CONTESTING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

As a cultural discourse, the problematic conception of citizenship is a product of social fragmentation in Malaysia. Citizenship can carry two meanings - legal and sociological. The legal simply refers to a subject's right and duties to be recognized as a legally permanent inhabitant of a state. Secondly, the development of citizenship, understood in sociological terms, would involve a transformative process in which individuals come to see themselves as part of a wider citizen body, to which they owe obligations involving duties as well as having rights. As such, 'citizenship' in this paper refers to an educational process: learning and teaching to improve or achieve the aims inherent to the legal meaning. The objective of this paper is to pull together citizenship and education as central themes, -not legal but the sociological aspects, with the 'nations-of-intent' as a conceptual framework. It explores the meaning of citizenship in diverse and democratic Malaysian as nation-state, the multiple views of citizenship and the dimensions of citizenship education. Nevertheless, the present effort of citizenship education in Malaysia is based on a particular form of 'nation-of-intent' (Bangsa Malaysia). As nation-building in Malaysia is a state without a nation (and it has many nations-of-intent), the present effort does not include ideas to the nation when promoting citizenship education- the notion of 'equality in diversity' and not only 'unity in diversity'. The concept of citizenship and citizenship education in Malaysia is prompting only one form of 'nation-of intent' available in the country, whereas, there are other nations as well, apparently. An implication of it is that the concept of citizenship and thus, nation building in Malaysia is still fraught with confusion. The presence of plurality of 'nations-of-intent' in contemporary Malaysia demonstrates the fact that dissenting voices are present and heard, within and without government. To some extent, it is unavoidable, for the fundamental reason that the status of individuals and group in terms of identity and sense of belonging is itself divided, not particularly conducive to a consciousness of national unity.

Keywords: Citizenship education, Cultural diversity, National unity

Introduction

Issues of cultural diversity and citizenship have been part of the educational agenda of Malaysia. This agenda comes in part from recognition of the need to address cultural diversity and citizenship as part of the on-going task of nation building. The meanings and values attached to both cultural diversity and citizenship have changed over time, and educational policies and programs in Malaysia have reflected these changes. The current period, characterized by attention to the fundamental notion of social cohesion, provides an opportunity to unite and strengthen the work in both citizenship education and nation building. Unavoidably, education is one of the sectors to energize the greater development when 'nation building' is an objective. Malaysian political agendas are unity and nation building. It involves the process or steps taken in bringing together people of different races and languages, and molding their orientations towards a new nation, which had previously existed only physically. Clearly, the national education policy, being the foundation for most educational development plans, therefore, forms a crucial and key element with regards to building a nation. Hence, the idea of citizenship and citizenship education in Malaysia has been concerned with issues much related to the competing notions of the nation. Cultural understandings of citizenship are not only concerned with 'formal' processes, such as who is entitled to vote and the maintenance of an active civil society, but also crucially with whose cultural practices are marginalized, stereotyped and rendered invisible. As Renato Rosaldo (1999) argues, citizenship is concerned with 'who needs to be visible, to be heard and to belong'. Similarly, this paper has sought to argue that citizenship is mostly about the ability in a shared Malaysian context to participate in the polity while being respected and not reduced to an 'other'. Citizenship in Malaysia becomes the struggle for a communicative society that is fearful of the threat of normalization, exclusion and silence. These features all seek to investigate the ways in which cultural diversity in Malaysia foster a sense of overlapping and contested 'nations-of-intent'. This paper would further discuss issues raised by citizenship education in Malaysia, followed by a debate on the qualitative discourse, interpretation and explanation regarding the field in the context of the contested notion of the existence of many 'nations-of-intent' as a framework. The impact of competing 'nations-of-intent' and social cohesion in Malaysia, the way it is influencing citizenship and citizenship education, hence nation building is then discussed. Debates on questions related to citizenship and citizenship education in Malaysia have tended to overlook the 'ideas of the nation' amongst the people of a diverse society are indicated. While these debates inevitably deal with questions that are related to notions of political community, participation and individual liberty, it is often overlooked when they

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deal with more specific cultural contexts and political traditions of thinking. In particular, most of these accounts neglect to analyze ideas related to a host political traditions and a number of contextual features such as the ways in which the public sphere become constructed in the context of everyday life. 'Ideas of the nation' are sometimes utilized by political leaders and policy makers in Malaysia, but sometimes these debates are mainly top-down in character and conceive of the cultural in an overly unified way. It is also suggested that the Malaysian nation needs a more explicit citizenship education and clear-cut statement of intent about its vision and direction of citizens towards upholding the principles of the current '1Malaysia' concept. However, the recent Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 does not make reference to the '1Malaysia' concept of moving from tolerance to appreciation to acceptance. This is a very critical dimension that even within homogeneous and mono-cultural environment there can be a fostering towards multi-cultural dimensions. Hence, the challenge in this paper is to find ways of addressing, re-addressing and theorizing unconscious ideas in divergent patterns of the nation, especially in Malaysia, which can be fragmented and contradictory and which cut across the traditional fault lines of race and ethnicity. In a way, there is an opportunity for the concept of 'nations-of-intent' to be explicitly organized around ideas, identification and patterns which are recognizably multiple and sometimes, unstable, with visible contradictions in the Malaysian citizens 'personal locations' in the process of nation building. Moreover, there is a newly focused understanding of the constructive nature of the process undertake socially and personally as citizens find their place in an identity grouping and explore the understanding of themselves and the social order which this can bring. In principle, therefore, the concept of 'nations of-intent' is well attuned to the needs of the Malaysian socio-political landscape; as politics becomes more concerned with subjectivity, it more than ever needs a language in which to talk about interrelationships between consciousness of the idea of the nation and social positioning. The concept of 'nations-of-intent' could, again in principle, supply such a language; it could make sense of the complex business of creating and re-creating 'identities' and building a nation, and of filling these out with content, as well as exploring the intense 'investments' which citizens hold in them, and the deep aggression to which they often give rise. At this point, it is essential to understand citizenship in Malaysia by focusing on the concept of 'nations-of-intent'- at once personal and political- of citizenship created by the institutional influences of education, mass media and new communication technologies, modernity and post-modernization. A systematic account of citizenship in Malaysia might be identified by the self-construction of the Malaysian subject as citizen is a new mode of arranging life strategies. What is at issue here is not the traditional connection of government policies and the Malaysian solidarity as a means of confronting the social inequalities of late capitalism, but rather reflexive scanning of the Malaysian at those nodal points in which identity, citizenship, social networks and administrative systems are looped. This may be of course, and it often does, take the form of the individual Malaysian as citizens in the frame of social systems, for example education. This important aspect, however, is that involvement in such systems constitutes individuals as at once subjects to sub-systems of administration and regulation, and also bearers of individual rights. Individualization these days perhaps might be taken to mean 'do-it-yourself citizenship', as various governmental and collective agencies, including the education system, welfare networks and the labour market- compel Malaysians to devise new ways of life and interaction. In these circumstances, the personal or subjective dimensions of citizenship are raised to the second power. Questions and issues surrounding ideas of the nation become political in a new sense- Here we might need to learn to balance the 'authority defined' and 'everyday defined' of being a Malaysian citizen at the same time. This suggests a form of citizenship education that addresses the 'occasional placeless-ness' evident in some groups of community with regards to citizenship while seeking to promote fluid and complex understandings of the Malaysian nation. This perhaps only becomes possible through movements and educational settings that mutually seek to explore more democratic arrangements and a mutual sense of interconnectedness within the multicultural Malaysian society. Citizenship and citizenship education in Malaysia needs to be redefined as of 'a form of theory' that seeks to develop democratic public spaces while simultaneously promoting a sense of lived connection with a number of complex and overlapping communities in time and space. It would also need to balance the demand for autonomous reflection with the recognition that Malaysian citizens live within overlapping communities with which they are likely to experience different levels of connection. The colonial period of Malaya, the attainment of independence, the progressive commodification of Malaysian culture and the ongoing 'work-in-progress' of building a Malaysian nation- all these mean that citizenship and citizenship education have to be re-addressed in terms of a new set of co-ordinates that can continue to connect citizens with the practices of democratic community in process of nation building. If there is no clear vision of the 'Malaysian nation' and without an attempt to re-imagine the ways in which all citizens may learn and find community with another one another in the age of globalization, thus radical possibilities of transformation need to be re-thought.

Contesting Citizenship

The two ideas of state and nation, which are the basis for the exclusionary aspects of citizenship, come together in notion of the nation state. This fusion is above all a legacy of the French Revolution of 1789, which was to have deep consequences for the future of citizenship. David Miller (1995) argues that citizenship is an empty idea without its association with the nation. It is contended that Miller's defense of nationality is coherent and that the nation is an appropriate foundation for citizenship. Citizenship must be attached to the state and the cultural idea of nation- capable of uniting diverse groups within increasingly plural societies. Miller further argues that nationality matters because people believe it matters. Any theory of citizenship must therefore recognize this fact, since it is nationality, defined as a shared history, political culture and a common sense of destiny that provides us with a sense of obligation to our fellow citizens. Without this bond, we are left only with 'strict reciprocity' between self-interested individuals. For Miller, this can only provide for a very weak citizenship and minimal state: "Given the possibility of private insurance, we would expect states that lacked communitarian background such as nationality provides to be a little more than minimal states providing only basic security for their members". The main elements in the revitalization of nationality will be the same everywhere: an open debate about national identity and its redefinition to accommodate cultural and territorial minorities. Nevertheless, while it is true that nationality has been an important identity that individuals have often been prepared to privilege over self-interest, it is not the only identity that has led to self-sacrifice and altruism. History show that individuals have been prepared to make ultimate sacrifice in the name of many causes such as religion, class, gender and the protection of the environment. Furthermore, it is not possible to assume that nation-states possess a degree of homogeneity that clearly does not exist anywhere in the world. As Kymlicka (1995) notes, there are around 600 languages and 5000 ethnic groups in the

world today but approximately 180 states. This means that in practice, all states are in fact multinational, containing as they do have many competing cultural and ethnic traditions.

Shamsul (1996) conceptualized a 'nation-of-intent' as a vision of territorial entity, a set of institutions, an ideal-type citizen and an identity profile that a group of 'social-engineers' have in mind and try to implement. It will often be an idealistic form shared by a number of people who identify themselves not only with one another, but with a whole nation whose other members they hope will join their vision. A nation-of-intent can be the idea of statesman wishing to unite different groups under his government's authority, of opposing party, a separatist group, a religious or other community. The concept of 'nations-of-intent' depicts an idea of a nation that still needs to be constructed or reconstructed. It is employed as the basis for a platform expressing dissent or a challenged to the established notion of a nation. It promises the citizens an opportunity to participate in the process of nation building. It further confirms this highly fluid notion of nationality. The discourse of the nation can be constructed in many different forms. This suggests that the form and content of national identity can be defined and redefined through dialogue and democratic decision. Individuals experience their nationality very differently. Thus, the concept of 'nations-of-intent' makes reference to the various aspects such as of ethnic, class and gender, and are sources of identity that are transcended by the primary identity of nation.

The idea of a modern large-scale republic must appeal to the understanding of shared history, common solidarities, and ideas of self-determination and autonomy which underlie national identity. However, the use of national identity as the foundation of citizenship involves several challenges such as of that national identity in any single case is associated with a particular history and a past which may be exclusive, especially of those potential new citizens who now seek membership. National identity can never be 'innocent' because it is based on certain cultural associations which are more congenial to some groups than to others. This history has connotations which may be unacceptable to some groups who are often the victims of that past national history. Citizenship has been understood as citizenship in a nation-state for at least three centuries. The concept of nation-state is still dominant in the political discourse as well as the understanding of most citizens, although there has been a discussion about the sense of an 18th-century-type nation state in the 21st century for some years (Castles and Davidson, 2000). The concept of citizenship in nation state has to be examined since the nation states were formed on the basis of homogeneity. The question is whether a new concept of citizenship is needed in a new state model such as a republican state. The concept of nation state becomes questionable, not only by an increasing diversity but also by increasing transnational migration that does not lead into a new citizenship. Nation-states have learned to cope more or less successfully with the model where migrants come into the state and become citizens so that in the second and third generation they have fully accepted citizens in their new state. This model does not function with those who take part in transnational migration.

The Malaysian Context
Malaysian ideas of citizenship since decolonization have been constructed within the context of a permanent state of anxiety about the survival of the state. The political leadership has continually stressed the need for citizens to be dependent upon one another, on the grounds that their nation is surrounded by agencies whose values and activities, whether intentionally hostile or not, would bring about their destruction unless they were resisted at every turn. The continuing success of Malaysia as a nation state is clearly and repeatedly identified by its political leadership is speeches, policy documents and political publicity as being dues wholly to the good outcomes of its policies and activities. Admirable political leadership within this context is therefore implicitly defined as being any course of past action that has resulted in acceptable outcomes. Thus, there is no explicit requirement that the process of making national policy be an expression of, or be informed by, a previously articulated set of moral, social, religious or humanitarian values. Political credibility and worthiness can therefore be constructed in terms of retrospectively defined as 'success' and all actions that have led to this are therefore automatically validated as acceptable and good.

As moral and political judgments within such a context are able to be made only about past events, the Malaysian political environment is not one within which meaningful, defensible judgments can be developed with regard to the desirability of any proposed future activity. The value of activity can be judged only post hoc. Indeed, political activity only acquires the capacity to accept judgment after it has run its course. The meaning of citizenship within such an arena does not therefore embrace Westernized notions of active democratic participation, least of all dissent, and in many ways renders such activity unhelpful, irrational and even meaningless. It is wholly consistent with the political rationale in Malaysia that its program of National Education emphasizes the need for young people to develop a convergent way of thinking about what it means to be a citizen and to be trained to accept instrumental conceptions of their role as a citizen. As an agent of the state, the educational system in Malaysia is seen as having a clear and vital role to play in the social construction of a citizen. Individual service and loyalty to the nation has been promoted in Malaysia as being of paramount importance, and has the need for each citizen to continually display such loyalty in both public and practical ways. Individual citizenship is characterized and portrayed as something that must be continually revalidated in civil society. In most Western democracies traditional models of citizenship can be encapsulated by the terminology of liberal individualism that priorities the civic, political and social rights of the autonomous individual and thus expansionary and emancipator. Some commentators argue that citizenship thus perceived may pose problems both nationally and internationally as citizens may tend to claim their rights and then retreat into their own privacy ignoring the community, the national and international public spaces (Ichilov, 1998). Some note that since the 1970s many democracies have in fact experienced crisis in maintaining the status of citizenship thus defined because of the erosion of conventional state provisions (Hill and Lian, 1995). This is not the case in Malaysia, where democratic citizenship is construed primarily as a vehicle serving the interests of the community and the state. As a natural consequence of the discussions and criticisms of these ideas in recent times, many alternatives have been suggested and developed in the sociological literature in particular, to address the changing context of citizenship in terms of national interests and issues of globalization. One of the notable discussions in the literature is the civic republican conception of citizenship suggested by Oldfield (1990), which firmly rejects 'welfarism' and which the goals of collectivist activity take precedence over those that prioritize the needs and desires of the individual. In

Malaysia, the notion of democracy is attached to a non-liberal socialist ideology in which the needs of the individual are sublimated to those of the state.

The relationship between education and national unity can be clearly observed in The Fifth Economic Plan. For example, among the objectives of the First Malaysia Plan 1966-1970 was to further consolidate the educational system in order to promote social, cultural and political unity; to improve the quality of education and to spread educational opportunity evenly throughout the country in order to correct the imbalance between urban and rural areas; and to diversify educational and training facilities by increasing such facilities in vital fields especially those relating to agriculture and industrial science and technology. Among the objectives of the Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975, was the consolidation of the educational system to promote national integration and unity; the implementation in stages of the Malay Language as the medium of instruction in schools; closing the gap in educational systems of East Malaysian with the national system. Meanwhile, the Third Malaysia Plan 1976-1980 contained objectives to strengthen the educational system by promoting national integration and unity through the continued implementation, in stages of the Malay language as the main medium of instruction at all levels; to narrow the gap in educational opportunities between the rich and poor, and among the various regions and races in the country through a more equitable distribution of resources and facilities; and to improve the quality of education in order to reduce wastage and increase its effectiveness for nation building. The coinage of multicultural nation state is a relatively challenging and there is an inherent tension between the two parts of the expression because the classical nation-states of Western Europe typically indulged in cultural homogenization. Not all of them achieved equal success, but the 'ideal' was to create a collectivity of citizens within common cultural attributes so that their ultimate loyalty was to the state. In this scheme, citizens are at once active agents (through collective determination) and subjects (who have rights and duties) of the nation state. As agents, the citizens are entitled to certain rights from the nation-state, and as its subjects, they are obliged to adhere certain duties to sustain the structure they have created. The bundle of rights and duties could be internalized through a set of consensual citizenship values.

In Malaysia, the tendency on the part of the dominant majority community, usually a combination of attributes, to claim that it is the "core of the nation" persists. Hence it is crucial to recognize the lack of fit between citizenship values (an attribute associated to one's notion of nation) and multiculturalism, a process of nation building in Malaysia phenomenon. The colonial situation gave birth to 'plural societies' wherein different segments, usually of racial collectivities, one national (the colonized) and the other ethnic (that of the immigrant colonizer), coexisted uneasily. The postcolonial states emerged when the colonizers retreated. In most of these states the political and cultural boundaries did not coincide as exemplified by the South Asian and African states. Often nations were divided between two or more states. However these new states accepted the crucial political, economic and socio-cultural institutions and values of colonizers leading to the coexistence of alien and native cultural elements.

Nevertheless, citizenship is not a widely understood idea in Malaysia. People do not have a clear idea of what it means to be a citizen, as opposed to being one of the ruler's subjects. Citizenship is not very much a concept that has played a central role in the Malaysian political tradition. Thus, this paper is inclined to see the concept of citizenship as slightly unsettling. Citizenship in diverse Malaysia must take a few issues into account- an 'explicit ideal' of multicultural citizenship needs to be formulated for diverse Malaysia. Diversity must be given public status and dignity and Malaysia needs to develop a new social and cultural policy capable or nurturing ethnic identities. The dichotomy of "Malaysian" and ethnic minority needs to be overcome: "Malaysian" must come to be seen as including the ethnic minority cultures and communities. The minorities are an integral part of Malaysia and have as much to offer, and owe as much allegiance to the society as do the majorities. The minority and majority communities in Malaysia must all have space to develop, but in relation to each other.

This suggests that the form and content of the 'official' nation-of-intent can be defined or redefined through dialogue and democratic decision- thus indicating that it is a highly fluid notion. Perhaps, it can be described that the main elements in the revitalization of the Malaysian notion through an 'open debate' of its national identity and its redefinition to accommodate cultural and territorial minorities. However, if nationality is simple to be determined politically, what differentiates it from citizenship? With regards to the Chinese and Indians in particular, there is a sense in which the past always constraints the present- present identities are built out of the materials that are handed down and not started from scratch. Thus, there is an existing of different nations-of-intent in which: those who want to insist that membership of a national community is not an open choice versus those who seek to form an understanding of nation as a matter of choice. Nevertheless, Malaysia's national identity is deeply rooted in its political culture, established over decades. But the point is surely that many of the key institutions that make up of the Malaysian culture, such as the monarchy, Parliament and the Constitution, are simply incompatible with, and indeed are in opposition to the suggestion of an 'open debate' on the Malaysian identity.

Education and the Imagined Nation

Citizenship education has been an uncontested part of education in Malaysia in different subjects and with different names. Different approaches are involved in the teaching of citizenship but also in different types of schools. Citizenship education through Civic Education as a subject in schools lacks acceptance and interest by students, other teachers and parents. Civic education suffers not only from a difficult structure but also from a general weariness with politics, which is evident in an unwillingness to become engaged in political actions. The fact that there is no continuity in Civic education due to changes of the subject from primary school to the different forms of secondary school, and that Civic Education is now often part of a subject-field consisting of several subjects formerly taught in their own right, may be considered as a reason for lack of interest in it.

There are two aspects that this paper would like to highlight- first, an overall understanding of the curriculum is imperative if is to be implemented meaningfully as intended. This means that educators in this case, who implements the curriculum, must fully understand the content and the spirit of the curriculum. Secondly, it has been pointed out that the national curriculum is both philosophical in its application. Philosophically, the curriculum has to be perceived and understood clearly. As educators are

concerned, they have to create and develop a learning situation where the teaching processes involve both the acquisition of knowledge and citizenship values. The intended curriculum would fail if the commitment towards the expressed citizenship values is absent among educators. Therefore, the process of curriculum reform involves all mechanisms and structures in the educational system. There must be a synergetic movement towards the fulfillment of a common, beginning from its planning and development, dissemination, implementation and the process of evaluation has that flow of coordination and does not exist in any contradictory pattern along the way. As such, citizenship in Malaysia can be regarded as exclusive as well as inclusive. While the Malaysian citizenship remains closely tied to the nation-state, such exclusion is inevitable. However, this relationship is becoming increasingly problematic as globalization challenges the boundaries of states. In its liberal form, citizenship claims to embody the ideal of universalism. All Malaysians who can legitimately claim to be citizens of the state are supposed to share equally the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. For some critics, however, ironically it is this very claim of universality that acts as a powerful exclusionary discourse. A notion of universal citizenship, it is suggested, simply cannot be sustained in the context of Malaysia's plural society. In addition to individual rights, special group rights such as of the Malays are therefore required to ensure that some individuals are not excluded from the benefits of citizenship because of their gender, race or any other aspect of their identity. There are apparently differing notions of citizenship that carry different implications for education. Education for citizenship in its minimal interpretation requires only induction into basic knowledge of institutionalized rules concerning rights and obligations. Maximal interpretations require education which develops critical and reflective abilities and enables capacities for self-determination and shared autonomy to grow.

In Malaysia, education for citizenship is receiving little serious attention and it is identified a threat to democracy in an increasingly commercial society, where insecurity and a sense of isolation and powerlessness become the everyday experience of growing numbers of individuals, and asked whether we are, as a society, creating conditions of the 'mass society of mutually antagonistic individuals, easy prey to 'depotism'. The challenge of the conventional science understanding of citizenship in terms of the relationship between individuals and the state from both sub-national (local) as well as a supra-national (global) perspective. First of all, from a sub-national perspective, it is apparent that membership of the nation-state often means little to its members, compared to other forms of sub-national communities with which they identify and through which they exercise their claims and obligations. In some cases, the communities that people acknowledge, the claims and obligations they recognize, may be very narrowly defined, restricted to their immediate circle of family, kin, lineage and neighbors. In others, the sense of connectedness transcends immediate and primordial identities and coheres around shared experiences of oppression or in solidarity with those who experience such as oppression.

This is a 'societal' understanding of the citizens as someone who belongs to different kinds of collective associations and defines their identity from participation in activities associated with these kinds of membership. Their sense of membership lies in terms on which they participate in this collective life and the forms of agency they are able to exercise. And when they are only able to participate on highly unequal terms, or are denied access altogether, citizenship relates to their attempts to challenge their exclusionary processes and bring about change. While the capacity to exercise agency at the individual level may be an important pre-condition, then it is the collective struggles of excluded groups which have historically driven processes of social transformation. There is a tendency to overlook the ways in which the Malaysian society is characterized by institutional ethnicity and social economic inequality and the way in which the Malaysian education system is characterized by distinctive exclusionary and discriminatory practices. In Malaysia, there is also a controversial nature of citizenship, and tensions posed, for example in seeking a balance between the individual and community rights, in defining the common values which underscore democratic and diverse societies, and in ensuring that all Malaysians citizens have a genuine sense of belonging to the society. Apart from that, there is also a failure to engage with the contested and often elusive nature of core concepts such as diversity and equality.

Even though cultural pluralism is acknowledged, educational responses occasionally may slip into stereotypical patterns. Simplistic views of culture and static concepts of ethnicity may fail to address culture in anything other than romanticized or ossified forms and perpetuate, rather than challenge prejudice. In Malaysia, the development of national identity and citizenship may be frustrated unless the system is prepared to include a genuine exploration of histories, within the formal curriculum. The instability of modern plural and multinational states is better countered through a genuine exploration of the values and perceptions that are held by constituent groups than by seeking to maintain some fictional state unity or 'nation state' mythology. There is a need to fully understand the dynamic nature of culture, the complex patterns of ethnic identity and the power of hidden forms of prejudice. Thus, the way forward in the education system has probably less to do with identifying a universally applicable model of multicultural education and more to do with a genuine informed commitment on the part of all education to work against cultural myopia, prejudice and disadvantages in all areas of education. Clearly this implies the permeation of education practice and policy with values that promote understanding and justice.

Challenges towards Citizenship Education and Diversity
Much talk these days is about the nation- nation and its problems and the transformation of the nation. The notions of nation seem inevitably to capsize into the forms of theorizing in which the catchword is that of 'project'. The 'project' of the nation is that of nation building. However, in the Malaysian context, the understanding of nation building is portrayed by the various ethnic groups building conceptions of their-self, of their personal and social location and their own position in an order of things. It is such restless self-activity that replaces the ascriptions of the one particular form of nation of intent. Nation building is much preoccupied with national identity as an end in itself; nevertheless, the citizens are free to choose the kind of idea and notion of nation, but the imperative is to get on with the 'formal' task and achieve.

It is evident that citizens' autonomy and well-being are promoted when they are able to collectively determine the future shape of their society. Malaysia is a case of a territory inhabited by a kaleidoscope of groups with competing cultural identities, stemming

from the period of colonization and long-standing country's history. In such a case, it will either mean allowing the dominant group to impose its cultural values on dissenting minorities in the name of nation building. Or on the other hand, it will justify minority groups in their struggle for autonomy, a struggle which in the nature of things is liable to cause the nation instability. The competing notions of nation have drawn the very underlying aspects of citizenship that are used to support the task of nation-building. It is then suggested that the varied ideas of the nation has to be explored and draw distinctions between different ways in which ethnic and political communities may be culturally divided. As such, the national identity would probably "run into trouble". However, on the other hand, it can guide towards political arrangements that meet the cultural demands of more than one group. The mere fact of cultural pluralism does not undermine the 'official notion of the nation' as it all depends on the character of the pluralism. It follows that in principle a multi-ethnic society can have a common national identity and enjoy national self determination in a relatively straightforward manner. Although ethnic identities may give rise to political demands, they are essentially cultural identities whose field of expression is civil society, and they can be combined with overarching national identities.

Very often, people do not have a clear idea of what it means to be a citizen, as opposed to being one of the ruler's subjects. Citizenship is not very much a concept that has played a central role in the Malaysian political tradition compared to the concept of a ruler's subjects. It seems the concept of citizenship as slightly unsettling. Citizenship in diverse Malaysia must take a few issues into account, formulate and stating explicitly idea of 'multicultural citizenship' needs to be formulated for a diverse Malaysia. Diversity must be given public status and dignity and Malaysia needs to develop a new social and cultural policy capable or nurturing ethnic identities. The dichotomy of "Malaysian" and ethnic minority needs to be overcome: "Malaysian" must come to be seen as including the ethnic minority cultures and communities. The minorities are an integral part of Malaysia and have as much to offer, and owe as much allegiance to the society as do the majorities. The minority and majority communities in Malaysia must all have space to develop, but in relation to each other. However, of course many practical difficulties may intervene: ethnic rivalries may make co-operation within the state difficult, the national identity may include cultural elements that some ethnic groups find unacceptable, and the nation may find itself being challenged at literally or metaphorically. In Malaysia, the principle remains clear that its society with ethnic cleavages can take part in a collective project of self-determination through a clear and concise understanding of citizenship and citizenship education.

The most obvious factor, is that the idea of nation in question have co-existed in a single political unit, while at the same time each component part has kept its distinct cultural features. However, the recipe for a successful task of nation building in Malaysia involves more than just political integration plus cultural difference. It is suggested that aspects of education, in particular citizenship education, plays an essential role in expressing the thought of being a 'Malaysian'. Citizenship education is an important but difficult subject because of its different components, its challenges of commitment and its relationship towards diversity. Diversity in the population adds to these difficulties since it turns out that citizenship education is still tacitly committed to homogeneity but has to cope with the increasingly diverse school population in Malaysia. Malaysia's Vision 2020 is an extreme example for the role of values within the state. There is no doubt about different values existing in different ethnic groups, but the main question to be posed is- are these values compatible within these groups? If nation building in Malaysia is understood as a value orientation which promotes the coexistence and preservation of a multiplicity of cultural communities within the territory of a state, the issue of national self-determination is not germane to nation building. At any rate, linking nation building with national self determination arises out of the confusion wrought by the conflation between one state and many nations. The Chinese and Indians for example have become major occupants of the territory to which they have migrated during the colonial period and gradually became nations through the process of national self-determination.

Further pertaining to the question of values, do political discourses in Malaysia as an ethnically diverse state for example, mainly highlight cultural values instead of democratic ones that would challenge students to participate in the state? For a long time, universal values (democratic, human rights, civil societies, non-discrimination) have been used to frame conceptually political discourses in Malaysia. It is necessary for a multi-ethnic country blessed with cultural diversity to examine the impact, relevance and usefulness of the universal values as they are embedded in the different ethnic/cultural context. For instance, the Malay Muslim would understand and accept human rights not as a something supreme to human being because they have a Supreme Being guiding them, namely, The Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and Allah the Almighty. Therefore, the universal values are always embedded and coloured by local/ethnic/cultural values.

Participation is another keyword in citizenship education as in an ethnically diverse society. Participation is only possible under the conditions of equality. Citizenship is necessary to give all groups political equality and thus political participation. Political equality, however, does not guarantee structural, economic and societal participation, while on the other hand economic participation is possible without political equality. All students have to cope with participation and its preconditions. Thus, it makes sense to deal with integration and assimilation as factors in the process of gaining participation. The first language of the minorities is only seldom taken into consideration when participation or integration is discussed. Sadly, the linguistic and cultural knowledge of the non-Malays, and which could be of value to Malaysia, is often less emphasized. The recognition of these qualities plays an important role in the discussion of the existence of many nations of intent. Then, participation means that citizens are not only willing to take an active part in the societal and political life but also to offer their own knowledge, which should in return be welcomed by the society at large, and therefore facilitates integration. This is a process that can be learned and experienced in school, thus optimizing the effectiveness of citizenship education.

Nevertheless, on the other hand, the dilemma posed for citizenship education by diversity can perhaps be best understood in terms of the competing notions of nation as a public policy. On the other hand, too much emphasis on the recognition of the different nations-of-intent could lead to a situation in which schools celebrate difference and seek to maintain distinctive languages, religions and cultural practices. This could be beneficial to personal and social identity and help build the minority

students' self-esteem but might mean neglecting the other functions of education-imparting basic skills and knowledge and providing the basis for social equality. Clearly, the need is for a balanced strategy that seeks to achieve both cultural recognition and social equality. That in return requires good planning, special training for teachers and adequate resources. Every education system affected by diversity such as Malaysia has had to struggle with these issues. The responses have varied considerably and have been conditioned by wider historical experiences and societal goals connected with national identity and citizenship.

Citizenship education in Malaysia involves cultivating a sense of national cohesion and loyalty and a sense of obligation and duty to the community and one's fellow citizens. It also requires the qualities of initiative and willingness to participate. But the development of these civic qualities has been slow. Part of the reason has been the difficulty of overcoming the inertia bred of the subservience required by the colonial systems. Partly too, the post-independence governments recognized the potential ambivalence of education for active citizenship. For the process can undermine the very political cohesion it is designed to promote. Politicians have been very alert to difficulties for nurturing an effectively mature style of citizenship and have placed great faith in the power of education to accomplish this. However, the complexities of the problem have not always allowed the setting or achievement of clear objectives. Differences of emphasis have sometimes been evident as between politicians and educationists. Furthermore, practical difficulties have on occasion proved more impervious to the civic educational policies than the planners have anticipated. Whether complementary or mutually at odds, the total array of objectives in programmes of education for citizenship may be listed as: comprehension, integration, participation and obligation.

The future of Malaysia lies in the ability of the country's citizens, in particular the younger generation to understand and believe, in all Malaysian's ability to unite: national unity without a common identity is an exercise in futility. In the context of the Malaysian plural society with a history of decades of uneasy co-existence, with fears and suspicions as constant companions and each community left largely to its own devices, the national unity through a common identity is difficult enough to imagine, let alone embrace wholeheartedly. According to some ethnic minorities, the present day policies of the government is viewed as to benefit the Malay majority and thus tend to divide rather than unite its citizens. The current education system apparently is good as far as it goes but nevertheless it falls far short of the conditions to create a common identity and a sense of being Malaysian. The ethnic minorities view the achievement of a nation built once Malaysia has in place policies of inclusiveness, of justice and equity and of equal opportunity without barriers. As the nation searches for a common identity, it is apparent that the single impediment to national building is the national education system.

In addition, as long as there is existence of the Chinese and Indian primary schools for example, there is a major challenge to develop a sense of being Malaysian. Malay is the national language and it should be the language of instruction in all Malaysian schools. The Malaysian cultural heritage is nevertheless important. Thus, there is a crucial need to look at education beyond its utilitarian value. It is believed that when the system of education is depoliticized and addresses the social, economic and political needs of the nation in a rational way, taking on board the cultural and language concerns of the non-Malays, Malaysia will have a better chance of breaking the racial mould and achieving national unity. The difference of language medium had led to differences of language medium had led to differences in attitudes among students. In East Africa for example, it had been shown that differences in school experience had resulted in differences in political views. The study also showed that differences in school experience between missions as opposed to government schools also led to differences in political views (Prewitt, 2002). As for the Malaysian school system, it not only expects to produce students who graduate with technical competence, but also with a disposition relevant to the demands for national integration. The national medium was also able to make the non-Malays move in the direction of Malay values and attitudes. In a similar view, Shamsul (2011) commented that the plural, diversified and fragmented Malaysian society is being well reflected in of the education system. Nevertheless, after surviving for a period of time in the 'state of stable tension', it is currently described as experiencing the process of 'social cohesion', in which he suggested aspects of 'humanizing' the education system that would address specific circumstances of the nation-state.

Many commentators further argue that social unity in a liberal democracy rests not on a shared identity but rather on share allegiance to political principals. According to Rawls pertaining to citizenship: "although a well-ordered society is divided and pluralistic…public agreement on questions of political and social justice supports ties of civic friendship and secures the bonds of association" (Rawls, 1980). On this view, by teaching certain common principles such as justice, tolerance and civility-citizenship education provides the foundation for national unity as well. Shared political principles obviously are helpful to maintain social unity, but indeed, deep conflict over basic principles can nevertheless lead to disunity. Nevertheless, shared principles are not sufficient. Social unity then requires not only shared principles, but also a sense of shared membership. Citizens must have a sense of belonging to the same community and a shared desire to continue to live together. Whatever Rawls has drawn upon, the question of different nations-of-intent is further raised. Are the political principles among them necessarily different? Rawls provided perspectives by giving a secular universal philosophical based moral principles without including different religious principles that apparently still divide people deeply, though at the secular level doing good is accepted as universal. This involves everyday life and the officially influenced social life structures in the political realm, people do not perceive things in terms of layers, secular and religious. Often dictated by ideology which drives the ultimate objective of that political existence- the ideology is then articulated in a political form which has content. Usually the ultimate political form is the formation of a nation, before that could be a political party and before that a small political collective. Content could be whatever ideology that the group shares so in the construction of citizenship education, philosophical elements mentioned by Rawls are important universal values, but it is usually driven by nations-of-intent informed by particular ideologies.

Clearly, among the significant challenges facing educators in Malaysia is how to respect and acknowledge the community cultures and knowledge of students while at the same time helping to construct a democratic public community with an overarching set of values to which all students will have a commitment and with which all will identify. In other words, the challenge is to construct a citizenship education that will help foster a just and inclusive pluralistic nation-state that all students

and groups will perceive as legitimate. This is a tremendous challenge but an essential task in a pluralistic democratic society. An important aim of the tertiary curriculum should be to educate students so that they will have the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to help create and to live in a public community in which all groups can and will participate. The goal of citizenship education should be of one that is able to construct a civic education curriculum that will be perceived by all students within the nation-state as being in the broad public interest. Only in this way a civic education can be provided that promotes national unity as well as reflects the diverse cultures within the nation-state. This is a difficult but essential task within culturally diverse Malaysian state with many nations that are serious about creating and implementing democratic education. The question of the Malaysian education has to be given careful thought with which is bound up in the ethnic minorities' schools in nation building in particular.

In the epilogue to education for citizenship in Malaysia, a better democratic approach to an education system has to be addressed with its practical implications. The approach ought to be applicable and should be informed by a democratic ideal of civic equality; individuals from all ethnic groups should be treated and treat one another as equal citizens, regardless of their gender, race or religion. More or less civic equality distinguishes more from less democratic societies. Citizenship education in Malaysia which is publicly supported education that is defensible according to a democratic ideal should educate the younger generation so that they are capable of assuming the rights and correlative responsibilities of equal citizenship, which include respecting other people's equal rights. In short, democratic education should express and develop the capacity of all individuals to become equal citizens. Citizenship education in the Malaysian democracy can help further civic equality in two importantly different ways: first, by expressing the democratic value of tolerating cultural differences, between the majority of Malays and minority of non-Malays, that are consistent with civic equality; and second, by recognizing the role that cultural differences of both the majority and minority groups have played in shaping in the Malaysian society and the nation in which all Malaysians live. However, not all education that goes by the name multicultural in the Malaysian education system serves the ideal civic equality in one of these ways, but citizenship education can (and the researcher argues should) do so. Toleration and recognition of cultural differences, the researcher argues, are both desirable parts in citizenship education. If toleration and recognition of cultural differences among the different ethnic groups in Malaysia are both democratically desirable, then the stark contrast often drawn between a liberal politics of toleration and non liberal politics of recognition represents a false dichotomy. Democracy in Malaysia can defend a set of citizenship educational practices that exhibit both toleration and recognition of cultural differences, depending on the content and social context in Malaysia.

Perhaps, the non-Malays being seen as fully Malaysian and accepting themselves as such, does not imply denying their ethnic origins and identity. Rather, there is a need to take a plural view of the Malaysian identity, understanding it as multilevel, dynamic and encompassing multiple identities. The positive value of diversity and the worth of each community need to be recognized. They enjoy full citizenship as well, while inequality and discrimination must be combated and positive strategies to promote equality and a healthy diverse society must be developed, including the promotion of values and virtues of equity and openness. There must be a universal enjoyment of fundamental rights. However, these need to be applied appropriately in different particular situations. Every individual, community and culture must share equitably in the Malaysian society's burdens and rewards. Fundamentally, all Malaysians must be able, through mutually respectful dialogue and recognizing their own and everyone else's rights and responsibilities, to contribute to the Malaysian society's values and its social and political arrangements- in brief, to shape the society and to determine what it means to be Malaysian. The issue is not only to do with a specific way of talking about common affairs, but above all, of conducting them. Malaysians need to learn to benefit from the diversity of riches through interaction and dialogue, to identify the commonalities and the agreements, and to agree to differ about the disagreements. It is important, too, to be constantly seeking- in particular through dialogue, to find equitable, just, peaceful and positive ways of anticipating, avoiding or resolving conflicts and problems.

If this expectation is to be realized, it is essential that citizenship education becomes a strong, evolving and lasting feature of the curriculum experience of all students in Malaysia. The challenges in accomplishing this are considerable. If the vision of citizenship education becoming firmly established in schools and radiating out into the Malaysian community and society is to become a reality, these challenges have to be overcome in the coming years. These are too deep-seated and practical. Malaysia is characterized by deep diversity along with the dimensions of class, gender, region, age, culture, religion and ethnicity. By looking inside the ethnic communities, incredible differentiation is found within and between communities. The diversity in Malaysia is much greater than that involving the visible and sizable minorities. Significant features of Malaysia are of central importance to the analysis of citizenship, citizenship education and the contested notion of the existence of many 'nations-of-intent'. These include the position of the ethnic minorities including class, gender, region, educational background and their shared experiences in history of the country.

Conclusion

Citizenship and citizenship education in Malaysia therefore, is the struggle for a democratic society that enables a diversity of citizens to lead relatively meaningful lives that respects the formation of complex hybrid identities, offers them the protective social state and grants them access to an education system which seeks to explore the possibility of living in a future which is free of domination and oppression. To be Malaysian citizens, means to engage in deliberative argument about what is ethical to become, and to consider how we might lead virtuous and just lives in specific cultural locations and contexts. In the Malaysian complex society, we require citizenship education that is able to make sense of contemporary transformations and offer young people the space to share and critically interrogate the diverse experiences and practices, enabling them to consider how they might best ensure the flourishing of each and every individual as citizens. It would also mean that they are able to recognize themselves as Malay, Chinese, Indian or any other ethnic groups and of course, as interconnected Malaysian citizens that would contribute towards to process of building a nation. Such a feat would require, as this paper have sought to emphasize, not only the cognitive capacities to reason, but also a renewed sense of being 'Malaysian' as sympathetic and compassionate beings

through citizenship education. It is citizenship and citizenship education, as this paper has insisted, thus far, is intimately connected with questions of competing notions of 'nations-of-intent' in Malaysia, and will continue to be so in the future regardless of how the dominant institutions are designed and developed. As we shall see over the period of progress in achieving a 'built Malaysian nation', these ideals need to be radically re-interpreted in order to meet the complex challenges of the present. This leaves open a number of questions. The first issue concerns the ways in which plural identities and differences are more salient in Malaysia, and the means by which they can be accommodated and recognized in a democratic order. More specifically, it raises the question of whether the nation can provide a sense of common citizen citizenry, or whether the nation is an anachronism in today's world. An alternative possibility would be to develop a post-national citizenship which might allow different institutional processes, such as education to form ideas of democratic community and nation. Notions of citizenship in Malaysia are challenged by demands of diversity and cultural citizenship, and there have been differences as to the unifying habits and attitudes of the citizenry. Malaysia is a 'state without a nation' and citizenship, along with citizenship education was central in shaping a democratic nation, in the constitution of moral citizen-subjects from various ethnic groups who continue to articulate different 'nations-of-intent'. The notion of 'nations-of-intent' further highlights the subjective and changeable aspects of nationhood and opens up the possibility of several co-existing or competing identity forms within the same nation. Nation-building in Malaysia is a state without a nation (and it has many nations-of-intent) and the present effort does not include ideas to the nation when promoting citizenship education- the notion of 'equality in diversity' and not only 'unity in diversity'. It is suggested that the Malaysian nation needs a more explicit citizenship education and clear-cut statement of intent about its vision and direction of citizens towards upholding the principles of the current '1Malaysia' concept. While debates on diversity and multiculturalism have dwelt with the role of citizenship education in preserving democratic ideals, there has been little or no attention to the role of learning in relation to the nature of building a 'state without a nation' in bridging the 'authority-defined' and the 'everyday-defined' idea of a nation, where various social groups are able to voice their different 'nations-of-intent'. Apparently, the concept of citizenship and citizenship education in Malaysia is prompting only of form 'nation-of intent' available in the country, whereas, there are other nations as well, apparently. An implication of it is that the concept of citizenship and thus, nation building in Malaysia is still fraught with confusion. The presence of plurality of 'nations-of-intent' in contemporary Malaysia demonstrates the fact that dissenting voices are present and heard, within and without government. Citizenship and citizenship education should thereby respond to the contextual challenges of multi-cultural groups within the Malaysian society, and to diverse multicultural societies, by supporting democratic deliberation within the society, among other important matters, about how the Malaysian education system can best educate all from different ethnic groups as civic equals. In conclusion, unity and diversity in citizenship education in the Malaysian context therefore go together, like citizens and democracies do. Toleration and recognition of diversity, within principled limits, make democratic unity possible. Disagreements about the limits of diversity fuel creative and destructive tensions within the unity. The more the creative tensions overwhelm the destructive ones, the better off a democracy is and the more constructive work Malaysian educationists have cut out for the nation. These issues need to be delved deeper into its meanings and to focus and concentrate efforts on the development of individuals to become good and effective Malaysian citizens, as aspired. Taking care of these individuals as citizens of Malaysia benevolently via citizenship education will transfuse goodness and well being of society and the Malaysian nation.

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