Citizenship Education in the United States: Perspective Reflected in State Education Standards[1]

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Abstract

There is growing international concern about the lack of civic engagement among the youth in many nations. These concerns have sparked renewed interest in the quantity and quality of civic education in public schools in the United States. The objective of this study is to determine if the concerns about civic education are about the sufficiency of academic content related to civic education or if the concerns reflect a lack of consensus regarding the question of "What makes a good citizen?" To address this question, this paper examines state social studies content standards from five U.S. states to determine if specific perspectives on citizenship are present in the standards and which perspectives are emphasized. University websites are also analyzed to assess their focus on citizenship. The study finds that the citizenship education in K-12 schools is robust, and specific perspectives are emphasized. This emphasis on specific perspectives, as opposed to a lack of academic content related to civic education, may be at the heart of the debate over citizenship education.

Key words: civic education, citizenship, civic engagement, social studies

The lack of civic engagement, political involvement, and civic knowledge demonstrated by young people in the United States has been a concern of U.S. scholars and civic leaders for decades (Albert Shanker Institute, 2003; CIRCLE, 2003; Galston, 2003; Walling, 2007). The U.S. is not alone in its concern about politically disengaged youth. Sears and Hyslop-Margison report that "there is . . . an explosion of international interest and activity in citizenship education" (2006, p. 15). Their report claims there is an air of crisis reflected in the reforms being proposed and implemented in citizenship education in countries as diverse as Australia, Russia, Colombia, and Singapore (2006, p. 15). There

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seems to be an international belief that formal education practices can produce good citizenship practices in young adults.

In the U.S., the responsibility for teaching civic knowledge and instilling the values of citizenship is shared by a number of institutions, but the balance of responsibility falls upon the public school system. In the United States public education, and therefore public citizenship education, is a state function. It is incumbent on each state's department of education and its local school districts to develop appropriate social studies/civics curriculum standards. The public schools are often criticized and blamed because there is a perception that the schools are not producing "good citizens".[2] However, a young person's civic participation is influenced by several factors, formal education being only one of those factors. Making a connection between the adequacy of civic education provided by the U.S. public schools and a youth's resulting civic participation is complicated by the influences of family, religion, and the mass media (Crittenden and Levine, 2013). A major complicating factor for each of these institutions is the lack of consensus on what makes a good citizen. A mutually agreed upon understanding of what good citizenship means is important. The stakes are high since civic knowledge has been connected to the promotion of democratic values, the ability to protect one's interests in the political process, trust in public life, and consistency in one's views (Galston, 2003, pp. 32-33).

This paper will examine how public schools in the U.S. are addressing the question: "What makes a good citizen?" The paper will begin by examining seven perspectives on citizenship, and will assess how these perspectives are reflected in social studies and government curricula from kindergarten through undergraduate levels. The perspectives include liberalism (Crittenden & Levine, 2013), communitarianism (Anderson et al., 1997), civic republicanism (Crittenden & Levine, 2013; Sandel,1996), assimilation (Anderson et al., 1997), cultural pluralism (Anderson et al., 1997), critical thinking (Anderson et al., 1997; Crittenden & Levine, 2013), and legalism (Anderson et al., 1997). Each perspective will be discussed briefly, and key features of each perspective will be identified. The key features will then be used to determine the prevalence of the perspectives in the social studies curricula for a sample of Kindergarten through twelfth grade programs in five states in the U.S. Additionally, references to citizenship on the websites of undergraduate colleges and universities will be identified to assess the significance of citizenship at institutions of higher education.

The objective of the study is to determine if specific perspectives on citizenship are emphasized in a sample of K-12 social studies curriculum standards, and in higher education. By virtue of the study design, a total number of standards will be identified and the distribution of perspectives across the standards will be revealed. If clear and adequate instructional standards are revealed, then it is possible that the underlying concern about civic education is actually a concern about the lack of consensus on the specific citizenship skills and understandings required, rather than on the sufficiency, or amount, of civic education available to United States public school students. For example, critics note the paucity of courses required at the high school level (CIRCLE, 2003, p. 14). In other words, concerns about civic

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[2] Nishishiba et al. also discuss the notion of "'good citizenship'" (2012, p. 22) in their work titled "Looking Back on the Founding: Civic Engagement Traditions in the United States."

education may not be about the lack of education as much as they are about longstanding disagreements over what it means to be an engaged citizen.

Theoretical Framework

According to Andrew Peterson, there has been a "renewed sense of interest in civic education across a number of nations in the last two decades" (2011, p. 2). This interest is driven by a concern in Western democracies that political knowledge and awareness is on the decline at a time when young people need to be politically aware and engaged in order to deal with the growing complexities of contemporary society (Peterson, 2011, p. 2). Young people are faced with new political, social, and technological challenges (Peterson, 2011, p. 2), and they are confronted with a more complex system of government to navigate. Changes in the structure and functions of government are accelerating the need to have informed and active citizens. For example, the United States government traditionally delivered public services directly to citizens through a hierarchy of government agencies. During the last several decades, that model has evolved into a complex market type collaborative system, which shares authority with various nongovernmental agents (Salamon, 2005, pp. 7-8). Private sector, nonprofit, and citizens' groups now work in concert with the public sector on some projects. These groups must share common objectives and values, if they are to achieve worthwhile public goals. Citizens are at the center of this complex system of governance. They are the professionals who serve in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors; participate in the political process; and receive services. Citizens ultimately own their government (Schachter, 1995, p. 530). Therefore, it is essential that *all* citizens be well educated and engaged in civic affairs.

In the US, the public schools are charged with the duty of educating *all* citizens. Thus, public schools are given the yeoman's task of operationalizing the answer to the complex question of "What makes a good citizen?" There is a vast body of literature in the areas of political philosophy and academic pedagogy from which schools can draw in designing a civic education curriculum and writing state content standards. This paper examines seven of the major perspectives from the literature on the dispositions, knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for citizenship. Five of the perspectives are decidedly philosophical in nature; two are more pedagogical. The perspectives are not mutually exclusive and are often overlapping, but they have been separated into distinct categories for the purposes of this study. The seven major perspectives from the literature are discussed below, and diagramed in Figure 1.
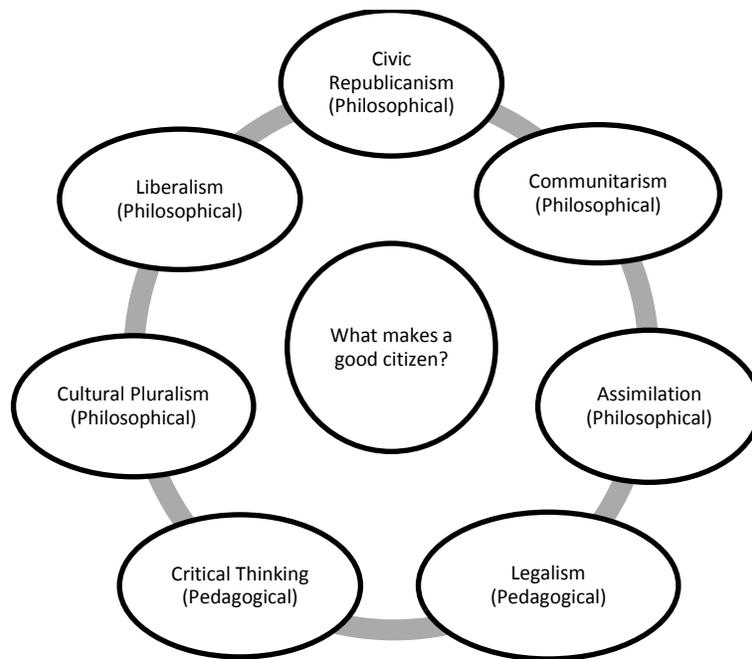
Figure 1. Seven major philosophical and pedagogical perspectives on the dispositions, knowledge, skills, and abilities required to be a good citizen.

Liberalism (Philosophical)

The roots of modern liberal thought can be traced back to the 17th century, when Western ideas of "selfhood" underwent "a dramatic 'inward turn'" (Theobald & Dinkelman, 1995, p. 7). Individual identity shifted from being defined by one's contribution to "the polis," or the community, to an inward focus on fulfillment and autonomy in the process of "self-definition" (Theobald & Dinkelman, 1995, p. 7). Since the 17th century, liberalism has assumed a variety of meanings and areas of emphasis. Liberalism, however, at its core, continues to be grounded in the individual, and it is linked to the notion of freedom. As a result, liberal education focuses on individual rights. It is concerned with understanding rights and the skills, such as critical thinking, tolerance, and respect needed to "secure and protect such individual rights" (Peterson, 2011, p. 13). The hallmark of contemporary liberalism continues to be individuality and individual rights.

Communitarianism (Philosophical)

Communitarianism is largely defined in contrast with liberalism, with the key difference being that communitarianism focuses on the collective instead of the individual. Communitarians believe that individuals "only come to make sense of their world, and their place in it, through social interactions" (Theobald & Dinkelman, 1995, p. 9), and communities help develop "meaning and morality" (Feinberg, 1995, p. 36). Communitarians contend that the liberal emphasis on individual rights and liberty

overlooks important social costs and consequences (Theobald & Dinkelman, 1995, pp. 11-12). These costs include the erosion of morality (Feinberg, 1995, p. 36), the degradation of the environment, and the exploitation of human beings and nature (Theobald & Dinkelman, 1995, p. 12). Thus, instead of focusing on rights, communitarians emphasize obligation and responsibility (Feinberg, 1995, p. 36). For communitarians, the "common good" has value (Peterson, 2011, p. 12). Evidence of communitarian influence on education is found in the requirement for high school students to volunteer in the community (Feinberg, 1995, p. 38). Communitarianism is fundamentally about the common good and obligation.

Civic Republicanism (Philosophical)

The basic principles of civic republicanism have commonalities with liberalism and communitarianism, but civic republicanism approaches these principles from a different perspective. For example, civic republicans value freedom, but freedom means participation in self-government and non-domination as opposed to the liberal ideal of freedom from non-interference (Peterson, 2011, pp. 15-19). As with communitarianism, the common good is central to civic republicanism. However, the common good is not defined by an external body; it is arrived at through an inclusive, deliberative process (Seidenfeld, 1992, p. 1528). What distinguishes civic republicanism from other philosophical perspectives is the idea of "citizenship as a practice" (Peterson, 2011, p. 3). Peterson contended that the notion of "'citizenship as practice'. . .incorporates a commitment to four inter-related principles. First, that citizens possess and should recognize certain *civic obligations*; second, that citizens must develop an awareness of *the common good*, which exists over and above their private self-interests; third, that citizens must possess and act in accordance with *civic virtue*; and fourth that civic engagement in democracy should incorporate a *deliberative* aspect" (2011, pp. 3-4). In the tradition of Aristotle, citizenship is measured by "the extent of an individual's participation in the community or state, but in such a way that participation enhances the good life for all members (citizens) of the community" (Kalu, 2003, p. 420). The defining characteristic of civic republicanism is the actual practice of citizenship. As Peterson explains, civic republicans are interested in civic education "because all republicans are fundamentally interested in how citizens learn to become active, engaged members of their political communities" (2011, p. 24). Participation and deliberation are at the heart of the civic republican tradition.

Cultural Pluralism (Philosophical)

The basic premise of cultural pluralism is that the knowledge of one's own culture and the culture of others produces tolerance among diverse cultural groups. James Spradley and David McCurdy define culture as "the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and to generate social behavior" (Spradley & McCurdy, 1975, qtd. in Bennet, 1986, p. 8). "Understanding our own and other cultures clarifies why we behave in certain ways, how we perceive reality, what we believe to be true, what we build and create, what we accept as good and desirable" (Bennett, 1986, p. 9). Cultural pluralists believe that if citizens cultivate an understanding of diverse cultures, they will be well equipped to decide which values of their own culture are important to maintain, which values of other cultures can be tolerated or embraced, and which new common values can be mutually developed to

shape an effective modern national ethos of cooperation and caring that benefits society. The cultural pluralism perspective focuses largely on understanding one's own culture and the cultures of others.

Assimilation (Philosophical)

The assimilation of diverse groups of people into the mainstream of social and political life in the United States has been a constant process throughout the course of the nation's history. Assimilation is a theory grounded in the American historical experience, and it is referred to as "the melting pot theory" (Bennett, 1986, p. 36). Historically, the melting pot theory implied that an immigrant to the U.S. should become *Americanized* as quickly as possible in order to ensure social and economic success in her/his adopted country. President Theodore Roosevelt's letter to the American Defense Society in 1919 typified the traditional U.S. Assimilation perspective. He wrote that if an immigrant in good faith became a citizen, he should be treated as an equal by every other American citizen. "But this (equality) is predicated upon the man's becoming in very fact an American and nothing but an American. We have room for but one flag . . . . We have room for but one language here and that is the English language" (Roosevelt, 1919, qtd. in Auchincloss, 2014, pp. 750-751). Over time, the U.S. Assimilation perspective has evolved into a more moderate point of view. Like the Cultural Pluralism perspective, the modern Assimilation perspective does not require cultural conformity or the giving up of ethnic traditions that individuals choose to maintain (Salins, 1997, p. 18). The modern Assimilation perspective focuses largely on instilling pride in being an important part of a national community. Peter Salins, in his book, *Assimilation American Style*, maintains that assimilation is not about cultural conformity, but instead it is about national unity (1997, p. 9). Salins asserts that assimilation in the United States is not about people of different backgrounds becoming alike; it is about those people believing they are a part of the same national family in order to avoid the ethnic conflict and discord that exists in many other countries with diverse populations (1997, p. 17). The modern Assimilation perspective promotes the idea that civic behaviors, supportive of national unity, must be learned and practiced by the diverse populations in the United States.

Critical Thinking (Pedagogical)

The intellectual roots of critical thinking are as ancient as the teaching practices used by Socrates 2,500 years ago**.** Socrates established the model for the tradition of critical thinking, namely to question common positions and opinions to determine which are reasonable and logical and which lack adequate evidence to warrant belief. Socrates sought to teach people not only to think but to think for themselves (Johnson, 2011, pp. 91-92). According to Richard Paul and Linda Elder, "Critical thinking is the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improve it. Critical thinking is, self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, self-corrective thinking" (2014, p. 2). Critical thinking goes beyond a student's ability to understand and remember information and follow commands and directions. To think critically, a student must analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information she/he has been given, has observed, or has experienced in order to determine the value or usefulness of the information (Scriven & Paul, 1987). Critical thinking is an overarching concept that influences instruction in various curricular areas. Since democracy in the United States is historically known as government by and for the people,

the ability to think critically about one's government and the people governing is considered to be an essential element of citizenship education.

Legalism (Pedagogical)

The legalist perspective of citizenship education was proposed by Christopher Anderson et al. (1997) in their research on the views of social studies teachers. Anderson et al. describe the legalist perspective as emphasizing law and order (1997, p. 344), "'inform[ing] students of their civil and political rights as citizens'" (1997, p. 345), and explaining the United States' role and responsibilities as a global power (1997, p. 345). Teachers who hold this view place a "greater emphasis on teaching civics as facts and information on how government works, inculcating respect for laws, and teaching about individual rights" (Anderson et al.,1997, p. 349). Anderson et al.'s legalist perspective is reminiscent of Horace Mann's 19th century notion of "common school" in which students were taught "basic mechanics of government" and were expected to memorize facts about political and military history (Crittenden & Levine, 2013). For the purposes of this study the defining characteristics of legalism are knowledge of facts and how government works.

As the foregoing discussion demonstrates, the perspectives are overlapping. For example, ideas about freedom, common good, and critical thinking are not the exclusive domain of only one perspective. In other instances, the perspectives represent opposing philosophical and political outlooks such as the individual versus the community. In yet other instances, the perspectives represent different levels of the same taxonomy, as is the case with fact-based learning and critical thinking. All of these philosophical and pedagogical perspectives, however, are essential to understanding how societies and their schools address the complex question of "What makes a good citizen?"

Method

The purpose of the study is to determine if specific perspectives on citizenship are emphasized in a sample of K-12 social studies curricula, and in higher education. The primary research questions are

> RQ 1: Do the curricula of K-12 public schools and the programs of public higher education institutions reflect particular philosophical or pedagogical perspectives of citizenship?

> RQ 2: If perspectives of citizenship are identified in the curricula and programs of public schools and institutions of higher education, which perspectives are most frequently identified and therefore most emphasized in the curricula and programs?

> RQ 3: If specific philosophical or pedagogical perspectives of citizenship are emphasized in the curricula and programs, does this distribution of perspectives indicate a lack of consensus regarding the question of "What makes a good citizen?" rather than a lack of sufficient opportunity for students to learn the dispositions, knowledge, skills and abilities related to citizenship?

In order to address these questions, the investigators followed a multi-step process. First, the investigators determined the prevailing philosophical and pedagogical perspectives on citizenship that influence citizenship education. As outlined in the review of the literature, the seven approaches the investigators identified were liberalism, communitarianism, civic republicanism, assimilation, cultural pluralism, critical thinking, and legalism. The defining characteristics of each approach identified by the investigators for the purposes of this study are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1
Defining Characteristics of Perspectives on Citizenship

Perspective	Defining Characteristics
Liberalism	Individual Rights
Communitarianism	Common Good and Obligation
Civic Republicanism	Deliberation and Participation
Assimilation	Inculcating dominant U.S. Values
Cultural Pluralism	Multiculturalism and Diversity
Critical Thinking	Analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information
Legalism	Knowledge of facts and how government works

Next, the investigators selected a sample of states within the U.S. for the study. The states were chosen based on their geographic location in order to ensure representation of the north, south, east, west, and middle of the country and included California (West), Massachusetts (East), Michigan (North), Missouri (Middle), and Texas (South). In addition to being geographically representative, the states were selected based on the researchers' perception that these states have historically maintained consistent academic content standards.

The investigators then located the K-12 state social studies content standards for the five states, and evaluated the standards to isolate the state social studies content standards related to civics and government in each of the five states. Standards directly related to geography, economics, history, and methods of social studies inquiry were excluded from the analysis. The specific documents and standards examined are listed in the appendix.

Using the defining characteristics listed in Table 1, the investigators classified each individual state social studies content standard as representing one of the seven philosophical or pedagogical perspectives of citizenship. When a standard appeared to correspond with more than one defining characteristic, the evaluators selected the one that was the best match. If the choice was between a pedagogical and philosophical perspective, the investigators typically selected the philosophical perspective. Examples of how specific state social studies content standards were classified are provided in Table 2. The

investigators worked together to determine the defining characteristic that applied to each state social studies standard, due to the complexity of the classification process. The results represent their agreement on the classification of all of the state social studies standards used in the study.

Table 2
Examples of Standards that Represent Each Perspective

Perspective	Example From Sample State Standards
Liberalism (Philosophical)	"Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured (e.g. freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, privacy)" (California State Board of Education 1998: 55). California,12th Grade, Standard 12.2
Communitarianism (Philosophical)	"Explain the importance of promoting the common good" (Missouri DESE 2004). Missouri, 2nd Grade
Civic Republicanism (Philosophical)	"Participate in projects to help or inform others (eg., service learning projects)" (Michigan Department of Education, Grade Level, 2007: 71). Michigan, 7th Grade, Standard 7-P4.2.3
Assimilation (Philosophical)	"Demonstrate the ability to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, to explain its general meaning, and to sing national songs. . .and explain the general meaning of the lyrics" (Massachusetts Department of Education 2003: 16). Massachusetts,1st Grade, Standard 1.4
Cultural Pluralism (Philosophical)	"Analyze the experiences and evaluate the contributions of diverse groups to multicultural societies" (Texas Administrative Code 2011: 5). Texas Middle School: 15(d)
Critical Thinking (Pedagogical)	"Analyze and explain ideas about fundamental values like liberty, justice and equality found in a range of documents. . ." (Michigan Department of Education, High School 2007: 54) Michigan, High School, Standard 2.2.4
Legalism (Pedagogical)	"Identify and describe provisions of the United States Constitution and the Massachusetts Constitution that define and distribute powers and authority of the federal or state government" (Massachusetts Department of Education 2003: 87). Massachusetts, 12th Grade, USG.3.2

Finally, the investigators reviewed the websites for 111 public institutions of higher education in Michigan, Texas, Massachusetts, California, and Missouri to determine if they reference citizenship in their values, mission, vision, competencies, literacies, or diversity documents. References to citizenship, civility, civic engagement, civic responsibility, global citizenship, public and community service, and civic

life were considered to be related to citizenship. The website review was conducted by a graduate assistant, and the results were evaluated by the investigators.[3]

Results

A total of 637 social studies content standards were analyzed to determine which philosophical and pedagogical perspectives of citizenship education were reflected in those standards. The results of the study are presented under the heading of each philosophical or pedagogical perspective. The pervasiveness of each perspective was determined by the percentage of standards reflecting a particular perspective as compared to the total of all the perspectives identified in a state's social studies content standards document. The results of the study, as presented in Table 3, reveal how frequently each perspective was identified in the documents.

Table 3
State by State Assessment of Perspectives on Citizenship Emphasized in the State Social Studies Content Standards

	California		Massachusetts		Michigan		Missouri		Texas		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Liberalism	14	15	6	10	13	8	5	5	21	10	59	9
Communitarianism	3	3	0	0	11	6.5	7	7	9	4	30	5
Civic Republicanism	5	5	8	13	47	28	10	11	24	11	94	15
Assimilation	7	8	11	17	9	5	9	10	25	11	61	10
Cultural Pluralism	8	9	3	5	1	.5	5	5	31	14	48	7
Critical Thinking	16	18	7	11	28	17	25	26	34	16	110	17
Legalism	38	42	28	44	60	35	34	36	75	34	235	37
Total	91	100	63	100	169	100	95	100	219	100	637	100

Liberalism (Philosophical)

For the purpose of the study, liberalism was determined, by the analysts, to be a dominant perspective of a social studies standard if the language of the standard clearly focused on promoting the understanding, the practice, or the defense of a person's liberties and individual rights in society. In

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[3] The investigators are grateful to Mary K. Stamberger for her assistance cataloging the references to citizenship on the websites of public institutions of higher education.

California's social studies content standards document, 15% of the standards analyzed were judged to be reflective of a liberalism perspective. This measure placed California's liberalism standard count five percentage points higher than the next two highest state totals (Massachusetts 10% and Texas 10%). In Michigan's standards, 8% of the state's social studies standards were judged to be reflective of the liberalism perspective. The liberalism perspective showed up least often in Missouri's standards with only 5% of that state's standards reflecting the liberalism perspective.

Communitarianism (Philosophical)

Communitarianism was determined to be a dominant perspective of a standard if its language focused on the common good and /or on one's obligation as a citizen. The preponderance of standards reflecting communitarianism was clustered in a range of 0%-7%. This is the lowest clustered range identified in the study. This result reveals that communitarianism is the least prevalent perspective identified in the social studies content standards documents studied. The percentages of standards reflecting communitarianism in the state's standards documents were: Missouri 7%, Michigan 6.5%, Texas 4%, California 3%, and Massachusetts 0%.

Civic Republicanism (Philosophical)

Civic Republicanism was determined to be a dominant perspective of a standard if the language of the standard focused on the promotion of deliberation or civic participation. The social studies standards of Michigan reflect the philosophical perspective of civic republicanism far more frequently than the standards of any other state in the study, with 28% of that state's standards focusing on deliberation and/or civic participation. The next highest state's standards ranking was Massachusetts, with 13%, followed by Missouri and Texas, both with 11% of their standards reflecting the civic republicanism perspective. The civic republicanism perspective was identified least frequently in the standards of California. Only 5% of that state's standards were identified as reflecting the perspective of civic republicanism.

Assimilation (Philosophical)

Assimilation was determined to be a dominant perspective of a standard if the language of the standard focused primarily on inculcating the dominant values of the United States. Seventeen percent of the Massachusetts standards reflected the assimilation perspective. Eleven percent of Texas' and 10% of Missouri's social studies standard reflected the assimilation perspective. California, with 8%, and Michigan, with 5%, had the least number of social studies standards reflecting assimilation.

Cultural Pluralism (Philosophical)

The analysts identified a social studies standard reflective of cultural pluralism if the language of the standard focused on raising awareness of the characteristics of various cultures and/or the diversity of populations in the United States and other countries. Texas ranked highest in this category of

perspectives, with 14% of their social studies standards reflecting the perspective of cultural pluralism. The other states ranked as follows: California 9%, Massachusetts 5%, Missouri 5%, and Michigan 0.5%.

Critical Thinking (Pedagogical)

In this study, a social studies standard was judged to reflect the perspective of critical thinking if the language of the standard was primarily focused on having students analyze, synthesize, and/or evaluate new or already mastered information. The results reveal that the perspective of critical thinking is highly prevalent in three of the five standards documents studied. The prevalence of the Critical Thinking perspective was second only to Legalism in Missouri, Texas, and California. Critical thinking ranked third in prevalence among Michigan's standards and fourth among Massachusetts' standards. Missouri ranked highest, with 26% of their standards reflecting an emphasis on critical thinking. California, Michigan, and Texas were clustered closely with 18%, 17%, and 16%, respectively. Eleven percent of Massachusetts' standards were judged to reflect an emphasis on Critical Thinking.

Legalism (Pedagogical)

The analysts judged a standard reflective of the legalism perspective if the language of the standard focused primarily on presenting factual material about laws, the structure of the government, or how the government works. The results reveal that legalism is the ideological perspective most frequently identified by the analysts in the social studies content standards included in this study. The prevalence of the legalism perspective ranked first among all of the 637 perspectives identified by the analysts. The percentages of each state's standards judged to be reflective of the Legalism perspective are as follows: Massachusetts 44%, California 42%, Missouri 36%, Michigan 35%, and Texas 34%.

Summary

Six hundred thirty seven social studies content standards were identified and analyzed to determine which philosophical or pedagogical perspectives of citizenship education are reflected in the standards. Of the 637 standards studied, the distribution of perspectives is as follows: 30 (5%) of the standards were judged to reflect the perspective of communitarianism, 48 (7%) cultural pluralism, 59 (9%) liberalism, 61 (10%) assimilation, 94 (15%) civic republicanism, 110 (17%) critical thinking, and 235 (37%) of the standards were judged to reflect the perspective of legalism. A state-by-state assessment of perspectives on citizenship emphasized in state social studies content standards, and a summary of perspectives on citizenship emphasized in state standards and are depicted in Figures 2 and 3.

Institutions of Higher Education

 Of the 111 websites that were reviewed for public universities and colleges in the five states, 16% (18) of the websites included references to citizenship in their values, mission, vision, competencies, literacies, or diversity documents. Public universities in California had the most sites with references to citizenship. Thirty percent (10) of the 33 websites in California included references to citizenship. In the

other four states, 6% to 20% of the public college and university websites included references to citizenship: Massachusetts 20%, Missouri 15%, Michigan 6%, and Texas 6%.
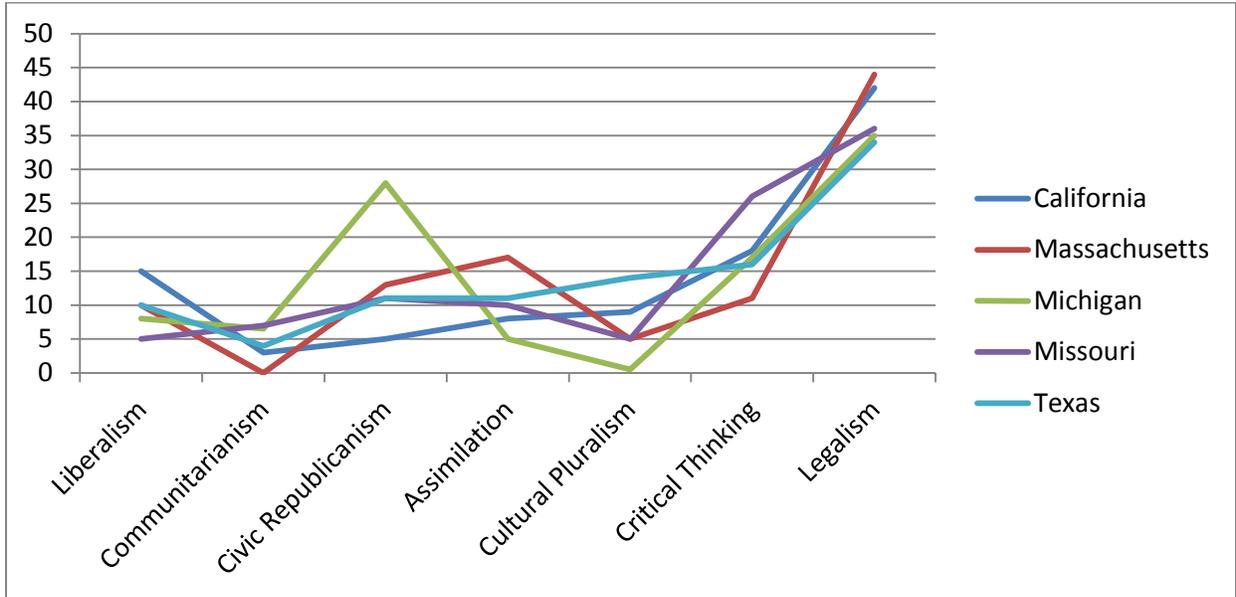
Figure 2. State by state assessment of perspectives on citizenship emphasized in state social studies content standards (based on percentages).
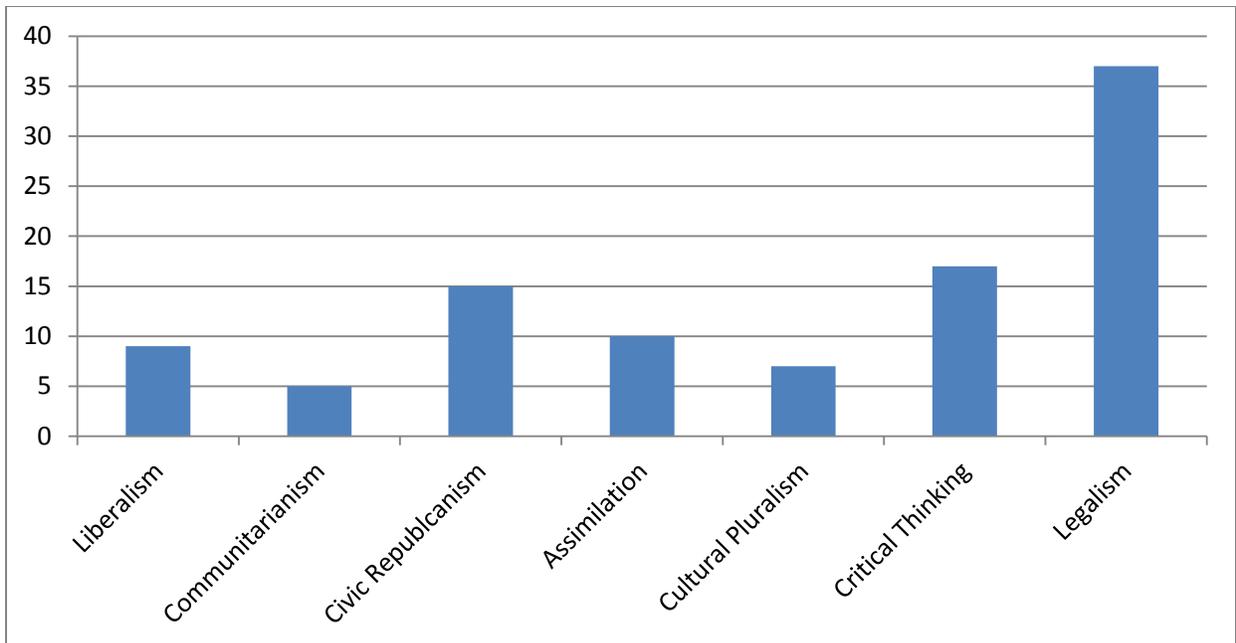

Figure 3. Summary of perspectives on citizenship emphasized in state standards (by percentages).

Reflections and Conclusions

This study examined a sample of K-12 public school state social studies content standards documents and higher education programs to determine if seven particular philosophical and pedagogical perspectives were reflected in any of the standards and programs. The prevalence of the identified perspectives was then determined. Finally, an analysis of the collected data was made to arrive at a judgment about the questions: Do the public K-12 schools and institutions of higher learning provide sufficient opportunities for students to learn the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to become good citizens? If sufficient opportunities are provided, does this indicate a lack of consensus regarding the question of "What makes a good citizen?" rather than a lack of adequate opportunities to learn?

The study revealed that all seven of the perspectives reviewed in the literature are identifiable in each of the state's standards documents in the sample, with the exception of Massachusetts. Not surprisingly, the pedagogical perspectives of legalism and critical thinking were found to be the two most prevalent perspectives identified. The perspectives of legalism and critical thinking are both grounded in academic learning theory. Having these perspectives dominate in public school social studies curricula demonstrates appropriate and responsible choices made by the public education communities that created the standards studied.

With regard to the philosophical perspectives, civic republicanism was the only philosophical perspective represented in more than 10% of the social studies standards. Fifteen percent of the all 637 standards reviewed reflected the civic republican perspective. These data, however, are skewed due to the presence of Michigan, a state which places emphasis on deliberation and participation. The other philosophical perspectives were present, but they were only in the range of 5% to 10% of all 637 standards.

Additionally, the investigators did not originally set out to identify differences among the states with regard to perspectives, but ideological differences emerged at the margins. The most noteworthy differences among the states are California's emphasis on liberalism, Michigan's focus on civic republicanism, Massachusetts's emphasis on assimilation, and Texas's attention to cultural pluralism. These variations among the states are relatively small and can be reasonably explained by political, historic, geographic, and demographic features of these states. The notion that there are differences in the ideological foci of citizenship education among the sample states is not surprising since variations in political subcultures within the United States have been well documented since Daniel Elazar's seminal work, *American Federalism: A View from the States*, was published almost 50 years ago. Moreover, public education is a state and local function in the US, and education policy and standards largely reflect state and local preferences. The ideological differences among the states, however, should not be overstated. The consistency is more compelling. All of the states in this study emphasized the pedagogical perspective of legalism, or the knowledge of facts, more than any other perspective, and the pedagogical perspective of critical thinking was represented in more than 15% of the content standards for each state, with the exception of Massachusetts.

The investigators determined that the sufficiency of citizenship education is arguably not an issue. The investigators did not have a benchmark by which to measure sufficiency, but an average of 127 civics and government standards per state were identified. This average is based on a narrow set of standards exclusively targeting citizenship and government. If the definition of citizenship education was expanded to include citizenship standards related to history, geography, economics, and tools of social science inquiry, this average would be even higher. Thus, there are adequate opportunities for students to learn basic knowledge of government and to think critically about those facts in the K-12 standards evaluated for this study. The sufficiency of citizenship education in higher education is less clear. The university websites do not demonstrate trends in the content of citizenship education, and only 16% of the 111 websites included references to citizenship. The statements regarding civic engagement, civic responsibility and public service were brief and scattered on the college and university websites.

In summary, in response to the question "What makes a good citizen?", the K-12 public schools in the sample states appear to address this question with the pedagogically appropriate response of critical thinking and knowledge of facts. There are some variations among the states regarding the ideological perspectives featured more prominently in their standards, but the differences are not remarkable, with the exception of Michigan's focus on civic republicanism. Each state in the sample has an average of 127 K-12 standards that address government and citizenship. Concerns about citizenship education, therefore, may be related to a lack of citizenship education in institutions of higher education. On the other hand, the concerns may be related to the continued debates about ideological preferences that are not represented in the state social studies content standards. Based on the sample of states used in this study, proponents of cultural pluralism, liberalism, and especially communitarianism, have cause for concern if the expectation is that K-12 public schools, rather than other institutions, should be responsible for promoting these values.

Limitations and Future Research

There were a number of limitations to this study which include a small sample size of five states. Generalizability to other states in a region or the U.S. as a whole cannot be assumed due to the small sample. A small set of standards related to citizenship and government were reviewed for this study. It is recommended that additional standards, especially history and tools of social studies inquiry, be reviewed in future studies to capture additional data on citizenship education. Additionally, alignment with Daniel Elazar's (1984) construct of political cultures or similar typologies may also yield important data regarding variations among states in future work.

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Appendix

Social Studies Content Standards Evaluated

Region	State	Standards Evaluated	Number of Standards	Website
North	Michigan	Documents: K-8 (December 2007) and High School Social Studies (October 2007) Grade Level Content Expectations	169	http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SSGLCE_218368_7.pdf http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SS_HSCE_210739_7_470248_7.pdf
South	Texas	Document: Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, Part II Chapter 113. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies (October 2011)	219	http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter113/index.html
East	Massachusetts	Document: Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework (August 2003)	63	http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/final.pdf
West	California	Document: History-Social Studies Content Standards for California Public Schools K-12 (October 1998)	91	http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/histsocscistnd.pdf
Middle	Missouri	Document: Social Studies Grade Level Expectations (no date) Social Studies Grade- and Course-Level Expectations 2.0 (2007)	95	https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/gle-social-studies.pdf https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/cle-social-studies.pdf

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