

"Don't worry, I'm not going to report you": Education for citizenship in Singapore.

Written by Ho Li-Ching

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Introduction

Public schools have traditionally been the primary vehicles for citizenship education, the transmission of national values, and the development of national identity (Feinberg, 1998; Popkewitz, 2003). Despite this shared emphasis on the promotion of citizenship, national identity, and values, citizenship education is “deeply embedded in a political and historical context unique to each country” (Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999, p. 30).

Cross-national citizenship education studies (Cogan, Morris, & Print, 2002; Hahn, 1998; Kerr, 2002) illustrate distinct differences in the definition and teaching of citizenship education. Newly industrialized states such as Singapore, in particular, have deliberately used education as an

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instrument for the promotion of social cohesion and the forging of national identity (Green, 1997). Nevertheless, numerous contentious issues remain, particularly the images and narratives that define citizenship and the nation. There is also a distinct need to clarify the nature of students' understandings and beliefs about citizenship and national history because students, influenced by their experiences and backgrounds, actively participate in the creation and interpretation of educational messages (Barton & McCully, 2005; Cornbleth, 2002; Epstein, 1998, 2000; Levstik & Groth, 2005; Lister, Smith, Middleton, & Cox, 2003).

Relatively few studies, however, have examined how adolescents from post-colonial non-Western countries conceptualize and mediate citizenship and national historical narratives. This study thus aims to fill a gap in the current research by investigating Singapore secondary students' conceptions of citizenship and their perspectives of the official national historical narrative presented in Social Studies and citizenship education programs in Singapore. Thus, the principal research question guiding this study is: Given the historical context of Singapore, how do students use the official national narrative found in the Social Studies curriculum to mediate a sense of themselves as citizens? In particular, I paid attention to how Singapore adolescents from different groups positioned themselves as citizens within a highly-regulated centralized educational context that has historically placed great emphasis on race.

I addressed this question through a collective instrumental case study of one Social Studies classroom in each of three Singapore secondary schools over the course of a 10-week school term. Naturalistic classroom observations, semi-structured student interviews, and an analysis of the formal and informal curriculum such as the National Education Program and Social Studies syllabi were conducted throughout the course of the inquiry.

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Background

Schools are the main vehicle for citizenship education. Within schools, the Social Studies has been a primary vehicle for citizenship education, both in the United States and in Singapore, but there is little or no consensus about the implications of citizenship for curriculum and instruction (Evans, 2004; Ross, 2001; Thornton, 2005). In fact, schools and citizenship education programs have been heavily criticized by many scholars. For example, in the United States they have been accused of perpetuating the hegemonic interests of those in power (Apple, 2004; Cherryholmes, 1996; McLaren, 1994), paying insufficient attention to diversity and difference (Banks, 2004, 2006; Gay, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Parker, 2003), paying too much attention to diversity and difference (Ravitch, 1990, 2002; Saxe, 2003; Schlesinger, 1991), and focusing too much attention on the nation (Nussbaum, 2002).

Social Studies courses, in their broadest sense, help in “the preparation of young people so that they possess the knowledge, skills and values necessary for active participation in society” (Ross, 2001, p. 20). The role of citizenship education in generating affective attachment and a sense of shared commitment on the part of the citizens of a state is generally unchallenged. Relatively few studies, however, have focused on adolescents’ conceptions of citizenship within the context of national history. The research to date suggests that adolescents’ understanding of citizenship and national history are greatly shaped by their personal experiences and backgrounds. King (2009), for example, suggests that students “bring with them a broad diversity of experiences and preferences that engender competing perspectives on many of the issues and events encountered at school” (pp. 215-216). Empirical studies conducted by Lister, Smith, Middleton, and Cox (2003), Cornbleth (2002), Epstein (1998, 2000), Barton and McCully (2005), and Levstik and Groth (2005) are particularly relevant to this study. Interestingly, with the exception of Levstik and Groth’s Ghanaian study, the four other studies (situated in Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States) noted distinct differences in how students from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds constructed understandings of citizenship and national history, some of which differed markedly from the dominant mainstream perspective. In contrast, the Ghanaian students in four private schools did not define their group history in opposition to the larger national history, focusing instead on themes such as unity.

Both Epstein (1998, 2000) and Cornbleth (2002) observed that students' backgrounds greatly influenced how they interpreted national history. Epstein (2000) examined the effects of 10 African American and European American high school students' racialized identities on their interpretations of history through the use of a pictorial task and an analysis of the students' national narratives. Her research demonstrated that the adolescents' racialized identities "significantly influenced their concepts of the historical experiences of racial groups, the role of the government in shaping these experiences, and the existence or lack of a common national history or identity" (p. 185). Similarly, Cornbleth (2002) interviewed 25 students from three secondary schools in upstate New York and asked them about their images of America. While the students' images of America were largely dominated by the themes of inequity, diversity and freedom, the author noted significant disparities in the perception of these major themes from students with different ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds. Interestingly, Cornbleth observed that the students' interpretations of diversity "plays out differently depending on who one is" (p. 547). Likewise, she found that the notion of freedom played out differently for affluent White students as compared to Puerto Rican or African students from less privileged backgrounds.

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, Lister, Smith, Middleton, and Cox (2003) conducted a three-year qualitative longitudinal study on the meaning of citizenship to 110 young British people from the city of Leicester. Their study indicated that the British young people held a fluid conception of citizenship that emphasized communitarian rather than liberal or civic-republican ideals and that their perceptions were deeply influenced by their life experiences. In Northern Ireland, Barton and McCully (2005) studied the connections that students made between history and identity, as well as the impact of the Northern Ireland national curriculum on students' ideas. Utilizing a picture sorting task that required the 253 students from eleven secondary schools to create groups of historical images and select those with which they most identified, the researchers found that students selectively drew on particular aspects of the school curriculum to support their own partisan historical narratives. However, the authors argued that the students' historically grounded identities developed in complex ways, and a simple, linear relationship could not be drawn between their identities and the school curriculum.

In contrast to the four studies described above, Levstik and Groth (2005) interviewed 150 junior secondary students from four parochial schools in Ghana, and found that they did not describe their group histories in opposition to the larger national history. The national ideal of unity, for example, emerged as one of the key themes in the national narrative constructed by the

Ghanaian students as they talked about a set of captioned pictures. To many students, the idea of unity was crucial to avoid inter-ethnic strife and ensure a prosperous and strong nation. This, the researchers noted, can largely be attributed to the fact that in Ghana, group history is an "important building block in the national narrative and, sometimes, a warning against the mistakes of the past" (p. 581). Thus, the officially sanctioned national historical narrative not only includes the vernacular histories of the different ethnic groups, but also focuses on what unites the larger nation.

Studies conducted in Hong Kong, a society with a relatively homogenous ethnic population, suggest that the Hong Kong students share a high level of acceptance of group differences and rights (Kennedy, Hahn, & Lee, 2007; Lee, 1999). Comparatively little is known, however, about how adolescents in diverse post-colonial Asian countries like Singapore navigate the tension between their group and national identities. Given the highly contextual nature of Social Studies and citizenship education, this study thus fills a gap in the research that, with the exception of Levstik and Groth's (2005) study, has been largely conducted in Western countries. In the subsequent sections, I briefly describe the political and educational context in Singapore, focusing particularly on race and citizenship. I then analyze how students in three Singapore secondary schools understand themselves as citizens of Singapore within the context of the official historical narrative.

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Context – Race and Citizenship in Singapore's History

In Singapore and Malaya, the British colonial government divided the population, largely consisting of immigrants from China, India and the Southeast Asian archipelago into racial groups and included them in colonial society in ways that minimized interaction between the racial communities (Barr & Low, 2005). The colonial government did more than just differentiate and arbitrate between the racial groups. In fact, the colonial government actually created and sustained racial stereotypes, thus contributing to the formation of a deeply divided society.

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Given that new states are very vulnerable to “serious disaffection based on primordial attachments” such as religion and race (Geertz, 1973, p. 259), these historical divisions, reinforced by colonial policies, greatly affected the structure of the nascent Singapore state after the decolonizing process.

In modern, postcolonial, constitutionally multiracial Singapore, race continues to be extremely visible in the public sphere. The official Singapore identity card reflects how all Singapore citizens are, for example, automatically ascribed a particular “race” at birth that is determined by one’s paternal ancestry (Chua, 2003). The post-colonial Singapore government also simplified and concentrated diverse groups into the four “overlapping circles” or racial groups: Chinese, Indian, Malay, and “Others.” Of Singapore’s population of 4.02 million, approximately 76.8% of the population are categorized as Chinese, 13.9% Malays, 7.9% Indians and the rest, including Eurasians, Armenians and so on, labeled as “Others” (Ooi, 2005).

After the communal riots in the 1950s and 1960s, the state marginalized race from the political sphere in order to maintain and control development. By the 1980s, after two decades of relative harmony between racial groups, combined with the rise of a newly assertive, increasingly liberal and internationally mobile middle class, the *raison d’être* of such restrictive policies became increasingly irrelevant. This heralded the renegotiation and redefinition of race away from the dangerous “communalism” of the past, toward a new state-approved, homogenized definition of racial and cultural values. This state-approved definition of racial identity is largely defined by primordial cultural characteristics. Racial culture is thus essentialized as a heritage of ideas and practices that govern the lived experiences of the collective and the individual citizen. While to a large extent constructed and imposed, these racial categorizations hold great significance for Singapore citizens because these form “webs of significance” (Geertz, 1973, p. 5) that make race an integral part of social reality, particularly in terms of social organization and identity formation. These in turn act as a set of “control mechanisms” (p. 44) that govern the behavior of citizens. In terms of social policies, for example, the government created racially-based institutions such as Mendaki for the Malays, the Singapore Indian Development Association (Sinda) for the Indians, and the Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC) for the Chinese, to incorporate elites, satisfy group demands and pre-empt racially charged issues (Brown, 1996). Other social policies also include the imposition of racial quotas for public housing (Moore, 2000).

Finally, in conjunction with these social policies, the members of the Singapore government constantly reiterate key governing principles such as meritocracy and racial equality in public discourse and in schools (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2007b). The second chapter of the Secondary Three textbook, titled "Governance in Singapore," clearly articulates the government's definition of meritocracy,

Meritocracy is a key part of the principle "Reward for work and Work for reward." Meritocracy means a system that rewards hard work and talent. When people are rewarded based on their abilities and hard work, they are encouraged to do well ... Meritocracy helps to give everybody in society an equal opportunity to achieve their best and be rewarded for their performance, regardless of race, religion and socio-economic background. (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2007c, p. 37)

Notably, however, the idea of meritocracy, and by extension, racial equality, is not problematized. In particular, this approach ignores the possibility of the existence of structural or institutional impediments and implicitly places the blame on the individual's lack of effort or ability.

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Citizenship Education in Singapore

Singapore, being highly centralized, experiences little public contestation over the content, values, and goals of school curricula. For all state schools, the Ministry of Education (MOE) determines the curriculum for the different subjects. All textbooks used in Singapore schools have to be pre-approved by the state (Goh & Gopinathan, 2005). The MOE's Curriculum

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Planning and Development Division develops the necessary curricular materials, such as textbooks, workbooks and the teacher's guide for certain subjects, including Social Studies.

The Singapore education structure is largely modeled after the British system, with students spending six years in primary school, four or five years in secondary school, and then two or three years in junior college, polytechnics or vocational institutes. At the end of each stage, all students attempt national examinations that determine their entry into different schools and academic tracks. For most students, the secondary school courses culminate in the high-stakes Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education 'O' Level examination at the end of their fourth or fifth year of secondary school.

Citizenship is a core component of the Singapore education system. Since 1997, the Singapore state has attempted to incorporate the key elements of citizenship into a unique and comprehensive program called National Education (NE), introduced by the Ministry of Education in 1997 (Sim, 2001). Three of the main citizenship education goals of the Singapore education system are: promoting loyalty to the Singapore nation, preserving distinct cultural and racial traditions and values, and maintaining cultural, religious and racial harmony (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2004).

Within the formal education system, the primary vehicle for the promotion of citizenship is the Social Studies program that is required for all secondary school students. For the students in the four or five year academic tracks, Social Studies consists of a two or three year program that culminates in a very high stakes national examination. Key goals of the Social Studies program include the development of well-rounded, empathetic, responsible citizens "with a sense of national identity and global perspective" (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 3). The program also aims to "imbue students with the skills of critical inquiry, investigation and reflection" (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 4) through the use of challenging assessments, issues, and case studies.

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The high-stakes Social Studies national examination is particularly demanding. Students attempt a 90-minute paper that is divided into two sections: primary document analysis and structured essay questions. The document-based questions require students to answer questions that assess their ability to critically evaluate and analyze historical sources. Typical questions expect students to compare and/or contrast the documents, evaluate their reliability and usefulness, and draw inferences from these previously unseen sources. Students are also required to be able to cross reference the source content to other sources or to relevant contextual knowledge. The second part challenges students' understanding and interpretation of the curriculum content. Open-ended questions assess students' ability to analyze an issue, draw reasoned conclusions, and construct a logical explanation and argument using relevant supporting evidence (e.g., "Economic integration was the most important reason for the merger of Singapore and Malaya in 1963. Do you agree?").

The Singapore secondary Social Studies curriculum frequently utilizes national myths (Woodward, 2003) to promote a "a deep sense of shared destiny and national identity" (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 3). For example, the official history and Social Studies syllabi regularly highlight certain key traumatic episodes such as the racial riots of the 1950s and 1960s between the Chinese and the Malays so as to provide a warning against repeating the mistakes of the past. Stories of national achievement and progress, such as the rapid development of the Singapore economy, are also given prominence (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2008). In the words of Goh and Gopinathan (2005),

the key thrust centers around the ongoing construction of a politically expedient narrative of the past. The key message relates to the successful transformation of an island engulfed by ethnic and religious strife into an independent city-state that enjoys unprecedented and sustainable economic and social progress. (p. 221)

Paralleling the state's political priorities, the Singapore education system also brings racial relations to the forefront and aims to achieve "racial harmony" (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2007a). In fact, a significant proportion of the citizenship education program in Singapore

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schools revolves around the issue of social cohesion. The secondary Social Studies syllabus, for example, states that one of the primary aims of the subject is to enable students to “develop into citizens who have empathy towards others and will participate responsibly and sensibly in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society” (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 3).

In the latest edition of the Secondary Three Social Studies textbook, students examine two case studies of nations faced with internal strife, Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland. The causes and consequences of these conflicts are explored, with the explicit intention of drawing parallels to the Singapore situation. This is then followed by a chapter devoted to managing racial diversity, titled “Bonding Singapore” (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2007c), which focuses on the need to manage perceptions of different racial and religious groups as well as the need to deal with external threats. In order to prevent discord and division, all Singapore citizens should, according to the text, be vigilant in identifying “threats” and strengthen social bonds (p. 156). The chapter also reiterates the lessons of the past and reminds students about past instances of racial conflict such as the 1964 race riots and the racially motivated Maria Hertogh riots in 1950.

Outside the formal curriculum, the socialization process is carried out through the various extra-curricular activities, fieldtrips to historically, socially and politically significant sites, and the commemoration of important events such as Racial Harmony Day. These national citizenship goals are also constantly reiterated in political discourse and in the state-controlled media. Grassroots organizations such as the People’s Association and self-help groups also regularly participate in the commemoration of the key events mentioned above (People's Association, 2005) in order to develop common space and to “gain a better understanding of the cultures and customs of all races” (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2007c, p. 149).

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Research Methods

This research draws on the qualitative instrumental case study framework laid out by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2001), Miles and Huberman (1994), Creswell (1998, 2003), Stake (1995) and Yin (1989). The research questions were addressed through a collective instrumental case study of three Social Studies classrooms in three Singapore secondary schools. Naturalistic classroom observations, an open-ended questionnaire, semi-structured student interviews, and analyses of the formal and informal curriculum (National Education Program, Social Studies syllabi, etc.) were conducted throughout the course of the inquiry. The data were collected during the course of one full school term (10 weeks), from June to September 2007.

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Participants and Setting

Considerations of representation, balance, variety, and most importantly, accessibility, affected the selection of cases (Stake, 1995). Consequently, I selected three Secondary Three Express Course Social Studies classes in three academically differentiated government secondary schools identified by their pseudonyms, Putih Secondary, Merah Secondary and Biru Secondary. All three selected classes were from the Special/Express academic track. The Special/Express track is a four-year program leading to national examinations for students graduating from secondary school - the Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education (GCE) 'O' Level examination.

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The sites were purposefully selected based on the national academic ranking of the schools, their racial composition, their gender distribution, and access. Based on the division of schools into the top academic tier, the middle tier and the bottom tier, one school that was typical of the average Singapore state school of a subgroup was selected. From the top academic tier, I selected Biru Secondary. This school had the highest mean admission score and had the highest percentage of students who obtained five or more 'O' Level subject passes. Merah Secondary was chosen to represent schools in the middle tier while Putih Secondary was typical of schools in the bottom tier. Two of the schools were racially diverse - one had a student population that was largely representative of the racial population distribution in Singapore (Merah Secondary) while the other had an above average proportion (45%) of Malay students (Putih Secondary). The third school, Biru Secondary, had an above average proportion of Chinese students (more than 90%).

The participants in this study consisted mostly of 14- or 15-year old students. Most students in these classes were Singaporeans, although there were a few foreign students from neighboring countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as students from further afield, such as China. All of the students from the three classes, a total of 133 students, completed the questionnaire. In addition, I interviewed a sample of Singaporean students that was representative of the racial and gender distribution of each class.

In total, 24 students, seven from Merah Secondary, eight from Putih Secondary and nine from Biru Secondary, participated in the interviews. These students were from different racial groups. The participants consisted of 16 Chinese students, four Malay students, and four Indian students. Eleven male and 13 female students participated in the interviews.

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Procedures

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Naturalistic observations of each social studies classroom were conducted at the beginning of the study. The observations focused on elements related to citizenship development and the national narrative, such as the emphasis placed by the teacher on particular aspects of the syllabi, the pedagogical methods used, as well as student-teacher and student-student interaction.

Another important data collection method used in the study consisted of semi-structured individual and group interviews. During both types of interviews, a semi-structured interview protocol was used (see Appendixes A and B) conducted the interviews in English because this was the primary language of instruction in the schools. Each interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes each; with the permission of the 24 participants, the interviews were tape recorded. During the interviews, the students answered a series of questions focusing on their conceptions of citizenship and completed a photo elicitation task. They were presented with a selection of captioned images representing various people, events, or ideas from Singapore's past and present, and were then asked to select a subset of pictures that would best represent Singapore to someone from another country (Levstik & Groth, 2005). Students then accounted for their choices and omissions. Next, students answered a series of questions that focused on their understanding of citizenship. Finally, the students were asked to participate in a group interview lasting for approximately one hour. Similar questions were asked and students completed the same photo elicitation task as a group. During both tasks, I focused on the debate and discussions that occurred between the students and noted any differences to their individual responses.

The next method of data collection involved the use of a questionnaire (see Appendix C). All of the students in each class completed a short questionnaire in 20 minutes. The students answered three questions. The first required them to describe themselves, the second called for students to explain their conception of citizenship, and the third entailed the writing of a short narrative of Singapore's history. The purpose of these questions was to obtain a broad understanding of which categories were most salient to students, how students conceptualized citizenship, and differences in their interpretation of the national historical narrative.

Documents such as the official syllabi produced by the Curriculum Planning and Development division of the Singapore Ministry of Education, textbooks, the teacher's guide, and other classroom artifacts were analyzed to provide the context for the study and triangulate the data. Classroom artifacts such as handouts and worksheets were obtained from the teacher directly.

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Data Analysis

During the data analysis process, the raw data, including researcher notes as well as transcriptions of the interviews and focus group session, were classified and coded with the use of the qualitative data analysis software, NVIVO 7. As advocated by Miles and Huberman (1994), I used data analysis strategies such as writing margin notes in field notes and writing reflective passages. The data were then "winnowed" and reduced through the use of codes, correspondence and patterns, as well as categorical aggregation (Stake, 1997). I generated codes through an initial analysis of the data, keeping an eye out for both frequently occurring phrases and unexpected or counterintuitive data. Examples of *in vivo* codes based on phrases used repeatedly by the participants include "racial harmony" and "meritocracy." Patterns of data and linkages were sought and the raw data were also reviewed under different possible interpretations. During multiple readings of the text, these codes were then refined and modified to minimize inconsistency and redundancy. Concurrently, interesting patterns and apparent contradictions were also noted (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addition, I made an attempt to seek disconfirming cases in order to refine and set parameters to the findings generated from the data.

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The Researcher

Because qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive in nature, it is imperative for researchers to explicitly acknowledge and identify their biases, values and personal interests (Creswell, 2003). My status as both an insider and outsider placed me in a unique position. As an experienced social studies teacher, I was involved in the planning and teaching of the geography and social studies curriculum. This knowledge enhanced my understanding of the decisions made by the teachers and students, and improved my ability to relate to the participants. As a female Chinese Singaporean researcher, I also had a better understanding of the codes and meanings ascribed by the participants to various concepts. It would have been difficult for a non-Singaporean researcher, for instance, to comprehend the different layers of meaning ascribed to the phrase “neighborhood school” – a pejorative term used to refer to a school that has low status and is ranked poorly in the national school system. This insider’s perspective was tempered by my experiences as a graduate student in New York, which allowed me to distance myself from the immediacy of the demands of classroom teaching. Exposure to alternative theoretical perspectives in graduate school, such as postcolonial theories, also brought about a different understanding of the education structure and systems in Singapore.

There were, however, biases that I brought to the study because of my professional, educational, and personal background. This shaped the way I collected and interpreted the data, including the selection of categories and identification of patterns. The familiarity that I had with the schools in Singapore, for example, while advantageous, could also have potentially resulted in an inadvertent omission of significant events because of their apparent normality. For instance, regular classroom routines such as the ritual greeting of the teacher at the beginning and the end of the lessons were such an integral part of my life, both as a student and a teacher, that it was easy for me to ignore the significant role it played in the ethos of the school.

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Findings – Race and Citizenship

This study aims to shed light on how a sample of students in Singapore utilizes the official historical narrative to position themselves as citizens. In general, students from all three schools and across all racial groups shared similar understandings of the historical narrative as depicted in the official social studies textbooks and national curriculum. The students' responses during the interviews and the social studies lessons also demonstrated that most of them had uncritically internalized the state's values and ideals about citizenship. Three key themes were dominant: the national ideals of progress and consensus, the rigid conception of race, and the lack of countervailing opinions.

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Progress and Consensus

Overall, the students' interpretations of the national narrative were remarkably similar to that of the official curriculum. Students not only had a good knowledge of key founding episodes in Singapore's history, such as the arrival of the British in 1819 and the Japanese Occupation of Singapore from 1942 to 1945, but they also frequently repeated the same phrasing and perspectives found in the textbooks. Students, for example described the economic transformation of Singapore from a small village to a prosperous city state. Reiterating the description found in the textbook, a student from Merah Secondary wrote: "Early Singapore was a fishing village, later Mr Raffles came and turned this place into a trading port, and now it is an established country." Despite their different socio-economic, ethnic and academic backgrounds, the participants from all three schools consistently provided very similar depictions of the key events in Singapore's history, and many described Singapore's historical development in largely the same manner.

Students also shared the state's understanding of the importance of the episodes of racial and religious conflict in Singapore's history, including the Maria Hertogh riots in 1950 and the Prophet Muhammad birthday riots in 1964. Echoing the official interpretation found in the textbooks, Cheralyn, a Chinese girl from Putih Secondary, explained that the rationale for studying these conflicts was because "it shows how racial discrimination causes conflicts, riots and stuff, destroys harmony between races."

The notion of progress also influenced the students' understanding of the national narrative. For example, in his interpretation of the history of race relations in Singapore, Ali, the boy with Indian and Malay heritage from Putih Secondary, said: "... now we are multi racial country, when last time we used to fight among races, now not as much but maybe not at all." Likewise, Siti, a Malay girl from Putih Secondary, stated that it was important for students to learn about the race riots because "they should know [about] the riots last time, and how we are like right now, the difference between it, and you know, hopefully that it will not happen again."

Constance, an expressive Chinese girl from Biru Secondary (the high achieving school with few minority students), explicitly linked the racial riots in Singapore's history to similar inter-ethnic conflict in other countries: "This racial tension between Chinese and Malays led to racial riots ... these two groups are something like what we learnt It's like Tamil Tigers and the people in Northern Ireland." Similarly, her classmate, Junhui, added that the conflict in both countries "serves as a reminder to Singaporeans not to be separated, or else we will be like these two countries." In sum, students from different socio-economic, racial, and academic backgrounds shared a common acceptance and understanding of the role played by these key episodes in Singapore's historical narrative, with most placing the episodes within the context of Singapore's progress from a racially divided nation to one that is now more harmonious. Similar to Levstik and Groth's (2005) findings, none of the Singapore students voiced any opposition to the official historical narrative promoted by the state or offered an alternative group or community-based narrative. □

Students and teachers in the study also frequently echoed the state's desire for achieving consensus and avoiding conflict at all cost. Many argued that one of the primary responsibilities of a Singapore citizen should be the promotion of racial relations and national unity. Students from the ethnically diverse Putih Secondary, for example, wrote about the need for citizens to remain united despite racial and religious diversity:

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Singapore citizens should unite as one country even (if) we come from different races and religions.

I am very happy to be a Singaporean. We as Singaporeans should not bother of [sic] the skin colour [sic]. No matter what colour is [sic] your skin, our blood is still red. As a citizen of Singapore, we should be united and loyal towards our country. We should live in harmony and faced [sic] difficulties together. Singapore is not only a country but a home to me.

In fact, many students used the words of the national pledge, particularly this phrase “regardless of race, language or religion,” in their responses. This was not an unexpected phenomenon because the daily recitation of the national pledge of allegiance in schools served as a constant reminder of the citizen’s responsibility to support racial harmony.

In summary, the students’ focus on the citizen’s responsibility for the promotion of “racial harmony” in society suggests an internalization of the values and ideals promulgated by the state. Notably, even students from the minority groups also appeared to have framed their own aspirations, values, and goals in a manner that echoed the state’s position, particularly with regard to the theme of progress and consensus, as well as the state’s ideal of racial and religious equality.

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Rigid Racial Categories

While the Singapore state recognizes the different historical racial and religious groups, this is done so within clearly defined boundaries. As described earlier, at the national level, the conception of the racial categories is presented in a static and fixed manner that contributes to the reification of differences within its population. As such, the concept of racial categorization is also not troubled anywhere within the social studies curriculum, because the discourse on race is monopolized by the state. The colonial influence on the representation and definition of racial

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boundaries, roles and relationships, largely in oppositional terms, is not examined. The role of the Singapore government in utilizing and reifying these historical colonial racial categories also goes unquestioned. □

During the study, both the students and teachers explicitly and implicitly endorsed the state's conception of race as an objective condition despite the fact that this did not reflect the unstable and politically contested process of racial formation and the creation of racial meanings [\[A8\]](#) (Omi & Winant, 1994). None spoke about the fluid and historically constructed nature of these categorizations. In all three social studies classrooms, for example, all three teachers appeared to accept the state's categorization of Singapore citizens into fixed racial groups. Mrs. Pereira's introduction to the chapter was typical:

Mrs. Pereira: What is the difference between race and ethnicity?

Students: (silence)

Mrs. Pereira: Races are grouped according to skin color, physical characteristics. In Singapore, how many racial groups are there?

Students: Four.

Mrs. Pereira: Only four? Yes, four major ones, Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others.

Students too appeared unaware of the constant shifting of parameters that have defined race throughout history or the fluidity and variability of racial categorizations. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the students also clearly identified with the state's four official categories as highlighted by Mrs. Pereira. The only student who had difficulty identifying with any of the official categories was Ali, who had an Indian father and a Malay mother. While officially categorized as

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an Indian based on his father's race, he appeared to identify more with the Malays because he studied the Malay language in school and as he pointed out, "My parents chose [for me to learn Malay] because both of them spoke Malay."

□

Lack of Countervailing Opinions

Finally, there were few critical or countervailing opinions voiced during the study by the students. Little or no discussion of sensitive and controversial issues occurred in the social studies classrooms during observations. Dominated by the narrative dictated to them by the state, both teachers and students from the different ethnic groups adhered closely to the official script. For example, as a result of the state's emphatic link between an individual citizen's responsibility and the maintenance of racial harmony, both teachers and students focused on individual acts of racism and appeared to be oblivious to any examples of structural problems faced by minorities. The following exchange in Mrs. Pereira's class at Putih Secondary was typical.

Mrs. Pereira: What is discrimination?

Students: (silence)

Mrs. Pereira: Exclusion of a particular group of people for various reasons... Even in a school like Putih, with a 50-50 proportion of races, Chinese don't mix with Malays. How many of you have good friends of another race?

Students: [only a few hands raised]

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Mrs. Pereira: I wonder why so few of you?

Students: [We] have friends but not so good.

Mrs. Pereira: I feel that we don't mix because we look down upon them.

Likewise, Mr. Tan from Merah Secondary also recounted an episode that suggested that racial relations in Singapore were greatly affected by the racist attitudes of the individual.

I was the form teacher of a class, a parent called up to complain about his son's friends and their skin color, and said to tell him not to mix with "those people." Instead, I said that I would encourage the boy to continue, and told the parent that he needs to change. We will look at the tensions between ethnic groups and why it arises. It is not easy to resolve conflicts because changing mindsets is difficult, such as changing the mindset of the parent.

In the study, both students and teachers focused exclusively on individual instances of racial prejudice. Few references were made to institutional causes of racial tension in Singapore, largely because the Singapore government places great emphasis on the neutral, color-blind and equitable nature of the Singapore system.

Nevertheless, during the social studies lessons, all three teachers devoted much time to describing, in great detail, examples of structural and institutional discrimination against the Tamils in Sri Lanka and the Catholics in Northern Ireland. For example, Ms. Ong from Biru Secondary tried to provide a nuanced view of the conflict in Sri Lanka. She presented both the reasons why the Sri Lankan Tamils might feel aggrieved and the political pressures faced by the Sinhalese government.

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[the Sri Lankan government made] Sinhala the official language, because of nationalistic feelings, to win support of Sinhalese voters, and give Sinhalese opportunities for better jobs ... and [implemented] higher entry standards for Tamils for university admission. Just imagine you are the government elected by the Sinhalese, made up of Sinhalese, most of the voters are Sinhalese, so you feel the need to protect the interests of Sinhalese voters ...the Sinhalese were the backward group in the country. The Tamils on the other hand, felt understandably upset that they had to score higher marks to get in.

In contrast to the detailed, critical description of the systemic discrimination faced by the Sri Lankan Tamils as shown in the preceding extract, none of the teachers extended this critique to the Singapore system. Instead, the teachers presented the Singapore system of meritocracy and multi-racialism as an ideal, just and color-blind system for all.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, none of the students participating in the interviews and the survey described the need for Singapore citizens to address instances of institutional or systemic causes of inequality. Despite the goals of the curriculum to develop "critical thinkers," there was no critical examination of these pertinent issues related to race and citizenship. Only twice throughout the study did students raise questions with regard to the official version of events. This, however, did not occur in the classroom but during the relatively safe confines of the individual interviews and focus group discussion. In a particularly revealing exchange during the focus group discussion, Claudine, an articulate female Chinese Putih student, perceptively noted:

Singapore is very good at covering up ... I won't say Singapore is totally racial ☐ harmony [sic] ... I won't believe that everyone in Singapore, even in the school itself, everybody you know... I believe that there's some unhappiness against some race or some race, but I feel that it won't directly affect us, because ... deep down I'm actually cursing you but I'm smiling at you all the time ...

Jack, Siti, and Priya, her Chinese, Malay and Indian/Sikh classmates respectively, agreed with her assessment. Jack asked: "Is there actually racial harmony? It's like, you just go to the canteen you can see ... one race sitting together, no two races sitting together." Priya echoed this perspective: "It's kind of like, you see, one clique all will be [sic] of the same race."

In sum, the data suggest that in most cases, these young Singapore citizens appeared to have internalized the dominant historical narrative vis-à-vis race and citizenship. Key problems include their unquestioning acceptance of, and identification with, the official racial categories, the lack of challenge to the state's dominant positions and perspectives, their inability and/or unwillingness to go beyond the role of the individual citizen and critically assess potential systemic or structural flaws, and finally, their lack of awareness of alternative perspectives.

□

Discussion – Constraints of Censorship and Testing

One of the key findings of this study is how Singapore students from highly dissimilar socio-economic, academic and racial backgrounds shared a remarkably similar understanding of the Singapore historical narrative, particularly with regard to citizenship and race. Their responses echoed the state's emphasis on racial equality, meritocracy, and the individual citizen's responsibility for racial harmony. Contrary to the findings of scholars such as Epstein (1998, 2000), who demonstrated that some students, shaped by their racialized identities, held diverse understandings of the national narrative, the students and teachers in this study seemed to accept, as established fact, the state's understanding of the role of the citizen. The results of this study closely mirror the findings of Levstik and Groth's (2005) Ghanaian study,

which suggested little divergence between ethnic and national conceptions of citizenship and national history.

This shared understanding between students from disparate groups can partially be attributed to the national narrative in the school curriculum that has consistently emphasized the equal contributions of all racial groups to Singapore's development, as well as the themes of unity, consensus and harmony. In fact, the Singapore historical context shares numerous similarities with that of Ghana. Both countries experienced colonial rule and, upon gaining independence, had to focus on nation-building and uniting a religiously and ethnically diverse population. Thus, both countries constantly highlight past instances of social discord and conflict as a lesson against repeating the mistakes of the past. In addition, unlike countries in which official histories of the nation compete with vernacular histories sanctioned by the family or communities, the Singapore state, from its inception as an independent country, consciously crafted an inclusive historical narrative that not only explicitly incorporated ethnic histories, but also greatly emphasized the importance of national unity and consensus for national survival. This stands in sharp contrast to the situation in the United States, where blacks and immigrants had to struggle to get "a place at the table" and faced great resistance to "the simple proposition that every American belonged in American history" (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 7).

The second key finding of this study is that none of the Singapore students contested or objected to the state's central narrative of racial harmony, meritocracy, and progress. During the study, too, teachers and students in Singapore consciously avoided controversial social and political issues. It appeared less politically fraught to devote the lessons to addressing individual actions and beliefs, as opposed to challenging the system. For example, none challenged the division of Singaporeans into discrete, mutually exclusive racial categories, or indeed, of the categories themselves. The next section explores why few students expressed critical opinions or offered alternative oppositional narratives through an examination of two constraints that hinder the teaching of social studies: (1) the lack of counter-socialization and the disciplining effects of censorship; (2) the impact of high stakes testing.

□

Constraints of a Climate of Censorship

The social context and political norms of a given community can shape curricular decisions and the impact of curriculum on students (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Given the range of democratic societies in the world, multiple conceptions of citizenship exist and attributes of citizenship vary across countries (Cogan, 2000). In Singapore, the state's desire for order and stability triumphs almost all other considerations and this is clearly reflected in Singapore schools. As Lee Kuan Yew, the former Prime Minister of Singapore argued,

The expansion of the right of the individual to behave or misbehave as he pleases has come at the expense of orderly society. In the East the main object is to have a well-ordered society so that everybody can have maximum enjoyment of his freedoms. This freedom can only exist in an ordered state and not in a natural state of contention and anarchy. (cited in Zakaria, 1994, p. 111)

Consequently, unlike in the United States, schools in Singapore are seldom sites of contestation and resistance to the dominant culture. As described in the earlier sections, schools in Singapore are centrally controlled by the Ministry of Education, all teachers are government/civil servants, and the national curriculum, the national examination system, and the official textbooks are produced and closely monitored by the Ministry of Education. Correspondingly, there is little or no public debate about the goals and substance of school programs.

The Singapore National Education citizenship program is also exceptional in that it is systematically incorporated at different levels, and is an integral part of the formal education system as well as the political and social fabric. Thus, the socialization of students occurs at multiple sites and at numerous levels. Challenges to the prevailing values, where they do exist, tend to be muted, personalized, and localized. More often than not, however, the unequal relations of power within social forms, structures, and practices remain hidden and unquestioned, particularly because the official curriculum, consciously or unconsciously aided and abetted by the teachers and the school system, perpetuates the national myth of "meritocracy," racial equality, individual achievement and responsibility.

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A large part of this could be due to what Cornbleth (2001) terms “climates of censorship and restraint.” Climates of censorship refer to the “threatening climate of external curriculum challenges to subject matter, materials or teaching-learning activities” (p. 83). Cornbleth contends that “few teachers totally eschew self-censorship” (p. 84) because of the desire of teachers to be accepted by their colleagues. The general climate of censorship and constraint influences how the sensitive issue of race and citizenship is addressed in the classroom. In their desire to avoid controversial topics, teachers and students alike adopt the state’s perspective of racial relations as an individual citizen’s responsibility and avoid discussion of institutional causes of racial tension in Singapore. Despite the attention focused on examples of institutional racism in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland in the social studies curriculum, the data suggest that teachers and students lacked awareness of the possibility of the existence of institutional privilege and discrimination in the Singapore context. Few were able or willing to challenge widely accepted school and societal norms.

Cornbleth (2001) suggests that many educators avoid conflict and controversy, which in turn hinders “teaching for meaningful learning” (p. 85). The following exchange in the Putih Secondary social studies classroom clearly demonstrated an acknowledgement of the possibility of repercussions for speaking out,

Mrs. Pereira: The distribution of Sinhalese and Tamils... look at the map in the textbook. Why are the Sinhalese and Tamils in conflict?

Students: (silence)

Mrs. Pereira: How many of you think that there is genuine cooperation among races in Singapore? How many think that we are faking it? Don't worry, I'm not going to report you.

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Students: [laughter]

Mrs. Pereira: Can anybody give me an example of racism?

Student (Pauline): Blogging about race.

The off-hand remark by Mrs. Pereira, where she stated "Don't worry, I'm not going to report you" is symptomatic of the uncertainty and ambivalence felt toward the discussion of controversial subjects, particularly those related to race. The subtext of this exchange demonstrated the common understanding between both the teacher and the students of the Singapore government's uncompromising responses to statements that could, in the government's eyes, incite racial hatred, thus the teacher's half-joking reassurance that she was not going to report anybody. This was reinforced by Pauline's reference to "Blogging about race," which alluded to the use of the Sedition Act to prosecute the three bloggers who wrote disparaging comments of minority races in their blogs (Popatlal, 2005).

The culture of self-censorship was also reflected in some of the students' responses. For example, students such as Weijie, a male Chinese Biru Secondary student, chose not to accord equal recognition to the roles played by the different racial groups in Singapore's history. Consequently, he anxiously asserted that this was not due to any racial bias on his part as seen from the following exchange.

Weijie: I think these are the two dominant ones so I picked them out.

Researcher: Two dominant, in what way?

Weijie: As in the population --

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Researcher: Okay.

Weijie: Ya. And I'm not a racist, I didn't single them out like this.

Researcher: I never said you were.

Weijie: Okay, I'm just pointing [out that] I'm not.

Although Weijie explicitly reiterated that he was not racially prejudiced in any way, it has to be noted that Weijie's perspective contradicted the official perspective because the lower secondary history curriculum not only gives great emphasis to the contributions of all immigrants, but also consciously attempts to portray the contributions of various immigrant groups equally in the curriculum.□

Evidence of Singapore educators' concerns about climates of conservatism and censorship can also be found in the influential government-sponsored National Education report. The report noted some of the issues faced by social studies teachers in Singapore, including not knowing where the "Out-of-Bound (OB) markers" were (a vague phrase frequently used by government ministers to identify taboo and sensitive topics), and their inability to handle dissent. According to the study team, educators had "concerns about how open and candid they could be in discussions and how they could manage debates on areas of controversy, without sufficient information, expertise, or clear out-of-bound markers to guide them" (Ministry of Education Singapore, 2007a, p. 16).

In sum, it is apparent that educators and students alike are reluctant to express oppositional viewpoints. The existence of self-censorship on the part of teachers and perhaps some students is not unique to Singapore. As Beauboeuf-Lafontant (1999) argues, many public schools “take part in ‘silencing’ discordant voices and perspectives” (p. 716). Well-known historical examples from the United States include the censorship challenges to the *Problems of Democracy* course created by Harold Rugg in the early part of the 20th century, and the *Man: A Course of Study* materials (MACOS) developed by Jerome Bruner (Makler, 2004; Zimmerman, 2002). In his assessment of the controversy over MACOS, Evans (2004) contended that the typical American education involved “a virulent socialization process with little or no countersocialization” (p. 145), and noted that there was a strong desire within the community for conformity, social control, and the adoption of traditionally “American” and authoritative perspectives. Similarly, in their study of U.S. schools for the first phase of the Civic Education Study of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, Hahn and Torney-Purta (1999) reported that few social studies teachers focused on controversial issues or contested the content in U.S. history and civics courses.

□

Constraints of High Stakes Testing

The second constraint on the teaching of social studies in Singapore schools is the presence of a summative, high-stakes written exam at the end of the course. The results of this examination determine the type of post-secondary school and program for which a student qualifies. No other type of assessment is used to evaluate student learning and understanding in social studies. This also has implications for school ranking and the performance rating of principals and teachers.

Consequently, in the social studies classrooms, there was a focus on teaching to the test, thus precluding any detailed examination of controversial social issues due to the lack of time. Standardized tests, according to Mathison, Ross and Vinson (2006) rob teachers “of their professional capacity to choose curricular content; to respond in meaningful ways to particular student needs” (p. 111). With rare exceptions, all three teachers concentrated their efforts on imparting content knowledge and the acquisition of essay answering skills. The priority of all

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three teachers seemed to be the preparation of students for the national examinations rather than on thoughtful or meaningful instruction centered around students' needs. Despite the potential richness and controversial nature of the topics, the lessons were teacher-centered. There was little or no discussion of controversial issues, and information about the case studies were presented in an authoritative and factual manner.

The Biru Secondary teacher, Ms. Ong, frequently reminded the students that they had to rush through the lesson because they were "really far behind" and needed to "catch up." The teachers, particularly Ms. Ong, constantly reiterated the requirements of the 'O' level examinations during the lessons, as shown in this exchange.

Ms Ong: Write down this sentence on the same piece of paper ... Explain the consequences of the civil war in Sri Lanka. Don't write an essay, I don't have time to read it. For example, foreign intervention, displacement. I need you to write an essay outline, paragraph 1, 2, 3, conclusion. Even if the question asks you to explain, in your conclusion, we need you to evaluate.

Student: But they did not ask for it.

Ms Ong: Ok, let me explain, even if a question is phrased as innocently as this, you have to explain. Because... I don't know why it's like this, but it's expected in the O levels for you to get the highest level of response.

Likewise, from the students' perspective, this focus on preparation for the examinations negatively affected their level of interest in the subject. In fact, two high achieving students from Biru Secondary, Hangming and Junhui, stated that they felt great pressure preparing for the examination and thought that the subject would be more interesting without it. Hangming, a Chinese boy from Biru Secondary, for example, stated that he was "not quite interested in social studies because of the exams."

Although it is true that secondary schools in Singapore pay great attention to the teaching of social studies, this is largely a reflection of its status as a required examination subject. Widespread anecdotal evidence suggests that in primary schools, social studies is not accorded nearly as much attention because it is not a core part of the national primary school examination system. Social studies periods are frequently utilized for other more “important” subjects such as Mathematics, Science and the languages. Similarly, in the United States, Pace (2007) writes that “high stakes accountability based on reading and math scores is marginalizing the Social Studies curriculum in elementary schools” (p. 26). This has resulted in reduced instructional time in states that do not have social studies tests whereas in others, the presence on high stakes testing has resulted in a focus on coverage. Thus, the Singapore secondary social studies program is caught in a bind. While being a required examination subject ensures that it is accorded a high status and given priority in schools, it then becomes, in many ways, a victim of its own status. This is because the pressure to perform well on exams affects the amount of time spent on in-depth discussions of relevant topics during social studies lessons. In its present form, the prescriptive and inflexible nature of the Singapore social studies course, governed by high stakes tests, also affects meaningful teaching and learning by precluding discussion of these controversial but highly pertinent issues.

Concluding Considerations

To conclude, this study sheds light on how students from a newly decolonized Asian state interpret citizenship and national history. The high level of consensus between students from disparate backgrounds about the role of the citizen and understanding of national history can partly be attributed to the inclusive nature of the national historical narrative as depicted in the text and the curriculum. This thus informs a wider understanding of how relatively young states like Singapore utilize history and social studies to navigate the potential pitfalls of diversity and emphasize national unity and cohesion.

The second finding of the study, the lack of critical and oppositional viewpoints, can be attributed to a combination of a climate of censorship and a regime of high stakes tests that acts as an effective mechanism to stifle democratic discourse within the social studies classroom. In the Singapore context, the state's emphasis on consensus can thus be seen as a disciplining mechanism with which to manage public discourse on race, citizenship, and the position of minority groups. Goh and Gopinathan (2005) neatly summarized the key challenges faced by history and social studies education in Singapore:

One major problem for the development of fair and balanced history syllabi, history textbooks and history pedagogy is that they have to induct young minds into the discipline of history, to enable them to evaluate sources and come to defensible judgments, while often at the same time satisfying the demands of the political elite seeking to establish as truth a particular version of the past. (p. 205)

Overall, this lack of a counter-hegemonic discourse within the curriculum is both troubling and ironic because the curriculum explicitly states that the goal is to promote independent inquiry and critical thinking (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2007a, 2008).

Social studies is crucial for the development of citizens who not only care about building a just and equitable society, but are also able to understand complex issues and make informed decisions (Pace, 2007). As Nelson and Pang (2006) contend, "it is social studies that opens critical inquiry into the implications and practices of social values" (p. 127). An effective social studies curriculum should incorporate the concerns of students and focus more on political and civic participation rather than high-stakes examinations. Ochoa-Becker (1999) makes the case for the use of controversial issues in order to engage students in the counter-socialization process. Arguing that "democracy is not well-served by either blind loyalty or unthinking citizens"

(p. 339), she suggests that teachers should make critical thinking and reasoned decision making a central component of their social studies classes. In addition, critical questions, such as who gets to define and speak of difference(s), and whose voice is assigned legitimacy or illegitimacy should be addressed (Spivak, 1988). Finally, the curriculum should incorporate the real life dilemmas and issues faced by the students. Instead of silencing teachers' and students' voices, space should be set aside to address the very real issues faced by students in a multi-racial school setting. Deliberation and the expression of difference are key components in the democratic decision making process (Camicia, 2007). As the Putih Secondary focus group showed, Singapore adolescents are capable of carrying out honest, stimulating, and passionate deliberations about the sensitive issues of race and citizenship. With safe spaces for "honest, authentic communication" (Stoughton & Sivertson, 2005, p. 294) and the examination of multiple perspectives, these conversations can then expand and create common social space through the discovery of commonalities.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

1. Photo elicitation task

These are images representing various people, events or ideas from Singapore's history. Please select the pictures that would most accurately represent Singapore's past, present and future to someone from another country.

Why did you choose these pictures? Why did you think that these were important?

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Why did you omit these pictures?

1. Interview questions:

1. How would you describe yourself? What adjectives would you use?
2. What does it mean to be a Singapore citizen? How important is being a Singapore citizen to you? Describe your sense of belonging to other Singaporeans.
3. How frequently do you participate in activities that remind you of Singapore? Give examples of such activities, e.g. in school. What are your opinions of these activities?
4. Describe the culture of Singapore. Do you think that it is possible for people who do not share Singaporean customs and traditions to become fully Singaporean? Why?
5. What have you learnt about Singapore's history and being a Singapore citizen in your social studies lessons?
6. What aspects of Singapore's past make you proud? What do you consider to be strengths and weaknesses of your country?
7. What do you think Singapore will be like twenty years from now? What role do you see yourself playing in Singapore's future?

Appendix B

Description of Photos in Photo Elicitation Task

1. Sir Stamford Raffles establishing a British trading post in Singapore in 1819
2. Immigrants to Singapore: Chinese and Straits Chinese
3. Immigrants to Singapore: Indians
4. Immigrants to Singapore: Malays from the Malay Archipelago
5. Immigrants to Singapore: Europeans
6. The British Surrender to the Japanese in 1942.
7. Lim Bo Seng, a war hero
8. Adnan bin Saidi, a war hero
9. Elizabeth Choy, a war heroine

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10. The Japanese surrender in Singapore in 1945

11. The Maria Hertogh racial riots, conflict between the Malays and Europeans 1950

12. The Hock Lee Bus communist riots, May 1955

13. David Marshall, the first Chief Minister and the Labour Front Party in 1955

14. The first fully democratic election in Singapore in 1959

15. The National Flag and Coat of Arms

16. Lee Kuan Yew, the first Prime Minister of Singapore

17. Zubir Said, the composer of Singapore's national anthem, Majulah Singapura

18. S.Rajaratnam, the first Foreign Minister and author of the national pledge

19. Yusof bin Ishak, the first Malayan born Yang- di-Pertuan Negara and President

20. The merger of Singapore and Malaya in 1963

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21. The separation of Singapore and Malaysia in 1965

22. The Prophet Muhammad's birthday racial riots in 1964

23. Goh Keng Swee, the first finance minister

24. Ong Teng Cheong, the first Elected President of Singapore

25. S.R. Nathan, the current Elected President of Singapore

26. National Service

27. Education in Singapore

28. Public housing in Singapore – Housing Development Board (HDB) flats

29. Singapore's financial district

30. Tourism in Singapore (The Esplanade)

Appendix C

Qualitative Survey Protocol

1. Complete this sentence: I am _____. Use as many descriptors and/or adjectives as possible. E.g. I am a teenager, student, basketball player etc.
2. What does it mean to be a Singapore citizen? What are the characteristics, rights, duties/responsibilities and roles of a citizen of Singapore?
3. Write a short narrative of Singapore's history. What are the important events and themes of Singapore's past?

Notes

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