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Democracy and citizenship in the Ethiopian curriculum and textbooks

A qualitative content analysis of conceptions of
democracy and citizenship ideals

Master's thesis in Grunnskolelærer 5-10, Samfunnsfag

Supervisor: Jørund Aasetre

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Acknowledgment

This masters' thesis marks the end of 5 years of studies at NTNU that will hopefully have sufficiently prepared me to become a teacher. The process of writing this thesis has been immensely challenging, but incredibly rewarding. I am thankful for the opportunity to be able to immerse myself in a fascinating subject and a country I have a great fondness for.

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Ragnvald Teigland

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Abstract

In 2018 a regime change fought through by years of protests brought with it hope for a more democratic Ethiopian society. After an initial period of promising reforms, the progress seems to have halted. Education plays an important part in shaping the values and behaviours of citizens, and therefore the society itself. The curriculum that determines the goals of this education is therefore important in developing democracy and democratic citizenship. Through a qualitative content analysis, this thesis investigates what view of democracy and citizenship is expressed in Ethiopian curriculum materials and compare it to relevant theory about democracy and citizenship, as well as conceptual frameworks on citizenship education. The results of this analysis shows an approach to citizenship education focused on developing dutiful, loyal, and hard-working citizens matching Westheimer & Kahne (2004)'s idea of the personally responsible citizen, rather than educating students for active participation in a democratic system despite stating that this is a goal. Furthermore, there is a large emphasis on developing a common national identity to replace the identification with the various regional or ethnic communities that Ethiopia consists of. There is no emphasis placed on a need for citizens to practice critical citizenship and work for systemic changes to Ethiopian society. The curriculum materials present an ideal version of democracy that does not match the reality of the Ethiopian political system. A view of democracy, human rights, and democratic citizenship as something good and desirable is communicated to students, but this analysis finds the approach of these curriculum materials to be unsuited to prepare and motivate students for active democratic citizenship.

Sammendrag

En regimeendring i 2018, kjempet gjennom av flere år med protester, bragte med seg håp om et mer demokratisk etiopisk samfunn. Etter en tidlig periode med lovende reformer ser det ut som fremgangen har stoppet. Utdanning spiller en viktig rolle i å forme verdier og atferd hos medborgere og derfor også samfunnet. Læreplanen, som bestemmer målene for denne utdanningen, er derfor viktig i å utvikle demokrati og demokratisk medborgerskap. Gjennom en kvalitativ innholdsanalyse undersøker denne avhandlingen hvilket syn på demokrati og medborgerskap som kommer til uttrykk i etiopisk læreplan og lærebøker og sammenlikner det med relevant teori om demokrati og medborgerskap samt konseptuelle rammeverk for medborgerskapsundervisning. Resultatene av denne analysen viser en tilnærming fokusert på å utvikle plikttoppfyllende, lojale, og hardtarbeidende medborgere som passer Westheimer & Kahne (2004) sin ide om den personlig ansvarlige medborgeren, heller enn å utdanne elever til å delta aktivt i et demokratisk system, selv om dette er et uttalt mål. Det vektlegges også å utvikle en felles nasjonal identitet som skal erstatte tilhørigheten til de mange etnisk definerte felleskapene som Etiopia består av. Det er ingen vektlegging av et behov for å praktisere kritisk medborgerskap eller å jobbe for systematisk endring av det etiopiske samfunnet. Læreplanmaterialene presenterer en ideell versjon av demokratiet som ikke stemmer overens med det politiske systemet i Etiopia. Et positivt syn på demokrati, menneskerettigheter, og demokratisk medborgerskap blir formidlet til elever, men denne analysen finner at tilnærmingen til denne læreplanen ikke er tilstrekkelig til å forberede og motivere elever til aktivt demokratisk medborgerskap.

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Introduction and research questions

In 2018 a regime change fought through by years of protests brought with it hope for a more democratic Ethiopian society. The initial period following the regime change was encouraging with the new prime minister releasing political prisoners, and enacting democratic reforms, and economic liberalisation. However, the early progress has been replaced by civil war, and a seemingly return to status quo with violations of fundamental rights, and extrajudicial executions and arbitrary arrests and detentions. Now it looks like the hope of democratization could be lost to a new authoritarian regime. With the new curriculum, the first of this regime, we get a glimpse of the vision they have for the future of the Ethiopian society. The curriculum is a result of political choices and is in many ways a formulation of the government's goals and visions for society. Education has a major influence on the attitudes and behaviours of students, and what the citizens of a society think and do has a major influence on how a society develops. Citizenship education can be viewed as an attempt to create the ideal citizen, or at least a citizen that fits into the society the government wants. Is this ideal citizen one that helps transform society into a more democratic one, or someone that reproduces or even strengthens the existing political order? I believe an analysis of Ethiopian curriculum materials can help figure this out. At the same time making an argument of whether the Ethiopian government wants to move in a more democratic direction based solely on curriculum materials would be drastically overestimating the significance of the curriculum. For example, it is possible that the curriculum says "all the right things" without this actually having any real consequence for education, or society as a whole. To say anything for certain about this one would have to consider a much larger context than the Ethiopian curriculum materials provide. This analysis could still be a contribution to a larger conversation on this topic and give an indication of the goals the Ethiopian government has for the development of Ethiopian society.

In this thesis I will analyse the General Curriculum Framework and citizenship education textbooks for grades 8-10 and aim to contribute to a better understanding of the content, goals, values that are expressed of these curriculum materials. Through a quantitative content analysis, I will attempt to answer the following problem statement:

What view of democracy and what citizenship ideal is expressed in the Ethiopian curriculum and Ethiopian textbooks for grades 8-10?

In addition, I will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- Is the citizenship ideal that is expressed indicative of a wish to move the Ethiopian society in a more democratic direction?
- Are the students taught to reproduce the reigning political order, or to challenge and change it?
- How is the view of citizenship affected by multiculturalism?
- How does the curriculum materials balance the rights and duties of citizens?
- How does the curriculum materials formalize civic participation as part of citizenship?

Relevance

I believe an analysis of curriculum materials in general is highly interesting because they have a huge influence on what goes on at school. They decide what should be taught and often how it should be taught. At the same time, the curriculum is a political document, and is a result of value judgments by politicians as well as professional assessments by experts in the field of education. The curriculum is a vision for how the people in a society, and thus how society itself, should be. This makes such analysis relevant not only within didactics and pedagogy as academic fields but also within comparative politics. I believe analysing the content of the Ethiopian curriculum for "Citizenship education" is relevant in the context of Ethiopian education, Norwegian education, and in educational research in general. Analysing curricula other than our own allows us to see ourselves from the outside. It gives us different perspectives on what the tasks and content of education should be, and how these tasks should be accomplished. Education for democracy and citizenship is heavily emphasized in the Norwegian curriculum, making it clear that this is an important function of Norwegian schools. Seeing how other school systems understand and execute this function, or how they understand the content of these concepts, allows us to see that there are other ways to understand and address these challenges. The way Norwegian schools handle this topic is not the only way to do it. Regardless of whether Ethiopian schools have anything to teach us about education for democracy and citizenship, it is useful to realize that the way we and other western countries do it is not the only possibility, and this can help us think outside our own box.

Curriculum analysis is relevant to the field of comparative politics because the curriculum in many ways can be seen as a formulation of the state's goals and visions for society and its citizens. In particular, the content concerning democracy and citizenship is about "creating the ideal citizen" or at least a citizen who fits into the society the state desires. Therefore, an analysis of the Ethiopian curriculum can be seen as a case study of Ethiopian politics. After the regime change in Ethiopia in 2018, there was hope for a shift towards democracy. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed made significant promises of democratic and liberal reforms. Examining the curriculum as a political document allows us to assess the extent to which these promises hold true, whether they are actually taking steps to transform Ethiopian society into a democratic one with citizens possessing democratic competence and values, or whether they are merely using these terms as a rhetorical device to gain support and legitimacy. Research on democracy is crucial within comparative politics, and understanding how democracy develops has been described as a "holy grail" within the field. Researching the role of schools in the development of democracy in authoritarian states can be seen as a contribution to such a discussion.

Background

While an extensive inquiry into Ethiopian history and politics is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is necessary to provide some of the political and historical context that the Ethiopian school curriculum exist in if we are to understand it's content. In this chapter I will provide a brief explanation of Ethiopia's political history since 1991, discuss the country's current democratic status, and briefly present structure of the Ethiopian school system.

Ethiopian Politics

The reigning political system of Ethiopia was established in 1991 after the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power following military victory in the civil war, replacing the military dictatorship of the previous regime. The EPRDF was a coalition of four different ethnic political parties, largely dominated by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The EPRDF restructured regional borders into ethnically defined regions and established a system of ethno-federalism with 9 semi-autonomous regions, moving away from ideas of national unity and Ethiopian nationalism (Lyons, 2019). The EPRDF believed that "the state could only survive if group rights were made the central organizing principle" (Lyons, 2019, p.53). President Meles Zenawi argued that previous regimes attempts to deny the ethnic diversity in the country had failed and led to wars. There was therefore need for a new strategy he argued, stating that "What incites disintegration is the view that we are all one" (Lyons, 2019, p.53). Meles believed there was a need for an opportunity for peoples "real identity" to flourish, and that a new Ethiopian identity would grow from this. In this new system political rights were "associated with the idea that communities based upon descent were the most salient basis for identity" (Lyons, 2019, p. 59). In this system the ethnic identities of citizens were registered, and they could only have a single ethnic identity. Simply choosing Ethiopian as an ethnic identity was not an option.

After holding the first general election in 1995, a new constitution was written into law (Lyons, 2019). The constitution gives 80 different ethnic groups sovereign power to form their own militias, their own regional state, or even to secede from Ethiopia. (Strategic Comments, 2020). This constitution also guarantees a "democratic order", promising popular sovereignty, and a comprehensive set of human and democratic rights to the people of Ethiopia. Even though the constitution says a lot of the right things, the practice of the Ethiopian state has not adhered to the promises it makes. The new Ethiopian political system was not one of representative democracy, but rather one of electoral authoritarianism (Lyons, 2019). Rather than being a way for the people to genuinely exercise their sovereignty, elections were a way for the EPRDF to consolidate and legitimize its power. The actual decision-making happened through interparty processes. By limiting the political rights and freedoms necessary for elections to be a tool of democratic decision-making, and through harassing and arresting political opposition, the EPRDF created a political space that did not allow for genuine opposition to the ruling party, be that through elections or other processes. As a result, all but one of the 6 national elections held in the regime's 27 years in power were non-competitive,

with the EPRDF winning nearly all, if not all the seats in the national assembly. (Lyons, 2019). Following the 2005 national election, the Ethiopian government began to control opposition political parties by declaring a state of emergency for 10 months (Lie & Mesfin, 2018). Jima (2021, p.3) argues that EPRDF leaders used “manipulation at best and the use of state terror at worst” to maintain a system of “deceptive democracy”. The period of EPRDF rule is one of contradictions. The Party held tight control over state institutions like the military and courts, while at the same time allowing a large degree of independence to the regional states. This paradox of centralizing governmental power within the party while at the same time empowering ethnically defined political parties and allowing state autonomy makes the Ethiopian political system unique.

In 2018 Abiy Ahmed was elected prime minister by party elites following the abdication of Hailemariam Desalegn due to years of anti-government protests starting in 2015. Strategic comments (2020) calls this “the most significant change in Ethiopia’s politics since the 1991 collapse of the Derg”, which ruled the country from 1974. Becoming the youngest ever leader of Ethiopia, and the first Oromo prime minister, Oromia being the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. Following years of Tigrayan domination of Ethiopia’s politics, this signified a generational and ethnic shift in power (Strategic Comments, 2020). The initial period of Ahmed’s leadership was hopeful, and a majority of the population supported him (Jima, 2021), and according to Strategic Comments (2020, p.4) “his promise of ‘democracy for all’ was widely cheered both domestically and internationally”. Early in his tenure he promised to protect fundamental rights (Jima, 2021) and enacted several changes that made it seem like Ethiopia was moving in a more just and democratic direction. Strategic Comments, (2020, p.2) argues that “By appointing several respected, independently minded figures to lead governing institutions such as the supreme court and the electoral board, Abiy took serious action to create at least a measure of separation between party and state”. Ahmed’s appointment also signalled an opening of political spaces with Ahmed releasing political prisoners and allowing exiled political parties to return and invited them to compete for power in future elections (Jima, 2021), (Strategic Comments, 2020). Ahmed restructured ministries and appointed women in charge of important ministries such as ministry of peace and defence, also achieving gender parity in his new cabinet. Prior to Abiy Ahmed’s appointment the number of women in important positions in the ministries was minimal (Jima, 2021). This shift, Strategic Comments (2020) argues, suggested that Ethiopia had made progress in developing its political system from effectively one of single-party authoritarianism towards multiparty democracy. As a result, Ahmed’s appointment felt to many like a revolution (Strategic comments, 2020).

Abiy Ahmed’s popularity has since fallen drastically (Strategic comments, 2020). According to Jima (2021) the success of Abiy Ahmed only lasted for 1 year before he gradually turned into an authoritarian, arguing that an inability to achieve his goals in the face of different challenges, especially from the Tigray and Oromo people, led him to return to the previous system (Jima, 2021). Especially ethnic conflicts, a problem that predates this administration, and that “Strategic Comments” argues stems from “ethnic antagonistic nationalism” embedded in the 1995 constitution, has been perhaps the greatest challenge of Abiy Ahmed’s tenure (Strategic Comments, 2020). In late 2019 the fractured EPRDF coalition was restructured into a single political party, named the

Prosperity Party (Strategic Comments, 2020). This signalled an attempt to move away from the ethnic orientation of Ethiopian politics and which is part of Abiy Ahmed's political ideology often called "Medemer", meaning "coming together" (Jima, 2021). This involves a goal of fostering a national unity to replace the ethnic antagonism that has been plaguing Ethiopian politics. So far this has not been successful. Critics of Abiy Ahmed and his politics have called this an attempt to end the system of federalism in favour of a unitary state and an ideology void of substance covering a dangerous cult of personality, instead of answering the problems of the various groups of people in Ethiopia. (Jima, 2021), (Strategic comments, 2020).

The TPLF, being critical of Ahmed's government, was not included into this new party following an earlier expulsion of party elites from government positions which hardened Tigrayan opposition to his government (Strategic comments, 2020). This move also angered many Oromos, "who see it as another move away from the ethnic autonomy they cherish, and a large portion of Abiy's own party joined only reluctantly" (Strategic Comments, 2020, p.4). Rather than seeking to reconcile with the TPLF, Ahmed removed TPLF leaders from positions in federal institutions, including the military and intelligence service, he also attempted to have some of them arrested. This escalated the conflict between the government and TPLF, which in late 2021 turned into a bloody civil war. There have also been clashes between government forces and regional militia challenging viability of Ahmed's political reforms. In trying to deal with the unrest that has resulted from these ethnic conflicts, Ahmed has resorted to many of the tactics the previous regime used and that he disavowed. Ethiopian security forces have committed what Jima calls "horrendous human rights violations", including but not limited to "burning homes, extrajudicial executions, torture, rape, forced evictions arbitrary arrests, and detentions, sometimes of entire families" (Jima, 2021, p.14). Despite finally holding the first multi party elections since 2005, Ethiopia's opportunity for democratization now seems lost to ethnic conflict and a backslide into authoritarianism as a response to the conflict. Jima calls this the vicious circle of Ethiopian politics, with initially hopeful reforms eventually leading to an authoritarian crackdown (Jima, 2021). Strategic comments, comparing the regime of Abiy Ahmed to the early period of the Derg, and EPRDF regimes, argues that this is nothing new. Saying that Ethiopia in 1973 and 1991 also initially experienced an opening of political space before freedoms later were restricted (Strategic Comments, 2020).

State of Democracy and Citizenship in Ethiopia

Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) concern themselves with the status of democracy in the world, and companies like the economist and freedom house publish annual reports on the democratic status of the world's countries. In the following I will be discussing what a couple of these reports have to say about the current status of democracy in Ethiopia.

"The Democracy Index", which is published by The Economist gives each country a score from 0 to 10 in each of five categories: Electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties. Based on the score in these categories the country is classified as one of four types of regime: "full

democracy”, “flawed democracy”, “hybrid regime” or “authoritarian regime” (The Economist, 2024). Ethiopia is classified as an authoritarian regime, scoring similarly to countries like Rwanda, Pakistan, and Qatar, but not too far away from being classified as a mixed regime. Ethiopia is scoring particularly bad in the categories of “civil liberties”, and “electoral process and pluralism” with a score of 1.47 and 0.42 respectively. They do however have fairly respectable scores in the categories of “political culture” and “political participation” with scores of 5.63 and 6.11 respectively which is a better score in these two categories than for example Slovakia which is classed as a flawed democracy.

The “Freedom in the world” report published by Freedom House “is an annual global report on political rights and civil liberties”. Based on the score in these two categories the report designates each country a status of either “free”, “Partly free”, or “not free”. The Report also designates the status of “electoral democracy” to countries that reach “a score of 7 or better in the Electoral Process subcategory, an overall political rights score of 20 or better, and an overall civil liberties score of 30 or better” (Freedom House, 2024). In this report Ethiopia received a score of 20/100, with 10 points out of 40 in political rights, and 10 points out of 60 in civil liberties. This gives Ethiopia the status of “not free” and is not enough to receive the designation of “electoral democracy”. Ethiopia scores low in every subcategory meaning that there are few positives to extract from their analysis, but Freedom House evaluate them to have made improvements compared to under the previous regime, which received a score of 12 in 2018.

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance’s Global state of democracy index is slightly more positive in its evaluation than Freedom House. In their four categories of “Rule of Law”, “Participation”, “Rights”, and “Representation” Ethiopia on average receive a score on the lower end of the mid-level range, with the scores in the subcategories of civic engagement and electoral participation on the high end of medium, and “inclusive suffrage” receiving a high score of 0.84 out of 1. Even though these indices somewhat differ in their results, they are very much in agreement in their description of the development of the status of democracy in Ethiopia. They describe a positive development as a result of reforms early in Abiy Ahmad tenure as prime minister, but are concerned that the civil war, and internal conflicts have caused the positive development to stall, or even move in the wrong direction. (Global State of Democracy Initiative, 2024). Based on these rapports it seems that the Ethiopian society despite what it says in the constitution does not provide its citizens with barely any of the civil and political rights it promises, and which is necessary for a democratic system to exist.

Ethiopian school system

Ethiopian general education is divided into primary and secondary education. Each of which is divided into two “cycles”. Primary education lasts for 8 years, where each cycle is 4 years each (Cycle 1: 1.-4. Grade, cycle 2: 5.-8. Grade). Secondary education lasts for 4 years, and each cycle lasts 2 years (Cycle 1: 9.-10. Grade, Cycle 2: 11.-12. Grade).(Zehle, 2014). Only primary education is compulsory. After grade 10 the students have to pass the Ethiopian General secondary certificate exam if they wish to continue

their education in grades 11 and 12 which serve as preparation for university. To attend university, they have to pass another exam, the Ethiopian higher education entrance certificate examination. Students that are not continuing to cycle 2 of secondary school, have the option to attend Technical and Vocational education training program, or teacher training in college. (Zehle, 2014). Despite improvement over the last 20 years Ethiopian education still has issues with low enrolment rates, and high dropout rates, with many students never being enrolled in school or not finishing their primary education. (FDRE M.oE., 2021). The ministry of education points to a need for children to work or help out at home, as well as illness in the children themselves or in family members as the major causes. They also point to issues with the quality of education, arguing that overcrowded classrooms, poor learning resources, and poorly educated or absentee teachers also contribute to students dropping out. (FDRE M.oE., 2021, p.11). In secondary school there are 10 mandatory subjects, and 2 subjects that are chosen from 5 different options. The mandatory subjects are English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, History, Citizenship education, Economics and Information Technology. The elective subjects are first language, a federal language, foreign language, health and physical education, and performing and visual arts.

The subject of Citizenship education was renamed in the new curriculum. In previous curriculum it was named "Civics and Ethical Education". It is described in the curriculum framework as a subject "for learners to understand the rights, duties and obligations of citizens" (FDRE M.o.E, 2020, p.36). In the middle level of education, or grades 7 and 8, citizenship education is taught in three 40-minute periods a week, this is reduced to two 45-minute periods for lower secondary school.

Existing research

Lots of research has been done on the topic of education for democratic citizenship. This includes research into teacher and student experiences, a variety of teaching methods, learning materials such as textbooks, and important policy documents such as curricula. However, from what I can tell most of this research is done in and about western democracies. There exists research about citizenship education in Ethiopia both by local and foreign researchers, but I have not been able to find any research about the new Ethiopian curriculum or the corresponding textbooks that I will be analysing in this thesis. Similar research as to what I am conducting has been done on both the curriculum and textbooks from the previous curriculum period.

Both Semela et.al (2013) and Ghebru & Lloyd (2020) have conducted qualitative analyses of Ethiopian secondary school textbooks and policy documents and compared them to theoretical frameworks like the ones I will be using. Their results are useful to see to what degree there has been a change in approach to citizenship education in Ethiopia with the new curriculum. Semela et.al (2013) in their analysis of policy documents, textbooks, and teaching methods found that the philosophical foundation was "eclectic in character combining Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) conception of "Personally responsible citizen""(Semela, et.al, 2013, p.163) which Westheimer & Kahne themselves are criticise for often hindering democratic participation and change rather than furthering it (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), and Cohen's (2011) "diversity civic

education” that emphasizes social inclusion to embrace ethnic, religious, and cultural diversities. This approach, Semela et.al states, does not align with the Ministry of Educations stated goal of promoting active citizenship which could be interpreted as wanting to educate what Westheimer & Kahne calls “the participatory citizen”.

Similarly, Ghebru & Lloyd (2020) finds that:

“the content of the CEE (Civics and ethical education) curriculum in general reflects a civic-oriented, rather than citizenship-oriented approach. The analysis shows that the current CEE curriculum is education about- rather than through or for citizenship; the reproduction- rather than transformation- of social order, an emphasis on conformity or compliance over action and civic engagement by citizens; a content-led rather than process-led approach; knowledge-based instead of principles-based, and didactic transmission of content rather than an interactive approach based on critical interpretation.” (Ghebru & Lloyd, 2020, p.9).

Shoko Yamada (2014) chose a slightly different approach when conducting a comparative analysis of CEE textbooks, also arguing that the textbooks give “appeal to the moral integrity of the learners to be “right” citizens” (Yamada, 2014, p.111), by promoting character traits they want in their citizens such as law abidingness and patriotism. She however goes further in her critique of the Ethiopian citizenship education than others, arguing that “civic education diffuses the knowledge of the principles and system of democracy, not for emancipating people but for replacing the old logic of control with a new logic” (Yamada, 2014, p.54). Explaining that the textbooks use “democracy” to legitimize the current government and to differentiate it from previous regimes. All in all, research on curriculum materials from the previous curriculum period concludes that Ethiopian citizenship education either has no intention of, or is not sufficient to develop active democratic citizenship in students.

Theory

Democracy and Citizenship

Democracy and citizenship are the two central concepts of my thesis. They are however both very difficult concepts to define because there is little consensus on what the terms actually mean. Gert Biesta (2016) argues that a major problem with the term democracy is that there are few that do not want to be associated with it, and that “there exists, therefore, a real danger that democracy has so many meanings that it has ceased to have any meaning at all.” (Biesta, 2016, s.122). Likewise, Schick (2002) argues that “contemporary political discourse uses the term ‘citizenship’ very loosely, often treating it as little more than an empty vessel into which speakers may pour their own social and political ideals.” (Schick, 2002, p.131). Meaning that both democracy and citizenship is often used to mean what we want or need it to mean.

Democracy

Democracy is perhaps the central concept of political theory and as a result “there is no single theory of democracy; only theories”. (Terchek & Conte, 2000, p.2). Apart from agreement on rule by majority, democracy as a field of theory involves “contentious debates concerning the proper function and scope of power, equality, freedom, justice and interests” (Terchek & Conte, 2000, p.2). The literal definition of democracy is “people’s rule” coming from the Greek words *dēmos* (“people”) and *kratos* (“rule”) (Dahl, et.al, 2024), but this is too general of a definition to be of any use. Democracy is used about a huge variety of political system where the general population has access to a vastly different amount of political, social, and legal rights, and a variety of duties and obligations. In addition, many different interpretations of democracy exist, with equally many different answers to important questions such as what ruling means, who should be considered as “the people”, and what kind of participation is expected of them. (Biesta, 2016), (Held, 2006). This shows that democracy is a contested topic where nearly every aspect of the concept is up for discussion. Just about the only thing people agree on is that in a democratic system the political power to some degree sits with the citizens of that country.

Citizenship

Citizenship could be used about belonging to any community or group (Smith, 2002), however when we speak of citizenship, we usually mean the legal status of being a member of a specific political community, usually a nation state. (Isin & Turner, 2002). This however does not cover the full spectrum of what being a citizen entails. Turner defines citizenship as “a collection of rights and obligations which give individuals a formal legal identity” (Turner, 1997, p. 5), while Solhaug calls citizenship “an institution on mediating rights and duties between the subjects of politics and the polity of which these subjects belong” (Solhaug, 2021, s.48). These definitions expand the concept to include all the rights and obligations that are required to attain or follows from this legal status. This means that there is likely to be as many different forms of citizenship as there are political communities in the world, and there is significant variety in views on what rights and obligations should be included in citizenship of a given political community. R. Smith (2002) argues that a citizenship is closely tied to rights to political participation. This definition draws a line between citizens and subjects, where only

members of a political community that affords its members the political rights usually associated with western liberal democracy, can truly be called citizens. Smith (2002, p.106) argue explain that "These include rights to vote; to hold elective and appointive governmental offices; to serve on various sorts of juries; and generally to participate in political debates as equal community members". Essentially this means that democratic citizenship is the only true form of citizenship. Similarly, Janoski & Gran (2002) argues that citizenship is inherently linked to equal democratic citizenship rights. Rights that guarantee protection from coercive power.

The form of association we usually associate with citizenship is an association to the national state as a political community, but in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world there exist discussions about forms of citizenship that are not connected to a nation state. Sasken (2002) argues that "it is becoming evident today that far from being unitary, the institution of citizenship has multiple dimensions, only some of which might be inextricably linked to the national state" (Sasken, 2002, p.277). Furthermore she suggests that for "the organization of formal status, the protection of rights, citizenship practices, or the experience of collective identities and solidarities", the nation-state is not the exclusive site for their enactment" (Sasken, 2002, p.278). The best example of this sort of transnational citizenship probably exists in the European Union where there not only exists a formal EU citizenship, but also "a growing cultural awareness of a 'European identity'" (Sasken, 2002, p.282). Sasken also suggests that transnational or global forms of identification can exist outside of formal institutions like the EU and that among other situations transborder migration can lead to establishment of social and political communities that transcend the borders of the nation state, or that a global sense of identification or solidarity can exist based on a humanitarian ideology. (Sasken, 2002).

Christian Joppke explains that in theory multicultural citizenship is an attempt to expand the idea of citizenship to "accommodate ethnic, national, and other minorities" (Joppke, 2002, p.245). Because no state can be culturally neutral, Joppke argues, the dominant culture will inevitably be promoted at the expense of minority cultures. There is therefore a need to accommodate these minority cultures. One way of doing this is giving minority groups or cultures special status with accompanying rights as a compensation for discriminatory practices of the dominant culture. Joppke argues that the theory and practice of multicultural citizenship are vastly different, saying that "multicultural citizenship in practice has been a variant of nation-building" (Joppke, 2002, p.245). He also discusses Australia as an example to show how multicultural citizenship works in practice. Here multiculturalism is explained as a "policy for managing the consequences of cultural diversity in the interests of the individual and society as a whole" (Joppke, 2002, p.251). Adapting a policy of multiculturalism in Australia, Joppke explains, involved removing demands of cultural assimilation for receiving citizenship in favour of demanding commitment to democratic values. Australia stated in the document National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia that "Multicultural policies are based on the premise that all Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia, to its interests and future first and foremost" (Joppke, 2002, p.251). Instead of making accommodations to minority cultures, the policy of multiculturalism is instead a switch from citizenship being contingent on some form of cultural assimilation and instead

requiring a commitment to the nation "overriding" other cultural commitments. This strategy of multicultural citizenship can be conceived as a contract where cultural accommodation is exchanged for national loyalty.

Four conceptions of democracy and citizenship

In the following I will present what is possibly the four main schools of thought within democracy theory. These are liberal, republican, deliberative, and radical democracy. These perspectives themselves contain a variety of different views within each category, but they are useful classifications that highlights differences in values, and priorities that underline different perspectives within democracy theory. How we understand democracy is closely related to how we understand citizenship. Because how we view citizens is so central to how we view democracy I have chosen to use a combined model of democracy and citizenship

According to Frank Cunningham "Nearly all democracies or aspiring democracies are typically described, both in theoretical circles and in popular discourse as liberal democratic" (Cunningham, 2001, p.27). This shows that even within the categories there is room for a variety of different democratic systems. This model of four conceptions is however not a tool to classify democratic systems, but instead simplifies a complicated theoretical field into four categories that shows us the major differences in what people think democracy should be and how it should function. This presentation therefore focuses on the similarities within the categories instead of the differences so that we can emphasise the differences between categories. According to Solhaug (2021) one of the main differences in these perspectives on democracy is between those focused on consensus, where a political goal is to arrive at a form of "the common good" and those that have a more conflict-oriented perspective. Another difference is concerned with how one arrives at decisions, whether that is through popular vote or forms of discussion. Terchek & Conte, (2000, p.9) also explain that "Democratic theories also depart from one another in what they expect from citizens". These differences also include different views on how important it is for people to engage and participate, which also shows that whether people have responsibility for a bigger community is an important difference.

Liberal Democracy

According to Peter Schuck liberal theory, whether it is concerning democracy, citizenship, or anything else, begins with the individual (Schuck, 2002). A cornerstone in liberal ideology is a wish to remove limitations of personal freedom. It is therefore important in the liberal conception of democracy is that it places a high value on personal freedom and a limited state that should be involved in the lives of citizens as little as possible (Schuck, 2002). In a Liberal conception of democracy individual rights are very important and it is the state's main function to protect these fundamental rights (Solhaug, 2021). The overwhelming focus in liberal theory is on citizens rights, and obligations beyond obeying laws are typically not emphasized. (Janoski & Gran, 2002, p.17). This focus on personal freedom and limited state also leads to a theory of democracy that emphasises individuals' responsibility for themselves through their participation in economic markets

and deemphasise citizens responsibility for any larger community (Solhaug, 2021). Liberals still recognize the governments right to manage things that are of public interest, as long as it leaves the individual to pursue private pursuits (Hinchliffe, 2020).

Peter Schuck defines 'liberal citizenship,' as "a distinct conception and institutionalization of citizenship whose primary value is to maximize individual liberty" (Schuck, 2002, p.132). According to Schuck (2002), liberal citizens are left with little guidance from the state and must therefore decide for themselves how they use their constitutionally secured freedoms. There are few if any guidelines for what kind of citizen they should be. According to Neufeld (2020) a core part of the liberal conception of democracy is the idea that citizens are capable of being reasonable persons (Neufeld, 2020). It follows naturally from this view that citizens are capable of making decisions about how to best utilise their freedoms. Neufeld argues that a liberal education for citizenship therefore focus on teaching students the skills and values necessary to become reasonable persons. (Neufeld, 2020, p. 42). Though there is some variety, a liberal theory of democracy downplays the importance of civic participation beyond voting in elections. This leads to what would be called a form of competitive democracy, where different political elites compete for power through elections. (Solhaug, 2021). Schuck (2002) argues that this type of democracy is in danger of becoming an instrument of the few rather than of the many if few citizens are willing to devote enough time or attention to politics. In the worst case scenario, the survival of democracy could be at stake. Some liberals still recognise the civil society of organisations as important representatives of different interest in democracy, even if they sometimes limit individual freedom (Solhaug, 2021). Because of the negative view of increased state power as a threat to individual liberty, many believe a robust and vigilant civil society is necessary to prevent this (Schuck, 2002).

Republican Democracy:

As opposed to a liberal view of democracy, the republican conception views the people not simply as group of individuals. They have a common interest and obligation to participate in ruling themselves (Solhaug, 2021). Republican democracy seeks to maximise the common good rather than the individual good. A republican view of democracy values civic participation. It involves a belief in that participation is important and matters, also beyond the act of voting in elections. Solhaug (2021) also calls this form of democracy a "participatory democracy". According to Hinchliffe (2020) in republican democracy politics is viewed as something that concerns everyone and is therefore something everyone should participate in. (Hinchliffe, 2020). The republican democracy also contains an emphasis on the "rule of law" as a framework for public participation (Solhaug, 2021). The idea of freedom is different in republican and liberal democracy. Where freedom in liberal democracy is understood as freedom from governmental interruption into the private sphere, in a republican democracy the emphasis is on opportunities to participate in the public sphere. (Solhaug, 2021, p. 37), (Hinchliffe, 2020, p.55). There is also a belief that this freedom must be exercised actively and in a political manner if this freedom should continue to exist.

According to Dagger (2002) republican citizenship involves an ethical as well as a legal dimension. In addition to the legal status of belonging to a political community, republican citizenship involves a set of expectations that separate "good" and "bad" citizens. "True" citizenship in a republican democracy, Dagger explains, "requires commitment to the common good and active participation in public affairs. It requires civic virtue" (Dagger, 2002, p.149). A good citizen places the interests of the community ahead of personal interests and will undertake public responsibilities when called upon. (Dagger, 2002). In the republican perspective citizenship is as much about responsibilities as it is about rights. Like with liberal democracy there are more and less "extreme" forms of republican democracy. Republican democracy involves different views of how citizens should balance public interest and self-interest. According to Dagger, the strictest forms of republican citizenship require "unquestioning loyalty and total sacrifice from the citizen" (Dagger, 2002, p.150), while the less strict understanding recognises that citizens should not abandon self-interest altogether.

Deliberative democracy:

The deliberative conception of democracy is based on a view of people as having a social nature with common interests and different forms of mutual dependence that creates a need to solve common problems (Solhaug, 2021). The deliberative perspective on democracy believes in using dialog to reach consensus on solutions for the common good. Either through competition where the best argument wins, or by reaching agreement on broad political settlements (Solhaug, 2021). This conception of democracy rests on a belief that this type of dialog improves decisions (Bohman & Rehg, 1997). Deliberative democracy is similar to the republican conception in that it values civic participation but is unique in the value it places on democratic deliberation, and the importance of reaching political consensus. Whereas in most democratic systems political legitimacy is achieved through election, in deliberative democracy outcomes are only democratically legitimate if they are the result of "a free and reasoned agreement among equals" (Bohman & Rehg, 1997, p.xv). Democratic deliberation is not just any form of political communication. The ideal of the deliberative democracy is in many ways a response to critique of both the nature political communication and of who gets to engage in it. Deliberative democratic theory posits a system of democracy where political communication functions less as means to pursue self-interest. Instead, it should promote an informed citizenry and opportunities for public input. (Bohman & Rehg, 1997)

Radical democracy:

In a radical conception of democracy one views democracy as a battle for hegemony. The prevailing politics is an expression of hegemony and democracy is supposed to make it possible to challenge this hegemony and replace it with a new one (Solhaug, 2021). As opposed to a deliberative democracy, a radical conception of democracy involves a belief that the central conflicts in society are irreconcilable and those in favour of radical democracy do not believe reaching consensus is possible. In the radical democratic theory conflict is not only good, but necessary. Democracy should be a fight between opposing views, but with respect for the others right to fight for their position (Solhaug, 2021). In fact, a radical conception of democracy involves a view that removing conflicts is authoritarian, since democracy needs disagreement to function properly. Radical

democracy also places emphasis on collective rather than individual action. Solhaug (2021) explains that radical democracy emphasises building a group identity around political causes to create social movements and promote your views, and to wage political battle. Citizenship within radical democratic theory involves a responsibility to engage in these types of political battles, to challenge hegemony and try to get support for your own. (Solhaug, 2021). According to Rasmussen & Brown "radical democratic citizenship" involves a continual commitment not to a community, but to "the political conceived as a constant challenge to the limits of politics" (Rasmussen & Brown, 2002, p.175). Janoski & Gran (2002) calls the radical democratic citizen "*active and protesting*" (Janoski & Gran, 2002, p.20). Because of the commitment to political and social change that radical democratic theory involves, the idea of citizenship and what it should look like, is also something that should be subject to change. (Rasmussen & Brown, 2002).

Education for democracy and citizenship

Education is not only concerned with teaching the students to read and do mathematics. The school is also concerned with the all-around development of the students. Included in this is the idea that the school should educate students into the kind of citizens society needs, teaching good values, as well as skills necessary to participate society to the benefit of oneself and everybody else. If one believes that the school is capable of holistic development of students, the school as an institution is essential for developing a democratic citizenry and society if that is what you want. Tawil (2013) argues that even though school is not the most important arena for children's socialisation, "educational institutions remain key to this process for they translate an explicit public policy at the heart of the reproduction of all societies" and that because of this "citizenship education remains a key policy domain of national importance" (Tawil, 2013, p.3). Similarly Biesta (2016) argues that in new and emerging democracies, the school is seen as essential in developing democratic citizenry and creating a democratic culture. While in established democracies it is viewed as central to preserving it, and countering political apathy (Biesta, 2016). Biesta also explains that the most common perspective on the relationship between education and democracy is "that of preparing children ... for their future participation in democratic life" (Biesta, 2016, p.123).

There are differing perspectives on how one is supposed to do this. These perspectives differ not only in their approach to teaching democracy to students, but also what they see as the goal of this education (Biesta, 2016). Biesta argues that it depends on the kind of subjectivity we view as desirable in a democratic society. As we discussed previously in this chapter, people do not generally agree on what democracy or democratic citizenship should be and this has consequences for education for democracy. Biesta explains that the dominating approach to education for democracy is an individualistic approach based in enlightenment philosophy that focuses on developing rational citizens with the capability to make their own free and independent judgements. This is to be done by instilling in them the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will turn them into democratic citizens. (Biesta, 2016). Specifically, Biesta argues, this approach is concerned with teaching about democracy and democratic processes, facilitating the acquisition of democratic skill, like deliberation, collective decision-making and dealing with differences, and supporting the acquisition of positive attitudes toward

democracy (Biesta, 2016). Similarly, Aviv Cohen presents a conception of civic education rooted in a view of education as something that aims to influence the way individuals behave in a society (Cohen, 2010). He also believes that what approach is used in civic education reveals what is the normative expected behaviour in the state we are examining. Cohen sees this process as one of three main pillars: (1) Knowledge, (2) Values, and (3) Behaviour. In this model is an assumption that the behaviour of a student is a result of both the knowledge that has been passed on, and the values that have been instilled. Citizenship education is therefore a process that seeks to create a certain type of behaviour in people. It achieves this by instilling the “right” values and passing on the “right” knowledge. Biesta is critical of this kind of approach, partly because it does not ask questions about the students’ relationships with others, or about the social and political context in which they learn and act. (Biesta, 2016).

There is a fair amount of research done on how we educate students for democracy and citizenship, and it reveals a breadth of different approaches to and understandings of these concepts. In attempts to organize this diverse landscape several researchers have categorized the different approaches to this subject and created frameworks we can use to better understand them. These frameworks have a lot in common but differ somewhat in their focus and in the factors they emphasize. In support of my analysis of the Ethiopian curriculum I will be using a two such frameworks to enable me to understand what sort of approach to and understanding of democracy and citizenship the Ethiopian curriculum represents.

[Westheimer & Kahne \(2004\) - Three types of citizens](#)

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) have created a framework based on three ideal types of citizens that they have based on a range of theoretical perspectives and observations of education in American schools. These ideal types are based on different visions of what kind of citizen a society should have, and therefore strive to develop through the education system. Being that these are ideal types of citizens they are not accurate descriptions of real-life people, or education goals. They are instead an attempt to simplify a complicated reality and meant to be used to better understand and analyse a complicated landscape. These types are not mutually exclusive, meaning that an educational program can promote more than one of the three types of citizenship, and any person can exhibit traits related to more than one type of citizenship. Because these categories were developed through observation of citizenship education, they are more a classification of types of educational programs than of ways that citizens act in society (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). The three conceptions of citizenship that Westheimer and Kahne have identified are the personally responsible citizen, participatory citizen, and justice-oriented citizen.

The personally responsible citizens

Westheimer & Kahne describes the personally responsible citizen as someone that “acts responsibly in his or her community by, for example, picking up litter, giving blood, recycling, obeying laws, and staying out of debt” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p.241). According to Westheimer & Kahne, “programs that seek to develop personally responsible citizens attempt to build character and personal responsibility by emphasizing honesty,

integrity, self-discipline, and hard work" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p.241). Sætra & Stray likens this approach to the English tradition of character education (Sætra & Stray, 2019), an educational approach that focuses on the moral development of students. Westheimer & Kahne explains that champions of this approach emphasize a connection between citizenship and character. They often view problems in society as caused by personal deficits, rather than structural issues. (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Westheimer & Kahne (2004) is critical of educational approaches related to this perspective on citizenship. They argue that education programs that focus on the individual citizens character and behaviour takes away from a necessary emphasis on "collective and public sector initiatives", and "that this emphasis distracts attention from analysis of the causes of social problems and from systemic solutions" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p.243). Unlike the participatory or justice-oriented citizen the personally responsible citizen is not necessarily a democratic citizen. Even though personally responsible citizen and the qualities and behaviours related to them would be a benefit to, if not essential to a functioning democratic society, one is not required to participate in any form of democratic activity to be considered "personally responsible". Likewise, any education program that intends to produce "personally responsible citizens" would not necessarily produce citizens that are in any way motivated to, or capable of active democratic participation. Essentially, critics of this perspective argue that an over-emphasis on these character traits detracts from other important democratic priorities and may hinder rather than make possible democratic participation and change. (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Westheimer & Kahne also argues that the focus volunteerism and other good deeds that is related to this perspective on citizenship "are put forward as a way of avoiding politics and policy" and that "the visions of obedience and patriotism that are often and increasingly associated with this agenda can be at odds with democratic goals" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, pp.243-244).

The participatory citizen

Westheimer & Kahne defines the participatory as someone "who actively participate in the civic affairs and the social life of the community at the local, state, or national level" and explains that "Proponents of this vision emphasize preparing students to engage in collective, community-based efforts" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p.241). The idea of the participatory citizen is based on an assumption that to improve and solve problems in society citizens must participate actively and take leadership positions in existing systems and community structures. This assumption leads to one of the main differences in how a "participatory citizen" and a "personally responsible citizen". Whereas a personally responsible citizen will practice volunteerism and donate money to charity, a participatory citizen will take a more active role in organizing the efforts that a personally responsible citizen might volunteer for or donate to. Because of this, an educational program that is focused on developing participatory citizens should teach students not only how government and community-based organizations work, but also how to plan and participate in organized efforts to help people or influence public policy. Such educational programs therefore emphasize teaching skills related to collective work. (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Justice-oriented citizen

The Justice-oriented citizen is characterized as someone that aims to improve society by calling attention to social problems and working to promote social justice (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). As opposed to those that support a view of citizens as personally responsible, those that advocate for a justice-oriented approach often see societal problems as a result of structural factors rather than individual deficits. The view of the Justice-oriented and participatory citizen shares an emphasis on the value of civic participation and collective work; however, they differ in that those who advocate for justice-oriented citizens focus on "responding to social problems and to structural critique" (Westheimer & kahne, 2004, p.242). The idea of the justice-oriented citizen is based on an assumption that to solve societal problems citizens must question, debate, and change established systems and structures that reproduce injustice. As opposed to proponents of personally responsible citizenship, those in favour of justice-oriented citizenship believe less in charity and volunteerism. They are according to Westheimer & Kahne (2004, p.242) more likely to emphasise teaching students about "social movements and how to effect systemic change" .

Westheimer & Kahne explains that educators in favour of a justice-oriented approach argue that "effective democratic citizens need opportunities to analyze and understand the interplay of social, economic, and political forces" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p.242). Educational programs designed to promote justice-oriented citizens aims to teach students to enact social change and improve society by critically analysing and addressing social issues and injustices. Promoting "justice-oriented citizenship" does not involve promoting a "fixed set of truths or critiques" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p.243). Instead, it focuses on engaging students in analysis and discussion about social, political, and economic structures. It teaches the strategies and skills that are necessary to engage in these activities, and encourage students to consider collective strategies to challenge injustice and address root causes of problems.

Aviv Cohen (2010) – Four conceptions of civic education

Aviv Cohen presents a model where the type of civic education is defined by its relationship to two factors, political knowledge, and normative values. Both are presented as a continuum between two positions. The factor of political knowledge ranges from approaches focusing on procedural knowledge on one end, and substantive knowledge on the other, while normative values range from individualistic to communal. Procedural political knowledge is defined as knowledge about "the institutions, rules, and practices of governance" (Cohen, 2010, p.20), while substantive political knowledge is knowledge about the "fundamental principles on which the state exists, such as the social-economic structure of society or information regarding the cultural foundations of the state" (Cohen, 2010, p.20). Individualistic approaches to normative values represent a liberal point of view and focuses on individual rights. This approach also promotes values such as critical thinking, independence and responsibility. The communal approaches to normative values represent a republican point of view and focuses on the relationship between the individual and a larger community. In this approach values such as national solidarity are promoted. The interaction between the axes of political knowledge and normative values creates four conceptions of citizenship education. These are: (1) liberal

civic education, (2) diversity civic education, (3) critical civic education, and (4) republican civic education.

Liberal civic education uses a procedural approach to political knowledge and an individualistic approach to normative values and focuses on developing the individual skills and characteristics that are necessary for the student to participate in the political process (Cohen, 2010). This approach focuses on providing students with the knowledge and tools that would allow them to become autonomous as well as engage in the public sphere to improve their own situation within the existing social, political, and economic order. The goal is individual actualization. This approach is somewhat similar to the personally responsible citizen.

Diversity civic education emphasises procedural political knowledge and communal normative values (Cohen, 2010). This conception aims to develop the student's ability to evaluate the social framework of society in the form of the relationships between different social groups, and between the social groups and the state. Where liberal civic education is based on a view of society as a gathering of individuals, in diversity civic education society is seen as a gathering of social groups and focuses on the relationships between them. The main goal of this approach is to develop the students understanding of the social reality of society, especially the oppression of certain social groups, and providing students with knowledge about how to act in the public sphere as part of a social group. This approach shifts the focus from promoting the individual to "scrutiny of the social surroundings" (Cohen, 2010, p.23).

Critical civic education emphasises substantive political knowledge and individualistic normative values. This approach is rooted in critical democratic theory and a view of society as a battle between social forces, and the hegemonic powers oppress those that are weaker. Education should empower students to take action against social injustice, and provide them with the necessary individual skills, such as critical thinking. According to Cohen, supporters of this approach critique the idea of objective knowledge. They emphasise the historical and social context of knowledge and point out how the idea of objective knowledge can be a tool of oppression.

Republican civic education emphasises substantive political knowledge and communal normative values. The goal of this approach is to develop "a feeling of belonging and solidarity to the national entity" (Cohen, 2010, p.22). This conception also emphasises the shared goals of society and aim to foster a commitment to these goals rather than the individual's self-interest. Whereas diversity civic education focuses on the different groups that society is comprised of, republican civic education emphasises the nation as a whole, and as something that is more than the sum of its parts. (Cohen, 2010)

Research Methodology

In this chapter I will discuss my choice of method, data selection for the thesis, the implementation of the analysis and the validity and reliability of my research.

Choice of method

When choosing to conduct research for my master's thesis on citizenship education in Ethiopian secondary school, many of the available research methods were not possible due to practical challenges related to the collection of data. I am currently located in Norway, and even though I through my supervisor have had some contact with research partners of his at the University of Bahir Dhar, traveling to Ethiopia to conduct any sort of field research would be too difficult, if possible at all. Both because of the time and resources it would take to arrange this and because of the political situation in the area this was not a viable option. Instead, I have chosen to conduct my research on the Ethiopian curriculum framework and textbooks for citizenship education for grades 8-10. One of the main benefits of using analysis of pre-existing textual data as a research method is the affordability and easy access to data. Even though the data I am using was not publicly available on the internet. Gaining access to them was far easier than it would have been to collect data myself. Also, because of my limited experience in this type of research and the limited amount of resources available to me, the quality of the data available in the chosen documents are also most likely far better than what I would have been able to gather through field research.

Data selection

The process of selection of the sources of data for my research is best characterised as an "convenience sample" (Thagaard, 2018). The limiting factor was the availability of relevant curriculum materials that was written in a language I am able to understand. Still, all the chosen data is included because it was deemed relevant to my research questions. Luckily much of the relevant material is written in or translated to English, but a lot of it is also published in Amharic. For example, the relevant textbooks for the grades below grade 8 are written in local languages and are as a result unavailable to me, as are the regional curriculum. My choice in using grade 8-10 textbooks, and the general curriculum framework is therefore a result of these sources being the best data available to me. As a result of this, there is a possibility that there exists different, better, more accurate, or more up to date sources of information that could have provided a better understanding of the concepts that I am researching.

The general curriculum framework sets relatively few directions for the specific content of the subjects. I therefore believed the "citizenship education" textbooks would be the best source of information about specific content. Because there only exists one series of textbooks, and it is published by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. I interpret it to be an extension of the curriculum, even though the textbooks are written by professors at Ethiopian universities and are therefore to some extent an expression of their own opinions, and not the government's.

General Curriculum Framework

The development and implementation of the new curriculum framework is a step in a larger restructuring of general education in Ethiopia. This is a plan that have been worked on for years, with the Ministry of Education publishing “Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap” in 2018 as a working paper in the process of deciding a plan for educational process until 2030. This process resulted in the Educational Sector Development Programme 6 (FDRE M.o.E., 2021), which was published in 2021, a document that also decides the key objectives and learning areas that are to be emphasised in the curriculum framework. The development of the curriculum was a joint venture between several governmental agencies, along with assistance from international partners such as Great Britain and Norway as well as organisations such as the World Bank, and foreign universities (FDRE M.o.E., 2021). The general curriculum framework is a framework for development of regional curricula and contains guidelines for the structure, content, and goals of the regional curriculum, while still being fairly general as to leave room for regional autonomy. The framework contains guidelines for areas such as: Vision, Values, Goals, Learning Areas, competencies, teaching philosophy and methodology, assessment and evaluation, and organization of subjects (FDRE M.o.E., 2020).

Citizenship education student textbooks

New textbooks were developed to go along with the new curriculum. Unlike what I am used to in Norway where several privately owned publishers develop textbooks on the basis of the national curriculum, in Ethiopia the Ministry of Education publishes a single series of textbooks for each subject (Yamada, 2011). I have not been able to locate a lot of information about the development process for the new textbooks, but nothing in the ESDP 6 suggest that there have been made any significant changes from the process used previously. I will therefore assume that information about that process is still relevant. The textbooks themselves are written and edited by professors from Ethiopian universities. Yamada (2011, p.104) explains that “Textbook authors are selected by the Ministry” through a rigorous selection process. The ESDP 6 explains that the authors of the textbooks are given “guidance on the use of teaching and learning materials development”, and there exists a quality assurance team to “ensure that textbooks are not ponderous and prescriptive” (FDRE M.o.E., 2021, pp.61-62). As described in the general curriculum framework the student textbook should:

“not simply contain knowledge to be acquired, but encourage the development of skills and values in ways appropriate to the subject, and focus on helping students achieve competency. They must also engage learners in a range of stimulating, challenging and focused activities” (FDRE M.o.E., 2020, p.62)

The Citizenship education textbooks are divided into chapters, or “Units” which are again divided into “lessons”. Each unit encompasses a different topic. At the start of each unit there is an introduction to the topic of the unit, and learning goals for the unit is presented. In addition to information about the topic of the unit, each lesson contains a brainstorming activity, a case study, and at least one group discussion activity. At the end of each unit there is a unit summary, a glossary, and unit review exercises. The textbooks cover a variety of topics including but not limited to: Value Ethics, Democracy and Human rights, Digital Technologies, Critical thinking and problem solving, as well as Global issues and foreign relations.

Qualitative content analysis

I have chosen to utilise a quantitative approach to my analysis of the textual data that I have collected. Because I believe my research questions are best answered through interpretive analysis of the content in central curriculum materials, I believe a qualitative content analysis is the most suitable approach. According to Fauskanger & Mosvold (2014) "Content analysis is a systematic examination and interpretation of data, and this method of analysis is used to study the meaning in textual data" (translated from: Fauskanger & Mosvold, 2014, p.1), while Hsieh & Shannon (2005) define qualitative content analysis as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1278). The systematisation of the subjective interpretation of meaning is what I believe makes this research method so powerful. By using systematic processes to interpret the meaning of content, this method allows the researcher to move beyond the literal meaning of the words used in the text, to make inferences, and to interpret underlying meaning. At the same time the idea of combining subjective interpretation and scientific research might seem like a paradox to some. Some researchers argue that qualitative content analysis can never access this deeper meaning of the content, and that any inferences beyond the actual content are too subjective to have any validity (Schreier, 2013).

The process of qualitative content analysis involves examining all the data and then reducing the relevant data into categories of a coding frame before conducting a thorough analysis (Schreier, 2013). Because qualitative research often produces a lot of data this process of reducing the data is imperative. This means that a qualitative content analysis does not offer a holistic view of the selected data, instead it is a more focused analysis of content related to specific research questions (Schreier, 2013). The systematic organization into codes and categories is what separates qualitative content analysis from the everyday interpretation we normally do when communicating in any way. One of the main benefits of this approach is that there are several ways of doing this, which makes this method flexible because it allows you to adopt the approach to better fit your specific research goals.

Hsieh & Shannon have identified three different approaches to this process: conventional-, directed-, and summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). I will not be using a summative approach to my analysis so I will not discuss it beyond explaining that it involves examining the frequency with which words are used in a text as well as the context in which they appear. The difference between the conventional and directed approach to qualitative content analysis lies in how one creates the codes and categories used in the analysis. In a directed or deductive approach, the codes and categories are created before one engages with the data. The initial codes are created based on existing theory or relevant research findings. The researcher then sorts the relevant data into these preexisting categories and subcategories. In a conventional or inductive approach, the codes and categories arise directly from the data itself (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Through an initial reading of the data the researcher identifies what content is and is not relevant to the research questions before grouping them into

meaningful clusters. Through several rounds the content is grouped together into bigger and more abstract categories.

My analysis can best be described as a conventional or inductive approach since I did not create a coding frame before my initial reading of the data. I created codes and categories that I believed best described the data that I found relevant for my research questions. However, I had familiarized myself with relevant research findings and theoretical frameworks for my topic of research. I used this both as an inspiration for several of my research questions, and also as important context and knowledge base for my interpretation of the data. Because existing theory was such a large part of my understanding of the topic it was an important part of how I interpreted the meaning of the data, and therefore how I grouped content meanings was heavily influenced by existing theory. My approach could therefore be understood as somewhat of a combination of the directed and conventional approach.

Coding and categorization

In my coding and categorization I drew inspiration from a strategy by Aksel Tjora. He presents a strategy for qualitative research that he calls "Stegvis-deduktiv induktiv metode", which translates to "step by step-deductive inductive method" (Tjora, 2021). Tjora has created a model for an inductive approach to data that works step by step from the empirical data towards theory, while incorporating what he calls tests after every step to ensure the quality of the progress.

After an initial reading where I reduced the data significantly and were left only with data I had evaluated to be potentially relevant for my research questions. These excerpts consisted of words, sentences, or full paragraphs. I began coding by reading the excerpts that I had found relevant and assigning each part of the data with a code that described the content of it. To maintain an empirical focus, rather than a theoretical one, in my coding I strived to use concepts from the data itself to name the codes. This is something Saldaña calls "in vivo"-coding (Saldaña, 2013, p.4). I also wanted the code to have a descriptive quality, where the name of the code would explain what the content of the piece of data was, not just describe the topic of the data. This way of coding generates a lot of different codes, with very few codes being alike. I ended up with several hundred different codes. The next step of the process was several rounds grouping codes together in gradually larger and more general or abstract categories, and sorting away the codes that did not fit into any relevant category. The goal of this step is creating a small number of categories that at the same time display an internal consistency and is thematically different from the other categories. (Tjora, 2021). I ended up with six categories. These are: (1) Rights and Duties, (2) Global Issues, (3) Identity/Citizens of what?, (4) change/critical skills, (5) Value ethics/character education, (6) Democratic Knowledge. The content of these categories was then analysed by interpreting the patterns within each of the categories and comparing what I found to existing theoretical frameworks. Tjora presents a quite linear process from the initial reading of the data and through the analysis. For me the process of coding and grouping codes together ended up being less linear. Through the process of grouping codes together I went through several rounds of both coding and categorization, recoding and grouping the codes in

different ways and discovering possible new themes before settling on the six categories above. This has shown me that there are different ways of interpreting what the patterns are in this set of data. As an example I for a long time had indigenous knowledge as a category of it's own before later in the process coming to the conclusion that the meaning of the data I had categorized as indigenous knowledge had very little in common beyond the use of similar terminology.

Reliability and Viability

In the following I will discuss the reliability and validity of my research

Reliability

Reliability is a measure of consistency or replicability, whether someone else following the same method of research would achieve the same results, or if you would get the same results if you repeated the research at a different point in time. (Schreier, 2012). When conducting an interpretative analysis, you cannot get around the fact that the person analysing will affect the results, because there is no such thing as an objective interpretation. Especially when analysis attempts to go beyond the literal meaning of the words you are analysing. Schreier argues that "The more hidden the meaning is, the more context you need in order to infer it, and the more likely it is that two people will read it differently" (Schreier, 2013, p.16). Because of this, striving for this kind of replicability does not make sense in my research. Instead, Tjora (2021) argue that you should practice transparency in your research, with the goal being that the reader gets a good enough understanding of the research to properly assess its quality (Tjora, 2021, p.264). Similarly Schreier (2021) argues that "to make your research reliable, it is important that you proceed in a systematic way, that you make all steps in your research transparent to your readers, and that you show how exactly you arrive at your conclusions" (Schreier, 2021, pp.26-27). I will therefore discuss my process and how I affected the process of collecting and analysing the data.

Still, there are ways in which I could have improved the reliability of my research. Both Bowen (2009) and Morgan (2022) argues for the use of triangulation as a strategy to increase the trustworthiness of a study when using pre-existing data in qualitative research. They argue that using different methods of collecting data and reaching similar findings across sets of data increases the reliability of the research. Since I have exclusively used pre-existing data for my analysis, this weakens the reliability of research based on these arguments. If my research had also used interviews of textbook authors, or people involved in the production of the curriculum framework, it would have been possible to see how my interpretation matches up with their understanding. Schreier (2012) argues that another method that can increase reliability in qualitative content analysis is, if you are working with another researcher, to use a strategy called "blind coding" where more than one researcher is coding independently of one another. Another way is through discussions with other members of a research team. Schreier argues that if researchers reach similar results independently, or if you can "make your interpretation sufficiently plausible to the other members of the research team" (Schreier, 2012, p.174), it is more likely that your coding frame is reliable. I have however conducted all the coding and analysis on my own and can therefore not use these arguments in favour

of the reliability of my research. I did however use what Schreier calls "double coding" (Schreier, 2012, p.34), which essentially is a strategy to check the consistency of your coding by coding your data a second time some time after your initial coding. Schreier suggests 10-14 days. This allows me to check if my coding is consistent over time.

The best argument for the reliability of my research is the transparency of my data, and the process that leads from the data to my final interpretation. Because I as a researcher was not in any way involved in the production of the data I use for my analysis, there is no way for me to have affected the data. A benefit of using pre-existing textual data as it relates to reliability is that the data exists independently of me as a researcher, and any person that wants to read the data and make up their own mind, or evaluate my interpretations has that option. Collecting data from publicly available sources allows for a lot of transparency into my data that is more difficult with other qualitative research methods. If I were collecting information from informants, for example through interviews, making unedited data material available would likely not be possible due to ethical considerations related to these informants right to anonymity. Despite having no influence on the data material, I have made choices in what parts of the data is shown and what is not shown to the reader. I have made decisions about what is important and what is less important, as well as ascribed a meaning to parts of communication based on what I believe to be relevant context. To make these choices transparent to the reader I have aimed to show as much of the data I have used as possible to make it as easy as possible for the reader to see how much and what empirical evidence I am basing my interpretation on, instead of only presenting my interpretation.

Validity

Scherier argues that "In evaluating the quality of qualitative research, validity is typically emphasised instead of objectivity and reliability" (Schreier, 2012, p.34). Validity is a consideration of whether research is measuring what it set out to measure, and if it covered every aspect of the phenomenon one wants to research. This is called "construct validity". Validity is also a measure of whether you can draw inferences based on your results. This is called "content validity" (Schreier, 2012), Validity is therefore essential in evaluating the quality of my data and whether the claims I am making in my analysis of the data can justifiably be made on the basis of my results. It is difficult to argue for the validity of your own research, as I would assume no researcher makes choices they believe are wrong, and most would believe that their interpretations have solid foundations. Therefore, it likely needs to be someone else that makes the evaluation of the validity of your research. Tjora argues for the importance of something he calls "communicative validity" (Tjora, 2021). This involves that the validity of research is tested in dialogue with the larger research community. This can happen through comparison with existing theory and research on the same or similar topics, or through some form of peer review. Similarly, to assessing reliability, validity is best evaluated by providing transparency into your research process (Tjora, 2021). By properly explaining the choices made in the research process, it makes it possible for the reader to evaluate how this affects the quality of the research. Since I am examining meaning beyond the literal meaning of the content my analysis requires me to make inferential leaps. To make it possible to assess to what degree these interpretations are valid, I have to explain to the best of my ability how I arrived at my conclusions. Schreier argues that when one in

an analysis attempt to say something about the communicator, such as their motivation, or to the how it affects the recipient, the standard for argumentation is necessarily higher because of a need of a lot of background and contextual knowledge (Schreier, 2012). I therefore attempt to limit any inferences beyond the content of the data being analysed.

Normally one of the factors you have to be cognisant of in conducting qualitative research is how you as a researcher affect the data you are collecting. The researcher is often close to the context in which the research is being conducted, either through conducting interviews of informants, or by participating in the situation they are observing. (Tjora, 2021). I am in an opposite situation when conducting this research. Namely, being far away from the context of the research. Even though I spent a month in Ethiopia in the beginning of 2018 and experienced some of the political and cultural context my data exist in, my perspective is that of an outsider. An outside perspective can be valuable, but I have to be aware that there is relevant context that I do not understand and that can lead to me misunderstand or miss things that someone with better knowledge of Ethiopian culture, politics, or education would not. This outside perspective is in many ways reinforced by my use of theory, which is mostly from western sources. I have

Results and Analysis

In the following chapter I will present and analyse what I have found in the data and discuss the meaning of the content as I interpret it. I will be sorting the analysis thematically and discuss the content of my different sources together instead of in separate sections as I interpret them all to functionally be different parts of the same source. I also believe this will allow me to give the best possible explanation of the patterns that I see across the complete set of data.

Democracy

In a curriculum that argues for education's importance in changing society, and greatly emphasizes teaching students' skills necessary to transform the country's economy, as well as instilling values to create a more peaceful and united nation, it is difficult to reconcile the public promises of democratisation with the relatively low emphasis on democracy in the curriculum framework. It is, as I will discuss later, made incredibly clear in the curriculum framework that developing national unity and developing the national economy is of high priority for the government. When it is never stated that it is a goal to make society more democratic, it indicates that this is not important for the government. Democracy is barely discussed in the curriculum, and the word democracy never appears. The Curriculum vision presents a vision of transforming the Ethiopian society to a knowledge based, and technology led economy and equipping the students with the necessary 21st century skills to make that transition. At the end of this vision, it is stated that the students should do this "as citizens of a democratic society". This feels less like an expression of a desire to make society more democratic as part of this vision of societal transformation and more like a statement that Ethiopia is democratic tacked on at the end. Later in the curriculum it is mentioned that students should develop an appreciation of democratic values and governance, and exercise democratic behaviour. It is however never elaborated on what democratic values or behaviour entails. The curriculum framework presents a range of desired behaviours and values in students, but it is never discussed how these relate to democracy.

In comparison to the curriculum, the citizenship education textbooks have emphasized teaching about democracy relatively heavily. The grade 8 discusses democracy in the unit about democracy, and somewhat in the units about the constitution and human rights. The grade 9 textbook discusses democracy briefly in the context of the 1995 FDRE constitution, while the grade 10 textbook discusses democracy in the unit about democracy and democratization, and in the unit about human rights. It is also mentioned once in the context of corruption. The textbooks devote most of the discussion of democracy to very general explanations of the concept of democracy as well as important principles, actors, and institutions in a democratic system. Democracy as a system is most often discussed through the lens of the rights it affords citizens. This is done both as a general discussion and through discussions of the Ethiopian constitution. Through presenting the rights promised in the constitution Ethiopia is explained as a democratic system, and as different from previous regimes that were not democratic because they did not provide the same rights. The textbooks do not enter into any discussions of the state of these rights in Ethiopian society.

Democracy and the related concepts are discussed mostly as abstract concepts without reference to any specific part of the Ethiopian political system. When discussing actors or institutions in a democracy such as political parties, no examples are mentioned. Instead, an idealized version that does not exist is presented. It could be the intention to present an ideal or a goal to work towards. I however interpret it as disingenuous when they do not discuss the reality of the situation of these institutions in Ethiopia. It would be natural for students to associate these descriptions with the real-life institutions they are familiar with, and these descriptions would then give them an inaccurate understanding of how democratic institutions function in Ethiopia. Presenting Ethiopia as more democratic than what is the reality. Only the grade 8 textbook makes specific references to the situation of democracy in Ethiopia, using two pages to discuss opportunities and challenges of democracy in Ethiopia. This presents a different picture of the institutions that are presented only in positive terms elsewhere in the textbooks. Here it is argued that Ethiopia has weak democratic institutions, a flawed party system, and lack of access to independent media among other things. The textbooks are missing discussions of how democratic processes actually work. They explain the purpose of some democratic institutions, but these explanations are short and does not provide insight into how they function.

Though not directly the grade 9 textbook presents an idea of the status of democracy in Ethiopia through its discussion of the 1995 FDRE constitution in the chapter about constitutionalism. Constitutionalism is presented as “a limited system of government by law in which there is actual or real realizations of the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens, a real practice of good governance, rule of law and separations of powers” (Feyisa & Nura, 2023, p.67), and through the use of similar language in describing the Ethiopian constitution it is implied that the Ethiopian political system is one of constitutionalism. This constitution is presented as introducing a system of parliamentary democracy and guaranteeing the citizens of Ethiopia a comprehensive set of democratic and human rights. This is presented as an opposition to earlier constitutions that did not guarantee democratic order or human rights. Similarly to what Yamada (2011) found in her analysis of textbooks from the previous curriculum period, this seems to attempt to separate the current political order from previous ones. It uses language in the constitution that does not reflect the reality of Ethiopian society to present the current regime as different from previous regimes, and legitimizes the current political order, whether intended or not, on the grounds of a democratic system that exists in writing but not in reality.

Citizens of what?

Citizenship is never in either the curriculum or textbooks discussed in the context of citizenship as the legal status of belonging to Ethiopia as a nation state. It is never explained that it is an aspect of citizenship that some in Ethiopia are entitled to this status, while others are not, or why this is the case. Instead, the focus is on the rights, responsibilities, values, and behaviours that should follow from belonging to Ethiopia as a political community. As discussed, one of the central aspects to the idea of citizenship is the belonging to a community. Because of the unique way that Ethiopia’s system of government is set up, there are particular questions we have to ask when considering what citizenship looks like in the Ethiopian context. One of those are what kind of

community does Ethiopian people see themselves as part of. Are they primarily Ethiopian citizens, or are they citizens of regional or ethnically defined communities? The Ethiopian constitution of 1995 starts like this: "We, the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia", meaning that the Ethiopia is a country of many different nations and people. This could complicate the idea of citizenship. Ethiopia has been and is currently dealing internal ethnic conflicts, both politically and militarily, and ethnic identity has been made a central factor of the political organization of the state of Ethiopia (Lyons, 2019), (Jima, 2021). Solving these questions related to citizenship and identity may be a crucial factor in Ethiopia becoming a more peaceful and stable country.

A phrase that is used often in the curriculum framework and textbooks is "Unity in Diversity". The term is not new to this curriculum, or this regime. It was also included as a central value in the previous curriculum framework, but the emphasis is drastically increased in the new curriculum. Put forth as one of 11 principles of the curriculum is "Promote National Unity in Diversity". Explaining further it is stated that: "While recognizing and appreciating the diversities, it is also essential to work toward strengthening national unity". The use of the phrase "national unity" is also found in the "general education learner profile", which is a formulation of "capacities and characteristics a learner is expected to have developed at the end of a given level of learning". There it is stated that the student should have "commitment for strengthening national unity, diversity and cultural heritages". This could be interpreted in a couple different ways. It could indicate a goal of developing a common pan-Ethiopian or national identity, and to promote citizens that see themselves as primarily belonging to Ethiopia as a political community.

Under the core competency "Cultural identity and global citizenship" in the curriculum, it is stated that "Producing learners who understand themselves as citizens of their country and of the world is one of the foremost competencies the curriculum should strive to achieve". This statement is much clearer and emphasises the importance of citizenship being connected to the country of Ethiopia as a political community, naming it one of the top priorities of this curriculum. The grade 9 textbook also explains that "national unity involves awareness of common identity and national feeling among the citizens of the country", and that "A balance between unity and diversity is used to create national integration and common national unity and identity among all nations" (Feyisa & Nura, 2023, p.121). This supports the interpretation that developing a common national identity for all Ethiopians is the goal of teaching students about "unity in diversity". This is very much in line with Cohen (2010)'s idea of republican civic education, where the goal is to develop in students "a feeling of belonging and solidarity to the national entity" (Cohen, 2010, p.22). At the same time, the language of "recognizing and appreciating the diversities" used in the curriculum framework could indicate that they want to maintain the different ways that Ethiopians identify, while at the same time fostering positive relationships between the people of different identities inside the country.

In the textbooks national unity is discussed both in the context of dealing with multiculturalism and nation building. The Grade 9 textbook argue for a strategy of accommodating differences rather than getting rid of them, calling multiculturalism "the

proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity” (Feyisa & Nura, 2023, p.95) and “the best strategy to deal with diversity accommodation to maintain and preserve a country’s national unity out of diverse identities” (Feyisa & Nura, 2023, p.94). This expresses that there is no intention of getting rid of ethnic and regional differences, and that accepting a variety of cultures and identities is not only the best strategy, but the only viable option. At the same time the grade 10 textbook argue against what they call “regionalism”, or a loyalty to a regional community at the cost of a national loyalty. Saying that:

“The mark of a great country is just how patriotic and prideful the citizens is to be part of it. Federalism, since it promotes smaller levels of government, promotes smaller levels of pride. It can put one region against another and take away from the feeling of patriotism that should be present all over the entire country” (Damtie & Tsige, 2023, p.115).

There seems to be a wish to find a difficult balance of fostering a common national identity and feeling of belonging that does not take away from the diversity that exists in culture and identity. This makes a lot of sense in the context of Ethiopia’s ethno-federalist system of government and the history of ethnic conflict.

There seems to be a lot of similarities with the idea of multicultural citizenship presented in the curriculum framework and textbooks and the example of Australia presented by Joppke (2002). Multiculturalism as presented is supposed to be the solution to the challenges Ethiopia is facing as a result of country’s ethnic diversity. Similarly to Australia, Ethiopia seemingly wants to develop a commitment to the nation as a political community that overrides the regional or ethnic communities that citizens identify with. Ethiopia has for a long time had a political system that accommodates national minorities through the system of devolution of political power to ethnically defined regional states that grants these minorities a large amount of political power over their own state. This focus on a national identity and patriotism in the curriculum could actually signal a desire to move away from multicultural citizenship as it is understood theoretically in favour of a more national form of citizenship. If this is the case the language of multiculturalism utilized is very much devoid of meaning.

One could also argue for similarities between this kind of nation building project to promote a national form of citizenship between the nations of Ethiopia and ideas of transnational or denationalised forms of citizenship. Ethiopia wants to develop an Ethiopian identity that transcends the “national” borders within the country. Comparisons can be made to attempts to develop a pan-European awareness or identity. Questions does have to be asked in both cases about what grounds they want to build this identity on and to what degree this resonates with the people. Apart from the values of respect and tolerance for diversity that are presented as a part of the concept of national unity, I cannot find in any of the curriculum materials any suggestion of what the basis of this common Ethiopian identity should be. The curriculum also specifies developing global citizenship as a core competency. Stating that students should “understand themselves as citizens ... of the world”. What this idea of being citizens of the world means is not explained any further in the curriculum framework. In the textbooks foreign relations and global issues is discussed through the lens of promoting the interests of Ethiopia, be that

politically, economically or militarily. Global issues are never discussed in relation to identification with any transnational community.

Character education and value ethics

Instilling students with the “right” values and helping them develop beneficial characteristics seems to be an important part of Ethiopian citizenship education. The curriculum states that “The general education curriculum ... should support the holistic development of learners as they move from childhood through adolescence to become well-behaved productive citizens” and that “It is important for learners to develop moral values and attributes of a citizen”. This wording ties the idea of citizenship or becoming a citizen closely with exhibiting a certain set of values and attributes. Specifically, the curriculum framework says the most important values for students to develop are “equality, collaboration, tolerance, respect, equity, patriotism and hospitality This is also heavily weighted in the textbooks with all the textbooks from grade 8-10 devoting a chapter or “unit” (out of 8 total in grade 9 & 10, and 7 in grade 8) to the topic of “ethical values” in grade 8 & 9, and “patriotism” in grade 10. “. Both the curriculum and are concerned with developing citizens that “act in morally responsible manners”, promoting actions such as volunteering, obeying laws, speaking truthfully, working hard, and avoiding substance abuse.

In the textbooks ethics and personal character is presented as a major reason for “the problems” Ethiopia is facing and a critical factor for “the existence of a democratic, stable and prosperous society” (Feyisa & Nura, 2023, p.21). The grade 9 textbook states that “As citizens it is a must to develop and practice those important traits of ethical person in order to curb the current serious crises we are facing as a country”, and that “As citizens we need to possess ethical values to save ourselves and generations from several problems. In today’s life, it is clear that there is a great failure and erosions of moral integrity and values of citizens in our country” (Feyisa & Nura, 2023, p.22). A failure in ethics and in the moral character of Ethiopian citizens is presented as the reason for the problems the country is facing. Societal problems are seen as individual rather than structural, and citizens must fix themselves and their moral failings, rather than seek to change societal structures. Even though most of the values this curriculum wants to instill in Ethiopian students are undeniably positive traits, some can be a cause for concern. Specifically, the focus on patriotism and loyalty could be at odds with democratic goals. Loyalty and patriotism are not in and of themselves in opposition to democracy and can be based in democratic ideals. One can imagine a movement in opposition to oppression, or authoritarianism to be motivated by a form of patriotism. However, when a government that is unanimously considered to be authoritarian promotes patriotism as a central value it is natural to interpret that as them wanting their citizens to be loyal to the regime, or developing patriotism in citizens as something they can exploit. However, the idea of patriotism is in the textbooks most often presented as a loyalty to the democratic values of the Ethiopian constitution rather than to the state itself, though not exclusively.

The grade 10 textbook defines patriotism as “Devotion to and vigorous support for one's country” (Damtie & Tsige, 2023, p.162), and presents a range of different types of

patriotism, discusses the values that should form the basis of patriotism, and explains what is expected of patriotic citizens. The textbook presents six different types of patriotism. These are constitutional patriotism, traditional patriotism, icon patriotism, capital patriotism, environmental patriotism, and symbolic patriotism. These are not as I understand options to choose from were some are good, and others are bad. Instead, they are all expressed as desirable types of patriotism for students to develop. Constitutional and traditional patriotism are the most prevalent types of patriotism that are discussed in the books. When discussing the values that should form the basis of the student's patriotism, loyalty is presented both as loyalty to the constitution, and to the elected government. The glossary at the end of the unit includes the concept of "chauvinism", which were not discussed previously in the unit. Chauvinism is in the textbook defined as "Being excessively or overly loyal to your country, race or gender, often at the expense of others" (Damtie & Tsige, 2023, p.162), but no discussion of why this might be bad, or how it relates to patriotism was included in the unit.

Rights and Duties

The textbooks include explanations of what the students' rights are as citizens according to the constitution, but in my opinion, there is an overwhelming emphasis on their duties as citizens, and constitutional or human rights are often presented as much as a duty you have to fellow citizens, as personal freedoms. This indicates a republican view of democracy and citizenship rather than a liberal view. The textbooks clearly indicate that citizens should value the common good over personal desires and interests, and are often concerned with the individual's responsibility to contribute to a larger community. They also present concern for the common good over personal desires as a trait that distinguishes good from bad citizens. Particularly the idea of patriotism is directly linked with "the common good", and "true patriots" are described as someone that "sacrifice their personal desires and interests for the common good" (Damtie & Tsige, 2023, p.149) and "carry out a wide-range of duties and tasks which epitomize hard work" (MoE, 2020, p.20). The grade 10 textbook also states that "in a democratic system, citizens shall perform duties and responsibilities they are assigned to do" (Damtie & Tsige, 2023, p. 148). This clearly communicates a view that personal freedoms should not be the primary concern of a good citizen. Instead, a good citizen's primary concern is the welfare of the community as a whole. In a liberal conception of democracy, the obligation to sacrifice personal desires for the common good would likely be viewed as a limitation of the individual's personal freedom.

Even though the idea of promoting common good as a citizen duty is prevalent throughout the curriculum material, it is not obvious what it specifically asks of citizens. The most specific the curriculum framework presents these expectations is through asking citizens to exhibit "hard work" and act "legally responsible". In the following I will explore how economic and democratic participation is discussed in curriculum materials, and if and how these practices relate to the duties and responsibilities of citizens presented in the above.

Democratic participation

The curriculum states a couple of times that producing “active citizens” is a goal, but it is never explained what being an active citizen entail. In the secondary school learner profile it is explained that students should be able to “*Use values and knowledge on basic functions of governance and civic, ethical, and legal rights and duties as bases for living a legally and socially desirable way of life, active citizenship, and social justice*”. It is also stated under “learning areas” for social science, and citizenship education, which are broad descriptions of subject contents, that these subjects should help students become “active and responsible citizens”. Because of these vague formulations it is impossible to interpret what kind of civic participation Ethiopia expects from their citizens. Developing any specific type of democratic participation therefore does not seem like a priority in the curriculum framework. We instead have to look to the textbooks for more detailed explanations.

In the grade 10 textbook, citizen participation and civic engagement is discussed in the context of democracy’s role in social transformation, good governance, and fighting corruption. Civic engagement is put forth as a means to change society in a democratic system. The textbook defines civic engagement as “*the many ways in which people participate in civic, community, and political life and, by doing so, express their engaged citizenship*”, and presents a couple of ways that citizens can practice civic engagement like this: “*It ranges from proactively becoming better informed to participating in public dialogue on issues, from volunteering to voting and community organizing to political advocacy*” (Damtie & Tsige, 2023, p.14). What is missing is any discussion of why or how the students can take part in these activities. Participation defined as “the involvement of citizens in the process of decision making” (p.61) is presented as a necessary aspect of good governance. Furthermore, citizen participation is presented as a necessity if a society is to avoid corruption. It is also argued that it is a responsibility both of individual citizens, and of the government to facilitate opportunities for all citizens to participate fully in society regardless of factors such as gender, race, religion, and physical ability, and for people to be able to express concern and influence policy making without fear or discrimination.

In the grade 8 textbook civic virtue defined as “citizens actively participating in democracy for the private as well as the public good” (Mengistu & Watte, 2023, p.28), is discussed in the units about virtue ethics and democracy. It is stated that “Citizens’ key role in democracy is participation. It is not only their right, but also their obligation” (Mengistu & Watte, 2023, p. 93). This is the clearest formulation of democratic participation as a duty of citizens. The grade 9 and 10 textbooks for the most part presents civic participation as something you could do, but not something you have to do. A positive, but not a necessity; while the grade 8 textbook argues that citizens’ active participation in their own affairs is necessary for the functioning of a democracy. In relation to what conception of democracy and/or citizenship is demonstrated, these books differ quite a lot. The grade 10 textbook in my opinion presents a liberal view of democratic participation, mostly discussing it in the context of citizens right to and access to it, but not as a duty of citizens. The grade 8 textbook on the other hand trends more towards a republican, deliberative, or radical conception where democratic participation beyond voting in elections is not viewed as optional. In the grade 8 textbook a couple of

modes of civic participations are presented, explaining that “citizens can participate in a variety of ways, such as running for office, voting in elections, becoming informed, debating issues, attending community or civic meetings, and becoming members of private voluntary organizations” (Mengistu & Watte, 2023, p.91). These forms of civic participation are however not discussed in any more detail. The textbooks avoid presenting actions such as protesting or civil disobedience as ways of engaging in civic participation. This form of civic participation would likely be viewed positively as actions that challenges the hegemony in a radical conception of democracy that sees conflict as an important part of democracy. Widespread protests were the cause of the recent regime change in Ethiopia (Lyons, 2019), but this is not discussed in any of the books.

Economic participation

Ethiopian education seems to place a large emphasis on economic productivity and contributing to the country’s economic development as a duty of citizens. Ethiopia is certainly not alone in having economical motivations for wanting a better educated population, and considering their status as a developing nation it is more than understandable that this is a high priority. Education is in many ways an institution that develops human capital that their country can benefit from. Still, I find it interesting to discuss to what degree this is connected to expectations and duties of Ethiopians as citizens. The curriculum states that “*the major aim of this curriculum framework developed for the general education system of the country is to produce citizens who are innovative, inventive, productive, self-directed, responsible and active contributors to national development*”. Again, nothing in this stated goal is surprising, as I assume most countries would love for their education system to achieve this goal. It does however merit discussion how the statements connect the concepts of citizenship, productivity, and national development.

This connection is made even more plain in the textbooks where it is stated that “Making active participations in the socio-economic activities of a society is one of the responsibilities expected of citizens” (Feyisa & Nura, 2023, p.77), and that “responsible citizens” is a person with a commitment for bettering the country and that they have an important role in “socio-economic transformation” of the country. This idea is in the grade 10 textbook also connected to the concept of patriotism, which is stated as a desirable trait in citizens, where the concept of “capital patriotism” is presented. The textbooks define capital patriotism as “actions of individuals who have expressed feelings of patriotism and focus more on the development of the national economy” (Damtie & Tsige, 2023, p.146). This could be interpreted as just a formulation of a basic societal expectation that you should get a job, be able to provide for yourself, and contribute to the society you are a part of. It could be linked to the ideal type of the personally responsible citizen, where working hard and producing economically is a way of acting responsible for yourself and your community, similarly to the one of the examples Westheimer & Kahne provides in “staying out of debt”. This also seems to be an expression of a republican conception of citizenship, where it is expressed that you have an economic responsibility for Ethiopia as a political community, and that you are a better citizen if you are more focused on improving the national economy.

There are no formal economic conditions tied to people's rights as citizens in Ethiopia (FDRE Constitution, 1995), but based on the content of the curriculum framework and textbooks, there seems to be economic conditions connected to whether you're seen as a "good" or "bad" citizen. Based on my interpretation a good citizen is someone that is economically productive and contributes to the economic development of the country. This could also be indicative of a view of citizens as "tools" for furthering national interests, or that the value of citizens is to some extent determined by their economic productivity. There is no way for me to claim that this is the case with any certainty solely based on the data that I have analysed. I do however believe there is grounds to question what view of citizens is behind this emphasis on economic duties of citizens, and what kind of consequences this could have for citizens that for any reason are not capable of the economic productivity that is expected of them.

Social justice and change

The Curriculum framework states that a goal of this curriculum is for students to *"have the ability to think critically, solve problems and contribute to economic advancement and social change"*. The curriculum also expresses a belief that education, among other things, is *"a tool for strengthening social justice, inclusion, and responsible citizenship"* and expresses both in the curriculum objectives and the learner profile that students should use knowledge and values obtained in their education to promote social justice. The language of social change and social justice can be recognized from the description of the justice-oriented citizen from Westheimer & Kahne's typology, as well as Cohen (2011)'s critical civic education. It does however lack some of the language related to the causes of injustice being systemic and working for systemic change. Based solely on these excerpts it is difficult to understand what kind of change is envisioned, or how students should work to enact social change and promote social justice. The concept of social change being grouped together with economic advancement could indicate that they are understood as the connected. That social change should happen as a result of increased economic productivity. With the emphasis placed on economic productivity as a duty of citizens, I find it natural to think that increasing their economic productivity would be the desired way for citizens to contribute to social change.

The grade 10 textbook briefly discusses the terms social change and social transformation. It explains that social transformation has two definitions, meaning either status transformation or societal transformation. Status transformation is defined as *"the process by which an individual alters the socially ascribed social status of his/her parents into a socially achieved status for him/herself"*, while societal transformation is *"a large-scale social change as in cultural reforms or transformations"* (Damtie & Tsige, 2023, p.13). Emphasising that social change can happen on an individual or societal level. Social change is also presented as one way a social transformation may manifest in a democratic society, explaining that

"The term social change encompasses a range of typical social and civic outcomes, from increased awareness and understanding, to attitudinal change, increased civic participation, and the building of public will, to policy change that corrects injustice.

Acknowledging that social change must start with the individual, social justice” (Damtie & Tsige, 2023, p.14).

Many of the outcomes presented here will most likely be viewed as desirable to a justice-oriented citizen, especially “policy change that corrects injustice”. This is language that match very well with the described goals of justice-oriented citizenship. The last part saying social change must start with the individual, however, seems to be in direct opposition with the emphasis placed on collective work in justice-oriented citizenship. There is also an emphasis on problems in the Ethiopian society being caused by personal flaws, rather than systemic factors. This seems to indicate that before engaging in work to enact societal change, citizens should first achieve status transformation, or develop a certain moral character. I do not find any language encouraging students to work for the kind of systemic change that is associated with the justice-oriented citizen, something I imagine I would find if there was a real desire for students to develop justice-oriented citizenship.

A justice-oriented citizen should engage in critical analysis of social problems (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). The curriculum framework does state that Ethiopia wants “learners who think critically and use this to deal with problems”, but there is never made any direct connections between this desired behaviour from students and enacting social change. The concepts of critical thinking and problem solving are heavily emphasized both in the curriculum framework, and in the textbooks. The way these skills are explained and taught in the textbooks would likely be useful for students attempting to engage in the sort of critical analysis and critique of societal structures and systems that characterizes the justice-oriented citizen, but there is nothing in the curriculum or textbooks that indicate that this is something they should use these skills for. No connections are made between the critical skills the students are being taught and any problem that is in any way political in nature. These skills are instead presented as tools that will help them solve problems in their day-to-day life.

The grade 9 and 10 textbooks in particular are weary of making any sort of critique of the existing political order in Ethiopia. Some critiques are directed at previous governments, but there are never made any indications that any actions made by the government may in any way be wrong. The grade 8 textbook however does point out some issues with the state of democracy and human rights in Ethiopia. Stating among other things that “*Ethiopia’s lack of democracy creates significant barriers to the day-to-day implementation of human rights*” (Mengistu & Watte, 2023, p.170). The textbook also points out traditional harmful practices, weak institutions, lack of a competitive political system, as well as access to free media as challenges Ethiopia faces. It also encourages people to work to address these challenges, but offer no advice on how one should do this.

Summarising discussion

Regardless of anything said about democracy in the curriculum materials, any argument about whether the curriculum promotes democracy or democratic citizenship has to be viewed in the context of the current political situation in Ethiopia, which few if any would argue is especially democratic. When reports from The Independent, Freedom House, and The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance all criticise both the electoral process and the status of civil liberties and argues that the country if anything is becoming less democratic. Despite promises from prime minister Abiy Ahmed of “democracy for all”, this makes it so any argument that the content of the new curriculum materials indicates a genuine wish to make Ethiopia more democratic would be either naïve or disingenuous. Still, the content of the curriculum materials places a much larger emphasis on teaching students about democratic rights and values than one would likely expect from a country that is labelled as an authoritarian regime, even if it is an electoral form of authoritarianism. Democracy and human rights are discussed exclusively in positive terms, and I believe it promotes appreciation for democratic values and governance, which is stated as goals in the curriculum framework. Whether it promotes democratic behaviour is more difficult to determine.

Democracy as a political system, in the textbooks, is discussed mostly through the lens of the rights it provides the citizens of a country. The rights given to Ethiopian citizens in their constitution is expressed as making Ethiopia democratic. This emphasis on rights is most consistent with a liberal conception of democracy. However, the view of citizens in the curriculum materials is far more consistent with a republican conception of democracy. The overwhelming focus is on citizens duties, and a responsibility for the common good, rather than personal desires. This is expressed as something that separates good and bad citizens. This view of citizens is not reconcilable with a liberal conception of democracy that values personal freedom. Even though the curriculum lacks some of the emphasis on democratic participation that is part of the republican conception of democracy, the emphasis on “common good” as a goal, and of citizens duties over rights makes this the category that best describes understanding of democracy that is expressed in the curriculum materials.

The types of citizenship that are promoted in the curriculum materials are best described by the categories of republican civic education from Cohen (2010)’s framework and the personally responsible citizen from Westheimer & Kahne (2004)’s framework. Starting with republican civic education, the curriculum materials place a large emphasis on developing a common national identity, and positive feelings towards Ethiopia which is very much in line with this approach to citizenship education. Because of this, the curriculum feels very much like a part of a nation-building project that is meant to solve problems related to the ethnic diversity of the Ethiopian population. Because of both recent and historical ethnic conflicts between the nations of Ethiopia, it would make sense for there to be a focus on fostering better relationships between the different ethnic groups. At the same time the language of multiculturalism and respect for diversity feels less impactful when it is accompanied by this large a focus on developing a common national identity. It seems that attachment to ethnically or regionally defined communities, rather than to a single national community, which is described as

“regionalism” the grade 10 textbook, is viewed as a problem that needs to be solved. I interpret the warnings about the dangers of regionalism, and the emphasis on patriotism and national loyalty as expressing that the regional or ethnic communities that exist in Ethiopia is not as important as the national community. Devaluing the diversity of identities of Ethiopians in favour of a single national identity seems to me like the opposite of “accommodating minority cultures” (Joppke, 2002), it is instead an expression of promoting the dominant culture at their expense. Criticism has been directed at Abiy Ahmad for wanting to turn Ethiopia into a unitary state, and I would argue that promotion of “unity in diversity” as it is expressed in the curriculum materials fits well within this narrative.

Apart from developing national unity the most dominant aspect of the citizenship education is the emphasis on value ethics and developing students’ moral character. Based on Westheimer & Kahne (2004)’s typology this indicates an approach that seeks to develop “personally responsible citizens”. The emphasis on individual character is accompanied by a lacking focus on the kinds of political participation that characterize the participatory or justice-oriented citizens. The curriculum material focuses heavily on developing individual characteristics and values like loyalty, responsibility, equality, patriotism, tolerance, and respect for the rule of law. Westheimer & Kahne (2004) expresses concern that too large an emphasis on individual values and character takes away from a necessary focus on “collective and public sector initiatives” as well as critical analysis of systemic problems, and a too large emphasis on this kind citizenship education is not suitable for developing democratic citizens. This is virtually absent from the curriculum materials I have analysed. Instead, failures of “moral integrity” in Ethiopian citizens is explained as a major reason for problems in society and the curriculum materials imply that students should improve themselves first to help solve these problems. This shows that problems in society is viewed as caused by “personal deficits, rather than structural issues” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p.239). This represents the opposite view than that of the “justice-oriented citizen”. Comparing this with the conclusions of the research of Yamada (2011), Semela et.al (2013) and Ghebru & Lloyd (2020) on the previous curriculum, it seems that the citizenship ideal in the current curriculum materials does not represent much of a change.

I would argue that encouraging students to engage in democratic participation is not a priority in these curriculum materials. The curriculum framework could be interpreted as expressing a goal of developing active citizens, but the way it is written it instead feels like it is just a buzzword tacked on at the end of a sentence about students “living a legally and socially desirable way of life”. It is also never explained what active citizenship entails, or what kind of democratic behaviour is wanted. The textbooks differ in their perspective on civic participation with the grade 8 textbook expressing a view of civic participation as an obligation of citizens, and a necessity for a functioning democracy. The grade 9 and 10 textbooks on the other hand discuss civic participation more as a right of citizens that they can make use of if and how they choose. A couple of ways of participating are suggested in the grade 8 textbook, but they are never discussed further. The lack of discussion about specific ways that students can participate in democracy, combined with the inconsistency in expectations between textbooks makes it so the curriculum materials does not contain any unified vision of what democratic participation

should look like in Ethiopia. By omission it is however made quite clear that collective action such as protests, or other forms of civil disobedience is not desirable.

Some of the language related to social change and social justice in the curriculum materials is reminiscent of language used to describe the justice-oriented citizen and critical civic education. Much like with the idea of active citizenship, these concepts are given little meaning in the curriculum framework, and little is said about what kind of social change is wanted or how students should work to achieve either social change or social justice. The best indication, in my opinion, of what kind of social change is wanted and how citizens should work to achieve it, is what I interpret as connections between the idea of social change and economic development. The curriculum presents an idea of societal "transformation" and "change" with the goal of becoming a middle-income country. This along with the large emphasis on economic productivity of as duty of citizens leads me to believe that the curriculum framework wants Ethiopian citizens to promote social change by becoming more economically productive. The textbooks also emphasize that social change needs to start with the individual. When the textbooks also express a view of societal problems being the result of individual moral or character flaws the curriculum materials also express a desire for citizens to better their moral character as a way to improve society. The curriculum materials also lack the emphasis on collective work that characterizes the participatory or justice-oriented citizen.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I find the main focus of citizenship education in Ethiopia as expressed in the curriculum framework and citizenship education textbooks for grades 8-10 is developing a common national identity and the right moral character in citizens. I interpret this curriculum to be a part of a strategy to solve problems in Ethiopia related to ethnic diversity. It wants to do this by promoting a common national identity that transcends the diversity of ethnic or regional identities that make up the nations of Ethiopia. Apart from respect for this diversity it is unclear what should be the basis of this identity. This is explained as an approach of multiculturalism, but because the political system of Ethiopia is already built on accommodation of minority cultures through devolution of political power, I find this approach to be a move in a direction of promotion of a single culture rather than accommodation of many.

In my opinion the Ethiopian curriculum materials is more concerned with developing dutiful, loyal, and hard-working citizens than it is in promoting democratic citizenship, and the personally responsible citizen as an ideal type is a very good description of the approach to citizenship education that is represented in the curriculum materials. There are undeniably a lot of positive values that citizenship education attempts to promote in students, but the overwhelming emphasis on individual character and values both as a cause and solution to societal problems I find to take away from a necessary focus on other democratic priorities. The curriculum uses the language of social change and social justice which in theory is often connected to challenge to power and societal structures that reproduce injustice, but is used in the curriculum materials as connected to economic development and the values of citizens. For a low-income country like Ethiopia economic development is obviously important and would improve the lives of many Ethiopians, but I find that it promotes an idea of civic participation that does not emphasise the importance of collective democratic action. Comparing my findings to the conclusions of research on the previous curriculum

Furthermore, the promotion of patriotism and national loyalty as desired citizen behaviour in the curriculum materials can very easily become at odds with the promotion of democratic behaviour and be used to disincentivise challenges to and criticism of those in power. Citizen participation is expressed in the textbook as a benefit to society, and a couple of ways to engage in democratic participation is presented, but the concept is almost entirely absent in the curriculum framework. Instead of democratic participation, economic participation as a duty of citizens is emphasized. Despite there being language in the curriculum materials that encourages democratic participation, the lack of a unified vision of what this should look like as well as a lack of emphasis on teaching students how to actually participate in democracy in a meaningful way indicates to me that this is not a priority. There might not be enough empirical or theoretical basis in my thesis to make any assertions about educational outcomes, but I believe the approach to citizenship education that this curriculum represents is not sufficient to motivate or prepare students to take an active part in an Ethiopian democracy. When the government has been shown to "crack down" on political opposition this does not come as that much of a surprise.

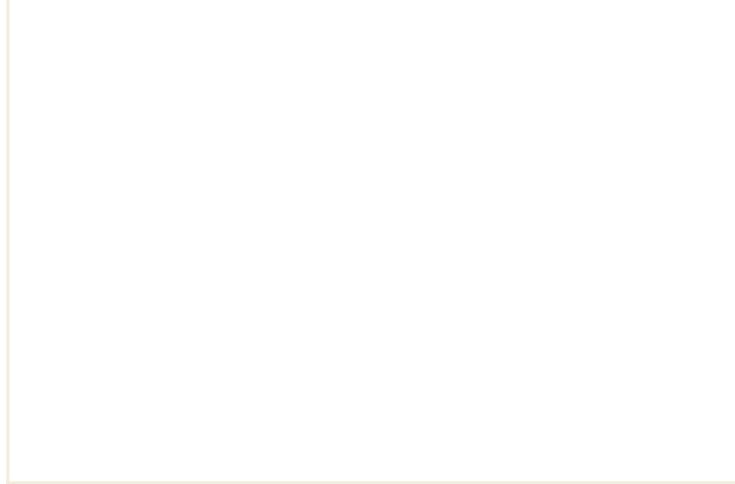
Despite the criticisms I have of the content of the curriculum materials I find it to promote a positive view of democracy and human rights. It also expresses to students and teachers that democracy is important and the best way to organize society. Because of this citizenship education is far more democratic than I expected when I chose this as my topic of research. I also believe it does provide opportunities for teachers to give students good education for democracy. Because of a lot of vague language in the curriculum framework I believe it is very possible to interpret this curriculum differently than I have, and for teachers or authors of local curriculum to justify an approach to citizenship education that is more in line with a participatory or justice-oriented citizenship. The scope of this research has been limited, and to understand the actual educational outcomes that these curriculum materials will lead to, it will require more study of actual educational situations.

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