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Cultivating a Justice Orientation Toward Citizenship in Preservice Elementary Teachers

Sara W. Fry
Boise State University

Jason O'Brien
University of Alabama in Huntsville

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Preparing youth for citizenship in a democracy is one of the underlying goals of education in the United States. Westheimer and Kahne (2004a) explained, "Everyone believes democracy is desirable" and myriad calls for educational reform often come "under the banner of furthering democracy" (p. 237). The importance of citizenship education to promote democratic ideals and a citizenry who are able to fulfill their civic duty is well-established in the literature (Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Gagnon, 2003; Jacobsen, Frankenberg & Lenhoff, 2012; Lutkus & Weiss, 2007; Mitra & Serriere, 2012; Ochoa-Becker, 2007; Wineburg, 2001). As a result of such an education, citizens should be able "to think for themselves" and "criticize tradition" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 2) with the goal of creating a better future by helping shape their communities and societies (Landsman & Gorski, 2007).

Despite the importance of democracy, the results of recent educational trends in the United States have been antithetical to the goal of preparing students to be effective life-long citizens. The literature is replete with concerns about the future of democracy from proponents of education who promote social justice in general (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009; Hursh, 2007; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Ritchie, 2012; Sleeter, 2012) and lamentations from social studies educators in particular (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Brighton, 2002; Davis & Davis, 2007; Leming, Ellington, & Schug, 2006; McEachron, 2010; Rock, et. al, 2006). K-12 teachers of all content areas have the opportunity to nurture a propensity for democratic participation. However, the responsibility falls largely on elementary teachers and secondary social studies teachers because they are responsible for curriculum that provides "students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy" (National Council for the Social Studies, 2005, p. 1).

Even though strong elementary social studies experiences can help students develop "a critical foundation for life-long participation as citizens" (National Council for the Social Studies, 2009, p. 31), in recent decades this academic discipline has been severely curtailed. For example, in a survey of a nationally representative sample of elementary and middle school social studies teachers, Leming et al. (2006) found that 70% of the elementary teachers in their sample "spent less than four hours per week teaching social studies" and half of their participants reported integrating "what little social studies they taught" into other content areas (p. 323). Meanwhile, von Zastrow and Janc (2004) and Pace's (2008) research indicated that the decline of elementary social studies disproportionably affects students in high-minority and high-poverty schools. The decline of elementary social studies seems problematic for the future of democracy. Indeed, prior research indicates that a narrow, often incomplete, conception of "good" citizenship is common among K-12 students (Conover & Searing, 2000; Chiodo & Martin, 2005).

Teacher preparation programs play a vital role in preparing preservice teachers to fulfill their responsibility of educating youth for participatory citizenship. The social studies methods course has a unique function within the preparation experience because it is there that candidates learn specific approaches to curriculum and instruction that can contribute to democracy. Recognizing that "a teacher's conception of citizenship education is one factor that shapes teaching and learning in the classroom" (Anderson, Avery, Pederson, Smith, & Sullivan, 1997, p. 356), we, the authors, undertook this mixed-methods study to investigate preservice elementary teachers' beliefs about citizenship as well as why they hold these particular beliefs.

Over the course of four semesters (beginning in 2010), we enlisted help from teacher educators from universities across the United States. For the quantitative portion of the study, we obtained responses from 846 preservice elementary teachers from 20 different states. Prior to any instruction in their social studies methods courses, preservice teachers enrolled in these courses responded to the open-ended question "What is a good citizen?"

Through our analysis of this initial data set, we discovered that a vast majority of preservice elementary teachers indicated a proclivity towards what Westheimer and Kahne (2004a) described as a personally responsible orientation towards citizenship. Noticeably absent were responses which included systematic mention of a justice orientation (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004a), that is, being inclined to promote social justice. In an attempt to discover why prospective elementary teachers held these beliefs, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 21 of the participants from two different states.

The purpose of this article is to share the findings and situate those findings within existing literature about citizenship and social justice. We offer insights into issues teacher educators need to address in order to prepare elementary teachers to be able to help children "acquire the knowledge and the intellectual skills needed to…enable the young citizen to participate in the process of improving the society" (Engle & Ochoa, 1988, p. 8). Westheimer and Kahne's (2004a) pioneering work that defined three categories of citizenship provided our conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

Westheimer and Kahne (2004a) described three categories of citizenship: personally responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented. A personally responsible citizen is, for example, a law-abiding tax payer who recycles and is inclined to volunteer in times of crisis. The core assumptions of this orientation are that "citizens must have good character; they must be honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the community" (p. 240). However, Westheimer and Kahne clarified the limitations of the personally responsible orientation towards citizenship: it comes at the expense of looking for and addressing the root causes of social problems. When educators emphasize personal responsibility, the result is reliance on character education and volunteerism as forms of citizenship education.

The participatory orientation is framed by the assumption that to improve society, "citizens must actively participate and take leadership positions within established systems and community structures" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004a, p. 240). In addition to being an active participant, the participatory citizen understands how government agencies and community organizations work. As an example, whereas the personally responsible citizen donates food for the hungry, the participatory citizen organizes a food drive.

While the participatory citizen works within established systems, those who have adopted a justice orientation "question, debate, and change established systems and structures that reproduce patterns of injustice over time" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004a, p. 240). Informed analysis in order to address the root cause of social issues and injustices is the justice-oriented citizen's goal. Instead of organizing a food drive, justice-oriented citizens "ask why people are hungry and act on what they discover" (p. 242).

Westheimer and Kahne (2004a) indicated that each citizenship orientation "reflects a relatively distinct set of theoretical and curricular goals" (p. 241). They underscored that programmatic decisions to educate in ways that promote one orientation are not arbitrary; rather, such decisions are a political choice. Their work illustrated that exclusively educating towards personal responsibility may reinforce "a conservative and individualistic notion of citizenship. Yet … if citizenship also requires collective participation and critical analysis of social structures, then other lenses are needed as well" (p. 264). In sum, Westheimer and Kahne's categories of citizenship and caveats about education's role in developing them provided the framework for this study. We turn now to a review of previous studies in which scholars have applied Westheimer and Kahne's "good" citizenship theoretical framework to teachers.

"Good" Citizenship: Preservice and Inservice Teachers' Perspectives

Prior research indicates that a narrow, often incomplete, conception of "good" citizenship is common among preservice teachers in the United States (Logan, 2011; Martin, 2008). Logan (2011) used Westheimer and Kahne's (2004a) framework in an investigation of nine elementary preservice teachers' and nine professors' perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about citizenship. Two of the future teachers in Logan's study described the importance of a justice orientation towards citizenship. The other seven embraced the participatory and personally responsible orientations. Logan recommended that teacher educators provide prospective teachers with authentic service-

learning experiences as a way to help enhance knowledge and understanding of citizenship. Beisser and Schmidt (2001) posited that service learning can be a "pedagogical bridge" to help students gain interpersonal and leadership skills to address social issues that they encounter.

Martin (2008) asked 39 elementary education majors and 36 secondary social studies certification seekers, "What does it mean to be a good citizen?" Her major conclusions were that the elementary preservice teachers emphasized civic engagement more than political engagement: following laws and community engagement were their two main criteria for good citizenship. Both elementary and secondary students in Martin's (2008) study felt that helping others was integral to good citizenship and that their future "good" citizenship endeavors would include teaching and helping others in need.

Faden (2012) and Patterson, Doppen, and Misco (2012) offered insights into practicing teachers' beliefs about "good" citizens. Faden interviewed 13 inservice teachers from the United States and Canada regarding their beliefs about citizenship and national identity. Twelve participants' descriptions of "good" citizens were consistent with Westheimer and Kahne's (2004a) participatory and personally responsible categories. The justice orientation was similarly limited in Patterson et al.'s (2012) larger study; they surveyed and interviewed 155 practicing high school teachers in the United States and found that a majority (n=102) held a personally responsible conception of citizenship, 39 fell under the participatory category, and only six indicated a preference for a justice orientation. Interviews with nine participants indicated that although teachers agreed upon the purpose of social studies instruction, their conceptualization of what constitutes "good" citizenship was so varied that it created a "slippery path…as beliefs and actions were not always congruent" (p. 270). The consistency of responses in existing literature in which preservice and practicing teachers give preference to a personally responsible conceptualization of citizenship, as well as the paucity of responses which included a justice orientation, served as the impetus for this study.

Teaching for Social Justice

Educators who promote social justice have concerns about educational trends in the 21st century. From an unwavering focus on high-stakes testing created by the legislation No Child Left Behind (Nichols & Berliner, 2007) to a neoliberal education agenda that emphasizes the economic outcomes of education at the expense of cultivating democratically-minded citizens (Hursh, 2007; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Ritchie, 2012) and culturally responsive teaching (Sleeter, 2012), trends in American education are contrary to those that promote social justice.

Mirra and Morrell (2011) explained that neoliberal economic goals have usurped "an explicit focus on the democratic purposes of schooling" (p. 408). According to these authors, this agenda devalues the skills of teachers and seeks to create the "'Teacher as Conduit'… a passive vision of … teachers as middlemen between content standards and children rather than professionals and intellectuals" (p. 409). These scholars call for an alternative vision of "Teacher as Civic Agent" who "prepares students to become self-actualized and critically empowered civic agents" (p. 409). Likewise, Cochran-Smith et al. (2009) argued that teaching for social justice is an essential purpose of teaching in a democratic society. As social studies is the content area specifically dedicated to developing the skills and knowledge for participatory citizenship (National Council for the Social Studies, 2005), we consider citizenship education that promotes a justice orientation to be synonymous with teaching for social justice.

Need for the Present Study

Scholarship about "good" citizenship has focused on K-12 students' perceptions (e.g. Conover & Searing, 2000; Chiodo & Martin, 2005). Few researchers have explored teacher candidates' views, especially at the elementary level. Only Logan (2011) and Martin (2008) have specifically investigated preservice teachers' perceptions. Logan's (2011) study was small in scope (n = 9) and Martin (2008) drew participants from only one institution, and did not disaggregate elementary preservice teachers' perceptions with those of secondary candidates.

To address the absence of a comprehensive study investigating the perceptions of elementary preservice teachers regarding "good" citizenship, we designed the present study and gathered data from a large number of respondents from institutions across the United States. Furthermore, we only included preservice elementary teachers. As a result, our findings offer enhanced insight into how elementary preservice teachers perceive "good" citizenship before they were exposed to instruction in elementary social studies methods. It was important to collect the data

before instruction because we were interested in perceptions that preservice teachers held rather than those of their methods instructors. An inherent assumption of ours is that instruction in social studies methods courses specifically addresses citizenship, and that this instruction would potentially influence students' understanding of the concept. To this end, the research questions that guided this study were: (1) How do preservice elementary teachers perceive good citizenship? and (2) Why do preservice elementary teachers perceive good citizenship in the manner they do?

Methods

We used mixed methods to answer the research questions. For the first question we used qualitative and quantitative methods. We used qualitative methods exclusively to answer the second question. Due to the qualitative component of the research design, we were systematically aware of our subjectivity (Peshkin, 1998) and acknowledge that, like Westheimer and Kahne (2004a), we believe there are limits to a personally responsible orientation towards citizenship and that justice-oriented citizens are crucial to promoting democracy. Because of the different research methods and populations, in the sections that follow we describe the participants, data collection, and analysis methods for each research question separately.

Question 1: Perceptions of Good Citizenship

Participants and data collection. We used convenience sampling to gather data. Specifically, we asked colleagues to suggest names of other teacher educators from around the United States who teach elementary social studies methods. Then we invited those named individuals to obtain data from their preservice teachers prior to instruction in their social studies methods courses. While our selection of participating instructors was not random, we worked diligently to obtain responses from as many different states in the four geographic regions of the United States as possible. Twenty instructors (in addition to the authors) agreed to provide responses to the question "What is a good citizen?" from all students enrolled in their social studies methods courses. By asking an open-ended question, we were not limiting the participants' potential responses and thus hoped to gain a broader range of insights about citizenship.

All data were obtained from preservice teachers enrolled at public universities. We obtained responses from preservice teachers in each of the four geographic regions defined by the United States Census Bureau (i.e., South, Northeast, Midwest, and West). Our goal was to obtain a large sample, thereby capturing a more comprehensive sample of preservice teachers' beliefs than Logan (2011) and Martin's (2008) related studies. The locations from which we obtained data, as well as the number of respondents from each state are listed in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1 Here]

Participating preservice elementary teachers anonymously answered the question, "What is a good citizen?" prior to instruction in elementary social studies methods. Participants were either second-semester sophomores, juniors, or seniors depending on how their undergraduate program sequences courses and all had completed an educational foundations and/or multicultural education course prior to enrolling in social studies methods. The instructors collected the written responses anonymously, and returned the responses to us via mail, at which time they were transcribed into a single document. To ensure anonymity of responses, students were not asked to provide identifying demographic data (age, sex, ethnicity, etc.) with their responses. Rather, as responses were transcribed, each was assigned a unique number coupled with the state from which the response was recorded. In the findings section which follows, individual responses are reported using both identifiers.

Analysis. We analyzed the "good" citizenship written responses by reading the data and using a priori and grounded codes (Straus & Corbin, 1990) to identify responses that typify perspectives of citizenship. Twelve a priori codes were based on themes Martin (2008) identified in a study of preservice perceptions of citizenship and Westheimer and Kahne's (2004a) characteristics of the justice-oriented citizen. We identified five additional codes that emerged as we analyzed the responses. Most participants' responses contained phrases or ideas which fit into multiple categories; therefore, the total frequencies (f = 1978) reflected in Table 2 is greater than the number of participants (n = 846).

[Insert Table 2 Here]

Research Question 2

Participants and data collection. To explore the question "Why do preservice elementary teachers perceive good citizenship in the manner they do," we interviewed 21 teacher candidates from our respective universities about their citizenship beliefs. Fifteen of these participants were from Alabama and six were from Idaho. Jason invited everyone enrolled in his social studies methods course the semester of data collection to participate; all 15 accepted. Sara was not teaching social studies methods that semester; she invited students from another methods instructor's course. The lack of a personal relationship with Sara is presumed to be why fewer Idaho students agreed to participate. At both universities completion of an introductory course in education as well courses in educational foundations and multicultural education were prerequisites to social studies methods. Although this sample was one of convenience, it was representative of our larger national data set in terms of the percentage who endorsed each perspective of good citizenship.

Twenty interview participants were women, five of whom were in their late twenties to mid-thirties in age. Our one male participant was also in his mid-thirties. Two participants were African American, one was Hispanic, and the rest were white. We used their written response to the prompt "What does it mean to be a good citizen?" to guide the semi-structured seven-question interview. Five questions helped us to better understand their explanation of a good citizen; two questions addressed their background with social justice and personal willingness to question authority (see the Appendix for the full list of questions). The semi-structured interview protocol allowed us to ask specific follow-up questions based on their written answers. Interviews ranged from 20 to 40 minutes in length.

Analysis. Our approach to analyzing the interview data involved transcribing the interviews and then reading and rereading the transcriptions in order to become familiar with the responses. Since our focus with the interviews was to determine if participants might have beliefs about citizenship that reflect a justice orientation even if such beliefs were absent from their writing, justice orientation was our unit of analysis (Foss & Waters, 2007). We used codes to identify and make sense of "certain words, phrases, patterns of behavior, [and the] subjects' ways of thinking" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 173) that were related to social justice.

For our initial reading of the transcripts and coding process, we used a priori codes (Table 2) to identify participants' perspective about citizenship. We reread each transcript multiple times after the initial a priori coding and highlighted significant quotes (Creswell, 2007) and developed grounded codes to describe these significant ideas in the data (Gibbs & Taylor, 2005). We used data displays (Miles & Huberman, 1994), creating visual organizers that helped us keep track of recurring codes or codes that seemed significant. The visual display helped us identify major trends regarding the 21 interview participants' beliefs about good citizenship and whether they articulated a justice orientation during the interview that was absent in their written response. Among the initial codes that emerged were "comment supports justice orientation" and "comment suggests discomfort or disagreement with justice orientation." The data displays helped us identify subtle distinctions within these two codes. For example, upon re-reading parts of each transcript in which participants expressed support or discomfort, we realized that three of the participants who made supportive comments did so enthusiastically and immediately after we asked a question. In contrast, four participants were pensive and contemplative before expressing their support. Six participants expressed minor amounts of support only after we provided an example such as Civil Rights activists systemically breaking unjust laws, while eight participants suggested discomfort with "good" citizens breaking even unjust laws. We considered these trends in conjunction with information in the data displays from all of the interview questions, and refined the codes into four major themes: strong, moderate, and minimal support for and resistance towards the justice orientation. We discuss these themes in the findings section that follows, along with noteworthy trends regarding experiences with social justice, questioning practices (interview question 6), and challenging authority (interview question 7) that further elucidate the nature of participants' perceptions of citizenship.

Limitations

We did not use random sampling to obtain our participants, and thus our findings may not be generalizable to all preservice elementary teachers in the United States. We intentionally did not collect demographic data from the national sample participants to preserve anonymity; however, this eliminated our ability to determine if there were differences based on demographic factors. The interview participants were interviewed by professors in their teacher preparation program, which may have increased the social desirability of their responses. However, as Toma (2000) suggested, when researchers "care deeply about what and whom they are studying" (p. 177) they are more likely to

become "insiders" (p. 183) who get to know and negotiate meaning about their research topic. Rapport with the interview participants and our enthusiasm for the topic may have increased the quality of our data and thus the credibility of findings that follow.

Findings

Research Question 1

The most frequently mentioned comments in the national data set indicated that respondents' views were aligned with the personally responsible orientation towards citizenship. The most common theme was "helps others" (n = 606, 71.6%). Within this theme, 101 (11.9%) preservice teachers mentioned some form of volunteering in their responses. While a majority of the responses involved people helping or volunteering in their communities, 120 (14.1%) mentioned some aspect of "world citizenship" or the importance of people considering themselves citizens of the world. Quantifying these responses revealed that slightly more preservice teachers (n = 53, 6.2%) mentioned "being aware of" or "informed about" the world than those who indicated that citizens should take action to improve the world (n =46, 5.4%). As an example of the latter, respondent 60 (California) stated, "Good citizens do their best by understanding the world and by doing something for the greater good of the world without expecting anything in return."

The personally responsible orientation towards citizenship was evidenced in the second most common response, following rules or laws, which was mentioned by 380 (44.9%) different preservice teachers. This was not surprising, based on other researchers' (Martin, 2008; Logan, 2011) findings which also indicated a preponderance of these types of responses regarding the importance of obedience to authority. Participant 31 (Florida) offered a few sentences which encapsulated the general sentiment regarding rules and laws:

> To be a good citizen we must follow and obey rules of society. As people living within a community we need these laws to keep us safe. If each individual abides by this code everyone will uphold their "job" of being a good citizen.

Participant 181 (Texas) explained, "I think that when people rob or hurt other people…they broke the rules and are not worthy to be called a citizen any longer." While both of these responses indicate the importance of obedience to authority, neither included any mention of a justification to challenge existing power structures if they are unjust. Thus, not only was personal responsibility common, but the justice orientation was typically absent in responses which mentioned following rules and laws.

"Respects others" was another common response that fits within the personally responsible orientation. Of the 846 respondents, 242 preservice teachers (28.6%) mentioned that respecting the beliefs and differences of others were important indicators of "good" citizenship. Common responses demonstrated a shared belief in respecting one's community, others' rights and beliefs, and respecting the environment. Eighteen of these 242 participants specifically mentioned respecting "diversity" or "differences" in their responses. Participant 629 (Indiana) stated, "[Good citizens] respect others' beliefs such as religious, racial and ethnic differences and supports these differences in the community." All of the participants in the study were taking their social studies methods courses after having taken an educational foundations and/or a multicultural education course, so while these numbers represent a small percentage of the total participants, at least some of their viewpoints reflect that reality that schools in the 21st century are becoming increasingly diverse and that accepting these differences is important for practicing teachers.

The previous responses have focused on a personally responsible orientation towards citizenship. We now turn to the responses in our national data set relating to Westhimer and Kahne's (2004a) notion of the participatory orientation. In all, 240 different participants (28.3%) specifically mentioned some aspect of voting or participating in elections. This number indicates that roughly one in four preservice teachers consider taking part in the political process to be an important part of being a "good" citizen. Participant 60 (California) wrote "Good citizens get out there and vote and take part in the democratic process so there [sic] voice is heard." A total of 152 respondents (17.9%) indicated that "keeping informed of current issues" was essential, but a smaller number (112; 13.2%) mentioned both voting and being informed. Nine respondents (1%) specifically mentioned *not* voting without being informed. For example, respondent 141 (Florida) wrote, "It does not make you a bad citizen if you do not vote. In

my opinion it makes you a bad citizen to vote if you are uninformed of the candidates and issues, including the impacts of those issues." To this point, we have discussed responses related to the personally responsible and participatory citizens; now we turn to those responses related to the justice orientation.

Far fewer participants wrote responses that contained elements of Westhimer and Kahne's (2004a) justice orientation towards citizenship. As we were coding responses, three main themes emerged under this orientation. The first was "standing up to injustice" which 49 participants (5.8%) mentioned. Participant 281 (Kentucky) stated,

> Good citizens believe in their ability to change what happens in their country. They have pride in their country but they are actively critical of their government, especially if their government is acting in an unjust manner. This is why it is so important for citizens to be informed and pay attention.

While this response indicates an element of patriotism, which on its own would suggest an inclination towards the personally responsible orientation, this preservice teacher was keenly aware of the importance of being critical of the status quo, especially if policies or laws infringe on citizens' rights. Participant 554 (Pennsylvania) reiterated the importance of taking action when citizens perceive injustice, explaining, "A good citizen not only thinks, questions, and reasons, but also takes action, there is no positive result for injustice if there is no change." These responses indicate an understanding that "good" citizens not only question, but take action to correct injustice, both hallmarks of a justice orientation towards citizenship.

Thirty four participants (4.0%) mentioned some aspect of thinking critically about the government. Absent in these responses was the notion of blind patriotism; rather, these future teachers indicated the need for healthy skepticism regarding legislation and governmental actions. Participant 678 (Washington) wrote, "Citizens should have a critical eye that is on the lookout for societal problems and to fix them. If the government has unfair laws, then good citizens go against that or get others to help fix the problem." Response 224 (Connecticut) said,

> "Good citizens are constructively critical of what the government is doing. It's the only way to change laws that are unfair to people in the country." Responses in this category all included the sentiment that citizens must actively question and criticize current laws and governmental policies with the goal of improving society.

The final theme under the justice orientation was "addresses causes of social issues" (n = 27, 3.2%). Participant 207 (Texas) wrote "Being a good citizen means taking an active role in the political process by learning about the causes of problems and then casting your vote or becoming an activist to fix the cause of what's wrong." Participant 559 (Pennsylvania) stated, "A good citizen understands and cares about the various problems of the world. Instead of pretending like these issues don't exist, they educate themselves to alleviate the causes of these problems. This is what 'good citizens' do." It was apparent, and not unexpected, that the participants who mentioned some aspect of a justice orientation in their responses would be in the minority of our response pool. In an attempt to provide a clearer picture of why preservice teachers held the beliefs they did about citizenship in general, and their perspective about social justice and a justice orientation towards citizenship in particular, we interviewed 21 preservice teachers regarding their beliefs. The following are the findings of those interviews.

Research Question 2

Our qualitative data analysis revealed myriad beliefs and levels of comfort with a justice orientation. In Table 3 we provide a summary of the extent to which the 21 interview participants articulated support, or lack thereof, for justice-oriented action and whether particular elements of a justice orientation were present or absent from their written response to the question, "What is a good citizen?"

[Insert Table 3 Here]

In the sections that follow, we explore the differences in perspectives articulated by the preservice teachers in each category. We then discuss findings with regards to participants' experiences with social justice, challenging existing practices, and challenging authority in elementary schools. These trends further elucidate the extent to which the participants felt able to take justice-oriented action in educational settings.

Extent of Support for Justice-Oriented Action

Strong justice orientation. The three participants who articulated strong support for justice-oriented action responded "yes" to the question "Can someone not follow rules or laws and still be a good citizen? If so, how?" without reservation and were readily able to give specific historic examples. Kevin (a pseudonym), a white male, explained:

> There have been times in U.S. history where to do the conscientious thing required breaking the law. Civil disobedience was essential in the Civil Rights movement and it was important in helping to end the Vietnam War. Civilizations often engage in a variety of inhumane behaviors, and it's not okay.

In a similar spirit, our other two participants who responded "yes" to this question cited specific people involved in the Civil Rights Movement as examples of when good citizens broke laws.

Kevin was the only participant who provided evidence of a justice orientation in his interview but not in writing. His written response included elements of Westheimer and Kahne's (2004a) participatory citizenship. Our interview revealed that his beliefs about a "good" citizen are more comprehensive than his writing. For the other two participants, their writing and interviews were consistent in that they indicated strong support for a justice orientation of citizenship.

Moderate. The four participants who we classified as articulating a moderate level of support for a justice orientation all initially responded "maybe" to the question about breaking laws. These participants talked through their ideas, identified an example of times when they believed breaking a law is okay, and ultimately concluded it is okay to break laws in certain circumstances. All four either described activists in the Civil Rights Movement or referred to Kohlberg's (1981) moral dilemma about whether it is justifiable to steal medicine to save someone's life. One participant noted:

> There are some pretty stupid laws, so I guess it depends…there's a law in Alabama that you're not supposed to walk around with ice cream in your pocket…but the big laws don't need to be broken because they protect people from other people.

Instead of focusing on current laws which may be unjust, this student referenced an outdated law she had read about on a social media website, indicating a lack of critical thinking or analysis of current laws. Interviews with these four participants revealed that, when prompted by the question, "Can someone not follow rules or laws and still be a good citizen? If so, how?" and with time to think through their ideas, their beliefs about what "good" citizenship were more nuanced than what was indicated in their written responses.

Minimal. Five participants articulated a minimal level of support for justice-oriented action. They responded in ways that stood in marked contrast to those we classified as moderate, partly because they hesitated about deciding that breaking a law could be okay. These preservice teachers could not independently come up with an example of when it might be, so the interviewer prompted them with an example from United States history (e.g., citizens breaking the law to help slaves escape the South via the Underground Railroad). These participants ultimately, yet reservedly, concluded that it could be okay to break laws about speeding or other "minor" rules. For example, one student explained,

> Maybe, it depends on the rule. I mean you have serious rules like "Don't fight," and then you have other rules like "Don't disrupt others" or "Don't get out of your seat." If you break one of those minor rules, then you can still be a good citizen. [Long pause] Yes, like speeding is a very good example.

This participant's explanation reflects a dichotomy she and several other preservice teachers struggled with during the interview: the possibility of students breaking classroom rules still being good classroom citizens versus adults breaking laws and still being good citizens.

For example, one student in Alabama remarked "If you expect your students to follow and obey the rules of the classroom, in the long run they'll obey the laws in the country when they're adults." Noting her strong desire for obedience, we asked her, "Why is following rules so important to you?" She immediately responded, "Because I want my students to follow my rules. My biggest concern is that I won't have good classroom management."As future teachers preparing for the notoriously difficult task of effective classroom management (Dicke, Elling, Schmeck, & Leutner, 2015; Veenman, 1984), expecting children to follow rules without question seemed to frame many participants' thinking in the interviews. Two aspects seem of note here: the first is that these preservice teachers believe that rules and laws must be followed in class to prepare students for life, and second that in their classrooms, teachers will expect rules to be followed without question.

One student who articulated minimal support for a justice-oriented action was our only outlier in that her writing about characteristics of a good citizen included the justice orientation category "stands up to injustice." The rest of her written response focused on the importance of voting and being virtuous, both of which are classified as tenets of personally responsible citizenship. Through the interview she was able to expound on her thought process; this future teacher believed standing up to injustice means a child standing up to a bully or an adult intervening if there is violence, but in both incidences only doing so if they can remain safe. Standing up to the injustice of individuals being denied their civil rights was not part of her outlook. She couldn't see herself questioning authority or standing up to an administrator, stating, "I'm not very confrontational." This outlier underscored an intriguing dichotomy we will explore further in the discussion section: just because someone defines a good citizen as one who stands up to injustice does not mean they themselves are willing to take action.

Resistance to the justice orientation. Eight participants indicated resistance to justice-oriented action. Seven of these future teachers indicated that breaking laws and rules is never okay. We asked follow-up questions to try to better understand their thinking. In one case we uncovered an apparent lack of background knowledge:

> Researcher: Are there any laws you disagree with?
> Participant: [long pause] Not recently, I'm not going to lie, I haven't been watching the news recently.
> Researcher: What about historical laws?
> Participant: Like, give me an example.
> Researcher: Like Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. It was against the law to lead people to freedom from slavery. Was she a good citizen?
> Participant: I think it depends on your point of view. Because back then would people even consider her a citizen of the U.S.?

While her response may have been influenced by remembering that citizenship was not extended to men of African ancestry until the passage of the 14th Amendment, her response also suggests a troublesome hesitation to declare historic laws that subjugated human beings based on their skin color unjust. In addition, this future teacher was interviewed during a time when legislators in her home state of Alabama had just passed the strictest anti-immigration bill in the country. This highly controversial law was widely criticized by the local and national media; that she was unaware of this legislation indicates a lack of knowledge of important current events directly related to the issue of social justice.

One of the eight participants who expressed opposition to the justice orientation indicated that it might okay to break unjust laws in a totalitarian government. However, she explained that it would never be okay in the United States because "We're really blessed to live here, and it needs to be respected." Her patriotic stance seems to overlook contemporary and historic inequities in the United States that have been codified into law. She also articulated a high degree of faith in elected officials:

> They've been put in place by authority that is supposed to have our best interest in mind. It's a position of trust; they're supposed to have put the rules in place for a reason and we should trust their judgment.

This kind of faith in authority was articulated by six other participants in the resistance category as well as three participants in the minimal category. We explore the implications of this trend in the discussion section.

Social Justice and Questioning Existing Practices

To gauge whether or not we as teacher educators might be reinforcing a personally responsible orientation, interviewees were asked to respond to the question "Have you had any experiences in your teacher education program which have stressed the justice orientation or which have allowed you to question existing practices?" It should be noted, that by the time all 21 participants were interviewed, they had all taken one or more semesters of education courses at their respective universities, specifically an introductory course in education a well a courses in educational foundations and multicultural education. Answers suggest that, overall, our participants were not comfortable with questioning authority and either had a limited exposure to a justice orientation to teaching or the experiences were not impactful.

In total, six participants specified that they had not had course experiences that stressed a justice orientation. Among these six were two of our participants who were in the strong support for justice-oriented action category. Our lone male participant, Kevin, who articulated the strongest sense of social justice in his interview, specified that his teacher preparation coursework – which at that point included three courses that addressed multiculturalism and social justice - had not enhanced his beliefs, which were already strong. Kevin explained, "Frankly, most of it is just something that is hard wired. Even as a young child, I couldn't stand to see people take advantage of others. This is largely something that's developed in me from a young age." It is worth noting that Kevin was a career-changer in his mid-30s; in addition to being "hard wired," his previous career experiences had further solidified his strong sense of social justice.

One participant in the moderate category described coursework that introduced her to the idea that children deserve equitable treatment in schools, but none shared experiences that stressed a justice orientation. Another participant who indicated a minimal support for justice-oriented action answered in a way that suggests incomplete understanding of what a justice orientation might mean:

> No, we haven't really discussed it [social justice] at all. I mean we discussed, in a couple of classes, on making the community better and trying to think outside the box and just helping. But I think all schools have rules, and we're supposed to follow those rules, because that's the way it's always been.

Although their foundations courses addressed historical inequalities in education and an appreciation for the difficulties faced by minority children in our nation's schools, our participants did not seem to recall the experiences or content. Feiman-Nemser (2001) reported a related issue in her scholarship about how novice teachers often struggle to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In other words, coursework learning may fade away from memory before being applied in the classroom; or, as in the present study, the fadeout process may have begun during undergraduate education coursework.

Our remaining 15 participants focused on the "questioning existing practices" portion of the question. Several asked for clarification regarding the meaning of "existing practices." Interviewers identified things such as "questioning course assignments and requirements, grading of assignments" or "academic expectations by professors." Eight of these preservice teachers specifically explained situations in which they might feel comfortable questioning decisions or grades made by individual faculty members – but only certain faculty members, not ones that they considered to be intimidating. Five participants indicated that they specifically would not question things like teacher preparation program requirements because they are determined by the state. One of the participants who was classified in the resistance to justice-oriented action category, articulated the belief that good citizens would not break laws because, "If you don't follow laws you don't show respect for our country… People died to put them in place. You'll make those around you sad if you don't follow [laws]." She seemed motivated by a similar rationale for her explanation about why she would not question existing practices:

> I don't think so because y'all know the guidelines. Y'all know what the state wants us to do, and y'all know what we need to accomplish to become teachers. You know most of the people who make the laws know what is going on, and they know what they're doing, so we should follow those laws.

It seemed that although some participants felt comfortable questioning people in certain circumstances, institutions or overarching power structures were not to be questioned because these procedures and policies were in place for good reasons.

The most surprising response to this question came from one of our participants in the strong support for justice-oriented action category: she said she would be unlikely to ask her professor, the interviewer with whom she had a positive rapport and seemed comfortable, to explain the importance of an assignment, even if she could not understand its value. Intrigued, we followed up:

> Researcher: Why? Are you deferring to my authority as your professor?
> Participant: I think that you know that there's a good reason for what you assign.

Earlier in her interview, she articulated a strong support for justice-oriented action, specifying:

> Sometimes there's more important [things] than following rules. If there's a law that you don't agree with or a rule that you don't agree with, and it infringes on somebody else's rights, then, you know, you could stand up for those people, help them.

Despite hypothetically supporting justice-oriented action, this individual thought she was unlikely to ask a professor a simple question like, "Can you please tell me how this assignment will help me as a teacher?" While a seemingly tedious assignment does not rise to the level of impinging on one's rights, this response still indicates a troubling unwillingness to question those in positions of authority.

Challenging Authority in Elementary Schools

Despite the afore-described reluctance to question existing practices, ten participants expressed the willingness to question authority in elementary schools. Their reasons for this willingness varied. For example, one participant who was categorized as expressing moderate support for justice-oriented action stated that she would stand up for her beliefs about the importance of a varied curriculum: "I'm not going to teach just reading and math all day long. There are other important subjects that need to be taught. Citizenship and multiculturalism are important in my classroom. Yeah, I'm going to [challenge authority]."

Others were specifically willing to challenge authority if it concerned the well-being of their future students, particularly those who might be at a disadvantage because of school practices and reliance on tests. Another preservice teacher explained that she would be willing to speak out in the face of unfair practices in a school, in part because "I'm in a situation where maybe I can take a few more chances and it be okay [compared to] someone who doesn't have someone to help them financially like I do in my husband." In acknowledging her position of financial comfort relative to classmates as a reason why she would be willing to challenge authority, she seemed to address a concern other preservice teachers had: challenging authority seems risky.

Five interview participants said they would not challenge authority until they had tenure because it might jeopardize their ability to remain employed by the school. They felt this way despite concerns about the structure of schools. For example, one preservice teacher sighed before responding,

> Hopefully, after I get tenure. Yes, after I get tenure… with special education you have parents fighting for the students' rights. You have all the mandated laws and so on and so forth. But with ELL students, who's really fighting for their rights? Who's really fighting for multiculturalism? So I feel like that's where my voice is. So I do see myself questioning people in charge, but only after I have tenure.

Another stated, "I would [challenge my administrators] if I see there is something wrong, but not in the first three years before you have tenure because I don't want to step on anyone's toes." In contrast, three participants never saw themselves questioning authority. One explained, "If you want to keep your career, sometimes you have to put your thoughts on the back burner." These words are particularly ominous because during the time frame of this study, Idaho passed new education legislation ending tenure. While veteran teachers who already have tenure maintain it, new teachers can no longer earn it. With so many of our participants indicating that tenure will provide

the comfort they need to challenge authority for the benefit of students, the national trend to end or weaken teacher tenure (Greenblatt, 2010) may have an unintended consequence: teachers who are less likely to advocate for students if it means challenging an administrator.

Three interview participants made reference to the notion of not challenging until they gained experience and thus became more of an authority figure themselves. One said, "Um, not right away, but once I've been there a few years, and I'm in my 'routine' or more comfortable, I'd be more comfortable talking with administrators about my concerns." These responses paint a picture of novice teachers as being more oriented towards placing faith in authority than embracing a justice orientation.

Discussion

The question "How do preservice elementary teachers perceive good citizenship?" guided our initial research with a national data set of 846 preservice elementary teachers. The majority of the responses indicated a reliance on a personally responsible orientation towards citizenship. The most common sentiment was helping others (n = 606, 71.6%), and 101 of those preservice teachers mentioned some form of volunteering as part of "good" citizenship. Given the prevalence of this belief, it seems worthwhile for teacher educators to examine how we can help candidates learn to perceive of helping others in ways that actually alleviate the underlying conditions of societal problems, rather than simply addressing the symptoms. Service-learning is a pedagogical choice that can provide prospective teachers with authentic experiences working to alleviate injustice while also enhancing their understanding of citizenship (Beisser &Schmidt, 2001; Logan, 2011). We recommend providing preservice teachers with opportunities for candidates to both engage *in* service-learning and learn *how* to teach it, thus empowering them with pedagogical skills they can use in their own classrooms and simultaneously helping them increase their own sense of civic agency. As Sara and colleagues explained, "[K-12 and teacher preparation] classrooms hold empowering potential for teaching students generative ways to think and actively apply their learning to work towards substantive change rather than feeling overwhelmed and powerless" (Wilhelm, Douglas & Fry, 2014, p. 1). Effective service-learning builds on student interests, which can help teachers to avoid the pitfalls of what Mirra and Morrell (2011) called "Teacher as Conduit" and instead become "Teacher as Change Agent" (p. 409).

Another noteworthy finding from our national data set was 380 preservice teachers included following rules or laws in their description of a "good" citizen. Research indicates that most preservice elementary teachers tend to be obedient and to not question rules and laws (Logan, 2011). Teacher educators should be aware of this predisposition among teacher candidates and look for meaningful activities which highlight times in which individuals have a moral obligation to question those in authority (including professors in teacher education programs). Far fewer participants wrote responses that reflected an understanding or a proclivity towards the adoption of a justice orientation.

Our qualitative study of 21 teacher candidates offered another insight into the trend of following rules and laws. Fourteen of the candidates we interviewed expressed a desire to have their future elementary students follow classroom rules without question, and they also believed good citizens follow rules and laws. Concerns about classroom management have long been recognized as paramount among early career teachers (Dicke et al., 2015; Veenman, 1984) and may contribute to high attrition rates among novices (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). For the 14 of our participants who expressed minimal support or resistance towards a justice orientation, these concerns may have outweighed other experiences that impacted their beliefs about citizenship.

With regard to the second research question, "Why do preservice elementary teachers perceive good citizenship in the manner they do?" the answer is multifaceted. Participants did not indicate that teacher preparation coursework had influenced their perceptions of citizenship, even though they completed three courses that addressed social justice prior to their interviews. This lack of transfer of knowledge from early preparation classes to social studies methods may have been a factor in a related finding: depth of content knowledge or lack thereof appeared to influence participants' perceptions of citizenship in that those who expressed strong or moderate support for justice-oriented action seem to possess more content knowledge than those who expressed minimal support or resistance. As social studies scholars and proponents have long made clear (e.g. Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Gagnon, 2003; Ochoa-Becker, 2007), content knowledge is essential to promote democracy. Without it, individual may struggle to

"criticize tradition" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 2), which is at the heart of promoting social justice. The apparent gaps in content knowledge that seemed to influence some interview participants' responses may hinder their ability to see the importance of adopting and teaching the justice orientation towards citizenship.

Teachers face situations in which the willingness to criticize tradition is essential to promote equity for the youth they teach. Four of the eight participants who expressed resistance to the justice orientation specified that they would not feel comfortable challenging school policies before they have earned tenure. Half of the other participants in the mild and moderate support categories also expressed reluctance to expression opposition to school policies they believe are unfair or unjust. As one moderate support participant said, "Probably not because my job would be on the line." Spoken in the midst of a national trend to abolish or weaken tenure for new teachers (Greenblatt, 2010), it is noteworthy that our participants with less confidence in their content knowledge also may feel less able to question policies enacted on their students without some sense of job security.

One participant who expressed strong support for social justice expressed some caution regarding how quickly they would question policies. As Kevin explained,

> Yes, but my impulse is usually to wait until I really know what I'm talking about. In a new area like teaching, it's probably going to be a while before I feel really comfortable enough in what I know to do that. That being said, if a child is being treated unfairly or cruelly, I will definitely step in.

This response reflects the desire to advocate for children and also learn and grow as a professional educator prior to taking action, which is a notable contrast to those participants who could not envision themselves questioning practices because of job security. In contrast with Kevin, another participant who expressed strong support for the justice orientation could not see herself questioning authority in school because to do so would make her uncomfortable. This disparity suggests that just because one supports social justice does not mean one will personally engage in the hard work it requires.

For the eight participants who did not include the justice-orientation in writing *and* expressed resistance to it in the interview, two common factors seemed to influence their beliefs about citizenship: a strong sense of trust in and lack of willingness to question authority. Based on previous research (e.g., Logan, 2011; Martin, 2008), and our own findings, it appears that many preservice elementary teachers have not considered or adopted a justice orientation towards citizenship. Our interview responses suggest our participants hold an underlying faith in existing power structures; that is, they believe that those in power make laws and rules which are necessary and just.

Their beliefs were undoubtedly influenced by their own school experience, as school curricula often emphasize the personally responsible orientation (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004b). Westheimer and Kahne (2004b) explained that some initiatives designed to provide citizenship education often shy away "from teaching about social movements, social transformation, and systemic change. These programs privilege individual acts of compassion and kindness over social action and the pursuit of social justice" (p. 243). That our 14 participants who articulated resistance or minimal support for the justice orientation were unable to identify an example of a time in United States history, such as the Civil Rights Movement, when good citizens broke laws to promote justice suggests that these future teachers may be the victims of what Westheimer and Kahne (2004a) described as "the narrow and often ideologically conservative conception of citizenship… [that] reflects neither arbitrary choices nor pedagogical limitations but rather political choices that have political consequences" (p. 237). One possible consequence of this ideological orientation is that the next generation of teachers includes a population who not only embrace a personally responsible orientation towards teaching: they are resistant to the justice orientation and have a strong inclination to trust authority.

Since Anderson et al. (1997) demonstrated that teachers' beliefs about citizenship shape the instruction they provide, it is essential that teacher educators provide experiences that expose preservice teachers to the goals of the justice orientation. Likewise,

> It is essential that teachers recognize their capacity as individuals and as a profession to bring about desirable outcomes for students. They must specifically understand why equity is desirable and ways to teach students to become stewards of democracy through the pursuit of social justice. (Silverman, 2010, p. 324)

If elementary teachers do not consider a justice orientation, our concerns are twofold: (1) They will not be able to teach this orientation to their students effectively and thus help their students develop a foundation for critical thinking and active citizenship, and (2) Without adopting a justice orientation themselves, teachers are less likely to challenge authority when educational rules and mandates are created that have potentially unfair impacts on students. These concerns lead to implications for teacher educators.

Implications and Directions for Future Study

Implications for teacher educators and new questions for scholarly inquiry emerge from these findings. The findings suggest that preservice elementary teachers may benefit from specific pedagogical experiences designed to help expand their thinking about citizenship. As Peck and Herriot (2015) pointed out, social justice is increasingly important in our global economically- and socially-connected world, and "more research on how teachers' beliefs influence their teaching" (p. 397) is needed. We recommend future studies investigate questions such as, "How can specific instructional strategies enhance preservice elementary teachers' understanding of the justice orientation towards citizenship?"

Along these lines, we (the authors) have begun to reframe our own teaching of social studies methods to more intentionally promote understanding of the justice orientation towards citizenship. Our initial experiences reframing our teaching have underscored that teacher educators' pedagogical choices is an area rich in potential for future scholarship. It would be worth doing an in-depth longitudinal study examining how elementary teacher candidates' stance toward citizenship is or is not impacted by coursework. Interviewing candidates upon entry into their teacher preparation program and at the end of each semester could help researchers identify the kinds of experiences that influence preservice teachers' orientations toward citizenship. It is also worth investigating what kinds of experiences can help expand understanding of citizenship and social justice – both in social studies methods courses and in other parts of the preparation program. Longitudinal studies could also elucidate how practicing teachers' perceptions change or remain static as they spend more time in the classroom.

Another effective way to teach a justice orientation is through the inclusion of historical content which focuses on times when people stood up to societal injustice to become agents of change. An example is the "irresistible forces" interpretation of history (Duplass, 2011). This paradigm teaches that ideas can become movements that eventually overcome prevailing (unjust) institutions (p. 162). Exposing preservice teachers to this interpretation is one way to explore how individuals can promote change with students. However, methods instructors should be explicit in this instruction so that teachers will enter classrooms knowing that this concept is just as applicable to contemporary society. We believe the effort to influence preservice teachers' beliefs needs to be programmatic and not just limited to social studies methods courses if we want the next generation of teachers to teach for social justice rather than continue to trend of citizenship education that avoids exploration of politics and "distract[s] attention from analysis of the causes of social problems" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004b, p. 243). As recent events make clear, teachers need to become what Mirra and Morrell (2011) called civic agents.

Finally, we noticed that new themes emerged between the collection of our data and data collection from previous studies. Researchers might investigate the extent to which perceptions of citizenship are influenced by current events. For example, we wondered if participants would have mentioned "patriotism" more frequently had our study been conducted shortly after the events of September 11, 2001.

Conclusion

Rather than simply transmitting some corpus of knowledge, teachers have the responsibility of preparing future citizens of this country. In their answers to our questions, elementary teacher candidates relied heavily on traits of the personally responsible citizen as the core of their descriptions of good citizenship. The majority suggested that citizens should simply follow the laws their government passes, be involved in some community events, and be honest and respectful of others. If teacher educators do not expose preservice teachers to other aspects of citizenship,

these teachers will not be able to begin to prepare K-6 students to start thinking about the world around them and how each and every person can work to improve society. To quote orator and politician Carl Schurz (1872): "My country right or wrong, if right to be kept right, and if wrong to be set right." As teacher educators, we owe it to our students—and our global society—to offer opportunities for them to develop a justice orientation as citizens of this country and the world.

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Appendix A—Interview Questions

1. When asked to define a "good" citizen you wrote _____. Please tell me why you wrote this answer.

2. How do you plan to teach citizenship to your elementary students? In other words, if you believe _____ is an important component, how do you plan to teach this belief to students?

3. Can someone not follow rules or laws and still be a good citizen? If so, how?

4. [If rules/laws was part of their response, ask] Why do you think following rules/laws is such an important component of good citizenship?

5. Researchers have found that there are three types of citizens: the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen, and the social justice orientation.

- Personally responsible citizens believe that good citizens follow rules and laws. How do you plan to teach this to your elementary students?
- Participatory citizens are politically active and vote in local and national elections. How do you plan to teach this component to your elementary students?
- The justice orientation is one in which citizens work to improve societal (or school) conditions. How do you plan to teach this to your elementary students?

6. Do you see yourself challenging authority when you're an elementary school teacher? If so how?

7. Have you had any experiences in your teacher education program which have stressed this "justice orientation" or which have allowed you to question existing practices?