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## Citizenship formation through curriculum and pedagogical practices: Evidence from two Zimbabwean teachers' colleges

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The need to include citizenship education in the school curriculum has been considered as significant for advancing democratic values, social justice, and human development. Debates on citizenship formation focus on various dimensions, such as human rights and global citizenship with limited focus on how “curriculum transposition” of citizenship education in teacher education has been undertaken. This paper argues that there is a need for citizenship education that advances democratic values, human capabilities, and social justice. It draws on 5 lecturer participants' voices in a case study on the operationalisation of National and Strategic Studies, a variant of citizenship education, in two Zimbabwean teachers' colleges. The paper investigates the form of citizenship cultivated by National and Strategic Studies, how this is achieved, and the challenges and opportunities to advancing critical citizenship among future teachers. The findings suggest that, despite aspirational moments of teaching and learning for critical thinking, curriculum and pedagogical practices represent an imperfect realisation of advancing critical citizenship. The paper proposes the need for curriculum and pedagogical practices in citizenship education to be more critical and democratic to form a robust form of citizenship that is democratic and critical.

**Keywords:** capability approach; citizenship education; critical democratic citizen; curriculum and pedagogical practices; human development

### Introduction

Given the limited focus of curriculum operationalisation in citizenship education (CE), the capability approach (CA) is applied as an evaluative framework to curriculum and pedagogical practices in National and Strategic Studies (NASS), a variant of CE, taught in Zimbabwean teachers' colleges. The CA is a normative evaluative tool propounded and developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum in the 1980s and 90s (Robeyns, 2005). Its tenets are discussed in detail later in the paper. The CA is adopted to assess the extent to which teacher education advances critical citizenship and human capabilities formation. Human capabilities include student teachers' freedom, choices and opportunities to participate as critical democratic citizens in decision-making that affects not only their own lives, but also those of future citizens (Marovah, 2013). In this case, the student teachers are students who have already undertaken their teaching practice and are now completing their final year at the college. Therefore, the CA offers an alternative theoretical lens, providing “a general normative framework for the assessment of human development,” but is applied in the area of CE in this paper (Unterhalter, Vaughan & Walker, 2007). As such, using the CA advances CE, which shapes student teachers into active and critical democratic citizens. Critical democratic citizens are society members who do not take things at face value but are informed by democratic values such as tolerance, participation, and public deliberation.

The paper addresses the research question, from the perspective of lecturers at two selected teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe. The research question is: What form of citizenship is promoted by NASS and how is this achieved? The research seeks to capture and interpret lived experiences of lecturers, the context, and citizenship dimensions advanced in the operationalisation of NASS. The paper first explores debates on citizenship formation and emphasises the limited focus in the literature on curriculum and pedagogical experiences in this area, while the second section focuses on the methodology of the study. The third section draws on lecturer participants' voices regarding their curriculum and pedagogical experiences to explore and discuss the extent to which teaching and learning practices contribute to developing critical and knowledgeable citizens who can function ethically as part of a democratic society. The discussion is divided into three curriculum and pedagogical practice subsections namely the NASS syllabus, teaching experiences, and citizenship values emerging. From the above, curriculum and pedagogical practices relate to the summation of activities, values, methods, and strategies used in planning and implementing the teaching and learning of CE in selected teachers' colleges. The paper concludes by highlighting key issues that emerged in the discussion and how these relate to the fostering of critical citizenship and human capabilities through curriculum and pedagogical practices.

### Citizenship Education in the United States and United Kingdom

Contrasting pathways of operationalising CE in literature from the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) agree that the future of democracy hinges on the education of citizens (Annette, 2005; Galston, 1989; Hahn, 1999; McCowan, 2006, 2012). According to McCowan (2012), the UK boasts a highly centralised education system with a common curriculum for all. The thrust of the CE programmes involves

blending conservative with more progressive aspects of active engagement, namely social and moral responsibility, community involvement, and political literacy. Whereas these aspects indicate the complexity and multidimensionality of CE, there seems to be limited focus on the role of CE in advancing human development.

In the USA and other countries with a federal system of government and a diversified population, the curriculum is less centralised, granting local school districts the autonomy to make policy. It is, thus, not surprising that Hahn (1999) finds the focus in most of these schools to be on the Constitution, its amendments and the Bill of Rights, the pledge of allegiance, and national symbols, which all contribute to the development of national identity and patriotism.

Service learning, with volunteering and community involvement, is yet another element of CE found in both USA and UK schools and universities (Annette, 2005). In his historiography, McCowan (2012) identifies several non-state organisations that support citizenship in schools and higher education institutions by making it more practical and relevant to students' everyday experiences. This, in turn, cultivates the values of social responsibility and volunteering which are important for shaping student teachers into active and critical democratic citizens. However, in non-democratic contexts, CE could be abused to advance government propaganda.

#### Citizenship Education in Selected African Countries and Zimbabwe

In the context of Africa in general, and Zimbabwe in particular, various forms of CE dictated by specific political contexts have been implemented as exemplified in Nigeria, Zambia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Oluniyi (2011) highlights that CE in Nigeria was initially offered as social studies but later as civics education in primary and junior secondary schools. Oluniyi (2011:61) adds that the multiple ethnic composition of the new state of Nigeria "necessitated finding a common ground to promote committed citizens, against primordial ethnic cleavages and indigenization." According to Morris (2002), the Zambian state surrendered the task of inculcating a culture of democracy mainly on non-governmental organizations (NGOs); these include religious bodies, labour unions, professional associations, and community groups. Mphaisha (2000) and Mutz (2002) conclude that despite suspicion by the Zambian government, which lacks tolerance towards student activism, students in colleges and universities attain civic knowledge through their association with civic organizations. In the South African context, the basic educational policy indicates clarity and the centrality of public schools in advancing the civic role with limited

attention to CE in higher education (HE) institutions (Schoeman, 2006; Waghid, 2004). However, the National Plan for Higher Education (Department of Education, 2001) emphasises the need for fostering students' capacity to deliberate respectfully with one another in order to become responsible citizens. Amidst criticism from more liberal scholars, several types of democratic citizens have been suggested placing emphasis on Ubuntu and communitarian values (Makgoba, 1996). This is understandable given South Africa's apartheid and colonial past, with its tendencies to segregate and treat citizens as different.

Literature on CE in the Zimbabwean context indicates various approaches and interpretations in both schools and HE. However, there is an information gap on forms of citizen sought in policy documents. While initial studies on CE adopted a historical approach, lately, some draw from curriculum theory centred on realism and constructionism to investigate the history, aim, content, and justification of CE (Mavhunga, Moyo & Chinyani, 2012; Munikwa & Pedzisai, 2013; Ranger, 2004; Tendi, 2010). The current focus is on the perceptions of students and lecturers towards the course. Surprisingly there has been limited focus on evaluating the form and quality of CE taught, or the type of citizen sought. Within the limited literature, there are contestations on what CE in the context of Zimbabwe sought to achieve and the type of citizens formed. Despite the various forms of CE introduced since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the general perception has been that NASS has been compulsorily introduced in 2002 as a response to a series of challenges that the government faced throughout the 1990s (Mavhunga et al., 2012; Munikwa & Pedzisai, 2013). The problems include growing political opposition, economic decline, social unrests, a series of industrial actions, food riots, and student protests (Nyakudya, 2011). Thus, CE grounded on the philosophy of Ubuntu proposed by Nziramasnga in 1999 was interpreted as meant to control young people and turn them away from being critical of the government of the time. The historiographical approach by most of the above Zimbabwean studies lack an engagement with real controversies in CE. Before assessing pedagogical practices in CE in the context of limited democratic space during the rule of President Mugabe<sup>1</sup> using the CA, the next section provides a brief understanding of curriculum and pedagogical practices relating to democratic education broadly and CE specifically.

#### Curriculum and Pedagogical Practices

The curriculum and pedagogical practices and processes of an educational programme that claim to be preparing critical democratic citizens should be inclined towards criticality. With regard to CE pro-

grammes, “critical” refers to both critical pedagogy and critical thinking. In this paper, it is argued that such curriculum and pedagogical practices should attempt to strengthen democratic values and social justice by developing critical thinking, analytic skills and respect for diversity of opinion (Arthur & Wright, 2001; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). In order to achieve this, the paper draws on Dewey (1916, 1974), Giroux (1992), and Gutmann (1987) who note the need for free and equitable interaction between learners and teachers informed by shared interests.

Gutmann (1987) argues that education not only sets the stage for democratic politics, but also plays a central role in it. In the light of this, Gutmann (1987), like Dewey (1916, 1974), proposes a democratic form of education which is inclusive and deliberative. From this perspective, there is a need to enlarge the range of our outlook on education beyond an individualistic view, between teacher and pupil, or between teacher and parent. Furthermore, it should be noted that democratic education and democracy cannot prosper in an oppressive context (Dewey, 1974; Giroux, 1992; Gutmann, 1987). Thus, pedagogical practices in CE should aim to teach the skills of reasoned deliberation to a society of free and equal citizens. This is in tandem with Dewey’s (1916) view of democracy as a way of life, rather than merely a system of good governance. From this assertion CE needs to be historically, culturally, and existentially recast through a “language of critique and possibility that expands and deepens the possibility for cultural and political democracy” (Giroux, 1992:4).

Hyslop-Margison and Sears (2006), Johnson and Morris (2010), and McCowan (2012) draw on an analysis of Crick (2000) and Freire’s (1972) work in different ways to explain that CE should empower young people with capacities to participate in political and other social processes and, in this way, enable them to challenge policies and events that are against democratic values.<sup>ii</sup> This is what could be regarded as critical CE. To achieve this, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) suggest that CE should involve learning about social and moral responsibility, involvement in the community, and political literacy. Indeed, critical CE sharpens critical thinking capacities that are important in the analysis of political, social and other issues when it includes deliberation on issues often regarded as “sensitive areas.”

These critical perspectives on the operationalisation of citizenship seem to converge towards civic republican approaches to citizenship in that they value universal political participation (McCowan, 2012). Of importance are the pedagogical practices of “dialogue and problematisation.” These entail a shift from traditional teacher-centred approaches to questioning, deliberative and participatory learning where learners are fully involved in

learning through engagement with problems and contradictions within their reality.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the aims, forms and scope of CE are contextually derived and represent complex approaches ranging from passive to active forms of citizenship. Conformists argue for CE that fosters obedience to the law, economic productivity and self-sufficiency, social cohesion or integration, loyalty to community and country. The progressive perspective, on the other hand, would like to see CE that develops cosmopolitan attitudes which transcend localised loyalties configured within democratic values. The tendency to misrepresent the complexity of and contestations regarding citizenship by using a binary and reductionist approach in terms of worldview and pedagogy, limits the literature reviewed above. In light of this, there is a need for theoretical lenses that can explore complex issues from a multidimensional perspective as provided by the CA, which is discussed in the next section.

#### The Capability Approach

The central idea of the CA focusing on social, economic, and political arrangements aiming to expand people’s freedom to be or to do what they rationally value, provides a sound theoretical contribution to this paper. Its application is significant in a curriculum that seeks the formation of a particular type of citizen – critical and democratic. Furthermore, CA’s emphasis on freedom and choices is in sync with the idea of democratic education espoused above by Dewey (1916, 1974), Giroux (1992), and Gutmann (1987). The CA is a flexible framework rather than a precise theory (Robeyns, 2005; Sen, 1992). Its major concepts and tenets, capabilities, functioning, conversion factors, heterogeneity, and public deliberation are briefly discussed. These are useful in advancing a NASS curriculum that emphasises deliberation, criticality, and cosmopolitan citizenship as opposed to loyalty to the nation state, which has been the case traditionally (McCowan & Unterhalter, 2009).

Capabilities are “the alternative combination of functionings that are feasible for [a person] to achieve well-being”; they are “the substantive freedom” a person has “to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value” (Sen, 1999:87). Wilson-Strydom (2015:151) argues that “[w]ithin the capabilities approach, functionings are akin to outcomes and refer to the achievement of being and doing what one has reason to value.” Thus, when considering CE pedagogical practices, we should ask whether students have had the same opportunities to achieve a desired outcome instead of focusing on whether different students have achieved the same outcome (for example, of critical thinking).

The connection between capabilities and functionings also depends on other factors such as conversion factors. Conversion factors, as explained by

Sen (1999), include all social, political, and economic arrangements contributing to the realisation of functionings. The ability to achieve certain beings and doings such as critical thinking and public deliberation are therefore influenced by three types of conversion factors, namely personal, social, and environmental characteristics. Personal characteristics such as physical condition, gender, or level of reading skills, or literacy could limit the freedom, for example, to choose a leader as an equal citizen within the context of voting by secret ballot. Such a person would need to be assisted to vote, even though the assistance rendered itself can be viewed as a conversion factor enhancing the exercise of the right to vote. Social characteristics (e.g., public policies, social norms and practices) such as obedience and respect for elders could be used to suppress dissenting voices of youths or to suppress women in a patriarchy.

Nussbaum (2002) proposes three capabilities for democratic citizenship, namely critical thinking, the ability to think as a global citizen, and narrative imagination. These capabilities are useful for assessing the extent to which curriculum and pedagogical arrangements foster the formation of critical democratic citizens. Critical thinking is the ability to criticise oneself and traditionally held truths, accepting only those that survive reason's demand for consistency and justification of logic (Nussbaum, 2002, 2006). To foster this capability, CE requires logical reasoning and testing of evidence for consistency of reasoning, correctness of facts and accuracy of judgment. The ability to think as a global citizen involves seeing oneself as a human being connected to others by an ethic of recognition and compassion, rather than simply as citizens of some locality. In order to cultivate this capability, CE ought to recognise and accommodate those differences that complicate understanding between groups and nations, as well as the common human needs and interests crucial for cooperation among them. Moreover, CE should ensure that learning is about nations other than one's own, and about the different groups that are part of one's own nation. Lastly, Nussbaum (2002, 2006) understands narrative imagination as the ability to empathise, which includes being able to understand the realities, aspirations, and emotions of others. Because the things that people value or aspire to be or to do vary within individuals and groups, there is a need to engage with each other in public deliberations, after heterogeneity has been recognised first.

The CA is strong on the point of viewing citizens as heterogeneous; for example, their ability to deliberate depends on individual abilities of communicating, building an argument, or matching complex and conflicting proposals, as well as being reflexive (McCowan & Unterhalter, 2009, 2013). Democratic citizenship should, thus, be viewed as "more than majoritarian rule and the organisational

or institutional processes of ballots, but instead involving on-going participation in decision-making and the exercise of public reason" (Sen, 2009:324). In this vein, public deliberations are critical for active participation of citizens, and key to evaluating curriculum and pedagogical practices in NASS. When analysing curriculum and pedagogical practices in CE, it is important to investigate the barriers to democratic participation, noting that democratic participation is dependent upon the citizens' ability to enter into public deliberations and action. The next section presents the methodology followed in the study.

### Methodology

This paper draws on qualitative data collected in a doctor of philosophy (PhD) study between February and May 2014, involving 31 volunteer participants, two mid-level policy stakeholders, 24 student participants and five lecturers from two rural primary school teachers' colleges. The author, who was the researcher in the PhD study, was also a principal lecturer in one of the colleges. The fact that the author was a lecturer in one of the institutions does not compromise the quality and interpretation of the data, as data analysis was guided by the particularity of the moment and the spirit to advance a capability focused and socially just CE programme.

The participating colleges were identified through a type of purposive sampling called multi-stage cluster sampling (Bryman, 2008). This sampling involves the clustering of primary sampling units (e.g., both colleges have a relatively long history of teacher training); then of categories (e.g., by responsible authority); and then of different clusters within those categories (e.g., type of diploma awarded by the college, primary). The sampling technique was necessary because teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe design their own curricula which are then approved by the University of Zimbabwe based on a scheme of associateship. This means that each college is semi-autonomous as it determines its own curriculum. The University of Zimbabwe acts as a quality controller for these curricula and approves the programmes offered at each college and, thus, certifies the graduates. Therefore, the need was clear to study more than one college, not necessarily for comparative purposes, but to allow for a broad understanding of the range of actors in their contexts (Yin, 2003). The first college, Charity Teachers' College (CTC), is government owned, while the second college, Good Hope Teachers' College (GHTC), is owned by a church organisation.

Ethical aspects were addressed by seeking ethical clearance from the affiliate university, applying for authority to access institutions from the Zimbabwean government, and securing informed consent from all participants. The institutions, stu-

dents, and lecturers were all made aware that participation was voluntary. Pseudonyms were used for colleges and participants' names in line with the code of ethics approved by the university. Although perspectives on curriculum and pedagogical practices were also gained from student participants, this article focuses on the five lecturers' voices drawn from 1-hour, semi-structured, in-depth interviews.

Data was collected in the two colleges by means of qualitative methods which included semi-structured, in-depth interviews with all 31 participants, focus-group discussions with student participants, class observations and document analysis. The qualitative data was organised and analysed using NVivo software. All qualitative data was open coded initially to allow participant voices to emerge and guide the identification of themes. Thereafter, a second round of thematic coding was performed. The fact that only five lecturers' views are represented is acknowledged as a limitation, since their views are not necessarily representative of all who were involved in NASS implementation. The next section provides a discussion of the findings on lecturers' curriculum and pedagogical experiences under three themes.

### Discussion

Curriculum is viewed as the summation of all intended and unintended teaching and learning experiences in an educational context (Kelly, 2004). Using this understanding, the paper presents lecturers' perspectives on their curriculum and pedagogical experiences organised in sub-themes. The first sub-theme is a component of the curriculum, namely the NASS syllabus, which focuses on how the syllabus was generated and/or reviewed, the components of the syllabus, and its implementation. The second sub-theme explores pedagogical experiences, i.e. the instructional experiences which include teaching methods used in NASS lessons. The third sub-theme centres on assessment practices, and the fourth explores underlying values advanced through various curriculum and pedagogical practices. Hidden elements of the curriculum processes, including power dynamics, are also discussed because they emerged in both colleges through the lecturers' responses. The following findings are discussed in this paper: the form of citizenship promoted by NASS is largely non-critical. This is influenced by the context in which NASS is taught and how its curriculum is operationalised. It also emerged that lecturers make an effort to educate students for critical citizenship despite limitations for such type of CE in policy documents. From the lecturers' perspectives, it is evident that the NASS curriculum and its pedagogical practices are value laden. However, some values, such as respect, do not always work in favour of promoting critical democratic citizenship. Ow-

ing to the often uncritical pedagogy used, the form of citizenship cultivated can be described as minimalist.

### The NASS Syllabuses

The most important observation from an analysis of these policy documents is that there is no explicit mention of the need to teach for critical citizenship in the syllabuses. In both colleges, the NASS syllabus is guided by processes stipulated in the *Department of Teacher Education (DTE): Handbook for quality assurance* (University of Zimbabwe, 2012). The structure of the syllabus and the weighting of the components of the syllabus are prescribed by the University of Zimbabwe. The syllabus draws on the DTE handbook, which requires a component of coursework and an examination weighted at 30% and 70% respectively.

Aims and objectives for the NASS syllabus in each college are the same. The focus of the syllabus is producing a patriotic, creative, professional, effective, resourceful, and humane teacher. The content is divided into three sections: section A covers the effect of Zimbabwean colonial history on national development; section B covers post-colonial developments in Zimbabwe; and section C covers socio-economic issues post-independence, environmental issues, and resource utilisation for sustainable development. There is also a distance education component focusing on regional and international relations. Under the distance education component students need to submit one written assignment. Modules and hand-outs with relevant information are given to students to assist them in assignment writing.

The participating lecturers from both colleges provided details on how NASS is to be operationalised. Mutambanengwe emphasised imparting knowledge for application, although his example of knowledge that would help students make choices is perhaps questionable:

*We give students information that they use to make their own choices. At all cost[s] we try to have topics which have something to do with national issues; let's talk of national symbols ...*

Mutambanengwe's emphasis on "choice" demands an understanding of the type of choices available and real opportunities to make such choices. To what extent do citizens have the freedom to do so? Some of the skills participating lecturers claim are fostered by NASS are good survival skills, which would advance freedom from poverty and hunger, and are powerful factors which can upset citizens' well-being. For example, business projects enhance their economic freedoms, while provision of knowledge about life-threatening diseases is a way of guaranteeing citizens what can be called social security. However, as argued by Sen (1999), citizens need more than this to consider themselves armed with survival skills. They need life skills that

will empower them to make collective or individual decisions regarding their valued doings and beings. These are necessary skills for negotiating one's democratic space in the real world, because citizens are often confronted by situations that require not only critical thinking as global citizens, but also the capability of narrative imagination (Nussbaum, 1997, 2002, 2006). These skills were not emphasised in any of the policy documents or by lecturers. When critical thinking was mentioned, it was as an afterthought. From this analysis, the form of citizenship being advanced by NASS seems to lack the ability to effectively prepare students for active participation in political life, though it does seem to equip them for survival in the economic and social realm.

Given the autonomy granted to these colleges to create their own syllabus, one would have expected the lecturers to fully utilise the opportunity to promote those citizenship values that advance human development (HD), if they were indeed persuaded of their significance. However, they seem to have taken a path that is defined by Galston (1989) and McCowan (2009, 2012) as conformist, seeking more to accommodate the politics of the day and less to advance democratic citizenship values. For example, Albert testified that: *What is actually being taught if you look at the history component is not Zimbabwean history per se but is partisan history.* This connects with some claims among history scholars that national issues are being articulated in a partisan manner (Materike 2012; Ranger, 2004, 2005; Tendi, 2010). In both colleges lecturers admitted that the history component mainly concentrated on dominant ethnic groups (the Shona and the Ndebele) and political parties (Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front [ZANU-PF] and Movement for Democratic Change [MDC]).

Importantly, the lecturers were making an effort to move away from a narrow, historicised, partisan NASS syllabus at every opportunity. From the evidence, the NASS curriculum's greatest strength is its interdisciplinary character, which allows for an exploration of a variety of aspects important for the development of a critical and creative mind. This means that, whenever convenient, lecturers exercised agency by making decisions and taking the action necessary to advance critical citizenship. The teaching methods used in NASS seemed to have taken the same path, as illustrated below.

#### Teaching Methods

All the lecturers appreciated the importance of critical thinking in Nussbaum's (2002, 2006) sense. They castigated others for not engaging students to the levels they would describe as advancing critical thinking. However, contradictions were identified among and within individual lecturers on how they view critical thinking and how it is cultivated in

NASS. At one level, they claimed that critical thinking is advanced through various pedagogical and curriculum arrangements focusing on NASS; yet they had reservations on whether there is room to advance critical thinking in their contexts. In line with Nyakudya's (2011) assertion, Albert acknowledged various teaching methods useful for critical thinking in NASS:

*There are so many methods, one can use lecture method[s], field trips etc. but above all one should engage the students in projects – that's what I have been encouraging colleagues [to do] wherever I go for external assessment.*

Albert did not only recommend these methods, but also claimed to be using them in his lessons. His main concern was the partisan nature of the way the course was being taught. Albert explicitly spelled out in whose favour this partisan history tended: *of course those who are fickle-minded, because they will be doing it for political expedience, this was being ZANUnised.*<sup>iii</sup> This comment by Albert indicates that at times lecturers realised the need to be critical in their approach.

At GHTC, Mutambanengwe disapproved of the teaching approach used by one of his colleagues, who had since left the college:

*His approach was vindictive, if I can say [that]. For example, for him there was nothing good which can be derived from the white regime: everything was bad.*

From the above, it is evident that lecturers' experiences were not always similar. They experienced moments of critical citizenship in which they critically engaged with issues; in other moments they appeared uncritical and biased towards the ruling party. Despite these limitations, all five lecturers made claims about a deliberate effort to engage students critically.

Another teaching method which lecturers in both colleges praised was field trips to historical sites, such as the Great Zimbabwe, because they provided an opportunity for students to learn through doing and seeing. However, it should be noted that field visits do not necessarily guarantee meaningful learning. Educating citizens for critical citizenship calls for a conscious and deliberate will to do so by meticulously preparing lessons for that mode of teaching. Without the right attitude, it is doubtful that those in charge of tour sites would be able to deliver lectures that cultivate active and critical democratic citizens.

In the NASS lectures there is also a tendency to teach for examinations, which is not a good starting point for critical thinking or collaborative learning (Nzirasanga, 1999). The fact that examinations determine the fate of students (particularly in NASS where the students must pass in order to graduate) is a clear indicator of unequal distribution of power in NASS lectures.

The classroom practices discussed above advance certain values which either inhibit or foster

critical citizenship. The next section focuses on the citizenship values that emerged from the lecturers' voices.

#### Citizenship Values Emerging

The curriculum and pedagogical practices are understood in relation to values which weave them together, unavoidably influencing an individual's capability set (Vaughan & Walker, 2012). Throughout the interviews reference was made to understanding national values, moral values, democratic values, Ubuntu values and elements of HD values. For example, Albert ascertained that *NASS is guided and informed by the African humanist philosophy of Ubuntu*.

The emphasis on Ubuntu values serves as a basis for inculcating moral behaviour and advancing important democratic values such as tolerance and compassion. The two lecturers at CTC upheld the importance of advancing the common good as well as individual rights (in practice, the focus on rights appears to be limited). What is problematic, however, is that in NASS, the connectedness of individuals to society is narrowed down to the country, rather than the world. This could be used as a vehicle for the suppression of minority ethnic, cultural, ideological or religious groups, the stifling of independent critical thought, and the promotion of imperialism, xenophobia, and parochialism (McCowan, 2008).

Ubuntu values emphasised at GHTC seem conservative in approach. Mutambanengwe said: *As we teach students to be endowed with the values of Africanness, they will become aware of what it means to be an African*. Taguta was sure that there is no danger of overshadowing personal liberties through such elements as respect: Ubuntu is not used as a way of advancing respect or as a way of avoiding dissent. To him, respect is a way of life, even in other non-African contexts. With regard to African philosophy, he saw it as a two-way process, where the elders respect the young ones as much as the young also respect elders. While this acknowledgement is a glimmer of hope for the advancement of a more inclusive and less coercive course, there is a tendency among the lecturers to take Ubuntu as a tried and tested philosophy that needs no further scrutiny. Nonetheless, Taguta (unlike other lecturers) was careful not to romanticise Ubuntu, acknowledging that *education is a springboard where those in power get their ideas to the people, and certainly there is no way that the dominant political party would accept other voices, although this should not be the case*.

Taguta's mention of the possibility of those in power pushing their own agenda was commendable for keeping the discussion alive to power dynamics and how these can influence the level of critical thinking in NASS, as well as the values it seeks to advance. However, the extent to which power is

given to the students to negotiate their democratic space, both within their institutions and the communities in which they will work, is relative, despite claims by Albert that there is total empowerment.

Lecturers stressed other values such as democratic values of public deliberation and inclusivity, as well as the HD value of empowerment with emphasis on decreasing the dependence syndrome. According to Mandizha, inclusivity encompassed students and even outsiders. He mentioned that: *Including others is the best practice and should be our way to go. We invite others to share with us their experiences*. Even though he viewed the involvement of students as imperative, he claimed that the extent of students' involvement was limited. The students' involvement can be taken to be affirmative rather than transformative in the sense that categorisations of students and lecturers were maintained, although both groups' contributions were valued. His claims that students get an opportunity to evaluate lecturers' pedagogical practices were not backed up by empirical evidence. There were no copies of evaluation forms to show students' evaluations, or how lecturers responded to these evaluations.

From the lecturers' voices there seems to be limited respect for individuals' choices regarding students' political concerns, which brings into question the idea of critical thinking and empowerment previously claimed by the participants. The way that Albert castigated a former MDC member of parliament who had decided to leave his seat to settle in the UK was also revealing.<sup>iv</sup> He said: *I remember this youngest MP [named] Tafadzwa Musekiwa who had to forego a seat in parliament for the option of going to scrub the backs of old people in the old people's homes in UK*. In this statement, Albert failed to see beyond the obvious and attempted to understand and accept that what people value is different. He had no kind words for those who had chosen to go outside the country. He called them *tools of the whites. They are white men's spokesperson in black skin, instead of being the voices of the voiceless*. From these statements, it is clear that Albert did not recognise the freedom of choice.

Despite the fact that public deliberations are at the heart of deliberative democracy, which encourages citizens' participation in decision-making (McCowan & Unterhalter, 2009, 2013), Mandizha doubted the effectiveness of deliberations in advancing the common good: *Debates may never be conclusive: they can just go on endlessly because of the polarised situation we have*. Mutambanengwe also noted that, in initial deliberations on what to include in the NASS syllabus at their college, *varied opinions came from different individuals within the course area but this was dominated by the person who attended the introductory work-*

*shop at national level.* This means the democratic processes undertaken were not flawless.

Although it is not typical in curriculum practice to involve students, the non-inclusion of students in the meetings that review the college syllabus weakens the degree of inclusivity. However, this does not mean that the lecturers did not recognise the need to include students in these meetings. Mutambanengwe said: *Yes, I think the client is an adult whom I think should also make an input here and there; the voice can also help us to shape the product which is user-friendly.*

Gunckel and Moore (2005) and Jagersma and Parsons (2011) praise the inclusion of students in curriculum review as essential in increasing the students' sense of ownership and reflective practice. In addition, focusing on curriculum and pedagogies, the CA emphasises the concerns of the voices of those who have to struggle to be heard and included (Vaughan & Walker, 2012:499). This means that curriculum arrangements and pedagogy ought to be in tune with the values that promote participation as part of citizenship.

From field observations, some institutional arrangements at GHTC depict exclusionary tendencies subtly embedded within the college structures through propagation of what they call "religious ethos," since the institution is run under the auspices of a religious organisation. For example, a prospective student's application for admission had been turned down on the basis that he did not have a testimonial letter from his church leader, despite the candidate's plea that he did not belong to a religious group with a pastor.<sup>v</sup> Surprisingly, NASS lecturers unquestioningly accepted these arrangements arguing that *at any church-run institution that is normal, because the college authorities need people who know and understand their ethos* (Zembe).

Based on Nussbaum's (2002) arguments on the value of narrative imagination, deliberation, tolerance, and respect, inclusivity should be augmented by sensitivity to religious liberty enshrined in the national constitution, which the NASS lecturers purported to have been teaching.

### Conclusion

Given the curriculum and pedagogical practices evident in the two colleges, the form of citizenship cultivated by NASS seems less able to produce an active and critical democratic citizen. The lecturers seemed to have some knowledge on values which must be promoted in order to teach for critical citizenship; however, they did not necessarily transform this knowledge into practical transformative activities in the teaching and learning of NASS. In their moments of aspirational critical citizenship, the lecturers took some risks and taught students the ability to think critically and to apply narrative imagination. But their capacity to think as world

citizens was limited by the syllabus' focus on the national context. The course is commended for focusing on the idea of advancing the common good of Ubuntu, although the idea of the common good itself could be used to propel the interests of those at the centre of power. The fact that religious affiliation at GHTC was often used as a qualification or disqualification for entrance into teacher training or as an access to power is regrettable. Those who do not belong to the religious denomination running the institution are marginalised and pressured to adopt the religious ethos of the denomination to enable them to participate in leadership roles. Apart from this, there was no evidence of the lecturers' will to stand against authority in the face of social injustices subtly embedded in the institutional arrangements of the institutions they work in. If citizens' capabilities were to be realised in student teachers through NASS, the operationalisation of NASS should be based on the model of criticality, rather than conformity. It should be free from indoctrination or any tendency to cultivate docile patriotism.

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### Notes

- i. Robert Mugabe was a Zimbabwean politician, revolutionary, and dictator who served as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe from 1980 to 1987 and then as President from 1987 to 2017.
- ii. They draw on Freire's work to challenge many of the assumptions surrounding CE in countries such as the USA and UK that do not question the impact of structures of power in inhibiting more robust forms of CE pedagogical practices advancing criticality.
- iii. "ZANUnised" here refers to teaching in a way that seeks to please ZANU-PF politicians.
- iv. The MDC is an opposition party formed in 1999, backed by students' unions, the biggest workers' union in Zimbabwe and civic society.
- v. African traditional religion is not organised in the same way as conventional Christian organisations with proper structures and in some cases offices where administrative tasks are carried out. People are just assembled as and when necessary, usually when there is a societal problem interpreted as requiring some spiritual intervention. They do not own buildings or any defined structures to administer their activities.

- vi. Published under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.
- vii. DATES: Received: 2 October 2016; Revised: 7 April 2017; Accepted: 30 May 2019; Published: 31 December 2019.

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