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Citizenship Education in a Fragile State: NGO Programs for Democratic Development and Youth Participation in Haiti

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**Citizenship Education in a Fragile State:
NGO Programs for Democratic Development and Youth Participation in Haiti
Éducation à la citoyenneté dans un état fragile : Programmes des ONGs pour le
développement démocratique et la participation des jeunes en Haïti**

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Abstract

This research centres on NGO citizenship education programs in Haiti to better understand youth experiences, outcomes, and perceptions of democracy. The findings from this study illustrate how programs from Western-based NGOs with liberal democratic traditions typically construct citizenship education in relation to the individual agency of the learners, whereas youth living in the context of fragility note the prerequisite for stable social structures as a foundation for citizenship. Through multi-dimensional analyses, this article highlights the importance of historical perspectives, the value of comparing disparate societies, and the necessity to explicate social locations in cross-cultural research. The concluding proposition states that not only does context matter in international research, but illustrates specifically *how* context affects youth participants subject to curriculum emanating from competing ideological environments. The issues explored here are among the key concerns for the future of comparative and international research in a globalizing and diverse world.

Résumé

Cette recherche se concentre sur les programmes d'éducation à la citoyenneté des ONGs en Haïti afin de mieux comprendre les expériences, les résultats et les perceptions des jeunes vis-à-vis de la démocratie. Les résultats de cette étude démontrent comment les programmes des ONGs basées à l'Ouest avec des traditions démocratiques libérales construisent généralement l'éducation à la citoyenneté par rapport au pouvoir individuel des apprenants, alors que les jeunes vivant dans un contexte de fragilité soulignent que la stabilité des structures sociales est un prérequis devant servir de fondation à la citoyenneté. À partir d'analyses multi-dimensionnelles, cet article souligne l'importance des perspectives historiques, la valeur de comparer des sociétés disparates, et la nécessité d'expliquer les localités sociales dans la recherche interculturelle. La proposition finale soutient que le contexte est non seulement important dans la recherche internationale, mais illustre spécifiquement comment le contexte affecte les jeunes participants, soumis à un curriculum émanant d'environnements idéologiquement concurrents. Les questions soulevées ici font partie des principales préoccupations pour l'avenir de la recherche comparative et internationale dans un monde globalisé et diversifié.

Keywords: youth, citizenship education, democracy, citizen participation, NGOs, Haïti, fragility, Canada

Mots-clés : jeunes/jeunesse ; éducation à la citoyenneté ; démocratie ; participation citoyenne ; ONGs ; Haïti ; fragilité ; Canada

Introduction

Citizenship education programs have proliferated across North America in formal and non-formal education settings and a subsequent body of research on these programs has thrived within the fields of comparative and international education, citizenship education, youth studies, and other sub-disciplines across education (Andreotti, 2006; Banks, 2017; Bixby & Pace, 2014; DeJaeghere, 2009; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Many citizenship education programs are constructed for young people who possess a presumed degree of access, opportunity and

privilege, and who enjoy sufficient forms of capital to benefit from these initiatives. In these cases, citizenship education emanating from the stable states of the Global North are often created with the assumption that youth beneficiaries have enough access to social, political, and economic resources that the program goals, in combination with the youths' individual agency, will enable the desired outcomes and expressions of citizenship.

Yet, citizenship education programming and research needs to serve not only youth with social and structural advantages, but *all* youth across socio-economic spectrums, regardless of their social position, and across cultural, regional, and national spheres. Part of the obligation of citizenship education research in comparative and international education is to better understand how youth outside traditional Western and/or advantaged locations respond to the variety of approaches to citizenship education. Thus, 21st century comparative and international education research must continue to address questions such as: How are citizenship education programs exported and implemented overseas within the context of a fragile society? How do youth from structurally marginalized positions envision citizenship? How do these young people reconcile the citizenship education curriculum they are exposed to against their own realities, histories, and socio-cultural backgrounds? This article endeavours to explore such questions, in large part to inform forthcoming international education scholarship by fore-fronting the roles of equity and inclusion in research, by elevating the importance of historical thinking, and by highlighting the value of comparative perspectives in citizenship education research.

This article addresses these questions by presenting findings from an investigation into youth perspectives on citizenship, and these young peoples' perceptions of their participation in NGO citizenship education programs in Haiti. The research centered on the activities of three NGOs with local and international partnerships that developed programs to foster youth participation to build democracy, reconstruct their society, and develop citizenship after the earthquake of 2010. This article contributes to the comparative, equity, and inclusion sub-themes of the Special Issue of *Comparative and International Education* to mark the 50th anniversary of the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada in several ways. For one, it speaks to the limits and the possibilities of comparative education research by exploring the application of Western frameworks to education settings in the Global South. Secondly, it addresses the growing recognition of the importance of equity and inclusion in comparative and international education research by placing attention on youth from populations that have been typically excluded in educational research, making explicit the over-representation of voices of youth from the Global North and the need for greater inclusion of youth in southern contexts such as these young people in Haiti.

This article proceeds with a literature review on citizenship, education for citizenship, and their implications of the implementation of the latter in fragile settings such as Haiti. It continues by outlining the research methodology used for this study, including the researcher's position, the methods used, and the individuals who participated in this study. Next, the research findings are presented, including a descriptive account of the participants' perspectives of, the researcher's observations of, and the artifacts produced in each of the three case study citizenship education programs. An analytical section then examines the research findings against the theoretical framework used in this research, Kahne and Westheimer's (2004) tripartite model of citizenship education approaches for youth programming. Following, a discussion deconstructs the analysis in the context of the reality of the socio-political environment in Haiti, and in consideration of the structure and agency dialectic to assess the applications and the limits of using such a conceptual model in this circumstance. This article concludes with considerations

for the future of the field of comparative and international education in terms of critical methodological and conceptual resources, and in the foregrounding of equity, justice, and inclusion.

Literature Review: Citizenship Education in Fragile Settings

Citizenship

Despite a relatively broad range of theoretical constructions of citizenship, most frameworks converge around at least two general characterizations of citizenship as either *social position* or as *behaviour* (UNESCO, 2014). Conceptualizing citizenship as one's *social position* links peoples' citizenry with their political association to the state. For example, in his typology of citizenship education, Schugurensky (2006) describes the status that people feel in connection with their political association to the state, and how their identity is shaped through feelings of belonging to their nation. Citizenship education through this lens, therefore, serves to reinforce connections between learners and their state.

As *behaviour*, citizenship focuses on the character and initiative of individuals with respect to their participation in society. Citizenship that emphasizes on civic virtues (Schugurensky, 2006), for example, includes the positive attributes associated with becoming a good citizen in one's society, whereas citizenship as agency concentrates on the deliberate action of individuals to re-shape society as one that is just, equitable and affords all members the rights associated with citizenship (Schugurensky, 2006). The research presented in this article focuses on constructions of citizenship as behaviour. In that vein, the corresponding citizenship education approaches intend to enable youth "to become clear-thinking and enlightened citizens who participate in decisions concerning society" (UNESCO, 1998, para. 1). The broader boundaries of this citizenship education imply any number of curricular activities that serve to develop youth initiatives to contribute to a more democratic society.

Citizenship Education

Citizenship education theory, correspondingly, characteristically proposes similarly dualistic frameworks for learning citizenship as either *social position* or as *behaviour*. At one end, this spectrum favours a political-centric epistemology that focuses on learning about voting, elections, and civic knowledge as citizenship education. The other pole emphasizes the consequences of exclusion, discrimination, and the social injustices, disadvantages and inequalities experienced by those who lack citizenship. These camps have been variably labelled as thin and thick (Carr, 2011), normative and critical (DeJaeghere, 2009), minimalist and maximalist (Cogan & Morris, 2001; Davies & Issitt, 2005) or soft and critical (Andreotti, 2006). The research presented in this article, however, teases these citizenship education dimensions into three orientations and relies on a three-pronged model of citizenship proposed by Westheimer and Kahne (2004).

In Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) analysis of US extra-curricular school service projects, three youth citizenship typologies emerge as archetypes. The first category is the *personally responsible citizen* whose citizenship is defined by hard work, honesty, integrity and self-discipline, and with goals of developing character, compassion, and personal responsibility. A second prototype is the *participatory citizen* who engages with formal institutions in society such as state structures, NGOs, religious organizations, and volunteer groups, and seeks to

coordinate community efforts for others in need. A third archetype is the *social justice-oriented citizen*, one who looks for ways to effect systemic change by exploring the root causes of inequalities, who critically analyzes these social issues, and who acts upon his or her findings by addressing the political, economic, and social structures at the heart of these injustices. While these three approaches have in common their intent to better society through social interventions, notwithstanding the reality that they frequently overlap in practice, they diverge fundamentally in the extent to which their work is individually or collectively pursued, and, most importantly, by the basic theory of change that underpins the approach.

Citizenship in Fragile Contexts

The citizenship frameworks explored thus far share certain viewpoints when applied in Western, liberal settings, contexts based upon structural assumptions that the individuals that are learning about citizenship have a certain degree of privilege, access, and opportunity to enjoy the *social position* of citizenship, and to practice its *behaviours*. Fragile states, however, are characterized by low-income and the limitation of the capacity, the legitimacy, or the willingness of their governments to provide satisfactory socio-political structural foundations for their people. The implications for citizenship and its corresponding youth education programs thus necessitate alternative approaches to their Western counterparts (Ichilov, 2013; Maitles, 2014; Velásquez, Jaramillo, Mesa, & Ferrás (2017). For instance, for the millions of stateless persons worldwide, citizenship has little meaning as a social position, status, or a political right. Furthermore, those that have suffered the consequences of a fragile state's shortcomings are less inspired to identify as a citizen of that state (Robins, Cornwall, & von Lieres, 2008). Thus, citizenship education programs that make assumptions about their learners' connections to their state based on Western norms may begin on faulty foundations.

Secondly, when citizenship is linked to behaviour, the limitations associated with fragile states are equally paramount. For example, *personal responsibility* may or may not be imbued in the cultural patterns of a community in a fragile nation; nor might people living in fragility have the means, access, structural opportunities, or resources to donate, help, or otherwise express civic virtues as *participatory citizens*. Whereas Putnam (2000) proposes universal merits of the social capital that keep societies from "Bowling Alone", others have suggested that the social produced in developing democracies can undermine citizen participation (Anderson, 2010). Furthermore, many living in fragile states lack the political security guaranteed to express agency through protests, social justice campaigns, or other political actions performed by *justice-oriented citizens*. Thus, societal contributions from youth who live in fragile contexts may be considerably more difficult and require a much greater degree of cultural capital, resources, and personal agency than assumed under Western youth citizenship models. Indeed, expressions of citizen participation and democracy by citizens themselves in fragile states have been articulated in ways that are often counterintuitive and unanticipated by the theorists of the Global North (Kabeer, 2005; Robins, Cornwall, & von Lieres, 2008).

Citizenship in Haiti

The importance of a historical perspective in this study is vital to inform and analyze the comparative, cross-cultural, and international aspects of this research. The particular context of fragility in Haiti has historical roots deeply connected to significant events dating from Columbus' landing and the subsequent extermination of the Indigenous Taíno population, to the importation and enslavement of over half a million Yoruba and other West and Central Africans.

The destabilization of Haiti continued on a global level scale with the forced repayment of 150 million Francs to French plantation owners after the 1791–1804 revolution that instigated independence; the nineteen-year US occupation beginning during the First World War; three decades of oppression and slaughter of over 50,000 citizens under the brutal Duvalier dictatorships; two coups of the first democratically elected president; and the arrival of corporations, NGOs, and multilateral organizations following the earthquake of 2010 (Ramachandran & Walz, 2015), a natural disaster upon which even some sought profit, a practice that Klein (2005) has described as “disaster capitalism”. Contemporary events that have further plunged the country into fragility include the highly-contested presence of UN peacekeeping forces, cholera outbreaks and other health crises, Hurricane Matthew of 2016, ongoing bouts of political populism and corruption, and the likely resistance to political protest (Barry-Shaw & Jay, 2012; Ives, 2016). The fact that Haiti remains one of the most highly indebted poor countries of the world, endures the lowest literacy and education completion rates in the Western Hemisphere, and scores over 60 on the World Bank’s Gini co-efficient index is further testament to its insecurity. Yet, Haitians’ historic and present struggles for justice, independence and anti-colonialism have also influenced its citizenry. Haitians’ long history of fighting for rights, voice, and power has most certainly informed how citizenship is constructed in Haitian society today, and at least one lens through which Haitian youth might view their own citizenship education (Gaffney, 2016).

In Western contexts, citizenship education is commonly provided through civil society organizations, schools, and other formal education institutions. In lower income countries, however, the capacity of schools to provide facilitate intra- or extra-curricular citizenship education programs is limited. In these cases, the benefits of the involvement of NGOs to fill gaps in social services have been reported in the literature. For example, a Canadian NGO in partnership with local organizations in Ethiopia was found to be “instrumental in alleviating social exclusion, and enabling access to a quality education with a sense of belonging and attachment, an increased self-esteem, and new aspirations” (Piquemal, 2013, p. 12). In Haiti, thousands of NGOs have established themselves by purporting to address existing gaps in society, among them, among them, education for citizenship. Some NGO programs, such as the three selected for this research, were specifically created to acculturate citizenship in youth for the reconstruction of Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. The research presented here elevates the voices of youth from these programs to assess their efficacy in fragile settings, and more broadly, to inform methodological and ethical directions for the future of comparative and international education research.

Research Methodology

Researcher Location

For a cross-national study such as this that involves youth in a post-colonial setting, I submit that the researcher’s position is relevant, significant, and should be acknowledged (Milligan, 2016). Indeed, while research often intends to enlighten, inform, and liberate, it also serves to re-colonize (Smith, 1988), especially if the researcher’s social location is not adequately considered. While I have reflexively deliberated on the impact of my positionality elsewhere (e.g. Plum, 2011, 2012), I will briefly address the matter here as well. To begin, my reality hardly resembles those of most of the participants in this study; I am situated in socio-economic

positions of privilege for major social categories of race, class, gender, and nationality. Consequently, given the disparateness between my social location and most of my research participants' social positions, I have prioritized an understanding, my ongoing learning, and the internalization of a background knowledge of the many aspects relating to their personal, their communities', and Haiti's history, languages, culture, and society. Further, and as an overall principle in research, I do my utmost to treat my research participants and every aspect of this work with sensitivity and respect. Additionally, because I have observed that literature across various disciplines chronically omits citizens' voices from international programs, I believe that including research sites and perspectives of youth spheres from the Global South such as Haiti can further legitimize the work of the academy, and in particular, the evolving field of comparative and international education. With these reflections in mind, and considering both my personal interest in educational challenges in parts of the world that have been subject to colonialism, and, like all researchers, the realization that I bring a unique perspective, analyses, and presentation of the topic, I have felt it warranted to pursue this research on youth citizenship education in Haiti.

Methodology

The findings and analyses presented here are a segment of a larger doctoral study that departs from a broader examination of the field of internationally-supported youth programs in Haiti after the earthquake of 2010. Given the complexities of transnational and global dynamics in the evolving field of comparative and international education, a vertical case study analysis was chosen as a methodological solution for this research. A vertical case study approach seeks to deconstruct international education policy, program implementation and the interpretations by program recipients through the channels of foreign aid (see Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009). For this study, I selected three NGO programs—along with their associated funding bodies, institutional policies, practitioner roles, and responses by the youth—for their distinct approaches to and their potential to contribute to youth participation and citizenship education during the reconstruction. The first program, entitled *Rights through Radio*¹, was a media training program in which youth from the largest temporary camp for internally displaced people (IDP) in Haiti interviewed other refugee youth about human rights issues, and produced a broadcast for national radio. The second program, called *Debate Competitions*, involved youth from debate clubs across the country that came together for a national championship retreat organized by an NGO. The third, named *Farming for Education*, was comprised of an NGO training program of farming and entrepreneurial skills for youth to gain an income, a livelihood, and access to school. Each program was analyzed along four vertical levels of stakeholders: participants, implementers, directors, funders and policy-makers. However, this article largely focuses on the perspectives of the youth at level one of the vertical channel of foreign aid.

Following Yin (1984), I invested considerable energy in and attention to the activities, lives, interactions, experiences, and perspectives of participants within each program. Accordingly, this research relied heavily on ethnography as a methodological and analytical technique. My goal was “not only to collect information from the emic or insider’s perspective, but also to make sense of all the data from an etic or external social scientific perspective” (Fetterman, 1989, p. 21). This required spending time with the youth participants to immerse myself as deeply as possible in their activities in the program, at home, and at school; to share

¹ Program and other names used in this study are pseudonyms; see below for more details surrounding the ethical protocols used in this research.

their citizenship education experiences; and to listen to how they interpreted this education. The intent of this study was to portray as best as possible how these youths were learning about citizenship through the NGO program for which they were selected, and against the backdrop of socio-political life in Haiti.

Five 2–3 week trips to Haiti were taken between 2010 and 2013 to collect data. The methods included my participation and observation of all three case study programs; in-depth program and participant observation; one-on-one interviews with youth at various stages of the program; analyses of program outcome artifacts created by youth participants; examining policy and program documents (reports, evaluations, media releases, website postings); and conducting additional follow-up meetings, focus groups, and interviews with participants, practitioners, observers other stakeholders. Given the vertical case study nature of the research, I began with the perspectives of youth, and subsequently recruited data by moving upward through the aid chain, for a total of 64 data points. For the purposes of this article, one youth per program was chosen as an example to represent the approach to citizenship learning and the perspectives of and outcomes for the youth. All names in this article ascribed to the youth, their communities, and the implementing NGO programs are pseudonyms, applied to protect their anonymity as a condition of the ethical protocols of this research agreed upon prior to the study.

The data were collected across three languages: Haitian Creole, French, and English. I conducted one-on-one interviews in English and French, and an on-site interpreter was used for the interviews in Creole. Data from all sources were translated into English by the author. Interviews were semi-structured and began by asking the youth broad questions about their experiences with the program before proceeding to their specific opinions on how it relates to their community, their country, the world, and their citizenship.

Research Findings

Each of the following case descriptions introduces the youth participant selected to represent each case study, provides some background on his or her involvement with the NGO program, and then illustrates his or her engagement with the citizenship education curriculum. The youth chosen for each program was selected based on their ability to represent the experiences of numerous other participants in the program, and how they articulated their perspectives with richness and complexity.

Rights through Radio: Sophia

Seventeen-year-old Sophia lived in Port-au-Prince until her home was destroyed in the earthquake of 2010. She and her family subsequently relocated to the Champs Tanporè IDP camp, located fifteen kilometers from downtown Port-au-Prince. The camp was built on an 18,000-acre plain at the foothills of the interior mountains, and although dry, dusty, and generally unsuitable for habitation, as most Haitian land was owned by the small wealthy elite class, this was the nearest and most appropriate government property available. With almost 100,000 occupants at the time of the research, Champs Tanporè had grown to become one of Haiti's ten largest cities. Due to its instability, its residents live in constant threat of violence, unemployment, improper sanitation, water scarcity, and abuse.

At home, Sophia and her family speak almost exclusively Creole. She attends the community school in Champs Tanporè, created and financed through international funding provided during the earthquake reconstruction. In the fall of 2011 Sophia was invited by her

school principal to participate in a youth program made available for ten students from her school. The one-week program was run through a partnership between UNICEF and a locally-established Haitian NGO, geared towards giving voice to youth after the earthquake. Sophia and the other nine youth were selectively recruited based on their enthusiasm, commitment and potential.

A key imperative for this program was the centrality of youth voice on issues that are relevant to them. The program activities included providing youth with a background on universal human rights, training in audio-recording equipment, instruction on conducting radio interviews, and facilitating the editing of the footage to produce a broadcast on national radio on the anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). The local NGO provided several trainers and experts for the program, but UNICEF also sent a seasoned reporter from the U.S. to help facilitate the sessions.

After workshops on the human rights framework and other relevant associated concepts, Sophia travelled with her group to an urban IDP camp and met with other youth to ask them about their experiences since the earthquake. She recorded these interviews and produced a segment on human rights abuses inflicted upon youth in the IDP camps. Sophia introduced her broadcast by relaying her experiences in Champs Tanporè, noting that “Sexual violence is a major problem for young girls living in my camp. I even have a friend who is 12-years-old who has been sexually assaulted by older people.” She continued by recounting her interview with a peer at the urban camp:

I spoke with Chantale, [a young woman] who lives in [a nearby temporary camp] who said that there is also a lot of violence in her camp. She said that, “People take advantage of the kids who live here when their parents are gone to work. This way the kids can’t explain to parents who did it to them.”

Sophia also met with several Haitian professionals, visits facilitated by the NGO’s program staff. From her interview with a local judge who advocates for youth rights in Haiti, she reported that he “explained that when the country suffers from a major catastrophe like the earthquake, or like the coup of 2004, the levels of violence tend to go up.” Clearly Sophia was learning how human rights and youth citizenship were shaped by the issues of fragility in her nation.

As Sophia made the connections between human rights and democracy in Haiti, the notion of a universally binding set of human rights was troubled by the Haitian realities that she was learning about. For Sophia, the observation that the instances she observed in Champs Tanporè were not unique to her camp but a trend across other IDP camps in the country was a moment of realization. She explained this epiphany: “having gone through this experience as a reporter I now understand that other people in other camps also have these problems, especially the youth. . . . But I never realized that youth and children have rights. Now I know.”

Sophia’s developing understanding of citizenship focused on human rights awareness, and her vision of a democratic society was founded upon the protection of these rights. However, clearly the backdrop of her and Chantale’s realities—environments in which rights were routinely infringed—distorted the normative, Western framing of citizenship education through a lens of human rights.

Debate Competitions: Makenley

The second case study involves Makenley, an 18-year-old young man who lives with his family in Lyon, a suburb of Port-au-Prince. His father is an economist with the Haitian government and

his mother works as an administrator. Makenley speaks mainly Creole with his family and friends, but at school he functions in French. He has just finished his first year at l'Université Quisqueya in Port-au-Prince where he studies international law.

For several years, Makenley has been a member of his community's grassroots debate club of about twenty youth that meets weekly to learn about and practice debating. For a second consecutive year, Mackenley was selected along with three other youth from his community to attend a four-day debate retreat that culminated with the national youth debating championships. This annual program was coordinated by a Haitian non-profit organization but is funded by various international organizations including the Open Society Foundations and the former Canadian NGO, Rights and Democracy. Sixty-two youth (23 girls and 39 boys) and 23 mentors from twelve cities in Haiti attended the program, held in February 2012. All the debates were held in French, which suited Makenley well, as he is fluent in French and aspires the same in English.

The four-person teams competed in elimination and final rounds, debating issues that were of relevance and interest for Haitian youth. The winning team would then be eligible to participate at the International Debate Education Association's World Debate Championships. In the previous year, Mackenley was a member of the team that attended the then World Championships in Istanbul. "If things work out" he admitted, "I would love to win again."

Makenley explained the impact of the program by drawing a connection between the skills that the youth participants develop through debating and the construction of citizens in Haiti. A democratic society, he suggested, rests on opportunities for citizens to debate, and for citizens to debate, they must know how to think rationally: "There has to be a certain logic to our speech. We do not talk just for the sake of talking. We talk to prove something. Equally, we don't just debate for the sake of debating. The debate must be scientific; it must have numbers."

According to this reasoning, Mackenley describes the merits of this NGO program:

The youth in this debate program focus on those problems that specifically concern Haitians...[they] reflect on Haitian society, the world, the major problems of the world, how we can resolve them, and what we should do to improve society. I do not think there's a better way [to achieve a democratic society] than through [a program like] *Debate Competitions*.

Makenley continued to deconstruct the links between the activities of this program and the vision for a deeper democracy in Haiti. At one point, Makenley reflected on the fact that while all the youth in this program are fluent in Creole, the program runs debates in French, a language that is secondary to a clear majority of youth in Haiti. "Many young people have an irrefutable logic," he said, "but they have problems to express it. So, if you really wanted to capture all the potential of young people, it would be ideal to do this program in Creole."

With little prompting, Makenley elaborated on the global and political contexts of language in Haiti:

The problem [in Haiti] is that we have two official languages: Creole, French. But people tend to select the French language for the purposes of external relations of our country. Therefore, if we only speak in Creole we will be isolated, so we seek a mastery of French so that we can communicate with others in other francophone countries, so that we can be part of a global community.

Yet while in the context of the nation's demographics Mackenley recognizes the power afforded to the French language in Haiti, he does not see these implications extending to the

dynamics of the debate program.

Yes, [language] necessarily excludes many people in Haiti. People who have problems speaking in French, they are definitely excluded. . . . But actually, the problem of language can be resolved in the program. This is not serious problem in the *Debate Competitions*. At any moment, we could change into Creole. It wouldn't be a big deal to change into Creole.

When Makenley considered his own advantages in relation to language, it became clear that the environment he grew up in, his interest and agility with language, and the general cultural capital he has been afforded in life have enabled him a relatively high degree of confidence and competence in the debate activities.

For me, I speak perfect French. That said, Creole is my first language, so I am much more comfortable in Creole. . . . But, I also like competition. I like to push my limits, and to do things that I am not at ease with. So, when I can, I choose to debate in English.

The type of citizenship education Mackenley experienced with *Debate Competitions* demonstrates the emphasis on skills for debating and as he emphasized, peaceful debate is essential for a democratic society. However, as he acknowledged, the command of language and its associated capital cannot be underestimated.

Farming for Education: Michel

The final case study involves Michel, a confident, friendly and vibrant 18-year-old. Michel speaks some French, but converses predominantly in Creole. He lives with his three brothers, four sisters, and two parents in Vil Mòn, a mountainous, rural farming village half way between the Gulf of Gonâve to the north and the Caribbean Sea to the south. For the most part, residents of Vil Mòn live off the formal political and economic structures of Haiti, and Michel is no exception. Influenced by the local political traditions of communitarianism and citizen participation of his village, Michel and many other youth in Vil Mòn have grown up with the custom of contributing to collective reserves to satisfy the basic needs of the village.

Michel participated in a farming program initiated by a large, South-Asian NGO in partnership with the local community school. The essence of this partnership involved the NGO's provision of farming, agronomy, business and life skills training for a group of youths, who would in turn develop small-scale farms in the yards of each of their homes. The school provided rooms for training, the infrastructure for farming, and a liaison with the local markets; and the youths returned their produce and profits to the NGO program as compensation for the school fees otherwise necessary for their education. The program was launched on May 20, 2011, and ran for one year. Michel's selection for the program was coordinated by a domestic Haitian micro-finance organization for the organized poor. The selection process was based on a philosophy of participatory wealth ranking, a methodology that relies on community members identifying the poorest people of the area (see Clements, Suon, Wilkie, & Milner-Gulland, 2014). The philosophy of the micro-finance agency towards constructing citizenship relates to its organizational mission to build an economic foundation for democracy in Haiti by empowering the rural poor with tools to lift themselves out of poverty. Because of its institutional presence in and demographic awareness of the community, the micro-finance organization was commissioned to select local, deserving youth that were felt to most benefit from the program.

Michel was enthusiastic about his involvement in the program. He lived close to the community school, and attended the two-hour farming workshops each weekend. Behind his home, he cultivated a tree nursery with over five-hundred seedlings that he planned to grow into orange, quenepa², and avocado trees. Michel also kept chickens provided by the program for egg production, and prepared another small plot of land to cultivate crops for the next harvest season.

While the overarching objective for the organizational partners and the local school was to develop youth entrepreneurs so that their revenues would contribute to the overall development of the community, Michel seemed have a somewhat different perspective. When describing how his vision for society had been shaped through the program, Michel frequently drew on the deeper roots, culture and traditions of collectivism in Vil Mòn. For instance, he explained how he often procured his basic needs not just through his family, but from neighbours as well: “The people in the community help me with things; they give me food from time-to-time when I am hungry”. As Michel makes sense of the citizenship education program, he underscores not so much the value of the focus on individual entrepreneurship training, but on that of bringing together a group of similarly drive youth:

One thing that was very important for us in this program: Before, we didn’t have anyone to help us connect our ideas. Now, we have someone with us who can help us connect our ideas. Now we work together, and we share our ideas. We sit together and talk about the gardens. We work together at the school garden.

However, the impact of the program individualist and economic ideologies that informed its approach to citizenship education was also evident when he shared his perspective. “And, we also learn how to make a small business”, he added, alluding to the stated, intended outcomes of the NGO.

Analysis

In the previous section of this article, the experiences and perspectives of individual youth illustrate the distinct outcomes associated with three unique approaches to citizenship education. In this section, these experiences are analyzed against the three citizenship education archetypes proposed by Westheimer and Kahne (2004).

Sophia’s justice-orientated citizenship education

Sophia’s six-day experience with the radio-broadcasting program enabled her not just to learn basic skills for radio journalism, but it provided her a foundational overview of rights for youth. Sophia was particularly interested in the rights relating to CRC Articles 19, 34, and 39 concerning security for abuse and maltreatment, protection against sexual exploitation, and appropriate physical and psychological recovery from these respective indignities (UN General Assembly, 1989). Through the program’s curriculum, Sophia related these rights to her own anecdotes of sexual violence in Champs Tanporè, and Chantale’s explanation of how a lack of supervision enables the regular exploitation of youth at the IDP camp that she lives in.

The emphasis of human rights in the education for citizenship in this program highlights its pursuit as a justice-seeking approach. Each radio broadcast involved not only an interview

² The quenepa tree, popular in the tropical countries across the Caribbean, bears a round fruit with leathery skin and a sweet, juicy pulp enjoyed by many Haitians.

with a peer youth, but also with one Haitian expert in the field of human rights to provide further insight into rights violations against the backdrop of the root causes for these injustices. Through the broadcasting of stories of youths lived experiences of rights-infringements as the intended outcome of the program, the apparent intent of this program was to influence change to structures of justice in Haiti.

Rights through Radio most reflected a *justice-oriented* citizenship education program as described by Westheimer & Kahne (2004). Whereas Sophia and her peers' lives in IDP camps involved daily violations of their rights and to their dignities, the framework of human rights is a useful vehicle to enhance their notions of citizenship. By examining youths' realities in the temporary camps, the very focus of the program drew "attention to matters of injustice and to the importance of pursuing social justice". It provided a platform to prepare youth to "improve society by critically analyzing and addressing social issues and injustices" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 4), and, to the degree that the broadcasts have the effect of shifting national and international public awareness of the realities of living in the extreme fragility of a temporary camp, this program maintained a focus on effecting systemic change in Haiti.

Makenley's participatory citizenship education

At first glance, Makenley's experience might also appear to align with a *justice-oriented citizenship* education approach. A key feature of the *justice-orientation* is to "improve society by critically analyzing and addressing social issues and injustices" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 4). Indeed, the *Debate Competitions* program curriculum was built around critically appraising a predetermined social issue, deconstructing its merits and shortcomings, and appealing to a panel of judges through carefully crafted logical arguments. However, upon closer inspection, I would argue that Makenley's experience illustrates how *Debate Competitions* nurtured *participatory citizens* to a greater degree than *justice-oriented ones*. Engaging fully in debate requires the development of several skill sets: self-confidence for public speaking; the formulation of logical arguments to make one's case; clear, strategic and persuasive communication; and French language skills.

These elements of debate—speaking in public, formulating convincing points, addressing social issues—come together to prepare "students to engage in collective, community-based efforts" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 4) such as town halls and formal government chambers. In fact, many of those who attended the *Debate Competitions* program already possessed the necessary capital to have succeeded thus far. They hailed from communities with access to a debate club (program organizers explained that they were unable to garner the capacity, resources, security, or leadership necessary to develop youth debate clubs in the large slums outside Port-au-Prince, in the IDP camps, or in the extreme rural areas); they had recreational time available to attend an extracurricular activity (rather than needing to work at home or in a job outside the home); they had developed dispositions of self-discipline, motivation, and self-confidence; and, as shall be discussed further, had a reasonable command of the French language to participate—a strong command of it to have succeeded—in the program. Clearly these youth participants enculturated and are likely further developing the cultural capital to become "those who actively participate in the civic affairs and the social life of the community at local, state, and national levels" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 4).

Michel's personally responsible citizenship education

Finally, Michel was involved in a program that enhanced his farming and gardening skills to the extent that he could sustain a fertile crop of mixed produce as well as several healthy livestock. Furthermore, he gained some useful life skills in HIV/AIDS education and disaster response training during the program, as well as basic financial and economic literacy from workshops throughout the year. This package of knowledge, skills and attitudes was central to the curriculum of developing the foundation of an economic democracy intended by the program initiators. This approach to citizenship education emphasized character building, personal responsibility, and hard work.

The approach of this NGO program appears to align with the framework of the *personally responsible citizen*. It emphasized self-discipline values of character and responsibility. Admittedly, elements of *participatory citizenship* were also evident, such as developing a base of capital—especially economic—so that youth will earn the means necessary to participate further in their socio-political settings. However, the prominence of the individualistic ideology upon which the program goals were developed lent to a program orientation that focused on individual and intrapersonal traits.

In stable states, the personal responsibility approach to citizenship education is commonplace, and aligns seamlessly with an overarching meritocratic ideology that is rarely and insufficiently contested. Indeed, this approach has enabled many youth to succeed due in part to hard work and strong character traits. Entrepreneurial skills, as well, have permitted some youth to ascertain a certain level of status and financial security that have enabled further expressions of citizenship consistent with this archetype. However, this approach to citizenship has its limits, not least in grossly understating the necessity of collective structures to address complex societal issues, as Westheimer and Kahne point out (2004, p. 5). As shall be discussed, these limitations bear even greater significance in the context of a fragile setting.

Discussion: Citizenship Education in the Context of Haitian Fragility

Citizenship education becomes infinitely more complex in international and fragile settings, thus, the importance of context is critical. Earlier studies in Haiti have demonstrated that context is underappreciated when policies, ideologies, and approaches are imported from the West. For example, in their research with school principals, Jean-Marie and Sider (2014) observed the tendency for Haitian administrators to use approaches similar to those from developed nations without adequately considering the contextual social, political, and economic factors that may inhibit their effectiveness in Haiti. Similarly, the data in this present study elucidates the tensions when citizenship education programs are exported without adequate consideration of local contexts. The following discussion intends to further explicate precisely *how* context is important, and illumine the specific tensions between the NGOs' emphases on youth agency and the underlying socio-political structural barriers that youth encountered in Haiti. This section examines each program within the context of Haiti, and for each case provides a comparative contribution by analyzing the Haitian context against a state that experiences greater political stability: Canada.

Justice-orientated citizenship in Haiti

Rights through Radio focused on teaching human rights as its pillar of citizenship education. However, rights education is problematic in Haiti because there are remarkably weak societal

structures to uphold human rights. This dearth of Haitian structures to guarantee human rights can be exemplified through a comparative analysis. In Canada, by contrast, specific legislations exist which serve to uphold individual rights, such as the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Institutions such as the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, and additional provincial and territorial agencies also serve to protect the rights of individual citizens. The traction provided by international conventions such as the CRC and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is typically much greater in stable countries with rights-protecting institutions such as Canada. The presence of legitimate governments at several levels, of functioning judiciaries, and of a reasonable degree of reliable democratic mechanisms have enabled normative human rights statements to inform legal charters, ongoing legislation, policing practices, and a presence of rights-informed morality in society. These institutions by no means ensure that the rights of *all* citizens across Canada are guaranteed in all circumstances and without fail. However, it does illustrate the extent to which rights-protecting measures are embedded within social structures to support citizens and a democracy in Canada.

Conversely, in Haiti, while human rights are also enshrined in official documents such as the Haitian National Constitution and its corresponding laws, there persists, however, momentous institutional barriers that exist that deny citizens of their rights. Against a historical backdrop of decades upon decades of colonization, slavery, occupation, autocracy, and corruption, a disregard for human rights is well entrenched in the expectations of many citizens. Today, continued accusations of a corrupt government (the very institution entrusted with ensuring human rights) as well as an overall weak public service (depleted significantly after the earthquake) have resulted in an insufficient police force, inadequate judiciary, limited functioning of the legislature, and a scarcity of human rights lawyers, and where those that advocate for increased protection of rights lack adequate resources, face routine threats, and are insufficiently protected by police (Defending Human Rights Defenders, 2017).

For Sophia, her discovery of human rights illuminated the gross omission of rights awareness in prevailing discourses in Haiti. Her work in *Rights through Radio* drew attention to the basic rights infringed upon youth in the temporary camps, making connections between the lived experience of Chantale to her own reality in Champs Tanporè. The reality for Sophia and other youth is that every day human rights are not guaranteed in Haiti: Enabling the right to an education that is “compulsory and available free for all” (UN General Assembly, 1989, Article 28) and the provision of “clean drinking-water” (UN General Assembly, 1989, Article 24), for example, are well-known violations across Haiti, as are the protection of youth, women, and girls against trafficking, prostitution, exploitation, discrimination, and sexual violence.

Thus, while Sophia’s experience with *Rights through Radio* encapsulated a *justice-oriented* approach to citizenship education, in the West where the citizenship education model was conceived, the extensiveness of human rights mechanisms remains in contrast with the relentless barriers to human rights that exist in fragile contexts. In Haiti, youth are so accustomed to rights infringements that they were surprised to learn that these wrongdoings should actually be protected according to international conventions and national laws. The problem for these youth is finding any reliable or promising structural avenues to address these rights infringements. The normative underpinning and the uptake of human rights in a fragile and insecure environment such as the IDP camps in Haiti rests on a fundamentally different foundation than in the Western political-economic contexts in which human rights were conceived and created.

Participatory citizenship in Haiti

Debate Competitions focused on the role that debating skills might play in developing critical thinkers, supporting peaceful conflict resolution, and deepening democracy. However, the barriers of language in Haiti were not adequately addressed in the program. A comparative examination of language in Canada portrays a high-income state where only 6.2% of the population speak neither of the nation's two official languages of English or French in their homes (Statistics Canada, 2011). Canada's official languages also make up two of the United Nations six official languages, suggesting the access to linguistic hegemony for a many Canadian citizens.

Throughout Haitian history, by contrast, language has been used as a deliberate mechanism for stratification, and as it has been argued, for its continued colonization (Lobb, 1940). Haiti's historical record provides some important context in this vein: French and Creole were selected as official languages during the 1915–1934 US Occupation, a move widely interpreted as US appeasement of France's colonial legacy and continued interest in Haiti, and one that cemented the primacy of the French language in Haiti even amidst the English-speaking occupants, and despite the widespread citizen incapacity in either language. Thus, French remains the language of and for the elite in Haiti, with dense institutional barriers for most Haitians who have little access, motivation or means to develop fluency in French.

This power afforded to French speakers in Haiti lies in sharp contrast to the clear majority whose language at home, on the street, and that connects them to their ancestors, is Creole. Thus, whereas Canada is a bilingual country that, in policy, provides access, protects rights, and ensures equality in two official languages, Haiti's socio-linguistic framework has few embedded structures to protect the linguistic rights of Creole speakers against the privileges afforded to French speakers. As one practitioner for *Debate Competitions* professed when discussing the language choice for the program, "You cannot characterize Haiti as a bilingual country in the same ways that Belgium or Canada are." This interplay between the dominant (usually colonial) language and the subjugated lingua franca and its consequences for educational outcomes has been well documented in comparative and international education literature. Brock-Utne (2007), for instance, notes similar privileges granted to those with English capabilities in Tanzania, in comparison with the majority Swahili speakers whose identity, learning, and life outcomes suffer due to the primacy of hegemonic languages in education.

Recall that in the Findings reported for this research, Mackenley suggested that, "if you really wanted to capture all the potential of young people, it would be ideal to do this program in Creole." To at least some degree, language exacerbated a divide in *Debate Competitions* that mirrored the national dynamic of language and social status. Fluent French language-speaking facilitated the success of youth in *Debate Competitions*; functional French enabled their participation, whereas no French—the reality of the majority of Haitian youth—resulted in exclusion. A further indication of this privilege: for a second consecutive year, Makenley and his team were awarded first prize in the finals, and later that year they travelled to Switzerland for the World Debate Championships.

Personally responsible citizenship in Haiti

Farming for Education was a program that intended to develop citizenship based on Western notions of individualism, economic liberalism, and meritocracy. In Vil Mòn, however, an alternative socio-economic backdrop exists. Whereas much of rural Haiti has been disconnected

from official state economic, political and social structures for some time, formal economies, reliable tax collection, and state provisions such as education, health care, or social assistance are uncharacteristic if established at all. Thus, community members have traditionally assembled to ensure their basic needs through their own initiatives in informal ways. As described earlier, Vil Mòn has a long history of collectivist approaches to the local political-economy. Michel also drew attention to this when he suggested, despite its formal intentions, the program enabled the youth to “work together, . . . share our ideas . . . and all help out at the school garden.”

This communal approach to local socio-economic relations is not uncommon in fragile settings where individuals and families bond together for greater social stability. *Farming for Education* disrupted this tradition by channelling the profits garnered from the youths’ farming activities towards the fees that they would otherwise need to pay for school. The problem created in this dynamic is that education is re-aligned as an individual benefit rather than a common responsibility. The onus on individual youth to procure their own means to afford the right to education reinforces education as a private good, and shifts responsibility away from adult leaders, community groups, religious organizations, NGOs, international funding, or, above all, the Haitian government to fund the operations of the school. Further, it provides access only to those who earn a profit from their entrepreneurial venture, or, to those whose families can afford otherwise to pay school fees. This dynamic reinforces an unstable, inequitable, unsustainable, unreliable, incoherent and fragile structure for the citizen development in the community. This tension in Vil Mòn reflects a global crisis that traditional local economics of the Global South face when they are supplanted by structural adjustment approaches of the international development agenda (Barry-Shaw & Jay, 2012).

Thus, a tension remains between Michel’s vision of democracy as a communal expression, and the NGO’s approach to citizenship education through economic democracy in the village. The communitarian tradition in Vil Mòn has enabled bonds of trust and support, social capital, and livelihoods and substance for centuries. Although the personally responsible orientation to citizenship may also foster values of compassion, honesty, and character-building that are productive for a community, the overall individualist focus of this approach neglects the deeper systemic problems in Haiti. While citizenship education in this vein may provide some benefits to certain youth, the sustainability of this approach and its ability to enable equal outcomes for all participants must be met with some skepticism.

Conclusion

As global societies have more complex, so has education to foster better citizens diversified to address increasingly distinct approaches to citizenship. Across various disciplines, rich and rigorous frameworks have been developed to theorize these approaches. However, most of these frameworks have been applied to Western settings against the backdrop of liberal democratic political structures, capitalist neo-liberal economic environments, and politically stable social environments. This article has sought to highlight and articulate the complexity of an international and fragile context where citizenship education is taught and developed with Western influences, with specific examples of the related outcomes and perspectives of three youth in three distinct NGO programs of the early 2010s.

The findings of this research suggest that even though each program emphasized favourable citizenship outcomes, each was based on the youth developing increased individual agency. However, the potential benefits were limited in consideration of a fragile, Haitian socio-

political structure. In the case of Sophia, her experience with *Rights through Radio* taught her that democracy requires human rights; however, for many in Haiti rights are not known to them and there are few mechanisms for rights to be upheld in the country. Thus, the *social-justice orientation* of her program reframes citizenship education as an education for conscientization, with the objective of more clearly and deeply viewing the oppressions in the youths' lives. In doing so, this realization will help illuminate how these abuses are unjust, and that there *are* paths—albeit difficult—to a better reality.

In Makenley's case, the *Debate Competitions* program taught him that democracy necessitates critical thinking and oratory skills so that broad-based public debates can occur across the country. However, the forum of the program (like the political chambers of the country) are in a language inaccessible to a significant proportion of the population. Thus, the mostly *participatory orientation* of his program amounted to accruing the cultural capital necessary to gain entry into the minority, elite, French-speaking class, offering youth the prospect of protection against the conditions of poverty that affect the overwhelming majority of the country.

Finally, in Michel's case, *Farming for Education* garnered him proficiency with agrarianism, entrepreneurial and life skills, and financial literacy, all against a framework of individualist and market-oriented principles that reflects the globally pervasive ideology of the early 21st century. However, Michel's local reality is that of a village with a socio-economic structure that emphasizes communal and rural grassroots approaches to community participation. Thus, while his program acculturated the values of a *personally responsible* orientation—a citizenship education that ultimately provided him with skills to be able to take care of himself and position himself as an upstanding citizen in his community—it all-the-while enabled the infiltration of neoliberalist and individualist ideologies in his communities that encourage the continued neo-colonization of Haiti.

Indeed, citizenship learning has long-term implications, and thus the depth and breadth of the social structures in environments such as Haiti within which short-term international NGO programs operate should not be underestimated. These social constructions are deeply entrenched in the principles and norms that inform the awareness ascribed to human rights, in the far-reaching cultural aspects of language, and in the invisible pervasiveness of the meta-narrative of political-economic ideology. The findings from this study suggest that while the citizenship education programs addressed, each according to their central ideology, central issues necessary for citizenship in Haiti, they each undervalue the importance of social structures in society.

The implications of this research on the future comparative and international education include the connections made between local and global, the primacy of equity and inclusion, and role of comparative methodologies in the related realm of citizenship education in comparative perspective. This article has shown that citizenship education cannot be framed as a neutral, objective, or technical curriculum, but that it departs directly from the social environment in which it emanates. Teachers of citizenship education must consider whether its learners are among populations that were historically colonized or colonizing; whether the political situation is stable or fragile; whether the environment is productive or threatened; whether the language of the people is universal or illegitimized; whether the workers are exploited or dominant; whether the political ideology represents communal or individual aspirations; and whether human rights doctrines serve as hollow rhetoric or instigate compliance. Citizenship education is dependent foremost on the social, cultural, environmental, historical, and political context in which it is delivered.

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