilled migrants, commonly called “expats.” It was assumed that English speakers were citizens of Western countries, such as those in the European Union or white “settler societies” of the United States, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. These countries were thought to share important historical and cultural similarities with the Netherlands, including progressive social values and norms, attitudes and experiences regarding appropriate social, economic and political participation. Expats were widely understood to live in the Netherlands for specific purposes that reflected the forms of meaningful participation in Dutch society that my research participants described: they worked at international businesses, were attending post-secondary educational institutions, or even volunteering. Moreover, English language facility often aligned with other culturalized markers of racial, ethnic, religious, gendered, and classed difference that are still quietly but powerfully used to mark out the targets of citizenship and integration policy interventions.

In spite of not being able to speak Dutch, English-speaking expats were nonetheless able to communicate in Amsterdam. With their ability to communicate exemplified through their relationship to labour, and often flagged by other culturalized markers associated with Dutchness or Western-ness, it was widely assumed that expats were able to practice good citizenship (Ong, 1996). Through the connections commonly drawn

between speaking English and contemporary discourses of good citizenship in the Netherlands, English speakers in Amsterdam have become an exception to the rule that all newcomers must undergo citizenship training (cf. Ghorashi & van Tilburg, 2006; van Nieuwkerk, 2004).

### 6 Concluding remarks: Teaching citizenship, speaking of belonging

Dutch cultural values, traditions, practices and norms have become integral to the discursive practices that undergird calculations of citizenship in daily life (Tonkens et al., 2008; Hurenkamp et al., 2011; Schinkel, 2010). My work among volunteer language coaches underscores how neoliberal governmentality impacts understandings of Dutch culture through the kinds of behaviours considered key to staking claims to citizenship in daily life (cf. Ong, 1996, 2006; Muehlebach, 2012; Li, 2007a). The fetishization of the Dutch language as the key to newcomers' integration has transformed communication into the pivot upon which these discursive layers of good citizenship practice may turn. These include a broad range of banal but morally-charged practices and attitudes (cf. Billig, 1995): from holding legal employment, to pursuing an education, engaged parenting, volunteering, as well as how one interacts with neighbours and others with whom one has regular contact. These everyday "common sense," but highly politicized interactions have become increasingly important as meaningful forms of Dutch cultural participation. These are in turn widely used across mainstream Dutch society to assess individuals' cultural and moral fit in the polity. However, these important modes of culturalised participation also draw in historically established and morally-charged markers of difference such as race, religion, class, gender and sexuality (Stoler, 1995). This wide web of overlapping markers of Dutchness and difference has created a problematically exclusive set of conditions for belonging; lower-classed, racialised and religiously different newcomers are targeted by citizenship education projects, whereas many white, English-speaking, well-educated migrants are considered to already practice culturally appropriate citizenship.

In the wake of the state's withdrawal from multiple areas of service provision, including adult citizenship education, citizens have themselves been called upon to step into the fray to remedy the problems of contemporary Dutch society (cf. Tonkens, 2006). In doing so, such individuals are seen to embody aspects of neoliberal logic that reshape the meaning and range of vaunted citizenship practices, including accepting citizens' responsibility for social service provision. The effects of this shift are clear among volunteer Dutch language coaches who have become important figures on the frontlines of citizenship education for adult immigrants.

In their capacity as informal citizenship educators, these volunteers provide a window onto how multiple discourses have become entangled in the conceptualization of contemporary citizenship, from the levels of policy to how notions of participation are grounded and taught in everyday lived experience. Significantly, as

my ethnography among Dutch language coaching volunteers in Amsterdam suggests, this neoliberal reconfiguration of citizenship practice also positions certain citizens to potentially challenge and partially rearticulate the meaning and criteria of good citizenship (cf. Hemment, 2012). This is clear in how language coaches appear to draw more heavily on neoliberally-informed aspects of citizenship discourse to reconcile and/or trouble the "culturalised" criteria of racial and religious exclusion – even if they do not disrupt the structures of hierarchy deeply embedded in Dutch citizenship. Nonetheless, language coaches illustrate how citizenship is a dynamic and discursive process that is re/produced and taught through social relationships in the everyday.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> I draw the term "native Dutch" from my research participants, who use *autochtone* (autochthonous) to describe people who are racially white, Dutch by ethnicity or heritage. Like many of my research participants, I am critical of the problematic nature of the *in vivo* and policy category of native Dutch and its deep entanglement with notions of racial, religious, cultural and linguistic difference and exclusion (cf. Geschiere, 2009).

<sup>ii</sup> I spoke with the *Gilde Amsterdam* director, as well as language coaches Anouk, Bart, and Susanne in English and quote them directly. Quotations attributed to language coaches José, Casper, the other program coordinators quoted were originally in Dutch. All individuals have been given pseudonyms, while the names of the organizations and their projects appear in the text.

<sup>iii</sup> At least one of these organizations, *Gilde Amsterdam*, has responded to these cuts by implementing a one-time inscription fee of €25 to make up this new budget shortfall. During our interview in May 2011, *Gilde Amsterdam's* director indicated that this organization already had one of the lowest operating costs for language coaching partnerships, at just €150 to support a coach-learner couple for a year.

<sup>iv</sup> Not all unpaid work is necessarily considered voluntarism. In line with scholarly and policy-oriented research groups in the Netherlands, I use the term voluntarism to refer to unpaid labour that is mediated by a formal organization. In this understanding, while caring for an ill relative or neighbour does not qualify as voluntary work, similar activities that are mediated through a nursing home would qualify as voluntarism. Given the strong moral and civic value attributed to voluntarism by the state, this definition has important implications for understanding who volunteers.

<sup>v</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the *inburgering* process and criteria, see Entzinger's (2004) reflection on developing the policy, and Björnson's (2007) ethnographic critique.



Melissa Fellin

## Raising Citizens: Parenting Education Classes and Somali Mothers' Experiences of Childrearing in Canada

Mothers are viewed as the people who are raising future citizens of Canada; therefore, their parenting practices are being targeted for intervention by civic organizations funded by the state. In this article, I argue that modernity narratives and neoliberalism approaches to mothering inform parenting education classes for Somali refugee women to Canada. Thus, Somali women are often seen as victims. Stereotyped identities conceal their social and historical agency. This research draws on 15 individual interviews with Somali mothers and participant- observation in two parenting education classes in Canada.

### Keywords:

Somali, women, mother, refugee, citizenship, education

### 1 Introduction

Citizenship education is carried out through interactions between the nation-state and immigrants. In Canada, these state programs are implemented by social service agencies (Ilcan and Basok, 2004). Parenting education classes that target refugee women are one of these programs.

The parenting education classes I attended were taught and instructed as preparation for living in Canada by social workers that have little knowledge of the histories and experiences of the women. The focus on the pathology of refugees (Harrell- Bond, 1999; Summerfield, 1999) obfuscates the structural violence that is a reality of their lives in Canada. Guiding parenting education classes were modernity narratives<sup>i</sup> of refugee women, Africans, and Muslims, which intersect with Western, middle-class assumptions of mothering. Somali mothers, however, are not merely "being made" through the process of imposing stereotyped identities; but, are also "self-making," that is negotiating between gendered social pressures as mothers who are both Somali and immigrants to Canada (Ong, 1999).

This article examines parenting education classes designed for women who immigrated to Canada as government- assisted or privately sponsored refugees.<sup>ii</sup> These classes target Somali mothers who were in the first or second year of resettlement in Ontario. Social workers and settlement workers act as brokers of the state to mold Somali refugee mothers into becoming more desirable mothers; that is, more like mothers in the imagined Canadian community who are viewed to be self-sufficient (Ong, 2003; see also Philips, 2000). This article examines how Somali women resist these processes through their parenting practices. As such, the research investigates the views and experiences of childrearing among Somali mothers in Canada. In this article, I argue that modernity narratives inform parenting education classes for newcomers to Canada. This educational practice takes place to homogenize and

adapt Somali women into the hegemonic Canadian culture. Instead, I suggest that Somali women's social and historical agency need to be considered by social workers and/or settlement workers in order to unearth Western assumptions that underlie parenting education classes for refugee women and to better support women as mothers in Canada. To do this, I explore women's perspectives and experiences of migration as they relate to mothering.

### 2 Somali women in Canada: Perspectives on gender and refugee studies

Boyd and Grieco (2003) suggest that to understand the unique experiences of female migrants researchers should consider three different stages of the migration process that will produce various outcomes and experiences for migrant women. The stages include the pre-migration stage, the transition across state borders, and their resettlement experiences in the adoptive country (Boyd and Grieco, 2003). To provide this context, in this section, I present each stage of the migration processes and how it has affected women at the macro level.

The largest numbers of Somalis have sought refuge in Canada since the beginning of Somalia's conflict in the north (1988) and in the south, subsequent to the collapse of Siyad Barre's government (1991). Most live in the province of Ontario, with approximately 75,000 Somalis residing in the Greater Toronto Area (Israelite et al., 1999). A failed coup in 1987 and the civil war in northern Somalia (1988-1991) led to the displacement of over a half a million people. The displacement of Somalis within and across borders escalated in the 1990s with drought, famine, and the renewed civil war. Many sought refuge in Ethiopia and Republic of Djibouti, but thousands eventually found resettlement in other countries, such as Canada (Lewis, 2008).

Berns McGown (1999), who conducted ethnographic research with Somalis in Toronto, suggests that Somalis originally from Mogadishu settled in a cluster of apartment buildings near the airport west of the city and gradually moved to less concentrated areas (p. 23). To this day, many families live in high-density and low-income areas of the city.

In the early 1990s Somali individuals and families were mainly inland refugee claimants<sup>iii</sup>; however, others entered as Convention refugees<sup>iv</sup> as well as immigrants. In the cases of refugee claimants, the lack of identity documents, especially among Somali women, was a major

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issue. Many Somalis did not take their identity documents with them when they left their home country because of frantic departures and banditry. As well, women were less likely than men to have a driver's license, passport, or other official documents. There was also no way of obtaining new documents or of authenticating existing ones because of the lack of an existing government in Somalia (Israelite et al., 1999; Jibril, 2011). The case led the Canadian government to pass Bill C-86 in 1993 and amend the Immigration Act in 1997, which created a category of refugees without identity documents: Undocumented Convention Refugees in Canada Class (UCRCC). The effect of the policy was that undocumented refugees from Somalia, the majority women and children, had to wait five years after refugee determination before they were able to apply for permanent residency, leaving many families in legal limbo for over ten years. Their immigration status affected their ability to gain employment, for youth to get post-secondary education, and it prevented family reunification (Israelite et al., 1999; Jibril, 2011).

The newcomer Somali individuals and families who were displaced as a result of the Ethiopian occupation (2006-2009) and/or have lived in cities or camps in various countries as refugees before settling in Toronto come from both urban and rural areas of Somalia. These newcomers usually immigrate to Canada as Government Assisted Refugees (GARs).<sup>iv</sup> Somalis have migrated from different regions, including Northern, Central, and Southern Somalia. Somalis in the city occupy various social positions, including their level of education and socio-economic status; however, the majority live in poverty. According to Michael Ornstein (2006), 63 percent of Somalis in Toronto live below Canada's unofficial poverty line.

There is increasing settlement of newcomers in second and third tier cities in Canada, including the Kitchener-Waterloo area, the second site of my fieldwork. In 2002, Citizenship and Immigration Canada created a federal plan to encourage newcomers to settle outside of Canada's main immigrant destinations (Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto) with one of the main alternatives being Waterloo Region. The immigrant and refugee population in Waterloo Region comprises one-fourth of the total population (Abu-Ayyash and Brochu, 2006). According to one of the Board of Directors for the African-Canadian Association of Waterloo Region and Area, there are approximately 4,000-5,000 Somalis living in Kitchener-Waterloo. Similar to Toronto, many Somalis in the Kitchener-Waterloo area were displaced from Somalia during Siyad Barre's presidency (1969-1991), particularly in the years before his government was overthrown. Many of these families first settled in Toronto and moved to Kitchener-Waterloo. There are various reasons Somalis have chosen to move to the Kitchener-Waterloo area, but the majority of the Somalis I spoke with in the area noted they moved to raise their children in a city that has less violence and fewer gangs compared to Toronto, and they wanted to live close to universities.

There are also many newcomer Somalis who are being resettled in Kitchener-Waterloo. Similar to the newcomers in Toronto, these Somali individuals and families were displaced from Somalia following Ethiopia's occupation of Somalia (2006-2009) and/or they have lived in cities and camps as refugees in other countries throughout the world before resettling in Canada (personal communication with Somali community leader, November 21, 2010). The majority of Somali households in the region are female-headed since many men died or went missing during the war. The increasing amount of Somali families that are female-headed households and are resettled in Canada is also a result of international resettlement policy, which gives higher priority to "women at risk" (Boyle and Ali, 2009). Many Somalis live in poverty in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, however, there are some who are educated and who occupy a higher socio-economic status (field notes, October 2010).

## 2.1 Gendered experiences of displacement and migration

I am aware of the potential shortcomings and critiques associated with using the word *refugee*. The term refugee has a legal definition in international law and refers to those who have fled their countries and crossed borders into another country for political reasons (UNHCR 1951, UNHCR 1967). This legal definition excludes those individuals and groups who have been forcibly displaced due to environmental disasters, development and economic reasons as well as those who are internally displaced. The reasons for displacement are usually highly complex and include a variety of compounding implications for crossing borders to seek asylum (Fellin, 2013).

Studies on refugees' experiences show that the label tends to universalize heterogeneous populations and that it conceals how gendered experiences are variously experienced (Malkki, 1992; Voutira and Harrell-Bond, 1995; Zetter, 1991). Scholars now realize that experiences of displacement and migration are gendered (Boyd and Grieco, 2003; Colson, 1999). Understanding the reasons women seek resettlement and their experiences of migration help us understand how gender affects adaptation and integration in the adoptive country (Boyd, Grieco 2003). It is important, however, to examine gender from both the perspective of the woman or man's home country with that of her or his adoptive country (Indra, 1987; McSpadden and Moussa, 1993). The social locations of immigrants and refugees transform and are renegotiated in their adoptive countries because they are contingent and variously shaped by their positions in socio-economic, racial, and gender hierarchies (McDowell, 2008; Pessar, 2001). Since gender is a social construct, what it means to be female or male will vary depending on the society (Boyd, Grieco 2003). For instance, identities can transform in the adoptive country if women are in a higher social position in the adoptive country in comparison to the home country (Pessar, 2001). However, if one fails to fulfill his or her expected gender roles in either of the contexts the individual will experience a range of social pressures,

which can lead to exclusion (McSpadden and Moussa, 1993, p. 204). Through the process of migration, settlement, and integration, gender roles and demands are reshaped, made problematic and negotiated (McSpadden and Moussa, 1993, p. 205). This research is among others that examine how the social pressures placed on women who identify as mothers from both their home and adoptive country are renegotiated in the resettlement context.

The refugee label has the effect of removing the individual from his or her context and replacing him or her with a stereotyped identity (Colson, 1999; Zetter, 1991). Neglecting past experiences result in the lack of knowledge and/or an unwillingness of social workers and/or settlement workers to engage with, hear, and consider the personal histories of these women as pertinent to the integration process. In turn, this leads to mothers' inability to receive the proper supports with raising their children in North America (Fellin, 2012).

Separating Somali women from their histories also tells us something about who is an ideal citizen and who is included in the nation: acceptable migrants are those who leave their past behind and become like 'us,' that is, migrants will only be accepted when they emphasize their similarities and hide their differences to make themselves more like citizens (Philips, 2000, p. 40). In this way, certain ethnicities, religions, languages, ways of being, and worldviews are considered to be 'normal,' while others are defined by difference reinforcing, maintaining, and reproducing inequalities in citizenship (Bannerji, 2000; Mackey, 2002; Philips, 2000; Thobani, 2007). Nevertheless, what is considered to be different changes over time (Hall 2000) and in the current social and political environment in Canada, Somali women are marked by their race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status *as well as* their migration status.

## 2.2 Muslim women in multicultural Canada

The Canadian nation-state was established as a result of settler-colonialism, and by displacing and dispossessing the indigenous populations. Social evolutionary paradigms based on the assumptions that white Europeans occupied the apex of the human evolutionary scale underpinned the colonial project (Bannerji, 2000; Day, 2000). Despite significant social and political shifts since then, it has been argued by scholars of multiculturalism in Canada (Bannerji, 2000; Day, 2000; Mackey, 2002; Thobani, 2007) that multiculturalism policy continues to be used by the Canadian state to manage internal 'Others,' including First Nations as well as immigrants, refugees, and racialized groups. The ongoing processes that reproduce the Canadian nation continue to be based on similar assumptions of a white Canada, which also shaped the official multiculturalism of the 1980s. A 'multicultural mosaic' in Canada meant various 'Others' could exhibit their cultural differences, as long as such differences did not threaten the status quo or the political and ideological system (Mackey, 2002, p. 143-45).

The US imperial 'War on Terror' has changed the ways

multiculturalism is conceived in North America. In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US, President Bush distinguished between "bad Muslims," who were responsible for terrorism, and "good Muslims" who were eager to prove that they were not terrorists by joining the US and its allies against "bad Muslims" (Mamdani 2004). Mamdani (2004) argues the discourse of "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims" reconstructed all Muslims as bad unless they prove that they are good. Mamdani (2004) conceptualizes the narratives told in the West as "Culture Talk." The view of social evolution of societies and cultures from barbarism to civilization is constructed on racial thinking and continues to inform narratives of colonized peoples in the world (Said 1993). During the Cold War, Africa was represented as having an inability to progress and reach modernity due to 'African tribalism' (Mamdani, 2004; Razack, 2008). According to Mamdani (2004), with the end of the Cold War, Islam and the Middle East became viewed not only as incapable of reaching modernity, but also as resistant to it.

The narratives of Muslims as well as the policies emanating from the 'War on Terror' represent and affect the lives of men and women in North America differently (Razack, 2008, p. 84). For instance, one of the policy objectives in the war of Afghanistan, made by the Bush administration, was the liberation of Muslim women. In doing so, 'women's rights' discourse was used to justify the war (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Razack, 2008). In the media, images of veiled women represent these women as victims. These representations not only victimized women, but also essentialized them, replacing their context with the stereotyped identity that sees them as passive victims who need to be helped (Thobani 2007). As such, these stereotypes often shape how non-Muslims view Muslim women in North America, including the Somali women in the parenting education classes described in this study. Studies have shown that in Canada it is believed that immigrant women are responsible for transmitting racial, cultural, and national difference onto their children (Thobani, 2007, p. 237). In this context, there is a normalization of white, Western, middle-class culture that includes beliefs about proper ways of mothering. This leads to the pathologizing of Somali culture and Islam. As such, Somali women become targets of resettlement programs such as parenting education classes that intend to modernize their mothering practices and to teach them how to raise their children *properly* (see also Villenas, 2001, p. 9).

## 2.3 Mothering in a neoliberal context

Parenting education classes that target Somali mothers need to be seen in light of the construction of the 'active citizen' in Canada that is based on North American neoliberalism. North American neoliberalism is characterized by the reversal of welfare programs, capitalist imperialism linked with "lawlessness and military action," (Ong 2006, p. 1-2) and the emphasis on citizens' freedoms. The 'neo' part of 'neoliberalism' is the new emphasis of governments on regulating the self (Ong 2006), which involves processes of "responsibilization"

whereby state interventions are used to motivate and manage self-sufficiency with the purpose of reducing claims on the state (Kennely and Llewellyn, 2009, p. 899; Rose, 1999, p. 74; Walsh, 2011, p. 861).

Parenting education classes are used to modify and shape the parenting practices of Somali mothers to teach them how to raise their children like mothers in the imagined Canadian community. The effects of this form of governance on Somali mothers are twofold. First, the emphasis on self-regulation and responsibility construct those who engage in paid work, have skills and education, English language abilities, and are *good* parents, as *ideal* citizens; however, those who make demands on the state are not considered to be responsible citizens (Hart, 2009, p. 643; Walsh, 2011, p. 873). In this context, the issues that are affecting Somali mothers, including unemployment or underemployment, lack of English proficiency, and low levels of literacy are viewed as failures of each individual. They also contribute to the belief that mothers, who immigrated to Canada as refugees, are a *burden* on the state (see Hart, 2009). Parenting education classes do not address these structural issues and instead look to modify the behaviour of mothers toward their children to become *good* parents.

The second way neoliberal governance affects Somali women is their positions as mothers of future neoliberal subjects. Within neoliberal understandings, groups who live in poverty are considered moral deviants who are blamed for their own circumstances. These moral judgments are extended to what is considered *good* or *bad* mothering (Pasternak, 2010, p. 173). One such group that is targeted in such discourse is lone parent, female-headed households (Giles, 2012). As stated earlier, Somali families in North America are increasingly female-headed (Berns and McGown, 2003), as were the mothers targeted in the parenting classes I attended and the majority of the women I interviewed. Furthermore, all of the women in these classes received social assistance, which provides evidence of their poverty. The focus of the parenting education classes on self-responsibility reinforces discourses of *good mothering*. North American beliefs about *good mothering*, include assumptions around middle-class choice and material realities. As a result, structural issues that affect poor families, such as lack of food, access to affordable housing and safe neighbourhoods become irrelevant (Giles, 2012, p. 116). The result is “blame the mother” discourse is maintained and reproduced rather than any critique of the larger system being offered (Giles, 2012, p. 123). *Good* and *bad* mothering discourse interrelate with ideas surrounding mothers’ roles as producers of creative, flexible, and productive future neoliberal subjects positing children as possible future citizens (Giles, 2012, p. 124). Assimilation programs, such as the parenting education classes focused on in this study, have targeted women since they have been historically thought of as transmitters of culture (Villenas, 2001, p. 8).

The state is no longer directly involved in the responsabilization of citizens; however, they are indirectly

involved through the social service sector. For instance, parenting education classes are provided by family counseling organizations. Part of the state’s actions to reduce the degree to which it meets its citizens social and economic needs has been to partner with the private sector, involve individuals and communities to reconstruct institutions, such as philanthropic or social service organizations, that support and assist marginalized citizens. Building upon Rose’s (1999) theory of “community as a means of government,” Ilcan and Basok (2004) have conceptualized this process as “community government,” whereby the government shapes and orients communities to engage in activities and programs to responsabilize “certain groups of citizens for particular purposes and ends” (p. 130).

Since the 1990s, in Canada, the social service sector has been increasingly responsible for providing social and economic services. The government has been able to reduce the amount of resources put towards advocacy by transforming the funding structure. While continuing to praise the social service sector for their contribution to public policy, the government undermines this contribution by reducing their ability to be involved in advocacy. This is accomplished by changing core funding to project funding, reducing financial support, and emphasizing accountability of social service institutions (Ilcan and Basok, 2004, p. 135). As a result, agencies have less time and resources for research, education, and advocacy, areas that are not funded by the government and are difficult to measure (Ilcan and Basok, 2004, p. 136). This has largely been successful and uncontended because the community is viewed as neutral, that is non-political (Ilcan and Basok, 2004). However, as Li (1996) argues this form of responsabilization of citizens is not unilateral; it is negotiated and contested by social service agencies, workers, and participants of the programs. It is within this context that social service agencies are offering parenting education classes for Somali refugee mothers in Ontario. The article critiques the belief in social services’ neutrality, recognizing the pressure placed on them through state funding, and contributes to research that critically examines these programs.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1 Research design

The research was designed as a multi-sited ethnographic research project. Specifically, it draws on participant-observation of parenting education classes that target Somali women and semi-structured interviews with Somali mothers in the Kitchener-Waterloo area and in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. For this study, I sought to understand the childrearing experiences of Somali women who immigrated to Canada. The project obtained ethics approval from the research ethics board at The University of Western Ontario. This study is part of a larger research project on the experiences of Somali children and youth in educational spaces in North America (Fellin, 2012). An earlier version of this article was presented at the American Anthropology Association Meetings in San Francisco, CA in 2012 (Stachel, 2012b).

### 3.2 Recruitment and interlocutors

The criteria for participating in this study included being a woman who identified as Somali and had one or more children living with her in the Kitchener-Waterloo area or in Toronto. For the parenting education classes, the refugee resettlement program identified the women as mothers. The children did not have to be the women's own. The women who were interviewed identified themselves as mothers. Mothers were invited to participate in an interview through an information letter written in English and translated into Somali. Those interested in participating in the study were invited to take part in an individual interview at a time and place that was convenient to them. Even though I studied the Somali language for two years, I did not have the proficiency to carry out extensive interviews in the language. Somali oratory is rich in metaphor, poetry, and allegory, some of which I would miss if I did not have assistance (see Besteman, 1999). As such, if my interlocutors felt more comfortable speaking in Somali, I offered to have a Somali interpreter present in the interviews. In the Kitchener-Waterloo area and in Toronto, I employed two different Somali mothers who had experience as interpreters. The presence of an interpreter did have an effect on the interviews. The interlocutors may have silenced parts of their histories and may not have spoken as openly because of the presence of another Somali community member, or were encouraged to speak out for the same reason. Nonetheless, in some contexts, the presence of an interpreter allowed me to access information that I would not have learned on my own.

For participant-observation of the parenting education classes, I approached the organization that was offering the program and gave them an information letter about my research. Once they consented to my participation, I sought informed consent from the counselor of the group and the mothers participating in the group.

This article draws on 15 semi-structured interviews with Somali mothers in Kitchener-Waterloo and Toronto. Thirteen of the mothers immigrated to Canada as government-assisted refugees under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). These women were receiving social assistance, were either widowed or divorced, and had between 2 and 8 children. The education level of the participants ranged from grade 3 to 12. The other two participants came to Canada as immigrants. Both of the women were married when they immigrated to Canada (although at the time of interview one was divorced) and both had graduate degrees.

### 3.3 Data gathering

The study draws on participant-observation in two parenting education classes (2010) in Ontario. It is also based on preliminary research for 2 years (2008–2010) and ethnographic fieldwork for 16 months (2010–2011), including participant-observation with Somali youth and their families in after-school homework programs, refugee organizations, Somali community programs and events, in families' homes, and in mosques in the Kitchener-Waterloo area and in Toronto (Fellin, 2012).

During participant-observation, I detailed field notes including descriptive, analytic and methodological field notes (Bernard 2002). During 16 months of fieldwork, I conducted the interviews with Somali mothers that lasted between thirty minutes and two hours. The questions posed during the interviews focused on four main themes: (1) the women's experiences of displacement; (2) experiences in refugee camps or in cities in other countries before immigrating to Canada; (3) their experiences immigrating and living in Canada; and (4) their experiences raising children.

### 3.4 Data analysis

For the interviews, a grounded theoretical approach was used to identify categories that emerged during participant-observation and interviews and to analyze them using ethnographic research on Somalia, Somali refugees as well as theories from post-colonial feminist studies, refugee studies, neoliberalism, citizenship education, and multiculturalism (Bernard, 2002). A transcriptionist transcribed the interviews verbatim with all identifying information removed. An open coding approach was used to analyze the emergent themes and patterns through a close study of the interview transcripts and field notes (Bernard, 2002). The themes and categories were checked against the literature and theories discussed above. The quotes used to represent Somali mothers in this article do not reveal any identifying information in order to protect the participants' anonymity.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Parenting education classes

On March 20, 2010 I met with the director of a government-assisted refugee resettlement program, a caseworker, and a social worker. The meeting was about a psycho-educational support group that would target Somali mothers who, within the past year, had immigrated to Canada as government-assisted refugees. The purpose of the program, I was told, was to reduce social isolation, improve parent-child relationships, increase positive parenting, improve settlement in Canada, and provide an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns, and to problem solve collectively (field notes March 20, 2010). An overview of the topics and objectives of each week showed me that the women's strengths were not considered. Only one of the eight weeks was dedicated to the women's personal histories; labeled the *trauma* piece. The next four weeks focused on parenting sessions with topics including, raising children in Canada, appropriate disciplining, parental responsibilities, parent-child relationships, understanding children, and communicating with children (field notes March 20, 2010). The lecture format of the classes do not draw on women's experiential knowledge in these areas. The women's own parenting styles were viewed as *backward* and therefore they needed to learn *modern*, Canadian parenting practices. This included negatively perceived assumptions regarding Somali women's use of physical discipline (see also Villenas, 2001, p. 9). In all of the sessions I



attended, Somali women's experiences of parenting were never consulted and their strengths and ways of coping as parents throughout their displacement and subsequent migrations were never considered. Further, the first group I observed did not have a Somali translator, but one who spoke Arabic. Only two of the women in the group spoke Arabic and all of the group members had beginner English proficiency.

In the second parenting class I attended, the counselor made similar assumptions of physical punishment and neglect on the part of mothers. The sessions were run as lectures given by the counselor, rather than an engagement in dialogue with the mothers. The focus was on physical abuse, what it included and the consequences of inflicting it on a child (i.e. Family and Children's Services to be called to the home, psychological impact on the child). The counselor also discussed emotional abuse and the possible effects on the child (i.e. low self-esteem, drug and alcohol use). Finally, she discussed neglect; having a dirty house, clothes, not changing diapers, and a lack of supervision. The mothers, throughout this session, were not asked for their input or given the opportunity to present their own strategies for dealing with their children's behavior (field notes, November 4, 2010).

These parenting education classes only focused on the past in terms of women's victimhood, rather than their strengths and the adversity they had overcome to get to North America with their children. The view of refugees as helpless and vulnerable in psycho-educational interventions in North America mirror those of humanitarian aid organizations working in refugee camps (Harrell-Bond, 1999; Malkki, 1996; Summerfield, 1999). Underlying the educational programs, therefore, is the view that refugees are not only victims of war, but also victims of their *traditions* and *backward* cultures. They must become *worthy* of Canadian citizenship in today's political environment, which is regarded as a privilege or a prize rather than a right.

#### 4.2 Mothers' experiences of structural violence

The findings of this research suggest that by replacing Somali mothers' contexts with a stereotyped identity, their experiences of structural violence in Canada are undermined. Here, I use Scheper-Hughes' (2004) conceptualization of structural violence to refer to the invisible "social machinery" (p. 14) of social inequality that reproduces social relations of exclusion. During participant-observation in parenting classes and interviews with mothers, it became clear that a focus on Somali women's victimhood obscured the issues they were faced with everyday. These included the closing of borders resulting in the separation of family members and their experiences of poverty. Both issues clearly affected their economic and emotional well-being.

##### 4.2.1 Separation from family members

In the first parenting group I attended, the women talked about the family members they had living in refugee camps. One young woman spoke of her brother and

fiancé; an older woman talked about her 26 year-old son who she had not seen in 11 years; and another spoke of her mother and four brothers (field notes May 1, 2010). Discussing how family members call her on the phone and cry to her, one woman showed me a picture of her family members and admitted that she did not like to look at the picture because she did not want to think about how she left them and what they are going through in the refugee camp (field notes May 29, 2010).

The separation of family members affects women's emotional well-being. Since 9/11 the Canadian state has increased border controls and tightened screening practices. One of the effects of such policies is that families are separated. In 2010, for instance, I met Fardowso in the parenting class. In one of the classes, she talked about the problems she faced with family reunification. In 2011, she was still going through the application process. In Yemen, Fardowso's husband left his family on a boat to Saudi Arabia, but was later deported back to Somalia. Soon after Fardowso immigrated to Canada, her daughter who was married with four children and due to be resettled in the US, died. Every time I met with Fardowso she talked about her separation from her husband and grandchildren, with great sadness and loss. She continues to try to get her grandchildren to Canada; however, since her granddaughter was the primary applicant, she needed to start a new application process (personal communication May 26, 2011). Fariido was also a participant of the 2010 parenting class. During our meetings at this time, Fariido made the connection between her worry of her children in the camps and her physical symptoms that included headaches, loss of balance, and insomnia. She also talked with me about not wanting to leave the house and that everything makes her cry. She added that she feels guilty when she is happy (field notes October 28, 2010).

In 2011, in an interview with Fariido and her daughter, she asked for my advice on finding out about the application for family reunification with her other children. Fariido explains: "My problem is that the Canadian government said they were going to bring my kids from Ethiopia, but it has been 1 year and 9 months and I am getting worried. We have done all of the paperwork on both sides and we are always thinking about them" (Fariido April 25, 2011). Both Fardowso and Fariido said they were always thinking of their family back home and crying while also experiencing physical pain that stopped them from going outside in the winter.

The worry over family is amplified during periods of armed conflict in Somalia. Sophia discussed with me how the war in Somalia affects Somali women's ability to function in their day-to-day lives in Canada. She said that for herself, she would feel so sad and angry hearing about relatives who have died, been shot, or bombed, that it de-habilitated her. For instance, in one day she had ten family members killed because a bomb hit their house in Mogadishu (personal communication with Sophia December 18, 2010).

#### 4.2.2 Mothers' experiences of poverty

Structural violence obscures the social, political, and economic history of poverty, taking it for granted and blaming poverty on the poor themselves (Scheper-Hughes, 2004, p. 14). Along with the limits of family reunification, many of the mothers talked with me about their experiences of poverty in Canada: housing issues, violence, and income for basic needs. The findings show that the poverty of family in other countries also influences mothers' poverty in Canada.

I witnessed many families living in housing situations that the mothers I interviewed considered unsafe and were worried the housing situations would affect their families' health. I saw parents with a newborn baby living in an apartment with no heating in the middle of winter, and children with bed bug bites who did not want to eat or sleep in their apartment because of the cockroach infestations. Faduma attempted to articulate her experiences of living in this housing situation: "I had this other house that had cockroaches, it had big, big mice. At nighttime, I cannot sleep. I have to watch the cockroaches and rats 'cause they're going to hit my kids if I sleep. All night I'm up" (Faduma June 29, 2011). In a cooperative housing complex in Kitchener, I met with Amal who had decorated her living room with large couches covered with oversized pillows to create a feeling of comfort in a home with stained walls from water damage and no heating (field notes October 2, 2010). Zeinab had similar experiences. As I sat in her apartment drinking tea, a cockroach scurried up the wall. During our conversation, she talked with me about how she cleaned all of the time but her apartment is infested with cockroaches. Zeinab started crying when telling me that her children would not eat what she cooked for them because they were afraid there were cockroaches in the food (personal communication with Zeinab December 2, 2010). When I raised concerns with one of the women's caseworkers about the conditions the families were living in she replied, "Somali women use words to manipulate and lie." She continued that because I am a different person they complain to me thinking that I will help them and that she believed it was the women's faults for the state of their apartments (personal communication December 2, 2010).

In Toronto, I met with Somali mothers who lived in areas known for gun violence. A mother sat and spoke with me in her apartment about her worry about her daughter coming home from night classes at university. The mother told me that throughout the night she hears gunshots (personal communication November 8, 2010). In another area of Toronto known for violence, I visited a mother who was a lone parent living in a cooperative housing complex in dismal shape with her daughter. The unit had a boarded-up front window. Inside, the mother had the house clean with big Italian style couches, a television, table, and chairs, however, there were no windows to the outside (field notes November 24, 2010).

Other housing issues included access to affordable housing that could accommodate large families. Idil tries to illustrate this problem: "You have 8 kids and there's no

way you can get an apartment that would fit, so that's another issue. And people, they get evicted from apartment to apartment. They have to lie...You have to hide some of your kids in order to be allowed in a 3-bedroom apartment" (Idil June 29, 2011). Many mothers talked about the housing costs and the effects on their ability to provide for their children. Zeinab talked about the lack of money to meet her family's basic needs because of the cost of rent. Showing me her cheque from Ontario Works that gives her \$344.00 for her basic needs and \$578.00 for her shelter (equaling \$922.00), she asks how can this be enough when the rent itself is \$800.00 (personal communication with Zeinab December 2, 2010).

During my fieldwork, I found the majority of Somalis continually listen to the news and frequently talk to their family members throughout the diaspora on the phone because they are deeply concerned with the political situation in Somalia. Their concern, to a large extent, has to do with family and community members who remain in Somalia or in the neighbouring countries of Kenya, Yemen, and Ethiopia, where Somalis' positions are increasingly precarious. In addition, I found when possible that Somali women in North America help their families in the diaspora by sending money to relatives in different countries, including Somalia. Although refugees in North America usually occupy lower socio-economic positions, small amounts of money by North American standards can enable the survival of many in the Horn of Africa. Remittances sent by Somalis have the advantage of reaching family members directly; in fact the total sum of remittances sent to Somalia is much greater than development aid (Horst 2008, p. 144). Sending remittances to family in Somalia or in neighbouring countries exacerbates Somali mothers' experiences of poverty in North America.

#### 4.3 Displacement and migration: Somali mothers' strengths and coping strategies

Stereotyped identities that view Somali mothers as vulnerable victims undermine the political histories and the complex relations and experiences of Somali women who immigrate to Canada. These histories are presented as unstable and unknowable, and eventually deemed irrelevant and unusable in citizenship education classes that target them. My approach was to examine the links between the past and the present to view Somali women as social and historical agents. By doing so, the findings show the survival, strengths and coping strategies of these women as mothers throughout their migration experiences. In all cases, the women's concerns were to maintain the safety and to protect their children in harsh conditions.

Throughout my fieldwork I heard stories from women that illustrated their strengths and resilience despite the adversity they faced throughout their migration trajectories. Both Zhara and Hodan told me stories of the loss of their children in Somalia while trying to save them. Zhara told me the story of losing her first born baby during the war because she could not leave the house to

access a hospital that was taken over by warlords. She blamed herself for not getting her son to a hospital in time,

My own son died with my own hand. I didn't know how to carry him to hospital because there's a war. He was dehydrated and had diarrhea. I didn't know—He died, and I'm holding him because he's sick. . . . My mom came and then said, 'Zhara, today I didn't see you, you didn't come down.' She said, 'What's up? Is he still sick? Here, Mohamed.' I say, 'Yes, mom. I don't know.' And he died. I don't know... I thought he was sleeping. . . . When my husband changed him, he was crying, crying, vomiting. . . . My husband went to [to call the doctor] he knows to see him. My mom came to greet me and then she saw him and she said, 'Give me the baby. Let me pray for him.' He died. My mom, she realized he passed away and she put him in my bed and started consoling me (Zhara, May 31, 2011).

Hodan told me the story of her oldest children as I sat with her and her son at the kitchen table in her apartment. During the civil war in Somalia, Hodan convinced her husband that they should send their four oldest children by boat to seek asylum in Yemen. Her children were on a boat that was bound for Yemen when it capsized and the passengers died. Hodan's husband blamed her for the deaths of their children and as a result left her. Living in Canada and raising her six remaining children as a lone parent, she continued to blame herself for the loss of her children (personal communication April 22, 2011).

Other mothers told the stories of how they helped their families' to survive as refugees in neighbouring countries. The Ibrahim family was led by Fardowso and includes 19-year-old Abuubakar, 17-year-old Ladan, and 14-year-old Hanad. The family was internally displaced to Mogadishu and then to the north to Boosaaso, as their region was one of the hardest hit in the war. They eventually fled the country in 1996 to Yemen where Hanad was born and they lived for 12 years. Fardowso explains the families' living conditions: "In Yemen we lived in a refugee camp that was far from cities and there were only Somalis. The children went to school in the camp. Life in the camp was hard. We were given little food and it was not enough. We tried to get stuff from Yemen people outside of the camp, to get more to survive" (Fardowso May 26, 2011). Here, Fardowso is explaining that despite the risk, she traveled outside of the camp in order to get more food for her family.

Yasmin, who immigrated to Canada a year earlier than Fardowso in 2008, had a similar experience. Yasmin attempted to articulate her migration trajectory:

"I was born in Mogadishu and went to school until I was in grade 11. I left because of the war. I first went to Basaso and then to Yemen. I spent 9 years in Yemen. I had my girl in Somalia and my boy in Yemen. They went to school in Yemen, an Arab school in the refugee camp."

Continuing with her narrative Yasmin discusses the work she did in order to get the basic necessities for her family:

"Life was hard. I was working in an Arab house, cleaning it was hard to get along with the families, but if [I] didn't I would have to find somewhere else. I needed the money to pay bills and get food so it was hard, hard to find work. When I was working in the houses I use chemicals; my eyes would be hurting, my throat was bad, my back hurting. One day I went to work and got in an accident. I had a pain in my leg, arm, and I had to have my joints put back together" (Yasmin May 27, 2011).

Fariido's experience was similar. Fariido, along with her husband, fled Somalia in 1993. Fariido's husband died in his sleep in 2006 in Yemen's capital city, Sana'a, where he worked. Fariido also worked as a house cleaner for Arab families and developed a growth in her throat that needed immediate surgery because of her daily exposure to chemicals. Her health condition and need for immediate surgery expedited the process of the family immigrating to Canada (personal communication with Fariido April 25, 2011).

Faaiso also had to work a low paying job to take care of her children in South Africa because of her refugee status. She was in constant fear for her children and herself living in South Africa. In explaining her fear she says,

"We lived in South Africa under terrible conditions. We had fear for our lives on the streets, here the cars stop for you, but there they would run you over—kill you. They did not care if you were not South African, especially if you are dressed like a Somali. They would loot stores, killing people, stealing things. They would take girls and rape them as young as 5" (Faaiso, April 14, 2011).

Sahro moved from a refugee camp in Kenya to the capital city, Nairobi because of her health. While coping with her own health conditions of high blood pressure and diabetes, Sahro made sure that her children still attended school despite the fees. Sahro explained how she maintained the learning of her 6 children, "Some of my kids were going to a public school and some private school, and I had problems with the school fees. Sometimes I did not have the money, but still they were going to school every day" (Sahro, April 25, 2011). The pride for roles as mothers and the concern for children's well-being throughout the war in Somalia and their migrations contrary to the deficit framing perspective of Canadian parenting education classes that view Somali mothers as Muslim refugee women who do not know better in how to properly care for their children (see Villenas 2001, p. 3-4).



#### 4.4 Somali culture and language in the diaspora

In the interviews, I found that Somali mothers negotiate the social pressures of the adoptive society by claiming both home and community spaces to maintain and to teach Somali culture and language as well as Islam to their children. I use “community educational spaces” as an overreaching term to highlight and examine learning that takes place outside of private/public schools and includes, but is not limited to, after-school homework programs, *dugsi*, Somali language classes, community programs, and events (Fellin, 2012). Mothers, often play key roles in creating these educational spaces and/or ensuring their children have access to these spaces. In all three of my fieldsites it was Somali mothers who created Somali language classes to teach their children their native language. For instance, Filsan suggested that Somali children growing up in Canada are not learning Somali language so there is a disconnection between elders and the youth, an important relationship back home to help youth transition into adulthood (Tefferi, 2007). Consequently, Filsan set up Somali language classes on Saturdays for children to learn the language. She volunteered her time to coordinate and advertise the classes and to take on the role of teaching the children (personal communication with Filsan July 17, 2009). Mothers also created and volunteered in after-school homework programs for Somali children and youth to help with their mainstream schooling. For instance, when Sophia first moved to Canada she created an after-school homework program to help Somali students with school. Some of the parents were not able to help their children with their homework because they were not proficient in English. As well, she believed it helped to fill in the gap in the school system to help newcomer children with learning English and transitioning into school in Canada (personal communication with Sophia November 15, 2010). In my research with Somali youth, I found that when youth were engaged in Somali community educational spaces, their grades went up and they were less likely to leave school (Fellin, 2015). In this way, Somali mothers, in their roles in community educational spaces play a key position in mitigating risk to their children. In fact, when Somali children experienced exclusion in their mainstream schools, community educational spaces offered youth spaces of belonging (Fellin, 2015). This individual and political agency that mothers used to not only maintain their culture, language, and religion, but also help their children integrate in Canada despite the structural violence they have experienced runs contrary to the views of neglect and lack of parental involvement in their children’s lives in parenting education classes.

#### 5 Discussion

Parenting education classes are used to *responsibilize* Somali mothers, to raise future citizens of Canada. The classes are taught in a way to hide differences in approaches and views of parenting and to homogenize Somali women to be like Western, middle-class mothers. Modernity narratives of Muslims, Africans, and refugees

that rely on ideas of progress and do not consider historical and global dynamics as well as neoliberal perspectives on mothering inform the parenting education classes that target Somali women. As a result, the structural violence experienced by Somali mothers in Canada, including the separation of family members and their experiences of poverty is overlooked in parenting education classes. Further, the strengths and capabilities of these women to protect their children throughout their migrations are undermined through the imposition of a stereotyped identity of victimhood. Seen as merely victims of trauma and in need of being weaned of their cultural habits and inducted into Canadian society were the focuses of these classes.

Somali mothers, however, are not merely “being made” but are “self-making” by claiming both the home and community spaces. Similar to Villenas’ (2001) study of Latina mothers who were also targets of parenting classes in a small-town in North Carolina, I found that Somali mothers’ narratives of their children’s education involved claiming the home space as well as community spaces as responsible for maintaining and teaching Somali culture, history, and language, as well as Islam. Berns McGown (1999) shows that Somali mothers in Canada are the ones taking care of their families by getting wage labour and keeping their children together. They are also learning the Qu’ran to teach their children their religion in the home.

By arguing that Somali women are resourceful, I am not negating their experiences of adversity. Rather, I seek to consider whether a focus on Somali women’s agency may be more effective in citizenship education classes, benefiting the women and their roles as mothers by focusing on their strengths through an acknowledgement of their pasts.

Replacing Somali women’s past with a stereotyped identity affects them as mothers in Canada. The findings show that experiences of migration and armed conflict are gendered (Boyd and Grieco, 2003; Pessar, 2001). The pre-migration stage that included men being lost or dying during the civil war affected women’s roles and their decisions about their children. Women had to make decisions concerning their children during the armed conflict in Somalia. Once these women crossed state borders, they also had to ensure the survival of their children throughout their migrations through getting wage labour in often harsh conditions and ensuring their children attend school. Since they were able to cross international borders they could apply and were able to get Convention Refugee status. As widowed or divorced women with children, they were identified by UNHCR as high priority for resettlement. However, once resettled in Canada their positions in economic, legal, and racial hierarchies led to silencing their voices in parenting education classes. As such, this research contributes to our understanding of how gender influences international migration throughout the migration process (Boyd and Grieco, 2003).

In light of the above, it becomes evident that there needs to be a restructuring of the approach to citizenship

education for refugee mothers. The multicultural model admits difference; however, the reasons for difference are constructed in terms of 'ethnic cultures.' According to Bannerji (2000, p. 44-45), when Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau created multiculturalism policy (1971) there were few multicultural demands on the government by third world immigrants. The issues they did raise had to do with racism, immigration and family reunification, and difficulties with childcare and language, many of the issues raised by Somali mothers in this study. Contrary to popular belief that multiculturalism was a response to third world immigrants, multiculturalism policy was constructed from above and became a way for the Canadian government to reduce issues of injustice, such as racism, to issues of cultural diversity that focus on religion and 'tradition.' The effect was that third world immigrants were culturized and mapped into specific ethnic communities (Bannerji, 2000, p. 44-45), perpetuating the idea that 'multicultures' have identifiable cultures, seen as traditions brought from their past (Mackey, 2002, p. 151). Somali women in this study were treated in much the same way.

Based on theories of modernity and liberal universalism, national narratives that construct immigrants and refugees as both internal and external threats, are a part of the larger nation-building project. Canada's national narratives are filled with tales of its territorial transformation from a "wilderness" to a "civilization" (Mackey, 2002, p. 17). An essential element to obtaining civilization is the improvement of the nation's people. The goals of progression and development are primary tenants of Western liberal culture. Underlying these goals is an assumption of its authority and right to define others as 'cultural' and subordinate to its unmarked core culture. Western liberal culture, therefore, gets to decide the differences that are allowed and the differences that need to be developed, altered, or improved (Mackey 2002, p. 161). The parenting education classes directed at Somali mothers mirror these social evolutionary theories. The view that mothers' parenting practices need to be 'improved' was quite different from their actual experiences of childrearing. Programs that seek to help with the integration of refugee women need to unearth assumptions that reinforce the subordinate status of refugees as well as Muslim women in Canada, and instead need to build upon their strengths as mothers by considering their experiences of parenting that include histories of survival and mitigating risk to themselves and to their families. Similarly, by refusing to see Somali women as merely victims, there is a change of focus from one's victimhood to an approach that sees the effects of the intersections of structural violence on the overall well-being of Somali women in North America.

## 6 Conclusion

Parenting education classes directed at Somali women are based on modernity narratives about Muslims, refugees, and neoliberal approaches to mothering. They do not consider the strengths of Somali women to

survive the armed conflict and displacement in Somalia and the ways they mitigated risks to their children throughout their migration. Somali women are pressured from their home culture to maintain and to teach their language, culture and religion to their children in the diaspora. My findings suggest they are carrying this out in both home and community spaces. At the same time, they are also under pressure of the adoptive country to be more like citizens in how they parent their children. Social service organizations are under increasing pressure to carry out the roles of the state. In this case, it is to assimilate the parenting practices of refugee women, to "responsibilize" them as mothers with an eye to the future that this will help them to raise responsible future citizens. The larger systemic exclusion of Somali mothers through structural violence, however, needs to be considered to better support Somali women as mothers in North America.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Modernity narratives are informed by colonialism and are used in the West to classify certain cultures as peaceful and civil and therefore considered modern from cultures they perceive as pre-modern and/or anti-modern (Mamdani 2004, Author 2013). Pre-modern people are characterized as not yet modern or unable to reach modernity. This is often used in the West to describe people from Africa. Anti-modern peoples are described as being ruled by customs and tradition that predispose them to violence. This narrative is often invoked by the West to talk about Muslims (Mamdani 2004, Said 1997, Author 2013).

<sup>ii</sup> Convention refugees have obtained refugee status in another country and have immigrated to Canada as government-assisted or privately sponsored refugees. Their status in Canada differs from asylum seekers who apply for refugee status within Canada.

<sup>iii</sup> Inland claimants enter Canada as asylum seekers applying for refugee status within Canada.

<sup>iv</sup> Convention refugees have obtained refugee status in another country and have immigrated to Canada as government-assisted or sponsored refugees.

<sup>v</sup> Government assisted refugees immigrate to Canada under government assisted refugee program and are sponsored by the Canadian government for their first year in Canada through financial and settlement support.

<sup>vi</sup> There is no official poverty line in Canada the "Low Income Cutoff" continues to be the measure used by Statistics Canada

Jennifer Long

## Investigating Multiculturalism and Mono-Culturalism Through the Infrastructure of Integration in Rotterdam, the Netherlands

This paper explores first-hand experiences of citizenship education specifically-designed for immigrants from the perspective of native Dutch settlement workers and volunteers in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Based on eight months of ethnographic research and in-depth interviews with settlement workers, this article explores how these 'minor figures' influence and inform the 'Infrastructure of Integration' and reinterpret national Dutch cultural values and norms on a local level. Using past understandings of multiculturalism and the current project of assimilating all non-western Muslim immigrants into Dutch society, this article investigates how these minor figures reproduce exclusionary discourses of belonging to the imagined community of the Netherlands.

### Keywords:

citizenship education, minor figures, infrastructure of integration, autochthony, Dutch multiculturalism

### 1 Introduction

The Netherlands has been overcome by what Dutch scholars call a 'culturalization of citizenship' in which "more meaning is attached to cultural participation (in terms of norms, values, practices and traditions) [of individuals], either as alternative or in addition to citizenship as rights and socio-economic participation" (Tonkens, Duyvendak, & Hurenkamp, 2010, p. 7; Mosher, this issue). This can be seen in the popularity of right-wing politicians who promise to lessen the amount of non-western immigration, the influence of the European Union, and have rekindled a sense of nationalism that has been socially stifled since World War II (van Bruggen, 2012). Yet, this nation-building project is not just a practice of national or political leaders; instead, this project can be found in the everyday practices of workers and volunteers involved in the infrastructure of integration. The result of this trend toward the culturalization of citizenship has created a more focused, mono-cultural society that moves well beyond what some scholars describe as the Netherlands's multi-cultural roots.

Integration programming for immigrants provides a fruitful context to investigate the ways in which education ties into projects of nationalism. This article investigates how state-supported citizen-making projects are understood and produced through 'the infrastructure of immigration' by asking, how ordinary citizens construct national discourses through neighborhood integration projects. Therefore, the kind of 'citizenship education' discussed in this paper aligns with Ong's (1999) notion of cultural citizenship that focus on the process of negotiation surrounding ideas of citizenship between state actors and individuals; a process that is inherently influenced by the specific context of power and politics. Using an approach similar to Delanty (2003), this article explores how ordinary citizens' 'repeated participation'

within larger (state) activities, such as citizenship courses, allow them to (re)define Dutch citizenship in their everyday practices within the larger political context and social categories of belonging. Specifically, this paper investigates how local native Dutch workers and volunteers interpret and guide immigrants' integration into Dutch society. On the local level, this civic integration infrastructure can be thought of as what Miller and Rose call, "the practices of minor figures" in which multiple non-state actors, such as citizenship education and second language learning volunteers, redefine their ideas of citizenship through their own participation in state-informed practices (2008). This paper will also examine how actors involved in the integration process of immigrants create and define membership to the national community.

The data presented in this paper are part of a larger study concerning perceptions of belonging to "the imagined community" of the Netherlands (Anderson, 1983), from the perspective of both the native Dutch and non-western immigrants. The author used a grounded theory approach in order to examine the manner in which native Dutch citizens reproduced exclusionary discourses of belonging surrounding Muslims immigrants in educational spaces. These spaces, as will be discussed further below, are both within and outside of those of integration classrooms, into what Leander, Phillips, and Headrick Taylor (2010) label "outside of school" settings where despite their location, the implicit guidelines that structure the relationships of the classroom are embodied in these spaces (p. 333). These spaces reproduce social, cultural, critical and political understandings which can then be used to explore the manner in which minor figures create 'culturally-appropriate' perceptions of national identities that exclude and reinforce the difference of certain immigrants, in particular Muslim immigrants, in the Dutch context. This focus on the integration of non-western Muslim immigrants, and Muslim women in particular, aligns with a larger European (and North American) trend to focus attention on the integration of non-western, non-Christian residents following attacks of terrorism by reported Islamists, the question of Muslims' perceived allegiance to the nation, and an increasing tolerance for Islamophobic rhetoric within the public sphere (Sniderman, 2007; Fekete, 2008; Allen, 2015).

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This article focuses on the everyday practices of individuals working and volunteering in the infrastructure of integration in order to better understand how these 'minor actors' perceive how one belongs to an ideal Dutch community today. It seeks to answer the question, how are discourses of national belonging interpreted and acted upon by those charged with providing the education linked to this nation-making paradigm? To answer such a question, this paper explores questions concerning the future of such recently-adopted assimilative policies as they are enacted by those individuals who are taking part as facilitators of such discourses of national belonging. As discussed in further detail below, integration policies and practices for non-western Muslim immigrants living in the Netherlands have taken on an assimilatory approach. Through the use of in-depth and ethnographic interviews with various educators and volunteers involved in local integration and settlement services, it becomes apparent that the idealized national community in the Netherlands has become one where fluency in the Dutch language and the emancipation of women have become particularly important. Furthermore, the comportment of oneself through Dutch spaces and the presence of these immigrants in Dutch spaces becomes a particularly interesting avenue for investigation with relation to the integration of Muslim women immigrants into Dutch society in both a physical and metaphorical stance. This paper begins with a brief history of the concept of multiculturalism and integration policies in the Netherlands as a background to the Dutch context. Next, I present my methodological approach and explore my research question using data collected during my doctoral research. These local experiences provide insight into first-hand accounts of nation-building from front-line integration and settlement workers in order to examine the realities of the 'infrastructure of integration' in a Dutch context.

## 2 Multiculturalism in the Netherlands?

The pillarization system in the Netherlands was in place from 1917 until 1960s, in which the state funded various civic organizations run through religious institutions and ideological organizations (or pillars). During this time, individuals' everyday lives were informed by their membership in a particular religious or political pillar through separate (state-funded) schools, hospitals, social support agencies, newspapers, trade unions, political parties, and media outlets. These pillars historically consisted of Protestants, Catholics, Liberals and Socialists. During its height, leaders or representatives from each respective pillar worked together on communal issues; however, ordinary citizens would often work, socialize, and frequent businesses that were run by members of their own pillar community. This segregated lifestyle was best known through the Dutch maxims "living apart together" (Entzinger, 2006, p. 124) and "good fences make good neighbors" (Kaya, 2009, p. 118).

This institutionalization of cultural pluralism supports the definition of multiculturalism from the introduction (this issue), where "a society of many cultures is possible

as a basis for 'living together with differences'" (Fleras, 2012, p. 387); the latter phrase of which harkens back to the Dutch motto of "living apart, together". Yet, while cultural differences were practiced and tolerated, this approach to Dutch society did not include any cultural identities that were non constitutive of the imagined community of the Netherlands. This selective acceptance of cultural pluralism was challenged and eventually broken with the introduction of non-western immigration.

In the 1960s, the Dutch actively recruited 'guest workers' (*gastarbeiders*) from Italy, Spain, Turkey, and Morocco in order to fill a gap in their employment sector caused by their long history of emigration from the country. These workers were not given legal citizenship as they were expected to come in, work, and then return to their respective homelands once the employee shortages were over (Vink, 2007, p. 339-340). Despite a reduction in the number of jobs for low skilled laborers throughout the 1970s, the guest worker population continued to grow, mainly due to family reunification policies.

Before 1979, the Dutch dealt with immigrants on an *ad hoc* basis as previous waves of immigrants were largely repatriates from Dutch colonies who integrated well into society and, guest workers were assumed to be temporary residents (Vink, 2007, p. 340). In 1979, however, the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) released a report called *Ethnic Minorities*, which maintained that the Netherlands had become a land of immigration and that guest workers were not returning to their homelands as previously predicted (Vink, 2007). In 1983, the *Minorities Memorandum* was released and included "a number of general provisions that related to ... the legal status of immigrants, most notably with regard to political participation and citizenship status" (Vink, 2007, p. 340). In this *Memorandum*, the government agreed that immigrants with past colonial ties, guest workers, and refugees "had become a permanent part of Dutch society and that the country would therefore assume 'a permanent multicultural character'" (Dutch Government, 1983, p.12, as cited in Vink, 2007, p. 341). This policy granted these minority groups with official rights that allowed them to develop infrastructure around cultural retention in the Netherlands and afforded them access to other welfare opportunities (Vink, 2007, p. 341).

Using the background of Pillarization and the policies of the early 1980s, scholars have labeled the Netherlands as having a multicultural past because the Dutch tended to "institutionalize cultural pluralism in the belief that cultural emancipation of immigrant minorities (was) the key to their integration into Dutch society" (Duyvendak & Scholten, 2012, p. 269). These same scholars argue that since 1990, there has been a dramatic turn-about in how the Dutch integrate immigrants which can be understood as much more assimilatory in tone (see for example, Doomernik, 2005 or Joppke 2007). A more recent example of this assimilatory approach includes, for example, a *Memorandum on Integration*, released in 2011 by the Minister of the Interior, which stated that the

government believed that Dutch society, and the values that it was based upon, should be central to all future integration policies (Government of the Netherlands, 2011). In so doing, the national government stated that integration policies needed to promote a mandatory, unified Dutch character in order to prevent the threat of “fragmentation and segregation in society” (Government of the Netherlands, 2011, para. 3). With this change of course, the government spoke overtly against the perceived (cultural) “relativism embedded in the model of the multicultural society” (Government of the Netherlands, 2011, para. 2). The alternative, according to the Minister, is that “no-one would feel at home in the Netherlands” (Government of the Netherlands, 2011, para. 3). This *Memorandum* implies that the Netherlands is a place where increasing diversity creates a sense of disassociation for the majority community (as was implied in the statement that no-one would feel at home with continued cultural fragmentation), which is a phenomenon that the government intends to correct. Such an assimilatory approach has never been so overtly stated by the government. Other scholars however, have argued that the Dutch have not so much turned-away from multiculturalism, but rather, that they were never multicultural in the first place (Vink, 2007; Duyvendak & Scholten, 2012).

Vink has convincingly argued that the Dutch used multiculturalism only in a descriptive sense; that is, as a means to describe the diversification of Dutch society rather than in a normative sense (2007, p. 344), as in the way that multiculturalism is understood in Canada, for example. He argues that past policies like *the Minorities Memorandum* actually worked to increase minorities’ dependency on government institutions (through their cultural institutionalization), which also reiterated the paternalism of the state with relation to non-western immigrant groups (Vink 2007, p. 345). Vink further describes the ways in which minority cultures are themselves discussed in national immigration policies as unequal partners in Dutch society, for example, in the 1983 *Memorandum* where the “majority culture” is described as being “anchored in Dutch society” (2007, p. 345). The distinction as *unequal partners* highlights the lack of power these minority groups had to enact a state of multiculturalism that was equalized across all cultural partners (Vink, 2007, p. 345); Importantly, this interpretation of official Multicultural policies (as disadvantageous for minority groups) is reminiscent of the arguments by critics of Canadian Multiculturalism (see for example, Mackey, 2002).

Other scholars have agreed with Vink that multiculturalism was never an official policy in the Netherlands. For example, Duyvendak and Scholten (2012) argue that there was never an identifiable multicultural discourse, even during points where the government supported institutionalized diversity, due to the contradiction of certain contemporary anti-multicultural policies. Furthermore, Duyvendak and Scholten argue that confusion exists around whether the Dutch followed a multicultural approach because of the divergence between these

policies as a top-down process versus their actual practice on local levels (2012). Duyvendak and Scholten argue that despite the quick eschewing of multicultural policies from state policy makers, multicultural practices continued at the local level past the turn of the millennium; for example, the practice of local government authorities consulting ethnic or religious organizations over community events and affairs (2012, p. 278). Indeed, district government officials continued to consult local ethnic organizations concerning community events and affairs during the time of my field research (see Long, forthcoming). Therefore, while multiculturalism might not have been a deliberate state process, there exist “pragmatic attempts ... on the local level” (Duyvendak & Scholten, 2012, p. 278). It is these pragmatic attempts that this article explores as they are played out by municipal workers and volunteers involved in the integration courses and policies for immigrants. From the data presented below, it becomes apparent that there are local interpretations of national-level approaches to Dutch integration and that these interpretations reproduce exclusionary discourses of national identity and belonging. Therefore, it is important to understand how cultural ideals have informed practices within the infrastructure of integration and how do integration practices influence ordinary citizens’ construction of an imagined community in the Netherlands? In order to answer these questions, I first provide a background to integration and settlement programming from the municipal level and then discuss the everyday practices of integration through the eyes of workers and volunteers at municipal-level integration organizations.

### 3 Integration and settlement programming in Rotterdam

According to Rotterdam’s “What is Civic Integration?” website produced in 2007, citizenship requires ‘participation’ and thus necessitates the ability to read, write, and understand the Dutch language (“What is civic integration,” 2007). The website also states that mandatory ‘civic integration’ (translated from the word *Inburgering* in which *burger* is literally ‘citizen’) will teach students how to live together in Rotterdam and throughout the Netherlands. Students are selected to attend civic integration courses if their economic status is deemed a hindrance for participating in society, for example, if they are on unemployment insurance for an extended period of time. This selection also depends on whether their cultural values are regarded as similar or adoptable to that of the Netherlands; for example, Japanese immigrants are counted as ‘western immigrants’ because they are assumed to be effective contributors to the Dutch economy (*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* (CBS), 2015).

The focus of most integration policies today is on the integration of Muslim immigrants from Turkey and Morocco. Dutch immigration officials categorized guest workers who emigrated from Turkey, Africa (predominately thought of as coming from Morocco), Latin America, or Asia (with the exception of Japan) as “non-

western immigrants" (CBS, 2015). Schinkel has argued that it is non-western immigrants and Muslims who are predominantly identified as lacking cultural integration and are therefore seen to exist on the 'periphery' of society (2008; van den Berg & Schinkel, 2009). The Dutch also used autochthony discourse, that is, narratives concerning (national) belonging to one's native homeland, in their political discussions. These terms identify Dutch citizens as *autochtonen* which translates to "natives" and immigrants as *allochtonen* which translates to "foreigners". The concept of autochthony however also carries certain understandings whereby *autochtonen* are largely thought to be white, liberal-minded, secularists or Christians; while *allochtonen* are often identified or portrayed in the media as non-western immigrants, individuals who have darker skin and who might hold more conservative values toward women and society, and who may be non-Christians. As argued by Shadid (2006), Muslims are often associated with "crime, drugs, and general nuisance... accused of fundamentalism, terrorism, radicalism, disloyalty and orthodoxy as well as of undertaking activities that are 'dangerous to democracy' and harmful to integration" in the Netherlands (p. 20). This framing of Muslim immigrants from Turkey and Morocco as being in the most need of cultural integration has been commonplace since the turn of the century. With regard to integration courses, such immigrants are typically asked to attend courses if they are parents or educators of children and regarded as lacking the necessary knowledge to raise children in a way that will guarantee their integration into Dutch society (Schinkel & van Houdt, 2010, p. 707).

#### 4 Integration policies for immigrants living in the Netherlands

Since January 1, 2007, integration policies have legally mandated the aforementioned individuals who are living in the Netherlands to complete *Inburgering* courses. As part of the process for naturalization and integration in the Netherlands, immigrants and refugees must pass a series of exams that require them to have sufficient knowledge of the Dutch language, history, and culture. According to an affiliated city website entitled *It begins with language*, there are three groups of individuals who must undergo such training: 'new comers', 'old comers' and spiritual ministers (*hetbegintmettaal.nl*, N.d.). Newcomers are defined as those who are immigrating from outside Europe, who do not have a Dutch passport and are between the ages of 16 and 65. Old-comers are between the ages of 16 and 65, do not have a Dutch passport, have lived in the Netherlands for eight years or less, and do not have any Dutch education. Lastly, spiritual leaders such as imams, pastors, hospital chaplains, rabbis, or those working in religious education, humanistic counseling, pastoral or missionary work are all required to take civic integration courses in addition to the above guidelines. Such stipulations mark those students seen to be in need of instruction concerning Dutch cultural norms as being different from the rest of Dutch society. These courses, by their very existence,

highlight the presence of an "autochthonous culture" which students must learn.

At the time of this research, those immigrants who wanted to obtain Dutch citizenship had to pass a two-part test in order to naturalize: a national exam and a practical exam. The national exam is standardized and consists of knowledge concerning Dutch society, being able to repeat Dutch phrases, and an electronic practical exam. The practical exams are conducted using role play techniques where students carry on a simulated interview or a short discussion, for example have a parent/teacher meeting concerning the progress of their child in school. These exams take approximately two hours for the price of € 399, according to *Ooverburggen*, one of the civic integration providers in Rotterdam.

In addition to writing exams for the practical portion of civic integration, students must complete a portfolio that documents 20 different experiences (signed by a witness) that highlights various civic integration proficiencies. The choices of portfolios include: citizenship, work, education, health and child welfare, social participation, and entrepreneurship. Proficiencies addressed in the work portfolio include, but are not limited to: acquiring personal insurances (e.g. asking questions from a provider); housing (e.g. paying one's rent, acknowledging the need to conserve energy, cleaning up one's property); education (e.g. signing up for further training); contact with neighbors in the area (e.g. introducing oneself, inviting a neighbor over, responding to an invitation, speaking with the neighbor concerning an issue and possible solutions, apologizing to the neighbor for something that the student has done wrong); searching for work; specific work techniques (e.g. writing up a client complaint); work-customer service (e.g. discussing performance review); work-care and wellness (e.g. reading and understanding texts about health, hygiene and safe working practices). The final interview to assess one's portfolio takes approximately 1 hour and costs € 169. These activities in skill development emphasize the importance of active citizenship within Dutch society.

In the following, I first provide an overview of my methodological and theoretical approach. This section is followed by the presentation of first-hand experiences of integration from the perspective of those native-Dutch working within the infrastructure of integration. What becomes apparent is that those working in the system of integration wish to develop citizens in a way that reinforces a mono-cultural perspective of Dutch society.

#### 5 Data gathering & methodology

The data for this article comes from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2009-2010 that included ethnographic and semi-structured, in-depth interviews with five native Dutch workers and volunteers who are/were directly involved with the integration courses in a neighborhood of Rotterdam. I gained access to this research site as a participant observer; that is, I took part in the integration courses and affiliated activities as a researcher, volunteer, and student. The qualitative data used in this article was collected over an eight month period



when I was attending an official integration course for newcomers and was a volunteer for a cycling program for non-western immigrant women. The classroom-based integration education courses were held on average three times a week at the same neighborhood centre where the weekly cycling courses were organized.

The data found in this article are presented as case studies of integration projects in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. By case study, I am referring to what Willis (2007) defines as “an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, and event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group” as a means to gain an holistic understanding of such a phenomenon in participants’ everyday lives (as cited in White, Drew & Hay, 2009, 21). In so doing, these case studies provide five separate perspectives on the single question of how discourses of national belonging interpreted and acted upon by those charged with providing the education linked to this nation-making paradigm. These case studies provide rich-detail concerning first-hand experiences of a larger, faceless process surrounding the integration of immigrants. Because other researchers have already conducted important work on Dutch integration from the perspective of its immigrant participants (see for example, Ghorashi & van Tillburg, 2006; Bjornson, 2007; van den Berg & Schinkel, 2009), it is pertinent to understand the perspective of educators and volunteers in the settlement and integration sector which I understand as being a part of the nation-making process.

Further, these local perspectives provide unique insight into the words and actions of these individuals as they transcended their role as educators of civic curriculum to individuals personally involved in the nation-making process. These conscious efforts, when discussed comparatively, provide insight into the manner in which those involved in the infrastructure of integration, produce exclusionary constructions of belonging to the imagined community of the Netherlands.

The data used in this article comes from in-depth, semi-structured interviews, conducted in either Dutch or English that were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim by professional transcribers, in addition to data gathered through participant observation and ethnographic interviews that were documented in field note entries, with five different participants. Following a grounded theory approach, I collected and analyzed my data at the same time thereby obtaining an in-depth appreciation of my participants’ nation-making experiences in a manner that focuses my attention to those themes that *they* find important (Bernard, 2006).

In order to identify municipal educators, volunteers and workers in my local field site, I used purposeful sampling techniques. Thus, these interviewees were selected on account of their role as *Inburgering* educators, volunteers or policy makers involved in citizenship education for immigrants. Having established a relationship with these interlocutors, through participant observation, I held multiple interviews, both formal and informal, with these participants. My analytical process included

reading through interview transcripts and my field notes in order to locate themes through open and selective coding techniques (Bryant, 2014). Upon reaching a point of theoretical saturation (Bryant, 2014, p. 131), it became apparent that there was indeed a culturalized understanding of integration by those involved in local integration activities.

In order to better understand the context of integration courses and my ethnographic field site, I conducted qualitative content analysis, using open coding techniques, on the educational documents collected throughout my ethnographic fieldwork that concerned integration and settlement education for non-western immigrants. These documents were supplemented by an analysis of content found on the national government immigration website and affiliated integration (civic education) partners. The findings from these documents helped shape the background and analysis of this work in terms of allowing me insight into which narratives, keywords, and themes were deemed to be “officially important” as determined through their presence, and therefore significance, in user (cycling) guides or manuals for integration instructors and their students.

## 6 Theoretical perspective

I situate my theoretical perspective within the critical social theory, in particular, I use Yuval-Davis’ notion of ‘multi-layered citizenship’ and its role in shaping contemporary politics of belonging (2007). The concept of multi-layered citizenship allows me to explore the heterogeneity of nationalist projects and to appreciate citizenship as a concept which has both formal and substantive aspects that highlights the intersectionality of identities (Yuval-Davis, 2007). Using this perspective as a framework, I explore and reflect upon the cultural as well as social, historical and ideological forces and structures that produce and constrain experiences of belonging and nation-making from the perspective of those working within the infrastructure of integration, that is, the practices of minor figures.

In what follows, I present two in-depth interviews of integration workers in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. I will then discuss my first-hand experiences as a volunteer for a local cycling program, which was used as an integration activity, and the conversations and interviews I had with the volunteers of this program, and others like it.

## 7 Integration inside the classroom

The integration courses that I attended as a participant observer were run three days a week out of a local neighborhood centre called, *Jarris Buurt Centrum*<sup>ii</sup>. I joined these lessons in November and stayed until June when these courses broke for summer holiday. My instructor for this courses was Hilde, a 30-something, blonde haired, soft-spoken woman who was well-liked by all her students. She led courses in Rotterdam and Dordrecht, in both day and evening programs, through a private company which is one of the seven private companies authorized to provide civic integration services in Rotterdam. Hilde used various teaching techniques to

cover the material in the textbook and was known for adhering to the strict rule of speaking Dutch at all times.

In the class I attended with Hilde as our instructor, the other students were predominantly of Turkish and Moroccan women who had come to the Netherlands with their husbands. There was a range in the number of years spent in the Netherlands from approximately 30 years to less than five years. When I asked the women why they chose to participate in these courses, their responses varied although for most of the students in this class, these lessons were described as “a means to an end”; that is, a means to acquire a visa or the first step toward other kinds of education. In general, students’ reactions toward the program were not negative but rather of genuine interest and appreciation of time spent with the other students. I was present on two occasions when students who were already-graduated visited the class ‘just to spend time’. Both visitors said that they found the courses cozy and friendly (*gezellig*). These classes also proved useful to network and socialize with one another and obtain practical information. For example, the students were quite happy one day to learn from one of their classmates that there was a doctor in the area who would speak Turkish with you; a rare occurrence as there were few Turkish-speaking doctors in Rotterdam.

During my participant observation of these courses, I became aware that the physical space in which these courses took place was important. This was further described by Hilde during an interview:

We originally operated these courses out of a small room in the local mosque three days a week. We had to move though because the room where we had these classes had no windows and because we were always interrupted by calls to prayer. We arrived for the lessons at 1 o’clock in the afternoon and by 2:20, the prayers started. We couldn’t do anything for the next half an hour because it was so loud and that went on every class! So I asked if we could take the loud speaker out of the room and they always said “yes” but it was never actually taken away. So I could not give good lessons. What I think is not nice about giving civic integration lessons in a mosque is that there was no Dutch being spoken in the place.

Secondly, we were working in a women’s only space so no men were allowed to come in. So for the women, in my eyes, it is much harder to acculturate. Some women were in the courses for over two years (the regular timing is three, six, twelve, or 18 months) because of how much harder being in the Mosque made it to learn. I thought, this is not good, they must learn how to participate, work, intern, speak Dutch, and what to do when they encounter men. If they don’t do these things then they haven’t really integrated.

So, I asked my boss to move locations. What eventually happened is that I moved the group from the Mosque to join another smaller group already taking place in the Jarris Neighborhood Center (JNC). The JNC was also ideal because they had computers

there and some of the exams are on computers. In the Mosque there is nothing like this so I thought, I must let them see that. There were enough advantages to move there for sure (Hilde, July 22, 2010).

By not supporting what she perceives as Dutch values, such as mixed gender spaces or not speaking Dutch while inside this space, Hilde’s reaction to move the class to a more-Dutch location demonstrates the manner in which individuals’ actions, as well as their affiliations, influence one’s perceived belonging; a factor which attaches not just to people but the places they use and imbue with meaning. This reinforces other researchers’ findings about the general publics’ unease associated with visible Islamic structures, such as mosque architecture, on the Dutch landscape (see Landman, 2010). It is significant to note that the space of the classroom itself was an important feature of the integration process for these immigrants.

In addition to this field site, I was a participant observer during four different graduation ceremonies held for students after completing pre-integration courses throughout Rotterdam. My involvement with these ceremonies was limited, often as an observer or volunteer; however, I was invited to each ceremony once another Dutch integration and language instructor, Femke, learned of my research and my interest in non-western immigrant integration services. Femke frequently shared her opinions concerning the integration of non-western immigrants, a process she had become disenchanted with over time. During one conversation, Femke stated,

Although I find myself a tolerant woman, some-times I question my level of tolerance because I see a bunch of women coming to this country, dressed with headscarves, and I wonder, ‘Wow, what has my nation come to?’ The city of Rotterdam has changed a lot since I was a little girl and I am worried about integration on a whole. For example, some of the *allochthonous* women I used to work with are not allowed to take part in my lessons anymore because their husbands feel as though it was “too much freedom for them to speak Dutch”. I think this is because the Moroccan and Turkish people who come to the Netherlands now, come from the less educated parts of their countries. Many of them marry their sisters, brothers, or cousins; thus, their IQ is (negatively) affected. With lower IQs, the next generation of children don’t have a chance. I think that these migrants have to catch up to the ‘West’, or, the Netherlands. They are behind in the times in how to treat their women, how to belong, and don’t make an effort in this society. I do not think that Moroccans or Turkish immigrants have the ability to match Dutch society; we will only be able to live apart, together. (...) I just don’t think these people (*allochtonen*) would accept homosexuality, or approve of female emancipation. So, I actually think that it is the attitude of these people that did not allow for a better relationship. You know, when the Surinamese, Indonesian, and Moluccan migrants came in, you did not realize that

they were Muslims (most Indonesian migrants were Muslims). They blended in. But now, the Dutch are too tolerant and what was once our strength is now our weakness (Femke, June 10, 2010).

Femke's perspective of the 'typical' students in her class becomes part of the larger discourse often used to support the focus of integration services on non-western immigrants; That is, that *allochthonous* individuals, particularly those stemming from Turkish and Moroccan immigration, are fundamentally different and in need of "proper education of Dutch moral standards" (van Bruinessen, 2006, p. 12). The fact that Femke questions not only the social values that immigrants from Turkey and Morocco might hold in contrast to the Dutch, but also perceived defectiveness in their genetic make-up, reifies these individuals into bounded ethnic groups that have particular social problems. In addition, Femke connects the lack of morals from one generation to the next, an act which supports the discourse in Dutch politics and media that Moroccan and Turkish youth have a 'lack of warmth' at home. This lack of warmth is associated with a lack of direction, parenting, or family atmosphere in the home which contributes to youths' public misbehavior and their inability to integrate into Dutch society effectively; this process is understood to disconnect non-western immigrants (and subsequent generations) from the Dutch "nation" (see Müller 2002 for further discussion). Similar to Fellin (this issue), it is the mothers who are often the focus of education campaigns, which points to the gendered approach of this citizenship process. These mothers have become targets of disciplinary action so that it can be assured that they will be able to raise children who become 'active' Dutch citizens (Kirk and Suvarierol, 2014, p. 252).

Significantly, Femke alludes to a multicultural ideal when she spoke of the inability of *allochthonous* individuals to match Dutch society, stating that "we will only be able to live apart, together". While her use of this phrase is telling of her belief that contemporary integration practices approach integration in the same way as they did during the period of Pillarization – an approach which she does not perceive as being successful – it is as important to recognize that Femke faults *allochtonen* for "not allow(ing) for a better relationship" conceivably between themselves and the Dutch.

With regard to the lived experiences of multiculturalism by ordinary citizens, these integration instructors segregated and subordinated non-western Muslim immigrants in relation to the majority members of the Netherlands. Importantly, non-western Muslim immigrants were perceived as having a resolute culture, which although speaks of the existence of multiple cultures in Dutch society, does not support an equitable relationship among them. Like the national policies for integration of immigrants, local accounts of integration supported the emancipation of these subjects through the acquisition of Dutch cultural values and norms that were to be delivered in Dutch spaces; spaces of which did not

include mosques or spaces perceived as anti-feminist. Importantly, these interlocutors did not just discuss their perceptions of this culture as specific cultural experiences but instead, superimposed these cultural traits, such as anti-homosexuality and conservatism toward female gender roles, onto a larger "Islamic Culture". These cultural traits were discussed as the binary opposite of their understandings of a "Dutch Culture" and point to a connection with the national context.

The following is an exploration of one of those methods, in particular, the use of cycling as an integration tool in one of Rotterdam's neighborhoods for the purpose of integrating female Muslim immigrants. It becomes apparent that cycling is perceived as a particularly Dutch manner of travel in public space and is a way to demonstrate Dutch cultural values and one's wish to belong in greater society.

### 8 Integration outside of the classroom

The Netherlands is known for having a 'bicycling culture' (Pelzer, 2010, p. 1). Pelzer argues that cycling is part of the Dutch 'national habitus'<sup>iii</sup> and that cycling should be viewed as a "cultural phenomenon that reflects the way in which the bicycle was used...to create national identification" (2010, p. 2-3). Pelzer believes that the Dutch have a bicycling culture not only due to the importance that cycling takes as a means of transportation but also in terms of how the public spaces in the Netherlands are physically constructed (2010, p. 2-3). For example, in Rotterdam, city planners designed the downtown streets to incorporate separate cycling lanes. Cyclists in the city also benefit from other infrastructure such as traffic control lights specific for bicycles, innumerable bicycle parking areas and rental facilities, and an underground tunnel beneath the river Rotte, made specifically for cycling transportation. Despite these allowances, cycling is seen to be a national pastime and mode of transportation.

In a study on the mobility among ethnic minorities in urban centers of the Netherlands, a researcher at the Cultural and Social Planning Bureau concluded that immigrants were less mobile than the native Dutch, opting instead to take public transportation (Harms, 2006, p. 1). The author concluded that "people of foreign origin leave (their) house more rarely than the ethnic Dutch" and that it is "perhaps, cultural factors, like the limited possibilities for Muslim women to go out of the house without the consent or without being accompanied by their husbands", that results in such differences in spatial behaviors, particularly when looking at Turkish and Moroccan groups (Harms, 2006, p. 6-7). Acknowledging the problematic cultural and religious generalizations made in the above assertions, this report underscores popular belief that non-western immigrants and their children are thought to be unwilling or unable to integrate, and in this case, to learn the national (cultural) mode of transportation.

Cycling lessons for immigrant women in the Netherlands have been available since the 1980s, and are now supported by foundations such as the National

Cycling Support Centre (*Landelijke Steunpunt Fiets*, LSF) that was founded in 1996 (*steunpuntfiets.nl*, 2015). According to text found on their website, immigrant women who can cycle are more emancipated than those who cannot because cycling “increases their independence and capabilities” (*steunpuntfiets.nl*, 2015, para. 1). This organization makes cycling a distinctively Dutch trait and one that represents Dutch cultural norms when they write “with other riders and good guidance, foreigners (*buitenlanders*) dare to go cycling and they become more familiar with the Dutch roads and with the Dutch culture (*de Nederlandse cultuur*)” (*steunpuntfiets.nl*, 2015, para. 3).

This integration trajectory for cycling classes was evident when I spoke with Tom, a native Dutch man, about his past experiences working for Rotterdam’s municipal government. During one of our in-depth interviews, Tom said:

The bicycling lessons took a lot of time and effort. We had to arrange the bicycles, get people to teach the lessons and other things. I arranged things more than actually taught any lessons. After a while, I thought the project had failed because I didn’t see any immigrant women cycling in the area. Then one day, I saw one of the men who taught these lessons and he said that he was still giving diplomas out, but that the women did not cycle very much after the lessons had finished. To which I said “Shit! Then these women did not really understand the intention of cycling.” When I heard that they were going to start bicycling lessons at the JNC, I said “Good! Get out there and start doing it!” because you can see the backwardness of these people who live very small lives because they don’t get out. They don’t know many people. The more backward the person is, the smaller their life is” (Tom, March 21, 2010).

This excerpt provides a window into Tom’s perception of what constitutes Dutch cultural norms and values. Like Hilde and Femke before him, Tom juxtaposes the culture of non-western immigrants with Dutch culture, even going so far as to call it “backward” which aligns to what scholars have been writing about the representation of Muslims and Orientalism in western thought. This perception of backwardness is reminiscent of Sherene Razack’s argument that Muslims, living in ‘the West’ after 9/11, are subjected to neo-colonial ideals where they are perceived to be in need of civilizing (2008). Thus, cycling lessons for, as Razack would categorize, the imperiled Muslim women living in the Netherlands is one way to emancipate these ‘backward’ women from their culture, religion, and overbearing husbands and fathers. Importantly, this idea of ‘backwardness’ is used as a counterpoint to understand the belonging of oneself to the community of the Netherlands, which although comes in many forms, can be easily identified through one’s ability to cycle. This underlying discourse is apparent when Tom states that “these people live very small lives because they don’t get out”. Thus, the purpose of these lessons was to emancipate the participants from their backwards

lifestyle and to get them (visibly) out into the neighborhood, and in so doing, broadening their exposure to the world.

In what follows, I provide experiences of cycling courses at the Jarris Neighborhood Center (JNC) where I volunteered to help non-western immigrant women learning how to cycle. These courses were part of the citizenship curriculum for immigrants working toward their integration requirements. From these experiences, it became apparent that teaching immigrants how to cycle was understood as a means to afford these women freedom from perceived oppressive relationships, often attributed to the perception that Muslim women were oppressed by their husbands and culture. The fact that these women were taught how to cycle was considered an important step in their process of integration into Dutch society; that is, the act of cycling was seen as a practical skill but also one that was associated with the Dutch national identity.

Cycling lessons at the JNC began in 2009 and were financially supported through funding from the district government. The target group for such lessons is non-western allochthonous women who are identified as Muslims. As such, these cycling lessons were listed as a ‘women-only’ activity, an act which drew on the perception that Muslim women would not attend events that included male, non-family members. These lessons began at 9:30 am, every Friday morning, when the women arrived at the local neighborhood center and then walked over to an open plane across the street. My job as a volunteer was to teach participants how to balance, peddle, and to practice turning and avoiding objects while on the plane. Once these steps were learned, the women graduated to cycling by themselves along a path through the park. Once they were confident enough in their abilities, one of the volunteers took an advanced group of cyclists out onto the streets in the neighborhood in order to practice knowledge of street signs and rules of the road in addition to gaining experience cycling in traffic. This was often a nerve-racking experience as the streets were busy with traffic from other cyclists and automobile drivers. In general, the process took ten weeks to complete and at the end, participants received a certificate of completion made available through the local school. This certificate could be used toward the participation portion of one’s naturalization certification.

The majority of the participants at these sessions were women between the ages of 25 and 65 years old who had immigrated from Turkey and Morocco. During the lessons, it was more common to hear women speaking Berber, Arabic, and Turkish rather than Dutch. These women came from a variety of family situations although the majority were mothers or grandmothers who lived with their extended families. Few of these participants worked although, some were in the process of taking integration courses or were students at the Islamic University. Although the majority of these women would have been considered Muslims because they wore headscarves, their religious identity and the topic of

religion did not surface, to my knowledge, throughout the eight months that I volunteered. When I asked participants of the lessons why they took part, women cited “hanging out with friends” and “finding a quicker form of transportation to their jobs and throughout the city”, as reasons. This is not to say that individuals did not use these courses as a means to fulfil their integration checklists but that there may have been other, more pressing reasons reported to me. For those local Dutch natives who organized and guided these classes, however, integration was a central goal of this project.

Throughout my eight months of participation in these cycling courses, I often heard Tieneke, a native Dutch woman in her early 50s who volunteered at the cycling lessons reassert the integrationist mission of the classes by insisting that everyone speak Dutch during the cycling lessons and coffee breaks. She would often say, “Come on Ladies! You must speak Dutch! Speak Dutch!” On one occasion, Tieneke was approached by two of the participants, one of which was trying to translate the intentions of the other. Tieneke stopped the ‘translator’ in mid-sentence and said, “No, no, you” pointing to the woman who did not speak Dutch very well, “try to tell me what it is you mean in Dutch. That is what you’re supposed to do here” (Tieneke, April 16, 2010, field notes). Tieneke’s insistence on the use of the Dutch language for communication during this activity, when she notes “that is what you’re supposed to do here”, connects the purpose of these lessons not just with cycling but with speaking the Dutch language - both of which are cultural traits associated with an ideal Dutch identity.

Furthermore, Henny, a native Dutch woman who was also a volunteer at the lessons and lived in the area, told me during an interview that she volunteers to help immigrant women because she “wanted to make people more comfortable in their daily practices in Dutch society, so that (these women) could do these things in everyday life” (Henny, June 28, 2010). Henny started volunteering with immigrant mothers from her local school and began volunteering as a cycling coach when one of the mothers told her that ‘everyone bicycles here’. Henny made note of this to me and added, “I didn’t see this but they did. (So) I take part because I see these women picked it up very fast and were happy to have this...I noticed how beneficial it could be (for them)” (Henny, June 28, 2010). Although Henny’s outspoken intention for these courses were not to assimilate these women into a particular Dutch ideal, Henny’s description of the women differentiated them from the larger Dutch majority. Moreover, her comments were somewhat reminiscent of the paternalistic approach of past integration policies, when she stated that “I noticed how beneficial it could be for them”. Thus, the act of cycling, as described by Tom and Tieneke, was used as a means to understand who belonged within the imagined community of the Netherlands and which traits were thought to be typical in Dutch culture. This experiential process of identifying Dutch values and norms was also used as a means to categorize non-

western immigrant women, as being non-Dutch. Overall, the actions and interactions among the volunteers and the participants reinforced notions of ideal Dutch behaviour through one’s repeated participation in the infrastructure of integration. These ethnographic examples speak to a mono-cultural interpretation of Dutch culture, values, and norms.

## 9 Concluding remarks

This article explores the manner in which discourses of national belonging are interpreted and acted upon by those charged with providing education linked to nation-making projects, such as immigrant integration into Dutch society. In so doing, this investigation also provided insight into the infrastructure of integration; an infrastructure which is made visible through the actions of ‘minor figures’ in relation to certain immigrant groups. Their actions demonstrate an understanding of Dutch cultural values and norms that defined traits thought to typify the majority Dutch culture; Such traits included the demonstration of female emancipation, for example, through their use of independent transportation such as bicycles, participating in non-Muslim spaces, for example, when taking courses outside the mosque, or speaking Dutch while in public.

Exploring the process of civic integration education in general is important for two reasons. First, this exploration has confirmed what other Dutch social scientists have argued, that there has been a culturalization of citizenship where citizenship and belonging to a Dutch ‘majority’ community are now understood largely through cultural factors (Tonkens et al., 2010). This becomes evident in situations where non-western immigrants, and in particular women, are required to interact with the opposite sex, accept homosexuality, learn to cycle, “act emancipated” (according to workers’ and volunteers’ perceived Dutch ideal), and to speak Dutch. Second, cycling lessons as a form of civic integration education shows how such lessons are not bound only to the classroom space but can also be located within everyday public spaces such as the public squares where these cycling lessons occurred. These case studies showed how civic education is not limited strictly to curriculum specialists, teachers, and students but is a process in which ordinary citizens who become involved in the integration process are also influencing the experiences of those participating students.

In sum, this article provides insight into the ways in which individuals craft their own understanding of citizenship education that works to create an exclusionary understanding of social belonging and civic engagement for new immigrants. Such an approach does not engender a multicultural awareness or sympathy but has instead reaffirmed the Netherlands’ mono-cultural project to integrate immigrants and build relationships across the imagined community. In so doing, these experiences have led to a citizenship education where Dutch cultural values, language and even comportment in public spaces are focused upon and where a mono-

cultural, rather than a multi-cultural, approach is the chosen framework for social cohesion within society.

Further research concerning the role of 'minor figures' in creating culturalized understandings of national citizenship, for example, through their participation in integration and settlement practices, would help illuminate the complex ways in which nations and their imagined communities are built not only from above, by the major nation-building figures like politicians, but also from below, through those everyday (re)conceptualizations of citizenship.

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#### Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Changes to the integration system came into place on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. These changes included the need for immigrants to pay for their civic education courses (loans have been made available for students through the government) and the institution of exams for certain migrants before coming to the Netherlands. Furthermore, the naturalization exams now include 5 parts: Knowledge of Dutch Society; speaking skills; reading skills; listening skills; and writing skills (for more information see Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, N.d. .; see also *inburgeren.nl*, N.d).

<sup>ii</sup> The name of the center was changed to safeguard confidentiality.

<sup>iii</sup> Pelzer defines Bourdieu's habitus as: the impetus for individuals to cycle because they have grown up with bicycling and lived in a context where cycling is naturalized (2010, p. 2).



## Ariel Loring

### A Grounded Approach to Citizenship Education: Local Interplays Between Government Institutions, Adult Schools, and Community Events in Sacramento, California

Following a grounded, bottom-up approach to language policy (Blommaert 2009; Canagarajah 2005; McCarty, 2011; Ramanathan, 2005), this paper investigates available resources and discourses of citizenship in Sacramento, California to those situated within the citizenship infrastructure. It analyzes how the discursive framing of local and national educational policies affects prospective citizens and the ways that resources and discourses differ across educational sites. These sites include a government field office, citizenship classes at adult schools and community centers, and a law school-sponsored citizenship fair. This article argues that adult schools and community events introduce their own *de facto* and *de jure* policies, in conjunction with top-down governmental policies that tend to reduce the complexity of naturalization at the expense of full participation. Both top-down and bottom-up educational policies consequently affect prospective citizens' understanding and enactment of citizenship.

#### Keywords:

citizenship, citizenship education, naturalization, language policy, discourse

#### 1 Introduction

This article investigates the depiction and enactment of citizenship education in Sacramento, California by those that comprise its infrastructure. To do so, it takes a grounded approach to citizenship education, focusing on available resources and discourses of citizenship in various sites in Sacramento. Within the larger Sacramento metropolitan area, 10,620 naturalizations occurred in the 2012 fiscal year. The majority of these new citizens were married, unemployed or working inside of the home, and originated from countries including Laos, Ukraine, Mexico, the Philippines, India, and Vietnam (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2012).<sup>i</sup> These naturalizations were only a portion of the 158,850 immigrants who became naturalized in the state of California during this time period. In the United States as a whole, almost 900,000 petitions were filed for U.S. naturalization during the 2012 fiscal year, with 84% of the applicants successfully becoming naturalized citizens (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2013).

The citizenship sites relevant to this article include the Sacramento-based USCIS [United States Citizenship and Immigration Services] government field office (both within the office and its website), citizenship classes at adult schools and community centers, citizenship fairs, and naturalization application workshops. These sites are *educational spaces*, which for the purposes of this paper are defined as any area where meanings of citizenship are transmitted and negotiated by those involved in the naturalization process, either directly or indirectly. Within these spaces, the type of education that

transpires is typically a one-directional transfer of knowledge and advisory guidance from someone in power (field officer, instructor, lawyer, staff) to the naturalization applicant.<sup>ii</sup> Primarily, the learning that occurs in this context is a growing understanding of the naturalization process, which consists of learning how to complete the N-400 application for naturalization and preparing for the oral naturalization interview. This type of learning is often rote, decontextualized, and practical and is not a rich co-construction of meaning between interlocutors (see Banks, 2008; DeJaeghere, 2008; Gordon, 2010; Loring, 2013a).

Understanding the type of learning, available resources, and particular ways of framing citizenship in these domains is consequential because it helps shape the journey which prospective citizens undergo as they work through the naturalization process, and can affect how they in turn come to understand what citizenship means and how they choose to enact it. Therefore, the research questions guiding this analysis are: What educational policies affect prospective naturalized citizens at both the national and local levels? How is citizenship education discursively framed by those who work within a local citizenship enterprise? How do educational resources for naturalization applicants differ across these sites? Qualitative research methods, including ethnography, interviews, and textual analysis, were employed to investigate these questions.

#### 2 Defining citizenship and citizenship education from the bottom-up

The word "citizenship" is a multifaceted term that takes on varying interpretations in different contexts (Loring, 2013b). When used by the U.S. federal government, citizenship is described in terms of rights and responsibilities; political theorists additionally reference membership, community, and participation (Castles, 1998; Marshall, 1950; Touraine, 1997); citizenship instructors mention lifestyles, such as living without the fear of deportation, that native-born citizens have always taken for granted (Loring, 2013a); and the U.S. news media often equates *citizenship* with desirable ethics, values, and principles (Loring, forthcoming).<sup>iii</sup> Recently, scholars have shifted to analyzing citizenship in terms of what it permits, namely access to fuller participation (Heller,

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2013; Ramanathan, 2013; Wiley, 2013; Wodak, 2013). More than exclusively referring to civic or legal participation, *full participation* is the ability to access any or all societal resources constrained by language, literacy, and culture, such as health care (Ziegahn et al., 2013), professional jobs (Ricento, 2013), equal educational opportunities (Lillie, forthcoming), and language communities outside one's nation-state (McPherron, forthcoming).

This article is informed by these more expansive views that consider citizenship alongside issues of engagement, access, and participation, and similarly takes a broad view of *citizenship education* as any process through which citizenship knowledge emerges. This interpretation diverges from UNESCO's definition of citizenship education as "educating children, from early childhood, to become clear-thinking and enlightened citizens who participate in decisions concerning society" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 1). From this perspective, citizenship education is treated as a curricular subject, which is then further investigated in terms of effectiveness (Keating, Kerr, Benton, Mundy, & Lopes, 2010) and its bearing on global culture (Zajda, Daun, & Saha, 2009). However, this component of citizenship education, which is comparably labeled *transformative citizenship education* (Banks, 2008) and *critical citizenship education* (DeJaeghere, 2008), is just one dimension of citizenship education. In a more generalized sense, citizenship education is given an emic interpretation in this article, defined as the wide variety of ways that citizenship knowledge is transferred (be it from public discourses, teachers, community members, websites, pamphlets, etc.), which may or may not lead to participation, tolerance, or deeper understanding. In this vein, I follow scholars such as DeJaeghere (2008) and Sim and Print (2009) who analyze the pedagogical practices and perspectives of citizenship instructors in Australia and Singapore, respectively. Grounded representations of citizenship education further encapsulate the fact that more comprehensive definitions of these terms are not necessarily shared by those involved in the Sacramento citizenship enterprise. For many of them, citizenship is seemingly the singular legal process whereby U.S. immigrants apply for and study for the naturalization test. Therefore, it is necessary to approach citizenship and citizenship education as policies that are affected by both the top-down and the bottom-up, informed by government policies as well as by the attitudes of those who implement the policies.

The top-down approach to language policies is the traditional approach, in that it has a macro focus and is concerned with how institutional policies affect those without agency (see Canagarajah, 2005). In the case of citizenship, the top-down perspective originates from USCIS, which portrays American citizenship in terms of certain dimensions; it is idyllic, collective, tangible, and testable (Loring, 2013b). These facets are part of a larger "cultural script that includes family, solidarity, a strong work ethic, belief in the value of education, contribution to the nation, and assimilation" (Gordon, 2010, p. 3). Indeed, many of these values are manifested in the

USCIS-produced naturalization material (Baptiste, forthcoming), where the application and subsequent interview require knowledge of "principles of American democracy" and "rights and responsibilities" (Applicant performance on the naturalization test, 2008). USCIS's depiction of citizenship contributes to everyday understandings of American nationalism, which, as they become more routinely and subliminally reiterated, form their own brand of banal nationalism (Billig, 1995).

Passing the naturalization interview and reciting the oath of allegiance to the U.S. is the culmination of an immigrant's path to naturalization. The naturalization process begins by submitting a twenty-one page English application (N-400 form) and paying a \$680 application fee. Until 2013, the application was ten pages and included questions about the applicant's name, family, residence, employment, and eligibility; it now includes additional questions about group membership and affiliations, illegal benefits attainment, military service, and renunciation of foreign titles of nobility.<sup>iv</sup> During the approximately five-month waiting period for a scheduled naturalization interview, applicants can enroll in a citizenship preparatory course or access study material from the USCIS website, which includes a question bank of one hundred history/civics questions and their prescribed answers, as well as a list of 93 English vocabulary words used in the English reading/writing portion of the test (Study for the test, n.d.).

The naturalization interview consists of a one-on-one appointment with a USCIS field officer. It is conducted in English, thus it is a *de facto* policy enforcing English usage in a country that is not *de facto* monolingual (McNamara & Shohamy, 2008). It includes a history/civics portion and an English language portion; the history/civics requirement is met by answering six of ten questions correctly from the aforementioned pre-published list. The English requirement includes a reading, writing, and speaking portion. For the reading and writing portions of the test, applicants are given three attempts to produce a correct sentence that is given to them in either the written or oral modality, such as "California has the most people" and "They want to vote." To pass the English speaking requirement, applicants are asked questions from their submitted N-400 naturalization application.<sup>v</sup> Of the various components of naturalization, many citizenship instructors believe the English requirement is the most challenging for applicants (Loring, 2013a); from observations and recordings of naturalization interviews, Winn (2000) noted that no applicants (10 of 67) failed solely on the history/civics portion. As assessed by the naturalization test, citizenship is a top-down process of meeting objectives that are identified in government policy: good moral character, knowledge of American history/civics, and English proficiency.<sup>vi</sup> Compared to the naturalization policies of other countries,<sup>vii</sup> Koopmans, Statham, Giugni, and Passy (2005) label the present-day U.S. as *multicultural/pluralist* (along with countries such as Canada, Australia, Britain, and Sweden), in that citizenship is easier to obtain and ethnic minority groups are encouraged to retain cultural differences. But

arguably, this is a *de jure* assertion representative of official policies and laws, and is not indicative of *de facto* practices (see Wiley, 2013 for examples of current anti-immigration public discourse).

Researchers are revisiting these traditional, top-down notions of citizenship, defining citizenship as an on-going, dynamic process, rather than a static attribute that an individual gains after passing the aforementioned naturalization interview (see Loring & Ramanathan, forthcoming; Ramanathan, 2013). These scholars, in researching citizenship in relation to language policy and language ideology, align with those in the language policy field who highlight the necessity of supplementing traditional top-down policy research with bottom-up research (Blommaert 2009; Canagarajah 2005; McCarty, 2011; Ramanathan, 2005). Bottom-up research includes the perspectives and practices of individuals, who, by being affected by top-down policies, often reformulate their own policies through accommodation, resistance, and transformation (McCarty, 2011; Ong, 1999). This results in a rich pool of *local knowledge* (Canagarajah, 2005) that is vital to understanding policy in a holistic way. Through analyzing educational policies in their relation to naturalization applicants, I examine *local knowledge* of what it means to be “an American citizen” from those involved in the citizenship infrastructure.

### 3 Methodology

The data for this study come from a larger pool of dissertation data, which consisted of ethnographic observations, interviews, governmental and pedagogical documents, and linguistic landscape signage. The data sources spanned adult schools, community centers, community-sponsored events, a USCIS field office, and national articles and blogs written about citizenship. Specific to this article is information concerning available resources and predominant discourses at the aforementioned sites. Additionally, a follow-up interview was conducted with the founder of a local citizenship fair.

#### 3.1 Site descriptions

Four types of sites comprise the data for this research: the USCIS field office, two public adult schools, a community center, and a law school-sponsored citizenship fair. Each site is described in more detail in the following sub-sections. All sites are located within Sacramento, the capital city of California and the thirty-fifth most populous city in the U.S. For comparative purposes, demographic information from the 2010 U.S. census is provided for the city of Sacramento, the state of California, and the nation as a whole (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).<sup>viii</sup>

As Table 1 illustrates, Sacramento is more racially and ethnically diverse than California, which itself is a highly diverse state in the U.S. There are higher percentages of foreign-born residents and linguistically diverse home environments in Sacramento than in the U.S., with the state of California having higher percentages than both. The education levels are largely constant across the three regions.

The four observed sites were chosen to encompass a wide sampling of resources and discourses accessed by prospective citizens, which will be contrasted with the top-down resources available from the USCIS online portal. The fact that all local sites provide free, subsidized, or low-cost services to the community suggests that the majority of applicants who seek assistance will turn to one of these sites. While all sites assist applicants with various stages of the naturalization process, the differences in how citizenship is discursively constructed demonstrate the complex landscape of citizenship education.

Table 1: Comparative demographics for Sacramento, California, and the U.S. in 2010

	Sacramento	California	United States
<b>Popula-tion</b>	<b>466,488</b>	<b>37,253,959</b>	<b>308,745,538</b>
<b>Race/ Ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White (non-Hispanic): 34.5%</li> <li>• Hispanic or Latino: 26.9%</li> <li>• African-American: 14.6%</li> <li>• Asian: 18.3%</li> <li>• American Indian: 1.1%</li> <li>• Two or more races: 7.1%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White (non-Hispanic): 40.1%</li> <li>• Hispanic or Latino: 37.6%</li> <li>• African-American: 6.2%</li> <li>• Asian: 13.0%</li> <li>• American Indian: 1%</li> <li>• Two or more races: 4.9%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White (non-Hispanic): 63%</li> <li>• Hispanic or Latino: 16.9%</li> <li>• African-American: 13.1%</li> <li>• Asian: 5.1%</li> <li>• American Indian: 1.2%</li> <li>• Two or more races: 2.4%</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school graduate or higher: 82.1%</li> <li>• Bachelor's degree or higher: 29.4%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school graduate or higher: 81%</li> <li>• Bachelor's degree or higher: 30.5%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school graduate or higher: 85.7%</li> <li>• Bachelor's degree or higher: 28.5%</li> </ul>
<b>Median household income</b>	<b>\$50,661</b>	<b>\$61,400</b>	<b>\$53,046</b>
<b>Foreign born persons</b>	<b>22.1%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>
<b>Language other than English spoken at home</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>43.5%</b>	<b>20.5%</b>

#### Public adult schools

Two public adults schools' citizenship classes were observed from one to five months from September 2010 to November 2011. Ford School for Adults,<sup>ix</sup> comprising 1,640 students,<sup>x</sup> offers an afternoon and evening citizenship/ESL class for twenty dollars a semester. From September 2010 to February 2011, I observed sixty-one students in attendance, who were primarily women, around 40-65 years old, and of Chinese, Hmong, and Mexican backgrounds. Their English language proficiencies encompassed a wide range from beginning to near-fluent. The instructor, Mr. Morris, is a 77-year-old retired high school principal. He follows a traditional teaching approach, in which students practice the test material by (re-)writing the given answers, which he then reviews orally. He occasionally introduces a lesson that provides deeper background information on a tested concept, but concludes his lesson by emphasizing the



basic response provided in the USCIS study material (“that’s all you need to know”), which mirrors top-down portrayals of citizenship. Students frequently receive handouts (an average of 6.3 per class meeting) that provide pertinent information guides produced by USCIS, ancillary handouts from citizenship curricular websites, or ones designed by Mr. Morris. Students in his class additionally obtain practical handouts and forms such as a multilingual voting guide, voter registration, passport application, other USCIS applications, and a breakdown of the naturalization application stages.

The second citizenship class observed is Wilson Adult School, serving a population of approximately fifty predominantly Caucasian students. The school offers two levels of Adult ESL and a citizenship class, to about fifteen primarily middle-aged Spanish and Russian-speaking students of intermediate English proficiency. The class teacher, Ms. Lara, is a naturalized American citizen, who uses Russian translations in classroom instructions, lessons, and handouts as a pedagogic tool. Her teaching strategy relies on exact memorization of the test content, achieved through constant oral and written repetitions. Ms. Lara provides her students with the N-400 application for citizenship, the one hundred history/civics test questions in either English or bilingual in English-Russian, civics and conversational English sample writing sentences, and sample questions for the oral interview.

### **Community center**

The Asian American Community Center [AACC] is a non-profit organization that provides assistance to the community’s immigrant, refugee, low-income, and limited English-speaking population. Founded in 1980, the AACC now employs seven people in its main office, with about twenty-five paid and volunteer staff members center-wide. Its offices provide assistance with career services, tax forms, and citizenship applications. The center distributes a citizenship workbook, available in English, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Tagalog, produced by a larger community organization, which includes all relevant publications by USCIS in addition to application instructions and a sample completed application.

AACC offers free ESL and citizenship classes, taught by Ms. Maria (the regular teacher) or Ms. April (the substitute teacher and co-founder of the organization). While both teachers frequently deviate from the test material, Ms. Maria does so to practice reading fluency and pronunciation and Ms. April does so to actively discourage memorization. The majority of the Chinese and Vietnamese ESL student population stay for the subsequent citizenship class, but the citizenship class is smaller (about seventeen people instead of thirty) with an older age demographic. On average, the AACC students have a lower level of English proficiency than the Ford School and Wilson Adult School students. Another service that the AACC provides is free naturalization workshops, in which volunteers and staff assist attendees with completing their N-400 naturalization applications, one in which I participated as a volunteer in 2012.

ization applications, one in which I participated as a volunteer in 2012.

### **Citizenship fair**

Giovanni Law School in Sacramento, partnered with other legal clinics in the community, sponsors an annual citizenship fair which provides assistance in completing and filing the N-400 naturalization application. Initiated in 2009 by Professor Alvarez, herself a naturalized U.S. citizen and an immigration and international human rights lawyer, the free fair accommodates approximately three hundred people, with resources to assist the first 150-200 attendees. According to Professor Alvarez, the attendees are largely Latino and Russian, except for one year in which attendees spoke twenty-three different languages. News of the fair reaches attendees through flyers, advertisements, and radio announcements that Giovanni Law School provides to local organizations. The fair is staffed by ninety to one hundred law students, ten to twenty staff and faculty from Giovanni Law School, twenty to thirty lawyers working pro bono, and ten interpreters. Although the fair is advertised as running from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., the volunteers work until 6:00 to 7:00 in the evening double-checking applications (“final attorney review.”)

### **USCIS field office**

The local USCIS field office serves twenty-three counties in Northern California; this is where applicants receive their naturalization interview. Duplicating and replacing forms are the other key areas of customer service provided. The most common types of inquiries involve green cards, case status, passport stamps, and citizenship/naturalization (Loring, 2013b). Approximately seventy people are seen a day, and while appointments last for as long as needed, most are fifteen to twenty minutes. A customer service appointment is scheduled either online through the government website (using the *Infopass* service) or through an automated machine inside the field office. Entering the field office involves photo identification, body scans, and security guards.

My access to this site was through scheduling an *Infopass* appointment online, which allowed me to ask field officers questions during my scheduled appointment time, observe *de jure* and *de facto* operational policies in the waiting room, and collect linguistic landscape data of instructional signage in the building. The data described in this chapter are primarily from an interview conducted with a USCIS field officer in one of the private naturalization interview rooms.

### **3.2 Data collection and analysis**

As mentioned, the type of data collected consists of ethnographic field notes and observations, interviews, and document analysis. The ethnographic observations were conducted at the aforementioned sites, the interviews were held with citizenship instructors (Mr. Morris, Ms. April, and Ms. Maria), Professor Alvarez from the Giovanni law school fair, and Mr. George, a field officer from USCIS. Analyzed documents consisted of published



documents, flyers, and booklets regarding citizenship at each of the educational venues observed.

The nature of the research questions and the topic of citizenship itself necessitate a holistic, qualitative research approach. Qualitative methods allow for particular meanings of citizenship to emerge from *detailed descriptions* of citizenship venues and *direct quotations* from those within the citizenship enterprise (Patton, 1980). Drawing from the grounded theory approach to qualitative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987), I simultaneously collected and analyzed data. This allows emergent meanings of citizenship to arise in tandem with ethnographic observations, uncovering a *thick* (Carspecken, 1996), descriptive explanation: “the integration of micro- and macrolevels of contextual data” (Watson-Gegeo, 1992, p. 52). Because there is no singular meaning of citizenship, ethnography is an effective methodology to elicit the multiple perspectives of citizenship that exist. In conducting an ethnographic study, I endeavor to understand how individuals define citizenship them-selves. I acknowledge that striving to attain local knowledge from an emic perspective is an ideal, for it is never truly possible for a researcher to become a complete insider (Abu-Lughod, 1990; Villenas, 1996).

#### 4 Findings

This section is organized into two strands; the first is a description of available resources and prominent discourses from USCIS, and the second is an account of resources and discourses in local educational sites.

##### 4.1 USCIS: top-down resources and discourses

The citizenship portal on the USCIS website is structured to provide information for three groups of people: applicants, instructors, and organizations. Applicants can download the N-400 naturalization application and study material for the naturalization interview (which includes a complete question bank of one hundred history/civics questions and approved answers, vocabulary lists for the English reading and writing portion, and printable flashcards for English vocabulary words and history/civics questions). This site has become increasingly multimodal, with text, audio, video, and interactive exercises; and multilingual, with some resources translated into Spanish and Chinese. I have argued elsewhere that the citizenship test requirements (and study material) limit English literacy to sentential, surface-level meanings, ignoring more globalized and comprehensive realms of literacy; accuracy is promoted over fluency, and language is tested and taught as a discrete skill (Loring, conditional acceptance).

The other key resource available to prospective citizens is to schedule an *Infopass* appointment at a local field office. Scheduling an appointment online inevitably requires computer access and literacy, but instructions are available in numerous languages: English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Russian, Portuguese, French, Korean, Polish, and Arabic. As mentioned in Section 3.1, applicants can use such

appointments to ask questions about their N-400 application.

To assist citizenship educators, the USCIS portal provides instructors with materials such as lesson plans and activities, educational products, and online training seminars (Teachers, n.d.). Closely related, but geared towards establishing new citizenship education programs, is the *Organization* tab (Program development, n.d.). Organizations can access documents such as “Expanding ESL, civics, and citizenship education in your community: a start-up guide” and “Citizenship foundation skills and knowledge clusters.”<sup>xii</sup> The first document provided to community organizations is a start-up guide for new citizenship/ESL programs. It includes sequential information that begins with identifying a need in the community, building a staff, establishing funding, and determining course content and assessment. The impetus for beginning such an endeavor is described as follows:

These programs help immigrants improve their English language ability so they can participate more fully in American life. Helping students learn to navigate America’s many complex systems and to understand American culture will help them establish a new life in this country. (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2009, p. 3)

This theme of cultural participation is one echoed in other realms of the citizenship enterprise, as will be discussed, and is even one of the hundred questions on the history/civics test.<sup>xiii</sup>

In the second document, citizenship knowledge is segmented into *foundation skills*, which are defined as “overarching skills that facilitate the learning of other content areas,” and *knowledge clusters*, which are “the specific content areas that applicants need to increase their chances of success during the naturalization interview and test” (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2010, p. 1). English proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) is counted as a foundation skill. The discourse used to describe foundation skills emphasizes the word “basic,” in phrases such as “basic conversation words,” “basic commands,” and “basic conversations in English” (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2010, p. 2). Foundation skills also include the ability to “locate information and resources to determine eligibility for naturalization, find the appropriate application forms, prepare for the naturalization interview and test, and travel to the USCIS offices” (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2010, p. 3). The words “locating,” “analyzing,” “synthesizing,” and “evaluating” appear on this page, comprising many of the higher order thinking skills on Bloom’s taxonomy of critical thinking (Krathwohl, 2002), which is a hierarchical ranking of cognitive understandings from concrete and simple to abstract and complex (Bloom, 1956; Krathwohl, 2002). The USCIS document clarifies that these skills are not required to pass the naturalization test, but are provided to help applicants prepare for the exam. In-

deed, as the next section will demonstrate, some citizenship teachers recognize this and incorporate these types of lessons into their curriculum (Loring, 2013a). Importantly, learning how to navigate government websites to obtain information and access required forms is an ability that elderly applicants may lack, and their main alternative is to visit the local USCIS field office, which in some cases is over one hundred miles away (Loring, 2013b).

The knowledge cluster skills include (1) understanding the naturalization process, (2) American history, (3) American government, and (4) integrated civics. Understanding the naturalization process is an area that relates closely to many of the abilities described as foundational skills; the last three correspond to the three subsections of the history/civics portion of the test. Stated justifications for teaching immigrants information in these content areas are: “to help new immigrants feel part of this shared experience” and to “help immigrants feel connected to their new communities and adopted country” (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2010, p. 7). Thus, this language relates to larger discourses about the shared values, common ties, and interconnectedness that unify American citizens.

#### **4.2 Local educational sites: bottom-up resources and discourses**

In addressing the resources and discourses present in the four local education sites, I will frame the discussion around (1) challenges and obstacles, (2) language assistance, and (3) perspectives towards citizenship at each site.

##### **Challenges and obstacles**

Adult schools offering citizenship instruction provide (semi)weekly practice with regards to the history/civics and English portions of the naturalization interview. This involves group work, individual writing practice, and choral repetitions modeled by the instructor. While the focus is direct assistance with the naturalization interview, peripheral areas of citizenship learning are sometimes addressed, such as logistical information about the USCIS building, application wait-time, and community dimensions of citizenship (Loring, 2013a). At the Ford School, this community dimension plays out in classroom visuals (photos of former students who have recently become naturalized), supplemental curriculum (bringing students’ native cultures into the discussions) and discourses that treat the class as a unit and showcase individual accomplishments (“I’d like to introduce to you [the class] a new citizen”). Students are encouraged to learn about their classmates’ naturalization process while learning about the necessary requirements which results in a shared goal of naturalization.

Lacking, however, is the extent to which teachers can assist students with legal issues. Mr. Morris at Ford School for Adults cautions, “you [the teacher] start playing lawyer and you can get into a lot of trouble quick with people, like give them advice that’s incorrect.” His students will occasionally bring their N-400 application

after class for assistance, where Mr. Morris will clarify its stated instructions and assist students in completing it. For issues in which he cannot advise, he directs students to free services such as USCIS *Infopass* appointments, explaining that lawyers who charge clients for free services “really take advantage of these guys.”

Another challenge for adult schools is the fact that students generally do not receive one-on-one help. Many instructors regularly rely on handouts that require students to mark correct answers or write in answers, and only the most vocal students participate during oral class reviews. Therefore, many students do not receive practice in oral English until immediately prior to their interview date, when they are included in more individualized practice. During many of my classroom observations of oral worksheet review, some students were unable to self-correct their answers because of the teacher’s reliance on the verbal modality. These teaching practices have significant consequences for students who likely do not have equal productive and receptive abilities in English.

At the AACC, citizenship classes face many of the same obstacles as the adult schools, however one crucial difference is that their office staff are specifically trained to assist students with filling out N-400 applications. Their staff provides this service within their offices and during citizenship fairs and application workshops that they themselves host. Unlike the citizenship fair at Giovanni Law School, the AACC fair is not completely staffed by lawyers. According to Ms. April, their staff members “were trained to get as much preliminary information as possible; if they [the applicants] needed to see a lawyer regarding some problem then we would send them in a room right away.”

The citizenship fair at Giovanni Law School is predominantly staffed by lawyers, and thus is able to provide full legal advice to all attendees, concluding in individual final attorney review sessions. They strive to provide a comprehensive experience for applicants during the fair itself, which includes taking and paying for pictures and copying, then mailing the completed application. Consequently, the wait-time for attendees is higher, and a significant obstacle is the sheer volume of attendees. As mentioned, approximately seventy to one hundred people who arrive later in the day are turned away. The sole purpose of the fair is to assist applicants with completing the N-400 application; according to Professor Alvarez, earlier attempts to include mock interviews with USCIS personnel and citizenship test workshops with undergraduate students was too “messy” because “trying to do too much is not helpful.”

Professor Alvarez believes the main challenge that their citizenship fair faces is the inability to conduct follow-up sessions with fair attendees or take on more difficult cases (for example, an applicant with a recent DUI on record). She describes this practice as a decision to be “risk-adverse” at the expense of turning some clients away: “If there’s any question that the interview might get a little tricky, we do not represent those individuals in a citizenship fair. We tell them that they should really go

get a lawyer to take their case.” She explains a hypothetical scenario with a citizenship fair attendee, in which she would tell the client that she would not continue the application process:

And they get upset, you know, [they say] ‘I’ve wasted my time, I’ve been waiting for a long time’ and I have to say to them ‘I appreciate your frustration but we don’t do any follow-up, we have limitations, we can’t accompany you to the interview. And with your history, you’re going to need an advocate. Even though you feel like it’s a waste of time, what I’m telling you is very helpful to you.’

Despite these obstacles, Professor Alvarez believes their services are “the minimum that should take place in order to do something ethically and professionally.”

Receiving assistance at the USCIS field office is an option that eliminates the peripheral members of the citizenship infrastructure and supplies a direct answer from a government employee to the naturalization applicant. This method of support obviates a “lot of hearsay out there,” sometimes generated by citizenship instructors who have not taken the test themselves or have never been to the field office, according to USCIS officer Mr. George. However, not all applicants take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions at a USCIS office, which Mr. George believes is one of the main obstacles applicants face during the naturalization process: “A lot of the time people have enough time to prepare but they don’t come into the office.”<sup>xiii</sup> Faced with the strict protocol for entering a government building and the online appointment-making system, many immigrants are presumably intimidated by or unable to successfully receive assistance directly from USCIS.

### **Language assistance**

Before broaching the topic of *how citizenship is talked about*, it is necessary to address the issue of *in which language is citizenship talked about?* The extent to which the various educational spaces offer multilingual assistance is dependent on the resources available and personal perspectives of local policy makers. In citizenship classes, the language instruction ranges from English-only instruction, to some L1 (first language) translations, to extensive L1 translations (Loring, 2013b). Ms. Maria at the AACC, who believes that the English requirement is the most difficult aspect of the naturalization interview, follows a strict English-only policy in class. She admonishes a Chinese couple for speaking to each other in their L1, telling them “You’re supposed to speak English.” Thus, she is a strict proponent of language immersion and does not consider L1 use to be a beneficial metalinguistic tool or scaffolding device (Grasso, 2012). Mr. Morris, although a monolingual English speaker, will employ some Spanish words to try to facilitate student comprehension, such as “*mucho dinero* [a lot of money]” and “a promise to be *leal* [loyal].” On the other hand, Ms. Lara at Wilson Adult School translates individual words, entire sentences, and

sets of instructions in Russian while she teaches. This practice is designed to aid her largely Russian-speaking class, but ignores the few Spanish speakers present. In a setting with a large student population, the choice of which language(s) to use and which language(s) to allow the students to use has significant implications as to which students are supported and which students are excluded.

At the observed AACC application workshop, applicants attend for one-on-one help, and thus, it is easier to provide accommodations in applicants’ native languages. The languages in which the staff can assist are: English, Russian, Ukrainian, Hindi, Punjabi, Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong, Tagalog, and Korean. Most applicants speak an Asian language, fitting in with the target group of the organization. The AACC volunteers and staff refer to non-English language assistance as “being helped *in language*.” For instance, English monolingual volunteers are told that applicants in the waiting area need assistance “in language,” as an explanation for why they are not yet helped. This expression is noteworthy because it ignores the fact that all attendees are assisted in language, which then treats English assistance as the norm.

At the Giovanni citizenship fair as well, the majority of applicants received help in a language other than English. The tables where the law students meet with clients have placards which list the language(s) spoken at that table. In 2011, the languages provided were: English, Spanish, Cantonese, German, Hindi/Punjabi, Armenian, Romanian, Tagalog, French, Farsi, Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, Hmong, Mandarin, and Korean. In 2013, the flyer for the fair was distributed in English, Portuguese, Hmong, Korean, Russian and Ukrainian, Spanish, and Urdu. According to Professor Alvarez, this linguistic reality “frustrates my English speaking [law] students. Some of the frustration is ‘why don’t they speak English?’ and we try to talk about that. But some of the frustration is just having to lose control and rely on an interpreter to help you through the process.”

The reason why Professor Alvarez chooses to make multilingual assistance widely available is based on the legal jargon of the naturalization application. She believes that the English requirement of the exam is “fairly basic,” but that “the possibility of doing harm with filling out the form if people don’t understand what you’re asking is huge.” She repeatedly mentions “balance” as a guiding policy factor; the fact that “speaking to them [applicants] in their native language can build trust, and they really appreciate the effort. But it also potentially keeps them from pushing themselves to experience what it might be like to go through the [naturalization] interview.” These decisions to include multilingual assistance are possible both because of the one-on-one interaction between client and lawyer and because of the availability of multilingual staff and interpreters. It is often not feasible for citizenship instructors to provide this level of multilingual help, and additionally, all interviewed instructors believe English is the most difficult aspect of the exam (Loring, 2013a).

Those who make an *Infopass* appointment in the USCIS field office enter a website which is largely English-dominant, although there are some signs translated into Spanish. About half of the posted signs in the *Infopass* appointment-waiting room (five of nine) and hallway (four of ten) are bilingual in English and Spanish, with the vast majority of Spanish usage acting as a direct translation of the English message (Loring, 2015). The purposes of signs in the *Infopass* appointment-waiting room and hallway are to give directions, specify interactional protocol, or provide additional information. The signs that include Spanish are primarily the first two types; only one bilingual sign imparts supplemental information. In the hallway, pamphlets and signs are provided in Spanish, but the only other languages present (French and Haitian Creole) are on signs specifically concerning Haitian refugee status in 2010. The language practices in the USCIS field office exemplify *erasure* (Irvine & Gal, 2000), in which less prevalent languages are ignored.

This *de facto* linguistic language practice contradicts the stated practice of language assistance, according to Mr. George. While he acknowledges that most people bring an English-speaking translator to their appointment if need be, he says, “If you come here and don’t speak English, we can usually say ‘wait a minute’ and we can find someone in the back who speaks that language. Chinese, Russian, Arabic... I wouldn’t say we have all languages covered, but I’d say for the majority of languages we have someone here who speaks it.” In all these sites, when the teaching mission is to provide assistance with a task, there is a propensity for multilingual assistance, with a desire to match the language proficiency of the applicants. When the teaching mission is to strengthen the applicants’ English proficiency, then there is greater variation of linguistic practices in line with the instructors’ teaching philosophy. The instructors’ teaching philosophies are understandably affected by nationalist discourses that link English with American identity and educational discourses that either emphasize English-only instruction or view L1 use in a language classroom as an educational resource (Grasso, 2012).

**Perspectives towards citizenship**

For all sites described, the predominant tendency is to equate *citizenship* with preparing for and passing the naturalization interview. Instructors, organizers, volunteers, lawyers, and field officers tend to teach the minimum of what the applicant needs to know to be successful, and “being successful” is interpreted as “obtaining legal citizenship status.” These are views that limit citizenship to its official, legal, and tangible nature, ignoring other critical and participatory notions of what citizenship enables (Loring, 2013b). However, the personal perspectives of those involved in the citizenship enterprise affect how they frame citizenship. These opinions concern the fairness of the naturalization test, personal enactments of citizenship, tensions applicants face during the naturalization process, and inter-

pretations of the meaning of U.S. citizenship. The latter two opinions are depicted in the following table for the various citizenship educators interviewed:

Table 2: Perspectives of citizenship educators

	<b>Instructors</b> (Mr. Morris, Ms. April, Ms. Maria)	<b>Lawyers</b> (Prof. Alvarez)	<b>USCIS Field Officers</b> (Mr. George)
<b>Main obstacles applicants face during process</b>	English, monetary cost of application	English, good moral character requirement, lack of legal services	Negative outside influences, having wrong information
<b>What it means to be a U.S. citizen</b>	Having taken-for-granted and guaranteed rights that are less easily stripped	Political participation or ability to receive certain benefits	Being physically present in the U.S. and having good moral character

While there is some variation between the citizenship instructors at the Ford School for Adults and the AACC, they agree that their students have the greatest difficulties with the English requirement of the naturalization test and the cost of the application fee (\$680). All instructors discuss what citizenship means to them using the expression “take for granted,” highlighting certain rights and responsibilities that native-born citizens do not appreciate (see Loring, 2013a). These encompass legal rights (right to vote), legal consequences (living without the threat of deportation), and the right to full participation (access to societal resources) (Ramanathan, 2013).

In accordance with the citizenship teachers, Professor Alvarez believes that a lack of English proficiency is the main reason why applicants delay their citizenship application. But she also believes that immigration law has become increasingly strict with respect to its good moral character requirements (in which applicants are asked about their group affiliations, criminal history, and prior illegal infractions). In her euphemistic words, “people have blemishes in their lives,” which can amount to prior illegal actions. Additionally, the financial cost and lack of legal services are other deterrents that she sees.

She provides two answers to the second question in Table 2; the first is personal and the second is based on observations. She herself equates citizenship with political participation, saying, “for me it’s the number one reason, to be a responsible member of society.” However, she acknowledges that the clients that she interacts with do not necessarily share her view:

I think the reality is that many are not motivated by political participation or social change, although some of them are. Many view citizenship as a necessary step to be able to attain certain benefits, whether immigration benefits, or social welfare benefits, or just simply stability in the country.

Predictably, these benefits are listed on the Giovanni Law School’s citizenship fair flyer. The naturalization incentives provided are: voting, family reunification,



eligibility for government jobs, security from deportation, and access to healthcare. The first three benefits are also emphasized in a USCIS-produced document, along with “obtaining citizenship for children born abroad,” “traveling with a U.S. passport,” and “showing your patriotism” (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2012). It is noteworthy that “showing your patriotism” is listed alongside these other tangible benefits as a “right only for citizens” (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2012), indicating that USCIS policy depicts patriotism as an expression of national commitment that permanent or temporary residents do not (or cannot) share. Also notable is the fact that security from deportation and access to healthcare are not mentioned in USCIS documents, but are arguably leading motivators for applicants to become naturalized (see Loring, 2013a).

Mr. George of USCIS takes a different approach, not seeing any component of the naturalization process as unfairly detrimental for applicants. Rather, he believes that “outside influences,” such as incorrect information applicants receive from non-USCIS educators, prevent applicants from applying in a timely manner. While Professor Alvarez views the good moral character requirements as an obstacle, Mr. George *defines* U.S. citizens in terms of these requirements. Thus, he states, “I think that you are ‘here’ and ‘willing to know the laws, and have good moral character, like we talked about.’ I mean, I don’t think you should be a citizen if you killed two people and do drugs and have been arrested so many times.” In sum, the citizenship teachers answered this question in a philosophical sense, the lawyer responded in terms of participation and benefits, and the field officer defined citizenship as it is represented in government policy and discourse.

## 5 Implications

This article has investigated the predominant resources and discourses available to prospective citizens in the Sacramento citizenship enterprise, often determining that citizenship dialogues and support differ across educational sites. Those who attend a citizenship class can expect to receive assistance with naturalization test preparation. This largely includes a teaching strategy of *teaching towards the test*, as other citizenship knowledge is often overlooked. When citizenship teachers do teach peripheral information, it aligns with the foundation skills that USCIS emphasizes in its online resources. Prospective citizens who visit a community center can additionally expect to receive one-on-one assistance in completing the naturalization application, either in the office or through a special event such as an application workshop or citizenship fair. Legal-sponsored citizenship fairs have the benefit of attorney review and assistance with determining eligibility. Not only do these venues shape applicants’ own perspectives towards citizenship and naturalization, but they also affect their opportunities for full participation.

The educators in these sites can be described as actively working to eliminate obstacles that stand

between applicants and the legal status of becoming American citizens. This entails teaching test content, processing applications, and answering personal questions. Assisting applicants with this specific agenda expedites their time spent as permanent residents, when they are living without certain rights and protections. Thus, these educators are creating opportunities for applicants’ future participation in activities such as voting, running for office, and serving on a jury, that USCIS repeatedly emphasize as key rights that distinguish citizens from non-citizens.

As mentioned, however, *full participation* is more than civic and legal opportunities, but is also the option to pursue any and all societal resources available to American residents (Heller, 2013). Along this vein, the type of citizenship assistance described in this research does not fully provide opportunities for long-term meaningful citizenship interactions, namely social belonging and participation. The assumption is that once legal citizenship is attained, many of the inequalities that applicants experience will disappear, and they will immediately become legitimate American citizens. This view neglects the other ways that immigrants are excluded from full participation -- through inequalities in language assistance, public policies, access to employment, and discriminatory discourse, -- which do not talk about or treat naturalized American citizens as equal members of society. Policies and discourses which establish hierarchies of inclusion create dis-citizens, rather than full citizens (Ramanathan, 2013). Individuals who feel as though they are not full-fledged citizens can feel a sense of disjointedness towards their adopted nation which can subsequently affect their participation in local and national American society.

This research is significant because it highlights a situation in which top-down and bottom-up educational policies are layered and sometimes at contrary purposes. Depending on the site that applicants choose to attend, the availability of resources differs to varying degrees. Each site presents unique challenges and obstacles, which applicants either know or learn about through experience. These sites can either invite applicants to receive assistance, through providing multilingual assistance or offering counsel with the trickier components of naturalization law, or adhere more closely to the “English-only” *de facto* policy of U.S. naturalization. How those involved in the citizenship enterprise interpret the journey of the applicants they support consequently affects the policies they enact at the local level. These bottom-up conceptualizations of citizenship and their resulting enactment in citizenship education shape the degree of immigrant inclusion and empowerment and give citizenship its fullest meaning.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> These countries are listed in decreasing frequency. There is also a large number of naturalized citizens who were placed in the categories "other" or "unknown" for these demographic statistics.

<sup>ii</sup> This is from the perspective of the applicants; those "in power" are learning about citizenship and immigration at a more personal level, above and beyond what they could learn from textbooks or legal documents.

<sup>iii</sup> This is seen in phrases such as "good citizenship" and "citizenship award."

<sup>iv</sup> New questions include: "Were you ever involved in any way with any of the following: genocide; torture; killing, or trying to kill, someone; badly hurting, or trying to hurt, a person on purpose; forcing, or trying

to force, someone to have any kind of sexual contact or relations; not letting someone practice his or her religion?"

<sup>v</sup> Applicants who are older than 50 years old and have lived in the U.S. for at least 20 years, and applicants who are older than 55 years old and have lived in the U.S. for at least 15 years are exempted from taking the English reading and writing portions of the test. Applicants who are older than 65 years old and have lived in the U.S. for at least 20 years additionally are given a simplified version of the history/civics test.

<sup>vi</sup> As dictated by the Immigration and Nationality Act § 312, this proficiency level is "an understanding of the English language, including an ability to read, write, and speak words in ordinary usage" but see Loring (2013b).

<sup>vii</sup> France is an example of an *assimilationist* or *republican model*, in which acquisition of citizenship is easier but requires cultural and linguistic assimilation. Countries such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Israel are labeled as *ethnic or exclusive* in that there are many institutional and cultural barriers to citizenship, especially for migrants and their descendants (Koopmans et al., 2005). Naturalization in Japan is also seen as an exclusionary due to its strict requirements (residency, good moral conduct, financial independence, and renunciation of prior nationalities) and lack of alternative paths to citizenship (Kashiwazaki, 2000). Unlike the U.S., South African policy does not bestow citizenship to children born in the country to temporary or undocumented parents (Klaaren, 2000).

<sup>viii</sup> Other races/ethnicities from the U.S. census data, not included here, were White (no additional information given as to Hispanic/Latino ethnicity), and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; for these reasons the total percentage is not 100%.

<sup>ix</sup> This school name, and all other names of individuals and institutions are pseudonyms.

<sup>x</sup> The school attendance calculation is from January 2011 and comprises both Ford School and its sister branch.

<sup>xi</sup> The *Organization* category, and these documents in particular, were chosen for a close analysis because they were distributed by a USCIS officer in a recent TESOL Convention session, in which a dozen citizenship instructors and program administrators attended.

<sup>xii</sup> Question #55 is "What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?" Answers are: "vote; join a political party; help with a campaign; join a civic group; join a community group; give an elected official your opinion on an issue; call Senators and Representatives; publicly support or oppose an issue or policy; run for office; write to a newspaper."

<sup>xiii</sup> This interview was held at the USCIS office and thus could not be audio recorded. This quote comes from my hand-written notes and follow-up field notes immediately after the interview concluded. When single-quotes are used, they represent verbatim quotes written during the interview itself.

Theresa Ann McGinnis

## “A Good Citizen is What You’ll Be”: Educating Khmer Youth for Citizenship in a United States Migrant Education Program

Citizenship education is a complex and multidimensional construct. This article adds to the discussion of citizenship education by examining, ethnographically the ways the “vision” of a US Migrant Education Program is circulated through the program’s discourse practices to Khmer American children of migrant agricultural workers. The article does not discuss the formal legal status of citizenship, but the program coordinators’ beliefs about the skills and dispositions needed for the Khmer youth to become “good citizens.” Within the coordinators’ visions, the fixing of the youth’s perceived deficiencies drive the curriculum, and as such the full participation of the youth as active citizens is not achieved.

And if you do your part:  
Obey the rules, respect authority  
A good citizen is what you’ll be.

We’re kids for character  
Here we stand, we’re unified  
Side by Side  
Let’s get together while we can...  
(Music by Joe Phillips, for a children’s TV show featuring Barney. Topic of the show was Citizenship, 1996)

### Keywords:

citizenship, citizenship education, naturalization, language policy, discourse

### 1 Introduction

Every afternoon 150 Cambodians (ethnic Khmer), Vietnamese and Chinese, children of migrant agricultural workers, sing the lyrics from the song “Kids for Character” as part of the curriculum of a summer Migrant Education Program. Taking place in an urban public middle school during summer weekdays and school year Saturday mornings, this US Migrant Education Program is both instructional and ideological. The use of such songs represents a subtle, hidden agenda, a model of citizenship education that focuses on teaching students the skills and dispositions needed to become “good citizens,” and it also reflects the programs’ beliefs about what constitutes good citizen-ship.

According to Fischman & Hass (2012), “creating

citizens, as well as the curriculum and practices of citizenship education, requires a vision of what type of subjectivity is desired as well as what is unacceptable” (p. 177). Commonly the development of a “desired” and acceptable citizen involves shaping poor immigrants, such as the children of migrant agricultural workers, into White-American “mainstream” ways of being. Assimilationist in nature, these types of institutionalized education programs often challenge youth’s notions of self and identity, especially poor immigrant or refugee youth, whose lived realities involve alternate social structures (Fischman & Hass, 2012; Olsen, 1997). However, there are important arguments for alternative, more transformative visions for creating citizens who work for social change within and across boundaries of nation-states (Abu El-Haj, 2008; Fischman & Haas, 2012; Ong, 1999).

In this article, I add to the discussion of citizenship education as a complex and multidimensional construct by examining ethnographically the ways in which a particular Migrant Education Program circulates a specific vision of citizenship through the program’s discourse and literacy practices to Khmer American children. I explore how program ideologies, or put differently how the program’s ideological assumptions of what makes a good citizen, are enacted through texts and forms of discourse by analyzing constructed, formalized and consciously controlled messages embedded within the day-to-day practices of the program (Fairclough, 1992). I discuss how the discourse practices assert particular social relations of power, and privilege the perspective of assimilation characteristic of white American cultural hegemony (Fairclough, 1989,1992).

In addition, I provide an analysis of the Khmer youth’s responses to the meanings and messages embedded in the literacy and discourse practices of the program. I examine the youth’s worldviews, which are created by their situations as children of refugees/migrants, by their cultural/religious values and beliefs, and by their families’ socioeconomic status. The research presented in this article, therefore, builds upon Ong’s (2003) idea of looking closely at “the interconnected everyday issues involved in shaping poor immigrants ideas about what being American might mean” (p. xvii). In my discussion, I consider how the daily experiences of the youth as poor, urban immigrants and as young people constrain their access to formal and public opportunities for participation in society (Lister, 2008; Wood, 2002). More

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critically, I elaborate on a notion of citizenship education, which focuses on developing the self-confidence and sense of agency needed by youth to become reflexive and participatory citizens (Banks, 2008; Lister, 2008).

## 2 Citizenship education as a complex process

Increasingly regimented curricula in US schools exert a dominant discourse that has a narrowing, constraining, and homogenizing influence on cultural diversity and related educational practices, including ideas of citizenship education. At the same time modern immigration patterns have broadened the cultural diversity of student populations in US schools and influenced the need for global awareness. (Levitt & Waters, 2002; Suaraz-Orozco & Qin-Hillard, 2004). These intricacies of a global world challenge young immigrants' identity construction and the relationships between, citizenship, identity and power. Several researchers argue that simple notions of citizenship as a nation bound legal status with expectations for a national identity need to be reconsidered (i.e. Abu El-Haj, 2009; Banks, 2008; Fischman & Haas, 2012; Ong 2003). Instead they argue that citizenship or the "guarantor of rights" needs to be disentangled from the "expectations for assimilation to a particular national identity" (Abu El-Haj, 2009, p. 279). Overall, these researchers maintain that citizenship education for full participation in a globalized world must be transformed so that all students learn to reflect upon and challenge both local and global structures that limit equality (Abu el-Haj, 2009; Banks, 2008; Levinson, 2005).

## 3 Citizenship education and the US educational context

Historically, within the US there has been a link between democracy, schooling and citizenship (Borman, Danzig & Garcia, 2012; Perry & Fraser, 1993; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's pushed the boundaries of democracy to include more inclusive education policies for non-White citizens (Banks, 2008; Perry & Fraser, 1993). Multicultural education programs were developed to provide curriculum that addressed the voices and identities of the ethnically and linguistically diverse student populations of the US public schools. Though no formal policy exists, school districts are encouraged to adopt policies that support all students "for full citizenship in a multiracial/multicultural democracy" (Perry & Fraser, 1993 p. 16), and to adopt policies that provide education for equitable outcomes and therefore informed, democratic citizens (Borman, Danzig & Garcia, 2012).

However, while the hope was that multicultural education would support struggles against cultural hegemony, US schools continue to function as White mainstream institutions (Banks, 2008; Duffy, 2007; Perry & Fraser, 1993). Hence, citizenship education within US public schools continues to focus on narrow conceptions of citizenship. Students are asked to develop commitments to the nation-state and to US mainstream culture (Banks, 2008). For example, Duffy (2007) describes how the rhetoric of the public schools in Minnesota offered Hmong refugee students curricula and materials that

encouraged them to "think American" and identify with the values taught in US schools. He explains how the literacy practices of the public schools involved teaching Hmong refugees "the ways of thinking, speaking, writing and acting practiced by members of the majority culture...diminishing Hmong-language practices of the home and supplanting these with the 'ways with words' privileged in schools" (p. 138). Duffy (2007) viewed these practices as ideologically narrow, assimilationist and "builders of national identity" (p. 138).

Embedded in the ideology of the narrow focused citizenship education of US educational institutions is a wider notion about poor immigrants or refugees whose supposedly primitive cultures are socially determined to be undesirable (Ong, 2003, p. xviii). Cambodians, one of the largest and the poorest refugee groups living in the United States, are part of a larger panethnic Asian American label, and hence positioned in relation to other more successful Asian Americans who have been perceived within the US as "model minorities" (Lee, 1996). The "model minority" myth portrays Asian Americans as smart and successful, quiet and obedient, and thus "good" citizens (Reyes, 2007; Tuan, 1998). In contrast, a pervasive discourse exists within the US categorizing Cambodians as "less successful exemplars of the Asian "race," less model-minority material, and more underclass in orientation" (Ong, 2003, p. 85).

This type of discourse has followed the children of refugees into the institutional spaces of schools where the terms, "Other Asian" (Um, 2003) and "Bad Asian" (Lei, 2003) emerged as descriptors of Khmer youth – terms that infer the youth are underachievers, lacking in potential, gangster, and are generally "at-risk." Chhuon (2013) points out that these beliefs transmitted to Khmer youth in schools can shape the way youth learn about belonging in school and in US society. He argues that US educational institutions promote a national identity based on hegemonic mainstream white ideals, which further perpetuate the idea that there is one "correct" white middle class identity for citizens. For many marginalized youth these hegemonic practices exert exclusionary feelings and challenge their sense of belonging to an "American" identity, including citizenship (Abu El-Haj, 2008; Chhuon, 2013; Duffy, 2007).

In this article, when I focus on the citizenship education of a Migrant Educations Program, I am not discussing the formal legal status of citizenship, but the "infrastructure of immigration" discussed by Gordon, Long & Fellin (2015) in the introduction of this themed issue, or put differently, how the program coordinators use their beliefs about the skills and dispositions needed for youth to become "good citizens" to mold their subjects into exemplars of the desirable categories of citizenship (Ong, 2003). I will also share how the Khmer youth examine their own identities that are a result of their positioning within an urban US context. The complexities include not only multiple feelings of inclusion and exclusion across ethnicity, race, gender, and socioeconomics, but also a range of encounters with racism, stereotypes, and anti-immigration sentiments. Therefore, I will also argue that

more transformative citizenship educational programs are needed where youth are provided spaces to critically examine how their citizenship identities are formed within local and global social communities.

#### **4 The Khmer youth and the Cambodian American context**

I came to know the Khmer youth and their families through my work in the Migrant Education Program. They live in a northeastern U.S. city where the parents and sometimes the youth are bused to regional farms outside the city to pick fruit. Most of the families are among the third or even fourth waves of refugees, arriving after 1980 through the mid 1990's. The refugees in these waves were among the poorest and least educated. The migrant education families came from farming backgrounds and had little to no education. Upon their arrival, according to Toan, a migrant education coordinator and Cambodian refugee, "the first thing they focus on is working in fields, like picking berries, fruit, apples, stuff like that" (Toan, Interview, 2/24/99).

The Khmer youth and their families were part of waves of Southeast Asian refugees who were produced by various political upheavals, war and persecution. Many of the families found themselves beginning a process of unplanned and rapid adjustment to a new life. They had lived through the terror of the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese invasion. They had lived in refugee camps and resettled in a new country - the United States. Hein (2006) asserts that this process of resocialization not only involves the refugee's history, politics and culture of their homeland, but also involves coping with new identities and inequalities following migration. Cambodian refugees and immigrants living in the US hold "interpretive frameworks of how they make sense of the world around them" (Smith, 1994), of how they engage with US society and culture.

As members of a Cambodian refugee community, the history of the youth and their families includes the Khmer genocide under the Pol Pot regime. The reign of the Khmer Rouge began in 1975. During its reign, it has been estimated that more than one million people died. Those who were not killed outright through torture or murder, either died from starvation or illness while living in work camps. Others died fleeing into the woods, by stepping on land mines, or being caught (Chandler, 1991). With the invasion of the Vietnamese in 1979, the people of Cambodia had some hope, but during this time severe food shortages occurred (Chandler, 1996). Due to food shortages, continuous fighting, and distrust of the Vietnamese approximately six hundred thousand Cambodians fled to the Thai border. Thousands of Khmer refugees stayed in Thai refugee camps.

This traumatic experience continues to cause post-migration stress within the Cambodian community (Nou, 2006). Socioeconomic deprivations are another aspect affecting Cambodian refugees in the United States (Chan, 2004; Hein, 2006; Nou, 2006; Ong, 2003). As noted earlier, with a poverty rate of 21.6%, the Cambodian

American poverty rate is among the highest of all Asian groups (SEARAC, 2011), and their rate is only slightly below the poverty rates of African Americans, and Hispanics (Macartney, Bishaw & Fontenor, 2013), thus indicating that Cambodian Americans are disadvantaged economically (Quintiliani, 2014). Ong, (2003) further elaborates and explains that as exploited Asian workers, like migrant agricultural workers, there is little room for improving one's socioeconomic status within the United States' neoliberal market economy.

As migrant agricultural workers the families I worked with had moved several times in search of work and lower-cost housing. Their more recent migratory movements brought them from rural poverty to impoverished inner-city neighborhoods. These poverty-stricken neighborhoods were located in highly segregated neighborhoods, affecting the kinds of schools the children attended, the kinds of English the youth were exposed to, their access to jobs, and the influences of youth gangs. In fact many of the Khmer youth in this study attended urban schools that had been labeled as "failing" by state officials. That is, the neighborhood high schools have low academic standards and high dropout rates and are characterized by high violence (Reyes, 2007).

Hence, while the Khmer youth I worked with for this research, middle school aged children of migrant agricultural workers, were too young to have been born during the reign of the Khmer Rouge or the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, the youth have experienced the stressors of their parents, including cultural adjustments and socioeconomic deprivations. More notable, according to Wright & Boun (2011) in their policy report documenting survey and focus group data of Southeast Asian students living across the United States, *Southeast Asian American Education 35 Years After Initial Resettlement: Research Report and Policy Recommendations*, the challenges that the Southeast Asian community face have not changed over the course of these thirty-five years [with] issues of poverty, low educational attainment, linguistic isolation, and parents' lack of familiarity with the U.S. school system. More specifically, the research participants noted experiences of feeling of loss of their cultural identities, being misperceived by teachers, being compared to higher Achieving Asian students, and feeling invisible (Wright & Boun, 2011). Finally, participants in Wright & Boun's (2011) research expressed continued experiences of racism and stereotyping, being told to "go back to their own country" even though they were born in the United States, and thus US citizens. They note often being treated as an "Other" or as a "foreigner." These feelings reflect a larger "forever foreigner" stereotype prevalent within US racial discourse (Reyes, 2007).

#### **5 Methodology**

This article draws from my larger, five-year (1997-2002), multisited ethnographic study, and from a (re) visitation to the community during the summer of 2010, that explored the intersection of identity, literacy and discourse practices within urban public middle schools, the

homes and communities of Khmer American youth and a Migrant Education Program. Using the ethnographic approaches of the New Literacy Studies that examine language and literacy as aspects of social practices, (Barton, 1994; Gee, 1990; Street, 1995), my larger study looked at both the day-to-day practices of the Khmer youth, and the social, cultural and ideological contexts in which these practices were embedded. The data presented here was collected in the Migrant Education Program serving the Khmer youth and their families. More specifically, I discuss curriculum choices of the Migrant Education Program, and the role the language, literacy and discourse practices within the curricula served to promote certain ideas of what makes a “good” citizen.

To get an in-depth picture of the complex relationship among literacy, discourse and citizenship educational practices, I combined several data-collection methods over the course of the study: participant-observation, interviews, audiotaping, photography, and review of archival materials. Data sources were coded and categorized based on the theoretical framework and grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). More specifically, because discourse practices imply certain ideologies, and these ideologies are circulated and sustained through the language and texts presented in Educational institutions, such as the Migrant Education Program, Fairclough’s (1992) social theory of discourse, provided an avenue that allowed me to look at the ways that discourse practices contribute to the program’s “vision of a good citizen.” In my analysis, I coded texts and speeches for instances of intertextuality, Fairclough’s (1992) notion of how varying texts and genres such as, songs, program brochures, handouts, lectures, assimilate or echo similar information, and how they produce “chains of communication” (p. 66). Taking each text separately, I coded broadly for overarching themes and coded more specifically for key terms related to citizenship. The combination of ethnographic approaches and critical discourse analysis helped me to document and analyze patterns of textual distribution, consumption, and knowledge production and how these practices served to create and sustain subject positioning within the Migrant Education Program.

## 6 The migrant education program

The United States Migrant Education Programs are federally funded programs under Title I Part C of the Elementary and Secondary School Act. The purported goals of the Migrant Education Program are to help children of migratory agricultural workers experience success by diminishing the effects of the interruption of education experienced because of the frequent movement of families. More specifically, because each state in the US has different education requirements, the US Migrant Education Program serves to help ensure that migratory children who move among the states are not penalized in any manner due to disparities among states in curriculum, and that their educational needs are met. The goal set forth by the US Migrant Education Program is to ensure that all migrant students reach challenging

academic standards and graduate with a high school diploma (or complete a GED) that prepares them for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment” (“Migrant Education,” 2013).

In the Northeast city where the data was collected, the Cambodian community was emerging and “Cambodian” blocks were dispersed throughout differing sections of the city. These sections, which were once predominantly white working class neighborhoods, had seen a shift to include Cambodian, Vietnamese, Laotian, and Chinese (Fujianese) families. The Migrant Education Program discussed in this article was established in this city to serve the increasing number of South East Asian and Asian families, who lived in this North Eastern urban community, but were bused to regional farms to pick Blueberries. To qualify for the program, the students’ parents must have worked in agriculture or in poultry plants, and the students must have moved with their families across school district boundaries in the previous three years. Approximately 150 students in grades K-9 attended Saturday and afterschool programs during the school year; the summer program had some 250 participants. The majority of students were Cambodian (ethnic Khmer); the second largest group was Vietnamese. Other students were Chinese, Laotian, Somali, and Mexican. With the increase in Bhutanese and Karen refugees to the community, the Migrant Education Program’s student population shifted over the years to include them (fieldnotes, June 4, 2010). In fact, each year, as new families moved into the district and families out, the numbers changed. Over the last several years, while the student population has grown and changed, the program goals have remained primarily the same (fieldnotes, July 5, 2010), and through a recent review of affiliated program materials it appears that many of the Migrant Education Program’s texts I describe in this article have not been updated.

Based on federal program goals, the objectives set by the coordinators of this North Eastern United States urban program centered on building school skills and on providing students a safe place. Each summer the program also focused on selected themes. Throughout the years the themes have included gang prevention, antiviolence, and conflict resolution. Organizations and guest presenters were invited to the migrant education program to lead projects and lectures that fit into these themes. Although the purposes of the Migrant Education program contained multiple dimensions and contradictions, there was an underlying agenda focused on the individual student’s internal motivation to work hard in school and to resist peer pressure. In previous work, I have discussed how overall the discourse of the program positioned the youth as needing to learn mainstream ways of being (McGinnis, 2009). In the following sections of this article, I illuminate how the program established a vision of a “desired” citizen and what is considered “unacceptable” behavior. I also present a contradictory example of a program that was more transformative in its ideology, called “Global Leaders of Tomorrow.”

### 7 "Vision" of a good citizen within the Migrant Education Program

Both Lister (2008) and Wood (2012) note that citizenship education for young people tends to focus on the adult educators' perceived vision of the youth's future potentials as "good citizens." This "adult centric" idea was an inherent part of the Migrant Education Program's practices. In addition, to being young people, the Khmer youth were also young people who were children of refugees and of migrant agricultural workers, and ultimately young people living in poverty. The language embedded within citizenship education programs for people living in poverty, like the Khmer youth, often reflects a discourse of "Othering" (Lister, 2008). The key terms used to refer to the Khmer youth by program coordinators included, "self-destructive," "hopeless" "at-risk," and "vulnerable." This discourse called for educational practices which focused on changing perceived "unacceptable" behaviors and attitudes of the students. For example, the following is an excerpt from a brochure of an outside educational program hired by the Migrant Education Program as part of their summer's theme on gang prevention, "the [program] envisions and works towards a society in which all young people have the opportunity and desire to choose a positive and productive path to adulthood, rather than a life of violence and/or self destruction." The overall message carried throughout the brochure and enacted within their educational program was the view of poor, migrant students as "self-destructive," "hopeless," "at-risk," and "vulnerable" (mission statement, brochure). This recurring discourse reveals an ideology of "Othering" and signifies "a dualistic process of differentiation and demarcation by which a line is drawn between "us" and "them" and through which social distance is established and maintained" (Lister, 2008, p 7).

Similar dualistic practices in the Migrant Education Program centered on the perceived deficiencies of the youth, which needed to be corrected for their potentials as good adult citizens to be achieved. These educational practices were lecture driven presentations by various organizations and guest presenters with little to no opportunity for the migrant education students to respond. Each presenter had a different focus, but the messages were clear, and often times printed on handouts with phrases such as: "Accept responsibility for your life," "You control in your own hands how far you can go," and "Be strong in the face of adversity." These phrases point toward the "vision" of what is believed will make a 'good and successful citizen.' Examples of unacceptable behaviors were perceived as "laziness," "bending to peer pressure," and ultimately "ending up hangin on the corner." An underlying theme of the ideology of what makes a good citizen is the idea of working hard. And for young people like the Khmer youth the expectation was that working hard in school "now" would enable them to attend a University and this would lead to economic success and upward mobility – attributes of a "good American citizen." This places

blame on the individual youth instead of recognizing the systemic barriers.

More specifically, in addition to the song described in the introduction of this article, the Program's "Kids for Character" curriculum included assemblies for all the Migrant Education Students, grades K- 9. At such assemblies, the students were provided both handouts and discussion on the meaning of "A Person of Character." "A Person of Character was defined as:

"is a good person, someone to look up to and admire. Knows the difference between right and wrong and always tries to do what is right. Sets a good example for everyone. Makes the world a better place. Is trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring and a good citizen." (Handout, Character Counts, Summer 2000).

Listed on the handout are the following criteria for what makes a "Good citizen:"

- Scrupulously following organization rules and policies.
- Playing by the rules (no cheating or taking short cuts)
- Respecting authority
- Obeying the law
- Paying your taxes (whatever is lawfully owed)
- Performing civic duties (voting, jury duty)
- Doing volunteer community work
- Conserving our resources and protecting the environment (Handout, Character Counts, Summer 2000)

This list reflects a passive notion of citizenship where students are asked to follow rules and to obey laws. The list also adopts adult centric notions of citizenship, asking students who are not fully enfranchised to perform civic duties such as voting and jury duty. Overall through the juxtapositioning of the handout with the song described in the beginning of this article, the program extends to the youth a sense of responsibility and duty associated with the ideological assumptions of US citizenship. Such a concept of citizenship leaves out notions of empowerment or any political paradigm that embraces identities or advocacy.

In combination with the lecture presentations and the circulation of handouts, the Migrant Education Program planned a trip for the middle school students to take a tour of an expensive suburban private university. At the university we walked through the student union where only white students were studying; they stopped what they were doing and looked up at the Khmer youth. Most simply used only their eyes and did not move their heads. No one smiled as we passed by. Sophear, a female 8<sup>th</sup> grader, leaned over and whispered to me, "I feel we're not welcome here." At that moment, Sophear's first trip to a university, she derived from the situation that she was not really being invited into that world. Therefore, instead of inspiring Sophear to believe in her future opportunities as the trip was set up to do, for her it reinforced her feelings of difference and ultimately notions of exclusions from white, American ways of



being – from normative white assumptions of good citizenship.

The educational agenda put forth by the Migrant Education Program to focus the students on the individual and intrinsic traits of what makes acceptable behavior, and a “good citizen,” disregarded the lived realities and the exclusionary experiences of the Khmer youth. Sovanna, another student in the Migrant Education Program, describes her experiences living in the American urban context:

“I see racism in my school. I am afraid because they [neighborhood youth] tell me to go back to my country. If not they will hurt me. As a young child I grew up with violence and prejudice. My parents would remind me to stay home because its safer than anywhere else. They want me to remember my culture always. I have to respect the elderly at all times, even some that I don’t know. Many kids who refuse to listen to their parents run away from home, and some join gangs. Then many crimes begin, because they start trouble for other people, and rob people’s houses. It’s always the innocent people who end up dead. These people become Americanized too quickly by wanting to be with the wrong crowd, and do the wrong things, just to be part of the crowd” (Personal Interview, 9/2/02).

Sovanna’s statement reveals two key points about assimilationist, adult centric notions of citizenship educational discourse. First, she points out the anti-immigration sentiment that is not only prevalent at her school, but is also a dominant national sentiment. This sentiment positions youth, like the Khmer youth, as outsiders to the dominant national identity, and cannot be separated from their identity construction. In fact, many of the Khmer youth note receiving derogatory comments like, “You Chinese should go home.” In response to these comments, they form themselves into a collective identity. To distinguish their identity as Khmer, they mark folders, T-Shirts, hats and other items with the words Khmer Pride. One boy admitted, “the hardest thing is that we are different;” however, the multimodal markings of “Khmer Pride” are meant to distinguish their difference from other Asian youth, and more importantly to demonstrate their pride in their Khmer cultural heritage, their language and their traditions. In essence, their multimodal practices serve as a mediation of the self, and of the collective self within their urban context (McGinnis, 2007).

Today’s generation of Khmer American youth are also growing up in communities with more access to digital technologies than in the past. As newer technologies shift the materials, media and spaces afforded to these newer generations of Khmer youth, one can see their expressions of the Khmer experience, and their identifications as Khmer, circulate more widely across social networks and national boundaries. For example, there are now websites where youth like Rithy, a migrant education student, discuss their “Khmer Pride” and build a virtual Khmer community with other Khmer youth living around the United States using digitally designed texts (fieldnotes, June, 2, 2010).

The second point Sovanna raises in her statement, is the question for many Khmer families about what “being/becoming American” means to them. An elder in the community stated, “culture is the soul of each nation. Elimination of culture is an elimination of the nation” (Personal Interview 9/27/99). With the youth’s exposure and choosing the ways of their urban American peers, values, music, ways of speaking and clothing styles, many Khmer parents, religious figures and community elders fear the youth will not learn the Khmer traditions nor continue to pass them on to future generations. These Khmer traditions and cultural practices, for them, are not only an expression of Khmer identity, but also a way to reclaim the social ideals of Khmer society. As a result, there is struggle within the community of what it means to be “American” – to be a good American citizen.

Thus, the pedagogical practices of the Migrant Education Program, which reduce the notion of citizenship to a set of dispositions and skills that can be delivered through lecture format ignores the network of complexities the Khmer youth encounter in their daily lives. According to Fischman & Hass (2012) this type of practice results in ineffective programs of citizenship education, particularly in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century of globalization. They contend that effective citizenship education programs “link student lives, both in and out of school, through active participation in authentic democratic activities” (p. 186). In the following section, I discuss how one program sponsored by the Migrant Education Program offered a more active and relevant approach to citizenship education.

### **8 Alternative vision, “Global Leaders of Tomorrow”**

“Global Leaders of Tomorrow” was a program presented to the students in the Migrant Education Program by an outside educational foundation. The title of the program, Global Leaders of Tomorrow, suggests a view of youth as resources to cultivate into leaders of a globalized world. The coordinator of “Global Leaders of Tomorrow,” a former journalist from Nigeria, looked more critically at the use of language and stressed, “information is power.” She explained to students that it was because information is power that she chose to go into the field of journalism. As an immigrant and woman of color, she told the Khmer youth, she did not like what White Western journalists were writing about her people, so she wanted to speak for her people, to have a voice in what was being written. She asked the students, “Do you like what is being written about your people?” One girl, Samaly emphatically said, “No!” The woman explained to her, “Then it is up to you to tell about and write about your people” (fieldnotes, 7/10/2001). This provided the youth a space to develop counter narratives to the pervasive negative discourse of Khmer youth. Overall, the coordinator’s hope was to provide the students with the knowledge and capacity to view writing as a resource to construct their own representations and to achieve change

More specifically, the goal of the program was to have students design and produce a newspaper called, *In Our Own Voices*. The central theme of the journalistic approach was to challenge the voicelessness and powerlessness often identified with refugees, and with people living in poverty. The coordinator also emphasized that the title reflected the voices of “you, the people” – a right associated with US citizenship – “we, the people” (Fieldnotes, July 11, 2001).

Students became engaged in working together on sections of the paper. Chamroeun wrote a political piece questioning the amount of money spent on space exploration when many US citizens were living in poverty. Samaly and her friend worked on exploring why youth join gangs. Sophear chose to write and design a section of the newspaper on fashion, particularly the fashion of Khmer urban girls. She and her friends worked together taking photographs of the clothes they wore, and wrote articles about the style of the clothing. While not a political piece, it was what she and her friends had interest in, and it represented their world. Sophear noted that she really liked the program, because she liked the creativity the project afforded (personal conversation, July 24, 2001).

Unfortunately, due to lack of funding by the Migrant Education Program, the sessions were limited in number and the paper was never produced. The ideal of having the students’ voices heard was not realized. That is, the potentials of the program, Global Leaders of Tomorrow, as one that enlarged the students’ ideas of citizenship and encouraged a critical exploration of the power of language and voice was not accomplished. Instead the realities of educational funding for youth living in impoverished urban areas ended up being an exclusionary element, and limiting the students’ opportunities to expand their agency beyond their community.

## 9 Conclusion

The Khmer youth attending the Migrant Education Program find themselves negotiating complex US urban communities, public schools and cultural practices. However, they are categorized and viewed within the Migrant Education program as perpetual victims and refugees whose struggles with gang activities and welfare dependency is something they need to overcome. As such, the examples of discourse practices discussed in this article show how within the Migrant Education Program the Khmer youth are viewed through a deficit perspective. This perspective leads to curricula, language and texts whose thematic threads involve an overall desire to develop acceptable citizens, where the youth are shaped into White-American “mainstream” ways of being. More specifically, the key ideas presented to the youth by educators and guest presenters remained focus on telling youth to follow rules, how to behave, to be responsible, and to accept responsibility.

My research echoes the findings of Hall’s (2002) research on citizenship and education among Sikh youth in Great Britain, and of Abu El-Haj’s (2009) research with Arab Americans and their experiences of becoming

citizens in post 9/11 US. The Khmer youth are cultivating multiple identities, which include the negotiation of class, race, religion, ethnicity, and gender – a complex negotiation often not addressed within narrow frameworks of US citizenship education practices, like the one within the Migrant Education Program. Therefore, a key implication of this research is how citizenship education that focuses on “fixing” the perceived deficiencies of youth ignores many of the lived realities described above, and does not respond to their feelings of exclusion or provide for their full participation, because they are viewed as objects to be acted upon or as “forever foreigners.” In fact, the conception of the youth as “deficient” led to a lack of faith in the Khmer youth’s abilities and behavior, and as such created a relationship where the full participation of the youth as active citizens was not possible. Thus, the overall outcome of citizenship education for the Khmer youth was both limiting and ineffective.

Serious and financial commitments to programs such as Global Leaders of Tomorrow, where youth are engaged in active citizenship practices, is called for if we want young people to fully participate in local and global communities. A transformative citizenship education program focuses on engaging youth in active ways, such as developing their voice through the use of counter narratives, and encourages youth to critically examine their lived realities and the social structures that exclude and silence them. It is through this active and critical examination of the existing social structures and social relations, both locally and globally, that youth can begin to cultivate citizenship practices that build on a sense of belonging and a sense of agency (Abu El-Haj, 2008; Lister, 2008). Ultimately, when developed with a focus on inclusion and action, education for citizenship can play a crucial role in preparing youth to be citizens in the full sense of the word, to challenge exclusionary elements and encourage a critical awareness of the workings of our society (Lister, 2008).

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Diane Farmer, Jeanette Cegin, Gabrielle Breton-Carbonneau

## Students' Pathways Across Local, National and Supra-National Borders: Representations of a Globalized World in a Francophone Minority School in Ontario, Canada

Informed by anthropology of childhood and youth, this paper examines how elementary students make sense of their diverse trajectories in an expanding culture of spatial, virtual and linguistic mobility (Farmer, 2012). Drawing on data collected in one francophone minority school in Ontario, Canada, we discuss students' representations of a "globalized world" as they co-construct with peers and teachers the multiple meanings associated with mobility, citizenship and nationhood.

### Keywords:

children, representation, mobilities, minority language policy

### 1 Introduction

Much literature in the area of citizenship education delves into the preparation of students for their civic and political responsibility as citizens in a democratic state (see Hahn, 1998; Parker, 1996). The assumption that students are in need of such preparation and formal schooling, as constituting the designated site to acquire this type of learning appears by and large to be untroubled. Some scholars, however, are questioning the limits of using the bounded form of national membership to describe citizenship education (Fischman, Haas, 2012, p. 173). Fischman and Haas (2012) describe citizenship education as an

"educationally unfinished project, an unresolvable tension, that cannot be learned and understood through conscious rationality alone and thus not "solved" through the delivery of explicit instruction on what democracy is and how a good citizen should act" (174).

Fischman and Haas (2012) do not discount the close connection of education and citizenship but assert that citizenship education is deeply connected to metaphorical and prototypical ways of thinking about and understandings of the role of the "nation as family". A different perspective examines the economic outlook of students. One such example is Mitchell's (2003) work

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which contributes to a critique of citizenship education practices in the US, England, and Canada. She advances the claim that formerly these nations approached multiculturalism for ethical reasons (i.e. teaching students to relate to and have respect for difference) although in widely different ways, yet now the general trend is toward promoting "individual patriotism and strategic entrepreneurialism" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 399). While this indicates a trend across nations related to changing student dispositions it also indicates changes in the direction of education systems to adopt policies that involve teaching students to act for themselves and value their ability to participate in the global economy. The analysis provided by Fischman and Haas (2012) as well as by Mitchell (2003) illustrate a shifting focus (or need of) in citizenship education, a blurring of categories associated with global movements and an emphasis toward a transnational character of citizenship education.

Developments in the area of childhood social studies over the past 20 years have challenged notions of childhood and youth as merely a transition stage. Scholars advocate that children are embedded in social relations and in being so, are constituted as social actors. Two consequences derive from this statement for this paper. First, children are well positioned to inform on their world and overall on the complexities of the social world. This begs the question: what can we learn from children, from their standpoint, on their world and on the social world? What can we learn, more specifically on/from their representations on citizenship? Second, the conception of childhood (and youth) is being largely defined by adults within particular settings, who deliberate on privileges, restrictions and particular ages associated with this status. Therefore, children and youth are constituted as a minority within societies (Holland et al. 2007; Leonard, 2005). Furthermore, the underlying social construct by which this population is positioned as a minority in relation to other structural forms of oppression has rarely been examined (Qvortrup, 1994; James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998). What is implied then, more specifically, on their status as citizens within citizenship education? In the context of this research, such an entry point on students as legitimate social actors, allows us to challenge the idea of young people as 'not yet citizens' (Biesta, Lawy, & Kelly, 2009).

Informed by anthropology of childhood and youth, the findings presented here stem from an ethnographic study that looks at how schooling practices are shaped by experiences of globalization and examines how



students make sense of their diverse pathways at the heart of an expanding culture of spatial, virtual and linguistic mobility (Farmer, 2012). The research was conducted in the province of Ontario, Canada. Canada's multiculturalism and official bilingualism (English and French) have been part of the policy landscape for more than 40 years. The country has two official languages, which are differently distributed across the regions, Québec being mostly French and the remainder of Canada, mostly English. But the recognition of French and English as national languages has led to the development of Minority Language Rights, which are protected by the Canadian government. This provision has served as the basis in the development of Minority Language Schools across Canada. However, since education in Canada falls under provincial jurisdiction the history and trajectory of minority language schools has not been homogeneous across the nation. In Ontario, for example, there are some 450 French language schools across the province. Although public schools have developed language curriculum in English and French, each system operates in one official language. The model developed is not one of bilingual education where students are gradually transiting from a (linguistic minority) setting to the national language public system. In francophone minority schools, citizenship has historically been linked to the preservation of a homogenous language and culture. Today, these schools are characterized by high levels of diversity and mobility, which challenge both the national (francophone) project and the school as a homogeneous space. This paper draws on data collected in one francophone minority public school in southern Ontario<sup>1</sup>. Our aim is to discuss elementary students' representations of a "globalized world" as they co-construct with peers and teachers the multiple meanings associated with mobility, citizenship and nationhood. Although specific to the Canadian context, this ethnographic study exemplifies the blurring of categories through the fluid movements of mobile families as well as the increasingly diversified contexts of schooling. It offers a view of students' experiences in picking up senses of belonging as they move or are in close contact with peers who have complex geographical trajectories. The research project relied, in part, on creative visual methods as constitutive of the methodological framework. Although this is not the focal point of the paper, methodological considerations in doing research along *with* rather than *on* children and youth is key in understanding how students define citizenship. In this paper, we first discuss how citizenship has been constructed in recent language management policy within the context of Ontario's francophone minority schools, and second, present a case study on students' representations of a globalized world as they are constituted throughout the students' life-long trajectories and transposed within the learning space of the classroom. This paper contributes to scholarship that problematizes the notion of children and youth as "not yet citizens" through making explicit some children's understandings of their local, national and transnational connections.

## 2 Ontario language policies and the imagined francophone student

The school is a key site for the production and reproduction of dominant societal discourses, one that imposes certain ways of thinking and doing on its student (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In Ontario (and elsewhere in Canada), education has also constituted an institutional space for the advocacy of minority language rights within the broader Canadian national context of Official Languages Policies. Historical developments originating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century until the early 21<sup>st</sup> century have led progressively to the consolidation of a French Language educational network in Ontario from Junior Kindergarten to the senior years of High School. The 2004 *Politique d'Aménagement Linguistique (PAL)*, in continuity with earlier versions of policy documents written in the mid 1990s (Farmer & Bélanger 2012), is Ontario's primary official policy for French language public schools in the province. As a formal representation legitimated through a series of historical developments, it holds francophone schools responsible for the "transmission of the French language and culture" (p.3). In order to broaden and support the access to French language minority schooling, which is only available to official minority language rights holders, a second policy was drafted in 2009 the *Policy Statement and Guidelines on the Admission, Welcoming, and Support of Students in French-language Schools*.

The first policy, the *PAL*, refers ultimately to language planning in minority francophone settings and states that students must gain "an increased capacity to acquire oral communication skills to maximize learning and *identity building*" (emphasis added, p. 4). Various scholars have suggested that the discourse framing the *PAL* policy presents an important limitation in how it constructs the Franco-Ontarian community as unilingual and culturally homogenous (Farmer & Bélanger, 2012; Labrie, 2007; Prasad, 2009, 2012). Indeed, there is a strong overarching focus on the minority status of French in Ontario to provide a space to (re)assert the claim that linguistic and cultural preservation is necessary. The policy explicitly states that French language schools are not only to foster language skills but also "a profound sense of the cultural and universal values shared by francophone communities here and elsewhere" (p. 5). Given the demographic changes in Ontario's francophone population towards increased international migration, as well as in recognition of the expansion of neo-liberal discourses on the knowledge economy and subsequent reforms in education, starting in the 1990s policy makers have been under pressure to review insular representations of *la francophonie* (Farmer, Chambon, & Labrie, 2003; Houle & Corbeil, 2010). Hence, in the 2004 language policy, there seems to be a discourse of 'global linkages', tying French Canadian schools to a broader international francophone community. It thus becomes possible to envision the school as a space to jump geographic scales since the local practice of education can surpass national discourses and shift toward a supra-national imagined language community. However, while



this is possible, there is still a tension within the school space where students are envisioned by different interlocutors as “native” or “migrant”.

The *Policy Statement and Guidelines on the Admission, Welcoming, and Support of Students in French-language Schools* (2009) provides a framework based on the principles of inclusive education to address the increasingly diverse student population attending francophone minority schools in Ontario. As it contends, “this policy statement promotes a dynamic, open, and inclusive modern French-speaking community” and endorses an “inclusive spirit...for learning to live together in a multilingual and multicultural society” (p. 7). The policy is however quick to rationalize that the students’ diverse needs must be met “while transmitting the French language and francophone culture” (p. 8). The policy undoubtedly “marks a potentially powerful shift in opening access to French-language education” (p. 70). The national agenda, while recognizing a diverse student body, remains limited in scope as described in the above policy provisions.

These two policies indicate adjustments to the level of inclusion in francophone minority schools have been made, however, these changes did not significantly alter the official discourse from which francophone students are formally represented in their ‘*francophone-ness*’. Such policy frameworks, although seemingly remote from the everyday activities in the classroom, has a significant impact on the manner in which students are being constructed in schools (either as “francophone” or “migrant”). Developing different ways of naming students is revealing of a differential access to citizenship as a social construct.

### 3 Students and representations of citizenship

In presenting the following case study, we aim to identify the ways that students in francophone minority settings imagine themselves. More specifically, we were interested to see whether students operate according to this paradigm, or whether they made use of other concepts to represent their local and sometimes global linkages.

The population of *l'École du Monde*, the school where the study took place, was linguistically diverse. In addition to French and English, Arabic was a predominant language amongst students and also spoken by several of the teachers. The school was labeled locally as an inner-city school (from a socio-economic as well as a religious perspective), and was discursively understood within the community as “the Arab school”. It was geographically located at proximity to a busy US border crossing, many of the young participants having family on both sides of the border. The school was also located at the margins, both geographically and symbolically, from Ottawa, the dominant centre where decision are made about Ontario’s *francophonie*. This setting thus provided an excellent opportunity to unveil alternative ways in which citizenship takes shape in the everyday life of *mobile* students. The overall research consisted of a multi-site study involving some 125 participants in three

schools (five classrooms), the majority of whom were children and youth (n=67). Findings discussed in this paper have been drawn from two classrooms from *L'École du Monde*, a Grade 4/5 (students aged 9 and 10 years old) and a Grade 5/6 (students aged 10 and 11). In total, 42 students, six parents and six adults from the school (principal, teachers and a social worker) participated in this site of the study. The research design incorporated both more conventional techniques including prolonged observation, individual and small group interviews and creative visual methods of inquiry, using (visual language portraits) and photography. In doing so, we developed a scaffolding approach to participation in which students were gradually trained to use the research tools designed for the study and were provided several opportunities to discuss their ideas about their own experiences of mobility and migration (Farmer & Prasad, 2014). In terms of a scaffolding approach to research, and experimenting with research tools, young participants were invited, for example, to take pictures of each other in school, which were digitally reworked into a colouring book style body outline and used as individualized templates for the drawing of language portraits. Students were given time in class to create their language portrait. They knew where, when and by whom the pictures had been taken and now saw the purpose for it. They were also given digital cameras and had the opportunity to practice in school the research task associated with taking pictures. This prepared them for a follow-up activity at home. Students were interviewed in small groups (three to four students) on three occasions where again they could discuss their ideas and stories.

This paper focuses on the data collected using reflexive drawing (Molinié, 2009), more specifically. Reflexive creative research techniques are helpful in supporting youth self-inquiry, which was an important goal of the research. It allows youth to position themselves as authors who appropriate and make sense of their drawing (Castoletti & Moore, 2009, p. 45-46). Molinié (2009, 2014) emphasizes amongst many attributes the dialogue generated between the researcher and the participants in a common meaning-making process. This approach was adapted in the project by having students involved as co-interviewers amongst peers. As indicated above, we invited students to do draw their language portrait. This technique has been developed by sociolinguists, Busch (2010), Busch, Jardine, and Tjoutuku, (2006) Krumm (2008) and is being used in various studies pertaining to language, multilingualism and society. We used Busch’s (2010) exploration of visual body mapping and utilized it as a biographical tool. In the project we asked participants to draw languages portraits, in response to the following statement: “I draw languages and culture that connect me”. This led participants to develop complex narratives. We draw from these narratives to reflect on the question of youth as ‘not yet citizens’. Visual methods are particularly fruitful when interested in the multiplicity of meanings (Leavy, 2008) and, as illustrated in the next section, visual language



portraits engaged students in deep reflections on their individual pathways. In using creative methods, we also sought to support students' participation in a way that was not contingent on their proficiency in the school language (Castoletti & Moore, 2009) or on their competency with traditional academic skills. The research questions guiding this analysis include: How do students navigate their own complex conceptions of identity, belonging, and mobility? What types of relational ties do they form, with whom, and on what scale (local, national, supra-national)? How might students' diverse representations contribute to redefining francophone minority public school space? Students expressed their mobility stories using reflexive drawing, interviews, and focus groups to elicit the plurality of meanings embedded in francophone youth self-representations. Language portraits formed an important piece of data for this project since it enabled students to represent their multiple identities by means of mapping them onto a drawn silhouette of themselves (Busch, Jardine, & Tjoutuku, 2006; Krumm, 2008).

#### 4 Findings

Despite the institutional context supporting homogenous discursive French space in francophone schools, our data reveals that teachers, students and staff seemed to construct spaces where students' multilingual language abilities and multiple identity belongings are accepted. A preliminary analysis of the data reveals that students demonstrate a strong awareness of the many languages, cultures and national ties influencing their identity constructions, often positioning themselves in multiple and contradictory ways with respect to dominant discourses advanced in the francophone minority institutional space of the school.

Students described their diverse array of networks that exist within and across spaces that are local, national, and transnational. This is evidenced in the inference to nation-states, in the idea of French as a global language and in building the reference to a 'globalized world' through family and community connections.

##### 4.1 Nationalism as social category

Although the activity instructions for the language portraits did not make explicit reference to concepts like "countries" or "nations", students frequently turned to the nation-state paradigm to represent themselves (see Appendix A Bahir). National symbols, including the colours and designs featured on national flags were prominent in nearly all of the student self-portraits. For instance, Jasmine<sup>ii</sup> says "I will talk about MY culture, MY country... I put multiculturalism on my hand because in Canada, it's everybody together...as opposed to in France where everybody is French" (p. 3). National symbols appear to be endorsed yet somewhat nuanced as they are reflected upon by the student in this example (the student drew comparisons on the different contexts she gained knowledge of through experiences of citizenship in multiple countries).

Given the extent of the transnational movements of

the families who attended the school, it was common for students to identify with not one but several nations (Bahir, Gretta, language portraits). For example, Bahir used his face to show where he was born and other body parts in descending order to show other places where he lived. This raises the question of whether students had limited ways of making sense of their multiple linguistic and cultural connections, which may be why they gravitated to nationalistic associations.

During group interviews, students' conceptions of belonging to a particular identity were, at times, challenged by their peers. One such example of this type of contestation occurred as follows:

Sana: *I choose brown for Albanian because there is an Albanian in my class*

Mike: *I am not Albanian, I'm Canadian*

Sana: *yeah, but you were born there (see Appendix B).*

Interestingly, nearly every student also included Albanian as an identity descriptor. Yet the Albanian student they all drew this linkage from described herself as Canadian. Nation-states for some of the children interviewed were too rigid and fixed as categories and so it seems that students re-appropriated more fluid terms to suit their identity needs. In essence, Sana and many other students were indicating their familiarity with, and concurrently producing, a "cosmopolitan sense of belonging" (Singh, Rizvi, & Shrestha 2000, p. 198).

##### 4.2 French as global language

Students repeatedly referenced what being a student in a French language school was like. During a first visit to the school by the research team, for example, a student who had arrived to this new school a week before, was quick to bring our attention to the Franco-Ontarian flag hung outside. However, students seemed to resist French as a homogenous linguistic category. As Madeleine asserts, "me, I don't like French, but everywhere I go, there are francophones, all the schools that I have been to, it's all French". Instead, all students represented themselves as multilingual selves in their language portraits (see Appendix C Madeleine). We noticed students drawing from their linguistic repertoires and making use of their multiple languages in particular contexts. Carmina explains, "I speak Arabic at home, I speak French at school, and I speak English with my friends". Lastly, in addition to the multiple languages that students could speak, some made reference to their "French" nations of origins such as Lebanon or Cameroon, "I've lived my whole life in French, I come from a French country" (Sadia). French thus seemed to be understood as a global language by the students, who often related to francophone networks that surpassed national territorial borders. We took into consideration student's relationship with virtual mobility to gain more insight into how the processes of migration and movement might include points of juncture or fluidity in relation to students self-representations. In the next section we shed light on the way technology contributes



to fostering a strong sense of normalcy toward transnational ties.

#### 4.3 Enhanced connections between local and transnational communities

Student solidified connections between their local and transnational communities through physical travel, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). ICTs were used to connect with people both locally and transnationally. For example Alim moved to Canada at 6 years old, to Lebanon at 7 and back to Canada at 10. He maintained close relationships with family through Skype. In this particular setting, most students defined family as an extended family. Students also described actively maintaining family connections (personally or through their parents) with family members located in many parts of the world. Interestingly, one interviewer asked a student how it feels to communicate with family members abroad and after a long pause, she replied, "just normal". Thus it is possible to envision through the experiences of children and youth how complex technologies and transnational ties are important to the lives and connections of mobile students. Students and their families traveled whenever possible and maintained connections through social media. The few students whose families lived locally and who did not travel extensively expressed being part of this globetrotting movement *through* their mobile peers.

#### 5 Discussion and conclusions

Although it has been documented that French in Canada embodies important principles related to particular social and political values (Heller, 1999), our data reveals that students did not seem to show concern for this ideology. Despite the discursive construction of traditional and even nationalist sentiments found within the aforementioned French language educational policies, students instead found other ways to orient themselves toward language and identity. Language portraits and interviews suggest that students often conceived of themselves in local, (trans)national and global terms. Through their high degree of spatial, virtual, linguistic and cultural mobilities, students may have acquired what Kelly and Lusi (2006) have coined a 'transnational habitus'. The term transnational habitus as Kelly and Lusi (2006) describe it is meant to acknowledge that a habitus is not concept that is bound by the parameters of place. Furthermore, they say "Economic, social, and cultural capital do not simply transfer to a new setting in which they are evaluated within a new habitus: instead, a process of valuation and exchange continues through transnational social fields well after settlement has occurred" (p. 837). The students interviewed by author of study in 2010 articulated an awareness of different "common sense" practices in various transnational settings they moved between and also discussed the new practices that have become common place for them to stay connected with places, people and ways of life abroad. This study reveals that students in francophone minority schools navigate the constraints of francophone

education policy in ways that reflect their mobile subjectivities. The students represented themselves as national, transnational and cosmopolite subjects. Franco-Ontarian minority language schools are no longer catering solely to a fictitious homogenous and authentic people. Instead, we contend that the school's diverse student and teacher population contributed to the redefinition of French minority language schools as hubs for various types of mobility. Students, teachers and staff redefined the school space as one that opens its doors to the multiplicity of identities that populate it. That these processes are so local, in one francophone school in southern Ontario, provides us with significant insight on how people are beginning to redefine and reimagine themselves in a global and mobile world. This research highlights from children's insights that they are far from "not yet citizens" and that citizenship, too, is a dynamic process that is always in the making.

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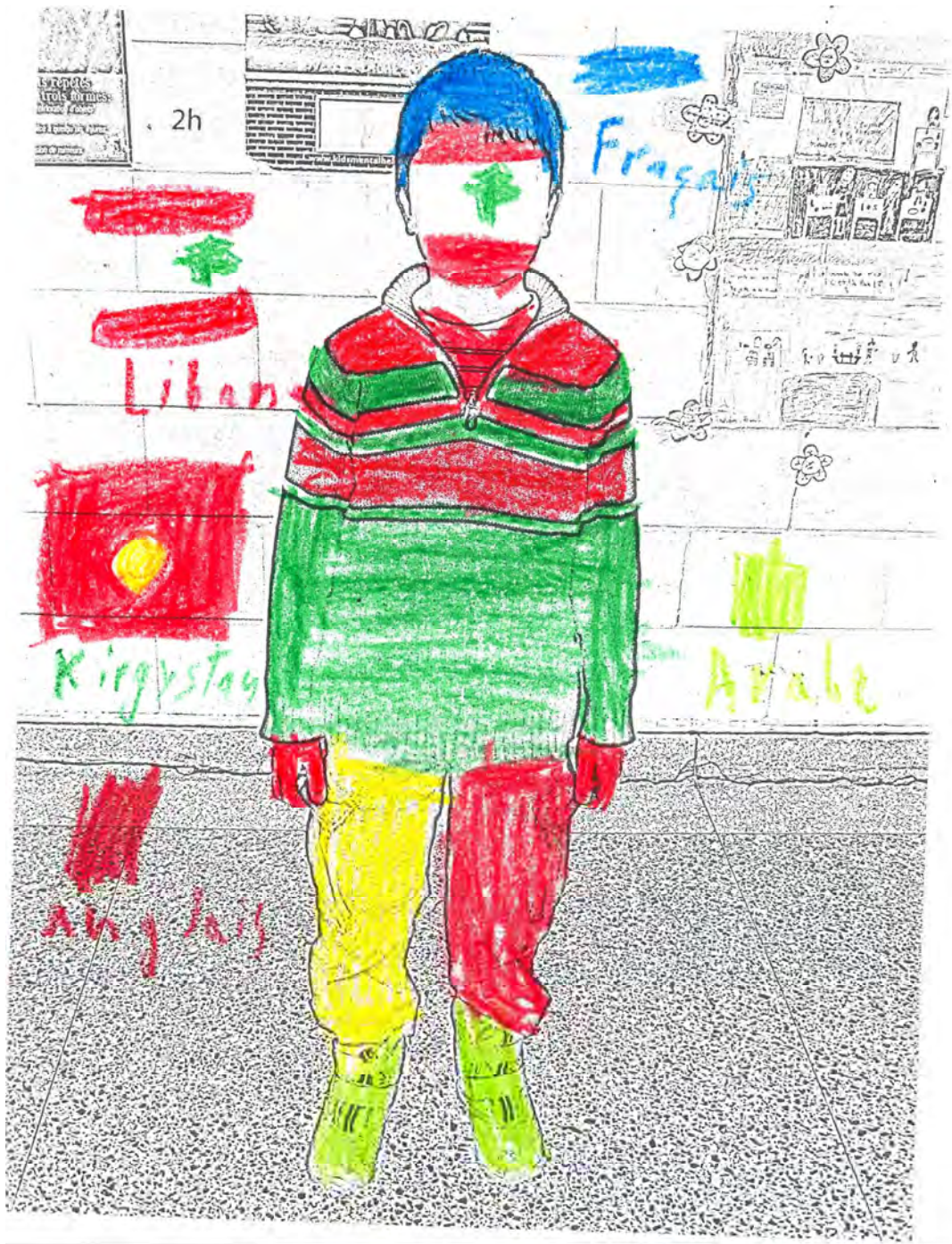
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## Endnotes

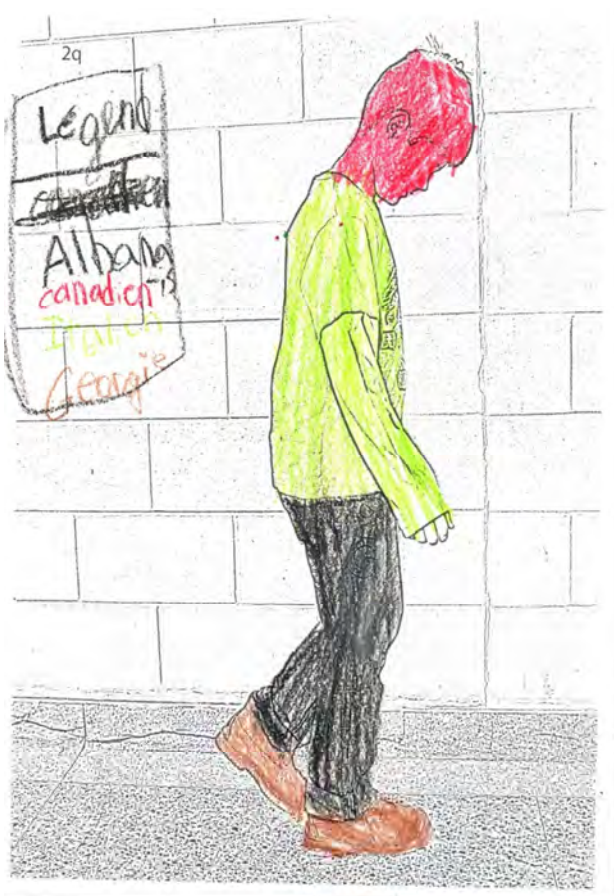
<sup>i</sup> This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, XX P.I., *Mobilités et transnationalisme : histoires d'enfants et de jeunes dans la redéfinition de l'espace scolaire de langue française de l'Ontario*, (2009-2012)

<sup>ii</sup> All names have been changed to pseudonyms.

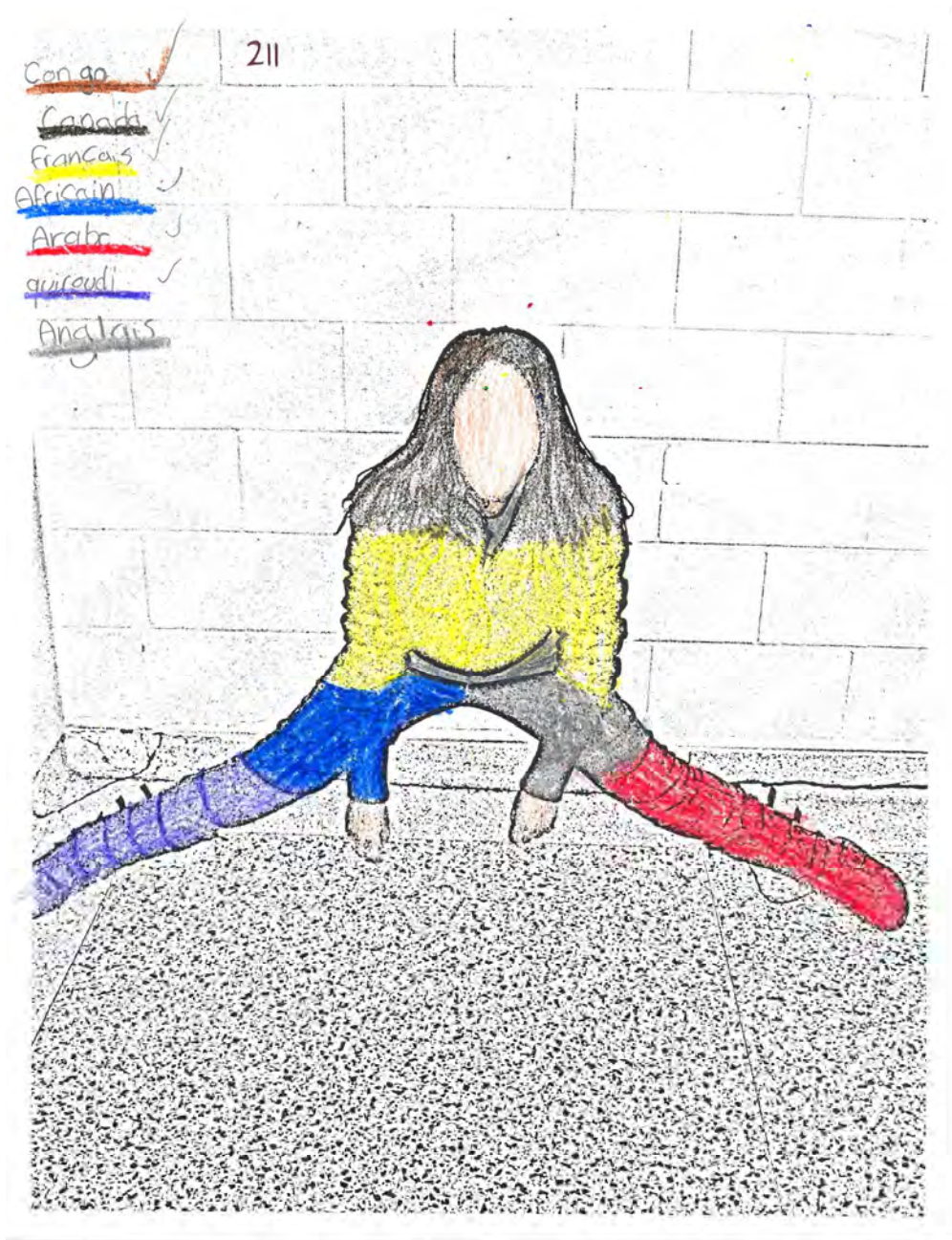
### Appendix A Bahir Language Portrait



### Appendix B Sana and Mike Language Portraits



### Appendix C Madeleine Language Portrait



## Zafer Kuş

### Science and Social Studies Teachers' Beliefs and Practices about Teaching Controversial Issues: Certain Comparisons<sup>1</sup>

The current study aims to investigate social studies and science teachers' attitudes and classroom practices associated with controversial issues. The study is a qualitative research based on data collected through interviews and observation. Social studies and Science teachers participated in the current study which was conducted in Kirsehir, a city in the center of Turkey, during the 2012-2013 academic years. Data were collected through classroom observation and interviews with teachers. In this study, teachers' positioning during controversial issues are determined by Kelly's (1986) positioning classification: Exclusive Neutrality, Exclusive Partiality, Neutral Impartiality, and Committed Impartiality. According to results of the research, violence against women, education system, terrorism and nationalism are the leading issues among the controversial issues that both social studies and science teachers listed in Turkey. In relation to their area, social studies teachers stated that the issues such as Kemalism, democracy, military coups, and deep state, which are associated with recent history of Turkey, were among the important controversial issues. Science teachers on the other hand stated issues such as cancer and anti-toxic foods and global warming among the controversial issues in Turkey. Both social studies and science teachers stated that the most frequently encountered problem in discussions was lack of knowledge by students. Whereas social studies teachers stated that their priority goals were particularly to raise active citizens and to set up a democratic classroom environment, science teachers pointed to raising scientifically thinking students and increasing students' knowledge as their priority goals. During in-class discussions teachers take some positions. The positions stated by the teachers and in-class observations of them conflict. Whereas the teachers stated that they prefer the 4th and 3rd positions, the in-class observations showed that they mainly adopted the 2nd position. Results of observations in social studies classes show that teachers definitely stated their positions about the discussed issue as a priority; they tried to teach the students their positions about the issue; and occasionally about some issues, they told just their positions.

#### Keywords:

controversial, social studies, science, teacher, Turkey

#### 1 Introduction

As in all societies, the Turkish society discusses many controversial issues. However, what are these controversial issues? How is a controversial issue defined? These may be disputable. Not surprisingly, a controversial issue is not defined with consensus. Evans, Avery, and Pederson (2000) described controversial issues as "taboo" topics because they are not usually discussed in society as people take personal offense to the discussion. Stradling (1985) defines controversial issues as those issues on which our society is clearly divided and significant groups within society advocate conflicting explanations or solutions based on alternative values. Wellington (1986) states that a controversial issue must involve value judgments, so that the issue cannot be settled by facts, evidence or experiment alone and controversial issue must be considered important by an appreciable number of people (Wellington, 1986). Controversial issues can be local or global, such as bullying, religion, politics, personal lifestyle or values.

Controversy is dangerous. It is intimidating and divisive.

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It makes teachers and students ill at ease (Byford, Lennon, & Russell, 2009). Dealing with these issues in the classroom can disturb the peace and stability of the scholastic environment. It can set students against each other (Philpott, Clabough, McConkey & Turner, 2011).

However, as Dewhurst (1992) argues, students are going to meet moral dilemmas before and after they leave school. Schools therefore have to help their students to handle questions of value, to learn to make judgments which are truly their own as well as learning to take responsibility for their own lives'. Gore (1999) notes, it is not possible to avoid teaching about, political ideas, cultural differences, environmental change, family heritage, human rights and many other topics. Students, therefore, need the skills to resolve controversial issues, as well as the appropriate classroom instruction to promote the development of an informed, skilled and committed citizen. It also should help students develop democratic values, such as toleration of dissent and support for equality (Lockwood & Harris, 1985 cited in Reitano, Kivunja, & Porter, 2008). Students need to explore how it is that individuals can apparently arrive at different positions on an issue. Introducing them to multiple positions is therefore an essential part of the methods of teaching about controversial issues (Oulton, Day, Dillon & Grace, 2004). For the vitality of a democracy to be maintained, students must engage in civic discussions with those that have different points of view, and through this discussion, students will gain tolerance for differences in others and will learn important content knowledge (Hess, 2009). The discussion of controversial issues in the classroom provides students with opportunities to engage in higher order thinking by examining divergent points of view about an

issue (Camicia & Dobson, 2010). Soley (1996) explains that controversial issues help students to think deeper about the content and allow the students to self-reflect about their own values and the values of others. Using controversial subjects in science education may support them in establishing a connection between the subject matter and their daily lives and motivating them (Lin and Mintzes, 2010). Conducted studies have shown that controversial subjects with multiple original solutions can be a very effective tool for encouraging students to discuss and develop argumentation skills (Sadler, 2004; Simonneau, 2007).

Controversial issues that concern society are brought into the classroom by either teachers or students by the curriculum of some courses or outside of the curriculum. The act of bringing these controversial issues into the classroom, as well as the beliefs and applications of teachers regarding the controversial issues and the perceptions of students are highly interesting, in terms of studies. Another point is that the controversial issues may be a subject to pedagogical studies as they are considered an educational ideal or purpose. Students are required to have the skills of critical and systematic thinking, be sensitive and respectful towards cultural differences and have a more active place in the democratic society in order to become efficient and sensitive citizens with superior thinking skills especially in terms of democratic citizen qualifications, which is becoming more and more important (Seçgin, 2009). Soley (1996) stated that the discussion of controversial issues was a "cornerstone of our professional responsibility" within the field of social science education and must be discussed despite the potential barriers. Taking the controversial issues into the classroom is very important in terms of raising individuals with the skills of critical thinking, as well as the development of a democratic society (Parker, 1996; Yankelovich, 1999). This article examines the attitudes of social studies and science teachers towards the controversial issues and their intraclass practices.

## 2 Controversial Issues in Turkey

Turkey is located on Anatolian peninsula in the southwestern end of Asian continent. A large portion of its land is in Asia and some is in Europe. In this regard, Turkey is both an Asian and a European country. On the other hand, Turkey is also a Middle Eastern country. An important characteristic of Turkey is about its population of 77 million, half of which are youth. In addition, Turkey, featuring a democratic secular state, serves as the bridge between Muslim and the Western countries due to the fact that majority of its population consist of Muslims. Following World War I, upon Ottoman Empire's collapse, new Republic of Turkey based on people's sovereignty was founded in 1920 with Ataturk's leadership after a war of independence. Since then, the constitution was rebuilt 4 times (1921, 1924, 1961, and 1982 Constitution); due to political unrest, the military seized power twice in 1960 and 1980; again they forced the government to resign in 1971 and 1977. For the last 15-

20 years, a rapid scientific, technology, social, and cultural change has been experienced in Turkey.

Turkey's cultural identity is an intersection for four separate elements. These elements consist of: authentic Turkish culture (Central Asia), Islamic culture (Arabic, Iranian), Anatolian local cultures and Western (European) culture (Turan, 1990: 42). This intersection provides for a rich Turkish culture with diversity. All these historical events and rapid changes constitute the source of many controversial issues in Turkey today.

As is expressed in the beginning of the article, controversial issues have various definitions. For instance, Stradling (1984) states the following regarding the controversial issues.

An idea or viewpoint may be considered an issue if a number of people disagree about statements and assertions made in connection with the proposition. Issues that deeply divide a society, that generate conflicting explanations and solutions based on alternative value systems, are considered controversial (Stradling, 1984).

Similarly, Bailey (1975) defines the controversial issues as follows:

If a number of different people think about an issue or a problem and if they have contradicting ideas on that issue, it is considered a controversial issue (Bailey, 1975; Cited by: Yilmaz, 2012:202).

As it is understood from all these definitions, the main points in controversial issues involve the disagreements on them and different views in society concerning the reasons and solutions of a problem. A controversial issue in a society may not be controversial in a different society. At this point, elements like the beliefs, culture, history, social and economic position of a society are very important. Besides, controversial issues may differ from time to time. For instance, the enfranchisement of woman in the USA transformed from a controversial political issue to an issue to be accepted almost by all the Americans (Hess, 2004). Should women have the right to vote in the United States? It is no more a controversial issue as it is no more discussed in the United States (even though it is still a controversial issue in some areas of the world). Another instance is related with the position of women in Turkey. It is stated that an important part of women in Turkey should be involved in business life, women and men should have equal rights and violence against women should be terminated. However, a considerable number of groups state that women should stay at home and stand behind men. In some cases, they even assert that a husband may beat a woman (his wife) (although it is against the constitution). Some women may even accept this condition. However, an important part of society objects to this view, which makes it a controversial issue in the Turkish society today.

In conclusion, there are different views about controversial issues according to time and society.

Many controversial issues are included in the curricula in the classrooms in order to help students gain certain values and skills. On elementary level, particularly in social studies and science classes, controversial issues take place. In 2005 – 2006 academic years, curricula of both subjects were restructured through constructive learning approach (MEB, 2005a). Elementary science classes aim to educate researching-questioning and problem-solving individuals, with decision making skills, who are able to think critically (MEB, 2005b). For this purpose, many socio-scientific and controversial issues (brain drain, environmental pollution, global warming, evolution theory, genetically modified products, human genome project, cloning, sexual education, etc.) are included within science curriculum. These subjects, which are part of science education, are referred to as "socio-scientific issues" in international literature. Socio-scientific issues are subjects which concern the society, which cover scientific moral dimensions, which have several different resolutions that can be achieved via reasoning, which do not have a definitive solution and which include open-ended problems (Sadler, 2004; Sadler, 2011; Sadler and Zeidler, 2005). Solution strategies of socio-scientific issues benefit from scientific principles, theories and scientific data. However it cannot be said that there solutions are fully supported by scientific approach. These are also supported several social factors including politics, economics and ethics (Demiral, 2014). With the social studies curricula renewed in 2005-2006 academic years, the content was completely different along with the controversial issues, many of which (Kemalism, freedom of press, democracy, laicism, population, freedom of thought, political issues, etc.) were included in the curriculum. Many of these recent topics are the controversial issues which are included in social studies and science curricula. However, what do teachers think about controversial issues? How do teachers discuss these issues in the class? Response to these issues during instruction is very important because teachers, who are the implementers of curricula, decide if controversial issues will be discussed in the class as well as which ones and their approach can determine if students are able to express their views comfortably to the class (Yilmaz, 2012).

### **Related Studies**

Examining the literature, it is observed that there are various long-term studies regarding the controversial issues and the education of these issues. It is also observed that these studies mainly focus on the teaching of controversial issues in classroom (Hess, 2002a; Hess, 2001a; Hess, 2001b; Dewhurst, 1992), as well as the practices of teachers in classroom, the difficulties they encounter with and their views (Byford, Lennon, & Russell, 2009; Hess, 2005; Hess, 2002b; Philpott, Clabough, McConkey & Turner, 2011; Lockwood, 1996; Oulton, Day, Dillon & Grace, 2004; Wilson, Haas, Laughlin, & Sunal, 2002).

In Turkey, on the other hand, it is observed that there has been an increase in the number of relevant studies in

recent years. Rather than experimental studies, there are studies regarding the thoughts of teachers and pre-service teachers about controversial issues (Avaroğulları, 2014; Ersoy, 2010; Ersoy, 2013; Seğgin, 2009; Sönmez and Kılınc, 2012; Yilmaz, 2012). However, the studies in this field are still very limited. This study, on the other hand, aims to determine and compare the issues being discussed in science and social studies classes and the practices of teachers during the discussions.

### **Method**

The current study is a qualitative research based on data collected through interviews and observation.

### **Participants**

Social studies and Science teachers participated in the current study. In order to become a teacher in Turkey, one must graduate at a 4-year college of education. In addition, graduates of history and geography majors can be appointed as teachers of social studies as well as graduates of physics, chemistry, and biology as teachers of science, following a one-year pedagogical formation program.

The current study was conducted in the city of Kirsehir, geographically located in the middle of Turkey in 2013 academic year.

Kirsehir is a small city near the capital Ankara in the middle of Turkey. In general, families have a medium social economic status (800-1400\$). This city attracts attention particularly with achievement levels in entrance to secondary and higher education on national tests.

The study group was composed of teachers who were selected based on various professional experience, various employment regions, and different genders. Initially, the aim of the current study was explained to 18 social studies and 17 science teachers and they were shown the interview questions. Later, 24 volunteering teachers were interviewed and recorded. Responses of 4 teachers who did not want their voices to be recorded responded to the interview questions in writing.

12 of the participating teachers were social studies and the other 12 were science teachers. 13 teachers were male whereas 11 were female. Teachers' professional experiences varied from 3 to 20 years. All teachers stated that they received no training on teaching controversial issues.

### **Collecting the Data**

Data collected for qualitative research may be diverse and in the form of observation notes, interview records, documents, photos, and other graphic representation (Cohen et al., 2007; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). Data for the current study was collected through classroom observation and interviews with teachers. First, through a semi-structured interview form, teachers were interviewed face-to-face. Teachers were contacted prior to the interviews and at a convenient time and date, they were interviewed in the schools where they worked. Duration of interviews



varied between 14 and 17 minutes. Prior to the interviews, a pilot application was conducted with 2 social studies and 2 science teachers. Teachers were asked about issues that they considered controversial in Turkey, the issues that they discussed during class, their purposes, and problems that they faced during discussions. Teachers took various positions to controversial issues. In the final question teachers were asked about their preference among the four positions (Table 1) that Kelly (1986) described.

Table 1: The positions teachers take on controversial issues

1 <sup>st</sup> Position (Exclusive Neutrality)	As a teacher, I do not convey controversial issues to the class and I do not express my personal opinion about such an issue.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Position (Exclusive Partiality)	About a controversial issue, I try to convince students to take a preferred right position. As a teacher, I explain my personal opinion in order for students to accept.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Position (Neutral Impartiality)	I support discussions about a controversial issue during the class. I do not state my personal opinion about the issue but I encourage students to express their own opinions.
4 <sup>th</sup> Position (Committed Impartiality)	I support discussions about controversial issues during the class; I state my personal opinion or position about the issue; and I encourage students to explain their own positions.

In addition to the interviews with teachers, observations were conducted during in order to see the classroom practices of those teachers. They were observed during the classes by trained observers. The content of the current study was explained to the observers and they were asked to take notes during discussions in the class. Class sessions of teachers who were interviewed during 2013 fall semester were observed. Thus, the difference between teachers' opinions and practices were identified.

#### Data Analysis

In the current study, during data analysis, first, all notes taken during interviews and class observations were directly transcribed. In this way, interviews and classroom observations were documented. Secondly, this document was studied and teachers' responses to questions were coded in Excel format by the researcher and a colleague. Thus, the issues that teachers considered to be the least and the most controversial in Turkey, the issues that they convey to the class and discuss, their targets during the discussion in the class, and their positions were identified. Thirdly, teachers' opinions were compared to their classroom practices through observers' notes. In direct quotes, teachers'

names were not given but abbreviations were provided. For instance, (ST-1/M) represents the first male science teacher; (SST-2/F) represents the second female social studies teacher. When the observers' notes were transferred, (SC-1) represented the first science class observed; (SSC-2) represented the second social studies class observed.

### 3 Findings

Findings obtained from social studies and science teachers were presented in five categories: 1- Controversial issues in Turkey, 2- Classroom controversial issues, 3- Goals of teaching controversial issues, 4- Problems faced during teaching controversial issues, 5- The positions teachers take on controversial issues

#### Controversial issues in Turkey

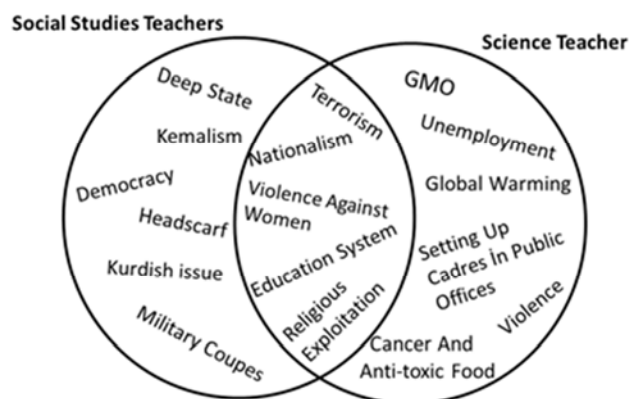
Social studies and science teachers stated many issues that they considered controversial in Turkey. Social studies teachers stated that the issues such as violence towards women, nationalism, terrorism, education system, Kemalism, democracy, military coupes, deep state, Kurdish issue, headscarf, and religious exploitation were particularly controversial. Science teachers stated that issues pertaining to the education system, genetically modified products, violence against women, terrorism, unemployment, violence, religious education or religious exploitation, setting up cadres in public offices, cancer and anti-toxic food, global warming, and nationalism were the most controversial in Turkey. Social studies teachers said that the stated controversial issues were included in the curriculum and thus they convey them to the class to discuss. Some social studies teachers even explained that they took some global and local controversial issues to the class to discuss even if they were not included in the curriculum. Science teachers on the other hand said that these issues were controversial in Turkey; as citizens they discussed these issues outside the class but were not able to discuss all these issues with their students during class.

There are some common issues (violence against women, education system, terrorism, etc.) that both social studies and science teachers consider controversial in Turkey which included violence against women. In general they stated that the issue of violence against women has been experienced for many years in Turkey, but had surfaced and been discussed until recently. Particularly in recent years, the violence against women was in an obviously public form and therefore publicized more by the media and teachers have begun to discuss the issue recently. The science teacher who expressed opinion about the issue said the following:

In my opinion, the most controversial issue in Turkey right now is the violence against women. In fact, the violence against women has always been an issue in Turkey. However, media puts it in their agenda when they want but when they do not, they manage to have people forget it (ST-3F).

Along with violence towards women both social studies and science teachers consider the education system to be among controversial issues in Turkey. Teachers stated that this as a very important issue and many people discussed it and that particularly the test systems in Turkey were very controversial. Another issue that is considered controversial in Turkey is terrorism. Many teachers of both subjects emphasized that terrorism had been a problem for Turkey for many long years and it caused both lives and material losses.

Figure 1: Issues considered the most controversial by teachers in Turkey



In addition to stating the most controversial issues in Turkey, teachers also told the least discussed issues nation-wide. Both social studies and science teachers thought that gene therapy, euthanasia, human genome project, cloning, and hybrid seeds were among the least discussed issues in Turkey. Science teachers stated that these issues were included in the curriculum on various levels and were taught to children. However, teachers said that these issues are rarely on the agenda and the public is not aware of them. Social studies teachers, on the other hand, stated that they had not encountered these issues and they are not presented in the media and people do not discuss these issues. In addition to the commonly expressed issues, social studies teachers said that issues of nepotism, bribery, and corruption are not discussed in Turkey. A social studies teacher stated the following about this:

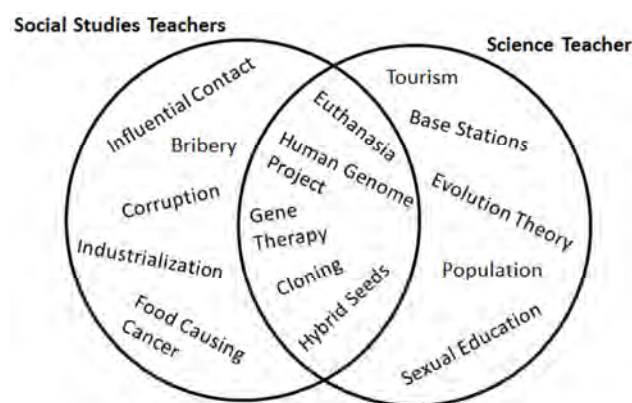
There are many issues that people do not discuss in Turkey such as nepotism, bribery, and corruption that were much discussed in the past but are never on discussion agenda nowadays. I think there are two reasons for that; either people have become very insensitive or these problems are not encountered in Turkey anymore (STT-5/F).

The food causing cancer, which was included among the most controversial issues in Turkey by science teachers, was shown among the least controversial issues by social studies teachers. Science teachers again stated that such issues as evolution theory, base stations, and sexual education included in the curricula were among the least discussed issues in Turkey.

A science teacher expressed their opinion stating following:

In fact, I noticed just now when you asked, many issues that we teach in the class are never discussed by the public, for instance, euthanasia, human genome project, evolution, gene therapy, and sexual education. Because people are ill-informed about such issues, they are not among the controversial issues. The issue of evolution is put on the agenda from time to time but is never supported by the public because the vast majority thinks the same way about evolution due to our beliefs. Therefore, this does not become an issue of discussion. Sexual education is never discussed since there is pressure about this issue and about other issues that I brought up (human genome project, gene therapy, individuals are ignorant in regards to these issues (ST-6/F).

Figure 2: The issues that teachers consider the least discussed in Turkey



**In-class Controversial Issues**

Almost all social studies teachers stated that the most discussed issue within the class was Kemalism. Most stated that issues associated with Kemalism were included in the curriculum and therefore this issue was largely covered. They emphasized that they even associated Kemalism with many other topics. Furthermore, some social studies teachers stated that students learned Kemalism in a wrong way within the family or in the environment; therefore, they try to provide correct information through in-class discussion. Social studies teachers stated the following about this issue:

I try to almost every week bring up the issue of Kemalism in the class and discuss with my students. I associate it with many topics. However, children have some inaccurate information about this. In particular, inaccurate information they learned from their families. I am trying to correct this (STT-1/F).

Teaching Kemalism is one of the basic goals of social studies subject. Therefore, it is largely covered in the class. In particular, all topics of 8<sup>th</sup> grade are associated with Kemalism. Therefore, we discuss this issue extensively in the class. However, children are not very

well informed about this or they have difficulty understanding due to their age levels (STT-7/M).

Most social studies teachers stated that they bring up issues of education system, environmental pollution, democracy, and laicism, freedom of press, brain drain, terrorism, and nationalism in the class. Some social studies teachers, on the other hand, said that they convey issues of violence against women, internet, and independence of judiciary, Armenian problem, and earthquake to the classroom to discuss with students. Social studies teachers stated that they discussed issues such as democracy, laicism, freedom of press, nationalism, and independence of judiciary particularly with 8<sup>th</sup> grade students but at lower grades, they did not find much ground for discussion.

According to the in-class observation results, the leading topic among issues that all social studies teachers discussed during class was Kemalism. Observation results showed that social studies teachers associated social studies topics with Kemalism and discussed it often. An observer took the following notes about this:

Because it is the subject of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade History of Ataturk's Principles and Reforms, the topic of Kemalism is brought up every period. Teacher often talks to the students about this issue. Even if different topics are discussed, this issue is brought up in a way (STC-3).

Regarding the issue of Kemalism, observers stated that in today's deviation from Kemalism, misconceptions, and misunderstanding true Kemalism were discussed. One observer wrote the following about this issue:

In particular, teachers discuss about particularly the assaults against Kemalism during class. One Teacher emphasizes that Kemalism is interpreted in favor of their interests by each segment of the society or defamed. Discussions about this are often held so that teacher can truthfully inform their students. Because political topics are too abstract for students and they cannot understand many of the concepts, they only state slogan statements heard in the family or environment (SSC-11).

Based on the observation results, other issues that are brought up in social studies classes included human rights, environmental pollution, nationalism, test systems, terrorism, democracy, cultural corruption, unemployment, brain drain, internet, laicism, population, education system, and some political issues. The Observation results also show that some social studies teachers convey with the class and discuss with students the TV series associated with Turkish history and issues such as Turkey-EU relations, violence against women, Kurdish problem, ethnic problems, unplanned urbanization, hydroelectric power plants, religious communities, and Syrian problem. However, majority of the observers state that, in social studies classes, these diverse topics were not discussed. When they were

discussed, not all students participated. They state that these topics were not covered as discussion points but rather points to lecture about and teachers gave brief description of these issues, told their personal opinion, or presented the information from the textbook. One observer told the following associated with this:

The teacher talks about democracy, laicism, and freedoms, in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. In this unit, the teacher asked about the definitions of democracy and other government styles, one at a time. S/he informed the students about gains of democracy and its brief history. No discussion was held about these topics (SSC-5).

Almost all science teachers, on the other hand, stated that the topic of evolution in class was a controversial issue. However, they stated that there were no detailed discussions about this topic because students were not knowledgeable in regards to this topic and they taught this only as a scientific theory as required in the curriculum. A science teacher stated the following:

Evolution theory is included in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Therefore, we discuss it in the class. Children think that this topic is against the truth of creation. In fact, we teach this only as a theory and since we do not think differently, there is no room for discussion (ST-1/F).

Other topics that science teachers discuss with students in the class are genetically modified foods, environmental pollution, cloning, sexual education, human genome project, nuclear power plants, organ transfer, and gene therapy. In addition, some science teachers stated that they discussed issues such as Kemalism, hydroelectric power plants, earthquake, hybrid seeds, and internet use in the class. Some science teachers stated that these were scientific topics and therefore children accept them easily and there was no room for discussion. One science teacher stated the following about this:

Our topics are different from the topics in social studies. Topics within science are scientific; therefore, if they are not against students' values, students think that these are true. On the other hand, because many topics are about the everyday life, in social studies, students can have more discussions (ST-2/F).

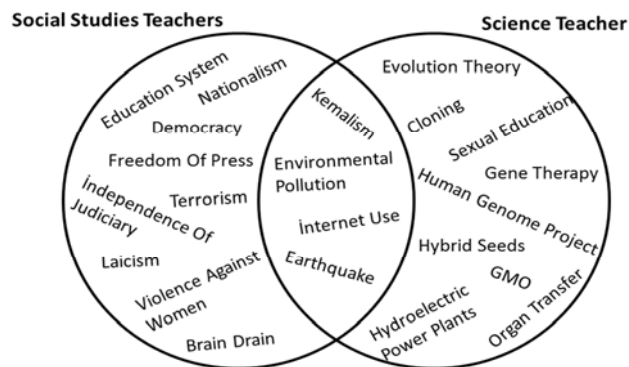
According to the observations in science classes, the most discussed topics by science teachers in the class were environmental pollution, nuclear power plants, and education system. Other topics that science teachers discussed were internet, genetically modified products, cultural corruption, sexual education, evolution theory, organ transfer, brain drain, violence, and cloning. Observers took the following notes in science classes:

For a long time the teacher had not set up a discussion in the class and today, s/he had a brief discussion session about environment and environmental

pollution (SC-9). The teacher wants to include current issues as well as science topics in the class. Before the class, s/he asks about what students think about the day's current issues (such as internet, politics, and violence) briefly (SC-12).

In the classroom that I observed, the teacher talked about the education system and exams in Turkey in a few class sessions.

Figure 3: The issues that Social Studies and Science teachers discuss in the class



### Purposes of Teaching the Controversial Issues

Teachers also stated their priority goals for in-class discussions. Social studies teachers said that their priority goal in particular was to educate active citizens and to set a democratic class environment whereas science teachers stated that their priority goal was to educate scientifically thinking citizens and to increase students' knowledge. Both social studies and science teachers stated the goal for students to learn to respect others' opinions as the common goal. Teachers told the following about their priority goals in class discussions:

As a social studies teacher, my priority goal is to educate active citizens by setting up a democratic class environment because so far passive citizens, including us, have been raised. This should be replaced by active citizenship from now on. The best place to teach this is the school and the best subject to teach it is the social studies (STT-3/M).

My priority during the discussions is to teach the children the respect for diverse opinions because the most important requirement of social life is to accept the others as they are. When this is established, ideas, dialogs, and brainstorming will increase. Otherwise, we will not be able to progress (STT-4/F)

My priority is to raise scientifically thinking citizens, which I think what we need the most. Scientific knowledge should be taught within this. When people can think individually, many things will have been accomplished (ST-5/F).

In addition, some social studies teachers stated their priorities as improving analytical thinking skills, increasing students' knowledge, changing students' values, and raising scientifically thinking citizens. On the other hand, some science teachers stated their priority goals as setting up a democratic class environment,

changing students' behaviors, and improving students' analytical thinking skills. Observation results show that during discussions social studies teachers' priorities were to increase students' knowledge and to change students' attitudes. Some observers on the other hand stated that in social studies classes teachers tried to set up a democratic class environment.

Observers stated the following about social studies teachers' goals in classroom discussions:

During discussions, the most frequent activity accomplished by teachers was to provide information about the topic. However, this is not a well-rounded position. The teacher was informing the children about the topic from whatever was his/her knowledge and aimed to change students' attitudes and opinions which s/he considered erroneous (SSC-1).

Teachers are in fact using the discussed topics as a tool. By setting up a democratic class environment, s/he is showing the students that diverse opinions may be held and must be respected (SSC-7).

Furthermore, the observers stated that in science classes the first priority of teachers was to increase students' knowledge. Some observers also stated that teachers' priority was to change students' behaviors and attitudes. Observers stated the following about science teachers' goals in class discussions:

Teacher completely focuses on knowledge. For instance, when explaining the evolution theory, s/he states that s/he also does not believe in this theory and explains the assumptions this theory puts forward and adds that s/he teaches the theory because it is included in curriculum (SC-5).

In the class I observed, there was not much room for discussion. I have been attending the teacher's class for four weeks; as far as I observed, in science class, I think teacher's priority for students was not to miss a question in the test. Namely, the teacher's priority was to add in students' knowledge about the topic (SC-6).

### Problems with Teaching Controversial Issues

Both social studies and science teachers stated that the most frequently encountered problem during discussions was the children's lack of information. Some social studies teachers said that students were influenced by families, they occasionally had inaccurate information, and it was so hard to change that.

Teachers stated the following about the problems encountered in social studies classes:

The problem I encountered most during the discussions was a child's inadequate information or misinformation about the topic discussed. The child only states what s/he acquired from the family. Child's family is much determinant in this. The child has the values transferred from his/her family. The child is influenced by the family's view (STT-2/M).

One of the important problems I encounter is disrespect. Students do not tolerate listening to one another; no respect for diverse views. Children do not accept that other people may think differently (STT-11/F).

Observation results showed that the most encountered problems during discussions were chaos, students not listening to each other, teacher-only talks during discussions, students unable to produce different ideas due to incomplete information, and only some students speaking up.

An observer told the following in regards to problems encountered:

During discussions, often teacher lectures. In a 10-minute discussion, teacher himself/herself talks for 7-8 minutes and finally gives the floor to a few students. Students cannot enrich discussions with their thoughts (SSC-10).

The most serious problem during the discussions is that the discussions are very shallow and that students do not listen to one another. Students express their views when social problems are discussed but a discussion setup is not formed in discussions about topics such as democracy, freedom of press, human rights, and freedom of thought. The same students continuously want to talk about all topics (SSC-2).

Due to our (observers') presence in the class, the teacher is very cautious; when the topics are covered, the teacher is only making the students read what is written in the book. The teacher is not moving; and since the students do not question, it is not possible to talk about a medium for discussion (SSC-6).

On the other hand, the science teachers stated that when sexual topics are discussed, students are shy and when obesity is discussed, children with weight are shy.

They shy away when the sexual education topic is covered. They are embarrassed. As long as we state that this is something to know about, we overcome their timidity (ST-4/F).

When I present a controversial issue to the student, the student cannot build an antithesis to that. Even though the student is against the idea, s/he cannot produce an opinion and cannot use evidence. The students do not have a culture of discussion and they need information (ST-11/M).

According to the observation results in science classes, the most serious problem about controversial issues is the teacher not allocating time for these topics. Majority of the observers state that teachers do not allocate time particularly for controversial issues and they mostly teach to the test and practice answering questions. Observers stated the following about this:

*There is a lot of pressure by the administration and particularly by the parents on the teacher. Detailed discussions on a topic cannot be held at school. The*

*classes all are basically like a transfer (teacher) and recording (students) of information (SC-2).*

*Frequent pilot tests are given at school. Following the test, students' scores are checked. Due to this pressure, the teacher just covers the class so as to increase students' achievements. For instance, the teacher prefers to emphasize what type of questions students may see on the test rather than to discuss a controversial issue (SC-7).*

#### *The positions teachers take on controversial issues*

Research results show that social studies teachers often prefer the 4<sup>th</sup> position (see table 1). Teachers taking this position support in-class discussions, state their opinion or position on the issue, and encourage students to express their personal positions. Social studies teachers state the reason why they take this position as that during discussions if they do not express their personal views, students will not express their own positions. Some social studies teachers also stated that they express an idea as if it were their personal idea (devil's advocate technique) in order to activate students and pull them into the discussion. Social studies teachers stated the following about the 4<sup>th</sup> position:

The child needs to be educated in the class in order to use this education in the street; they cannot take this culture in the streets. In order for me to be a model for them, I need to state my personal opinion bravely. I encourage them by saying 'see, I state my opinions, you can do the same'. Then, I say that no one can judge us for our opinions (STT-12/M).

Eventually, we are citizens too; we have opinions about a controversial issue. I believe if anyone says that they do not have an opinion they are lying. It is not possible to set up a discussion without stating your opinion (STT-5/F).

Some social studies teachers stated that they often prefer the 3<sup>rd</sup> position. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> position, teachers support in-class discussions, they do not state their personal opinions but they encourage students to state their personal opinions. Social studies teachers stated that they usually try to prefer this position in order not to influence students. A social studies teacher stated the following about the third position:

During the discussions, as far as possible, I do not state my opinion because this is the right position to take. When we state opinion, students cannot produce counter ideas. They are influenced by what we say (STT-10/M).

Some social studies teachers, on the other hand, stated that they preferred the 2<sup>nd</sup> position about the issues (homeland, nation, Kemalism, etc.) that they considered sensitive. Teachers taking the second position try to convince students to take a preferred right position and state their personal opinion in order for students to

embrace. A social studies teacher preferring the second position stated the following about this:

*We are social studies teachers; we explain the unity of homeland and nation to the children. Children must not get misinformed about these issues. I talk about these with the children and explain for them to embrace. It is not right to remain impartial about these issues (STT-9/M).*

Social studies teachers who do not prefer the second and the third positions explained why they did not prefer them as in the following:

I do not prefer the second position because I do not have an obligation to impose an opinion. Everyone's habitat is different; therefore, everyone may have diverse ideas about one issue. I do not think I have the right to impose an idea (STT-4/F).

The third position may be a must. I do not believe that anyone saying that during discussions they do not state any opinion is sincere. This is very hard in our country conditions. There is this objective of teaching one's own ideas even when explaining an issue (STT-8/M).

Research findings show that science teachers often prefer the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positions. Only one science teacher stated preference for the 2<sup>nd</sup> position. Science teachers preferring the 4<sup>th</sup> position stated that they put forward their personal opinion in order to encourage students and in order for them not to misunderstand the evolution theory. Teachers preferring this position stated that they do not impose their ideas during discussions. Science teachers preferring the fourth position stated the following:

I definitely state my personal opinion about the issues during discussions in the class. However, I explain why I defend this idea with its truth. Later, I tell them to state their opinion and to tell the truth (ST-10/M).

I state my opinion during discussions. In particular when explaining the evolution theory, I tell my opinion too. Otherwise, students think that we embrace these (ST-12/M).

We are not like social studies teachers. There are exact scientific truths and I definitely tell them in the class (ST-6/F).

Teachers preferring the third position stated that they do not tell their opinions in order not to influence students. Teachers preferring the third perspective stated the following:

I do not tell my opinion during in-class discussions because children assume that our opinion is correct. However, I ask them questions that may guide them and pull the discussion into different dimensions (ST-1/F).

As with the social studies teachers, some science teachers also stated that about some issues they

considered sensitive, in order to teach the children the truth, they prefer the second position.

The science teachers who do not prefer the second position told the following about why they do not:

I never prefer the second position during the discussions because the goal of discussions is not to influence students' opinions or impose an idea but only to learn to think (ST-5/F).

If I prefer this position, there will not be any room for discussion. Students will not be able to explain their opinions. Students must be free to form their own ideas (ST-8/M).

Observations in social studies classes show that majority of teachers take the second or fourth positions. The Observation results show that teachers prioritize stating their own opinions about the topic; they try to teach their views to the students; and about some issues, they state only their views. Observers told the following about the position that teachers took in social studies classes:

Often an environment for discussion is not set up; teachers just provide information about issues and try to convince students. They explain the issues as they make a presentation. They do not allow for much student dialogue (SSC-1).

The teacher always tells his/her opinion about the issue. However, s/he also tells the truth behind it. S/he tries to have students think freely and sensitively (SSC-7).

The observations in science classes show that teachers often convey the controversial issues into the class but a discussion medium is not fully set up. Observers stated that teachers told their views about the controversial issue and got a few students to talk about the topic. Some observers on the other hand said that teachers preferred the fourth position; they both stated their views and got students' views on the issue. Observers stated the following about the positions that teachers took in science classes:

The teacher does not manage a medium of detailed, long discussion in class. S/he tells his/her opinion and continues to cover the topic. S/he does not present diverse views and does not elicit students' views (SC-11).

First of all, the teacher asks questions about the controversial issue to students; gets students' responses; and later, presents diverse views and elicits students' views again. S/he states his/her opinion about the issue (SC-8).

Because the teacher does not discuss issues in the class, s/he does not take any position. S/he transfers whatever is in the textbook or in the supplementary book to students, answers questions about the issue and finalizes the lesson (SC-2).

#### 4 Results and discussion

The following results were obtained in the current research which was conducted in order to investigate social studies and science teachers' views about controversial issues and their practices within the classroom; they were then compared to each other.

Violence against women is the leading issue among the controversial issues that both social studies and science teachers listed in Turkey. Violence against women is a common problem experienced by all women around the world regardless of religion, race, language, and ethnic background. In Turkey also, the issue of violence against women is a social problem. Several researches conducted indicated various violence types against women in Turkey (TNSA 2003; Vatandaş, 2003; Kalaycıoğlu & Tılıç 2001; Ayaz, Çıra, & Kara 2007; Altınay & Arat 2007). Recently the violence against women has been one of the most discussed issues in Turkey upon becoming more exposed publicly in the mass media attention. Therefore, teachers stated that violence against women was a controversial issue. Because of this, both male and female teachers have defined the subject of "violence against women" as controversial. While female teachers presented more detail and voiced their demands regarding harsh penalties for preventing violence against women, male teachers merely stated that violence against women is a serious problem in Turkey.

Another issue regarded as controversial by both social studies and science teachers in Turkey is education system. Teachers included this issue among controversial issues because they are in the system; it impacts all families; and reorganizations in education are experienced every year in Turkey. Although for the last 11 years a single political party was the ruling party, the minister of national education was replaced five times and based on this, the education system was modified. Many times the standardized tests conducted after elementary and secondary education is considered an important problem in Turkey. Again due to recent reorganization of religious education and the disputes between the ruling and opposition parties, the issues of religious exploitation and the headscarf are among the issue that teachers consider controversial.

Other issues that teachers considered controversial in Turkey are terrorism and nationalism. There is a terrorism problem which has been going on for more than thirty years in Turkey. Main source of terrorist attacks in Turkey is PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party). Central purpose for the terrorist organization PKK is to establish an independent state of Kurdistan in the region including the southeastern part of Turkey. PKK has been organizing terrible attacks, on people including children, seniors, and women, affecting people from all walks of life. The nationalism developing against terrorism is also among the controversial issue teachers consider in Turkey.

In relation to their area, social studies teachers stated the issues such as Kemalism, democracy, military coupes, and deep state, which are associated with recent events

in Turkey, were among important controversial issues. Science teachers on the other hand stated issues such as cancer and anti-toxic foods and global warming among the controversial issues in Turkey. Whereas social studies teachers stated that in the class they brought up issues that they considered controversial in Turkey and discussed them with their students, science teachers said that they discussed the issues, which are included in the curriculum, with their students in the class.

Gene therapy, euthanasia, human genome project, cloning, and hybrid seeds are among the issues that social studies and science teachers considered the least controversial in Turkey. Because these issues are not much on media agenda; they include scientific knowledge; and people do not have knowledge of these issues, they may have been considered as the least controversial.

Almost all social studies teachers stated the issue of Kemalism was the most discussed issue in the class. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938) was the founder of modern Turkey and the first president. During the establishment of the Republic of Turkey (1923), Atatürk brought a set of reforms that transformed social life in Turkey. Secular and western-style reforms brought by Atatürk evoked negative reactions particularly from the religious portion of population. Many conflicts discussed today in relation to Kemalism are rooted on *secularist vs Islamist* or *Kemalist vs anti-Kemalist* grounds. Furthermore, compulsory teaching of Kemalism topics in class, particularly within social studies classes, may be another reason for in-class disputes.

Teaching Kemalism in Turkey is based on goals in general curricula and general goals of Turkish National Education formed in relation to Basic National Education Law numbered 1739. Thus, raising citizens devoted to Atatürk's Principles and Reforms has some legal basis (Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu, 1973).

The Majority of social studies teachers stated that they discussed issues of education system, environmental pollution, democracy, laicism, freedom of press, brain drain, terrorism, and nationalism in the class, some social studies teachers, on the other hand, said that they brought up issues of internet, independence of judiciary, Armenian problem, and earthquake to discuss in the class. The other issues that majority of social studies teachers brought up to discuss in the class were human rights, environmental pollution, nationalism, test systems, terrorism, democracy, cultural corruption, unemployment, brain drain, internet, laicism, population, education system, and some political issues. The issues of discussion in the class pointed out by the social studies teachers were also stated by the observers. However, observers stated that a discussion medium was not set up in the social studies classes; no technique to teach controversial issues was used; and teachers only transferred information about these issues. These issues were the topics included in the elementary social studies curriculum. It is observed that teachers considered each topic presented based on curriculum in the class, a controversial issue. Then, it is assumed that teachers do

not know how to teach the controversial issues. In the current research, both all social studies and all science teachers stated that they did not receive any training about how to teach controversial issues, neither during in-service trainings nor back in the university. Studies conducted showed that teachers did not receive training on how to teach controversial issues; they were not confident with leading discussions in class; and they had difficulties with including controversial issues within their lessons (Byford, Lennon, & Russell, 2009; Hess, 2002b; Holden & Hicks, 2007; Onosko, 1996, Oulton et al., 2004; Wilson et al., 2002).

Almost all science teachers stated that evolution theory was a controversial issue in the class. Other issues that science teachers discuss with students in class included: genetically modified foods, environmental pollution, cloning, sexual education, human genome project, nuclear power plants, organ transfer, and gene therapy. In addition, some science teachers stated that they discussed issues such as Kemalism, hydroelectric power plants, earthquake, hybrid seeds, and internet use with students in the class. According to the observations from the science classes, the most frequently discussed issues by science teachers in class were environmental pollution, nuclear power plants, and education system. According to the observation results, other issues that science teachers discussed in the class included internet, genetically modified products, cultural corruption, sexual education, evolution theory, organ transfer, brain drain, violence, and cloning. However, a similar situation of social studies classes was observed in science classes. Observers in the science classes stated that these issues were conveyed to the classroom by teachers but discussions on these issues did not happen. The majority of observers said that teachers tried to teach these issues and prepared students for the test. The basic reason for this may be the standardized test taken at the end of elementary education. Based on the results of this standardized test, students are admitted to the secondary education institutions, science topics are considered critical in this test. It is also obvious in the current study that teachers teach the issues as they are presented in the textbooks without setting up discussion environments and do not take any risks.

Both social studies and science teachers stated that the most frequently encountered problem in discussions was lack of knowledge by students. Teachers said that students could not continue to discuss. Several other studies conducted in different countries also show that students are having difficulties establishing an argument during discussions. While individual characteristics are the main difficulty in this regard, it was found that classroom teacher's role is also a problem (Lin and Mintzes, 2010). It was also suggested that the content of the subject may be a factor (Sadler, 2004; Simonneaux, 2007).

Some social studies teachers stated that students were often influenced by their family's point of view; they occasionally had misconceptions; and it was quite hard to reverse this.

Science teachers stated that students were embarrassed when sexual issues were discussed and overweight children were embarrassed when obesity was discussed. When teachers talk about problems associated with the students in class, in-class observations show that the problems stem from teachers inadequately teaching controversial issues. Observers in social studies classes noted the most frequently encountered problems as chaos during discussions, students not listening to one another, often teachers only lecture, and students are not able to produce ideas due to lack of information, and the same students constantly speaking up.

Observers in the science classes on the other hand pointed to discussion environments not forming in the class and to the classes conducted leading up to the test as a basic problem.

Whereas social studies teachers stated that their priority goals were particularly to raise active citizens and to set up a democratic classroom environment, science teachers pointed to raising scientifically thinking students and increasing students' knowledge as their priority goals. Both social studies and science teachers' goals were to help their students respect diverse views. In addition, some social studies teachers stated their priority goals as increasing students' analytical thinking skills, increasing students' knowledge, altering students' values, and raising scientifically thinking citizens. Some science teachers, on the other hand, defined their priorities as setting up a democratic classroom environment, altering students' behaviors, and increasing students' analytical thinking skills. However, observation results show that social studies teachers' priorities during discussions were to increase students' information and to alter students' attitudes. Observations in the science classes, on the other hand, show that teachers' priority was to increase students' information. Thus, it is clear that teachers expressed what was required during discussions but they were not able to materialize these in class. The IEA researchers reported that open classroom climate for discussion is a significant predictor of civic knowledge, support for democratic values, participation in political discussion, and political engagement (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald and Schultz, 2001).

During in-class discussions teachers take some positions. Both social studies and science teachers were observed to take similar positions. Some teachers stated that during in-class discussions they explained their position and opinion and encouraged students to declare their positions (4<sup>th</sup> position). Some teachers, on the other hand, said that they did not state their position but they encouraged students to declare their positions (3<sup>rd</sup> position). Two social studies teachers and a science teacher pointed out that they made statements of their positions in order for students to accept, about issues that they considered sensitive (2<sup>nd</sup> position). *In relation to the reason for this, social studies teachers taking the fourth position* stated that if they did not reveal their position, students would not declare their own position.



Science teachers, on the other hand, stated that they revealed their positions in order to encourage students and in order for students not to misunderstand (as in evolution theory issue). Social studies and science teachers taking the third position explained that they preferred this position so as not to influence students. However, the positions stated by the teachers and in-class observations of them conflict. Whereas the teachers stated that they prefer the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positions, the in-class observations showed that they mainly adopted the 2<sup>nd</sup> position. Results of observations in social studies classes show that teachers definitely stated their positions about the discussed issue as a priority; they tried to teach the students their positions about the issue; and occasionally about some issues, they told just their positions. NCSS (2007) asserted that controversial issues must be studied in the classroom without the assumption that they are settled in advance or there is only one right answer in matters of dispute. The social studies teacher must approach such issues in a spirit of critical inquiry exposing the students to a variety of ideas, even if they are different from their own. The ways that teachers deal with controversy range from purposeful avoidance of them to one-sided advocacy of particular points of view.

Observations in science classes show that a complete discussion set up was not formed; teachers often stated their positions about the controversial issue and elicited views of a few students and just continued to cover the class. Stradling (1985) reports that teachers 'found procedural neutrality difficult to sustain' as it threatened the rapport they had built up with the class and seemed to cast doubt on their personal credibility. Kelly (1986) proposed 'committed impartiality' in which the teacher attempts to provide all sides of an argument as well as share their own views with the class. Although controversial subjects hold an importance place in both social studies and science lessons, there is no course or content pre-service teachers' education about teaching controversial subjects to students. In addition, it is clear that no adequate education was given to in-service teachers regarding controversial subjects. Likewise, in this study, all participating teachers have stated that they had not received any training about teaching controversial subjects. However, teaching controversial subjects require peculiar methods, techniques and strategies due to the nature of said subjects. Teachers should be able to establish an unbiased, reliable discussion platform for this issues. They also should be able to contribute to students' certain skills such as high level thinking, cooperating with peers, resolving conflicts, achieving democratic participation, presenting and defending own ideas with evidence-based facts. Another result of this study shows that despite these skills are present within Science and Social Studies curricula, they do not reflect in the classroom due to issues and difficulties in teachers' education and teaching methods.

In brief, social studies and science teachers give place to various controversial issues in the classroom. However, since they are not trained about the education

of these controversial issues, they are unable to use these issues on behalf of students. Besides, teachers may encounter with a number of problems during these discussions and display anti-democratic practices.

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## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> The study was presented in International Social Studies Symposium (2014). Gazi University, in Ankara, Turkey.

## Review of the Book:

**Ross, E. Wayne (Ed.): The Social Studies Curriculum. Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities. Fourth Edition. Albany: State University of New York Press (SUNY) 2014, 419 pp., US \$ 31.95.**

ISBN 978-1-4384-5317-0 (hardcover)  
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This is the fourth volume of this edition since it first appeared in 1992. Twelve of the eighteen chapters are completely new, e.g. a chapter on islamophobia (*Beyond Fearing the Savage: Responding to Islamophobia in the Classroom*) by Özlem Sensoy (289-312). All other chapters have been revised and updated.

“Teaching by its very nature is a political act”. This programmatic confession from Michael Apple’s *Ideology and Curriculum* (1990) which introduces Paul Orlowski’s chapter about *Critical Media Literacy and Social Studies* expresses best the intention of most of the 18 chapters in this volume: a critical social studies curriculum that focuses on deconstructing hegemonic discourses that impede the task of *Teaching Democracy* (Joseph Kahne/Joel Westheimer). While sensitive towards continuing “alarmist” (p. 72) educational discourse, many of the contributors heavily criticize current neoliberal education reform in the United States and Canada, in the context of educational policies like *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) or *Race To The Top* and an ongoing conservative rewriting of history as for example in common core State Standards in Texas. Authors repeatedly argue against rote learning and the “banking concept of teaching” (p. 328), an approach reduced to ensuring “...students knew several pages’ worth of disconnected social studies terms, dates, wars, presidents, kings, pacts, and treaties” (p. 286). Paolo Freire is one of the most cited informants. Authors both criticise non-reflective standards-based education and the pressures and non-intended outcomes of high-stakes testing as well as attempting to identify alternative forms of assessment conducive to learning (Sandra Mathison: *Making Assessment Work for Teaching and Learning*).

Many of the contributors of this volume introduce themselves to the reader as former and experienced teachers, who have taught in various school settings, grade levels and states. In his chapter *Why Inquiry?*, Doug Selwyn, relates the date of receiving his teaching certificate in 1981 to the beginning of Ronald Reagan’s presidency, giving an outline of the political culture of the 1980es and contrasting it with societal changes which have taken place up to the present day: “How could we have imagined the collapse of the Soviet Union, the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, Enron and the financial bubbles, two wars in Iraq, the war in Afghanistan ... genetically modified foods, the WTO (and the battle of Seattle), melting polar ice caps and climate change, Occupy Wall Street, and the Red Sox

winning the World Series, not once, but three times ... we are no more able to predict what our current students will be dealing with in 2045, thirty-three years from now, than I could have in 1981” (p. 286). Thus, an unpredictable and „open“ future answers the author’s question of “*Why inquiry?*”.

Some rather binary chapters challenge what is discussed as “controversy in the classroom” (Diane E. Hess, see review [www.jsse.org/index.php/jsse/article/view/1136](http://www.jsse.org/index.php/jsse/article/view/1136)) in the US-context and, what is known in Germany as ‘Beutelsbach Consensus’ - political education which respects the prohibition of overwhelming the pupil and the need to treat controversial subjects as controversial. Gregory Queen examines the risks of “being political” in the classroom in his chapter *Class Struggle in the Classroom*.<sup>1</sup> He argues that, interestingly, parents do not complain about other teachers who teach only the textbook point of view. However, the same parents are quick to fear that their children are being indoctrinated when their children are taught a one-sided Marxist curriculum of American contemporary and global history. (p. 328). The role of educators should be defined as „in a partisan manner“ and educators should “acknowledge their working-class status within this struggle between capitalists and workers” (p. 319). Among others, this chapter is excellent material for controversial discussion in an academic social studies teacher training course!

A useful name index (p. 397-409) indicates additional classical reference authors. As well as Paolo Freire, referred to above (*Education for Critical Consciousness and Pedagogy of the oppressed*), these include John Dewey, Michel Foucault and Georg Lukacs (*History and Class Consciousness*). The detailed subject index (p. 411-419) includes rare keywords like “anarchism” or “memorization”.

“The curriculum is what students experience.” (Preface) Most convincing chapters describe alternative social studies curricula, many of which seem to have been evaluated during teaching practice. It is a pity that while clearly a lot of didactical experience underlying the description of intended curriculum, there is almost no space given to reports of the acted and staged curriculum. Thus, the creation of authentic spaces for democratic social studies education remains programmatic and “abstract”. Voices of the students, classroom discourse, learning problems or even crises and their unintended outcomes, are rarely nowhere documented, if at all, and could be a challenge for the fifth edition, integrating qualitative



social studies classroom research into critical teaching into the programmatic profile of critical teaching.

Social studies is an “umbrella design” (p. 3) and the first two chapters, in particular, deal with history and concepts. Many of the chapters can be used in academic teacher training as basic discussion input. Joel Westheimer *Teaching Students to Think about Patriotism* has already become a classic (p. 127-138). The collection can be highly recommended to all European/foreign readers who want to gain non-mainstream access to social studies.

(See review in JSSE 2011-1 on Current Trends and Topics in U.S Citizenship, Law-Related and Economic Education: [www.jsse.org/index.php/jsse/article/view/1156](http://www.jsse.org/index.php/jsse/article/view/1156)).

Tilman Grammes  
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<sup>i</sup> From 2004 to 2012, Gregory Queen had been chair of a high school social studies department and used his position to resist the imposition of common curricula and assessments. As a direct result of his resistance, he was forced to resign as department chair and experienced restrictions to his academic freedom. As the editor, Wayne Ross, he joined the Rouge Forum ([www.rougeforum.org](http://www.rougeforum.org)), a civil organisation concerned with questions such as „How can we teach against racism, national chauvinism and sexism in an increasingly authoritarian and undemocratic society?“

