

**PLANTING THE SEEDS OF CHANGE: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF A CIVIC
ORGANIZATION IN TEACHING YOUTH ABOUT CITIZENSHIP IN POST-
REVOLUTIONARY EGYPT**

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In the context of post-revolutionary Egypt, many civic organizations arose for the purpose of preparing youth to be citizens of a new Egypt. The role of such organizations in equipping youth with civic knowledge and skills remains to be unexplored. This study looks at one civic organization, Bokra, in Egypt after the Revolution. It aims to explore the civic discourses that the organization promotes through its annual summer school. It also aims to find out how the youth participants in the school perceived such discourses and how their understanding of citizenship changed in light of the socio-political change in Egypt. Multiple data sources such as document analysis, interviews, observation and video-recordings are used in order to provide a clear picture of how the school helps its students re-invent Egyptian citizenship. Findings from this study offer practical implications for educators, social science researchers and community organizers. A civic organization such as Bokra creates a democratic climate for youth to experience aspects of citizenship that are essential for active participation outside the classroom such as social responsibility and agency. It does not only help youth develop affective aspects of citizenship such as love, belongingness and loyalty to Egypt but also attempts to change youth mindset about civic engagement. The end goal of the school is to help youth utilize the skills they learn in

the classroom to initiate projects to develop their local communities. The study highlights the potential role that civic organizations can play in promoting a form of citizenship suitable for a country in transition.

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PREFACE

“And my success is not but through Allah. Upon him I have relied, and to Him I return.” (11:88). First and foremost, I thank God for granting me the opportunity to pursue knowledge and gave me strength throughout the entire process. It would have not been without God’s will. He made everything easy from the time I was accepted in the doctoral program until my graduation. Knowing that He is there always reassured me.

I also would like to thank my dissertation committee. Dr. John Myer, my dissertation advisor continued to assist with this research even after he moved to another academic institution. Dr. Myers is not only my advisor but rather a mentor who has always been interested in my work and keen on helping me achieve the highest result. I always felt comfortable discussing my work with him and he always gave me great advice. I would also like to thank the rest of my committee. Dr. Richard Donato has been there for help with any academic matter whenever I asked for it. He was also instrumental in helping me organize the defense especially that I was not in Pittsburgh at that time. Dr. Noreen Garman gave valuable recommendations and shared important reflections on my study. Dr. Mohammad Bamyeh had great comments His knowledge about the Middle East is extensive.

I would like to thank the founders, organizers and students of Bokra School with whom I worked closely so that this study would come to light. I found the input from everyone extremely

interesting and eye-opening. I hope that the results of this study would help them continue the good practices they already have in place and improve areas that need work.

Many thanks are due to my family. My parents and my brother have played a tremendous role in helping me succeed not only during my doctoral studies but throughout my entire life. My mom, Nisreen, taught me the importance of hard work, preparation and time-management. My dad, Gehad, always believed in me, trusted my choices in life and called me the reason of his happiness. My brother, Osama, has been by my side all my life and always felt proud of me. Thanks to my amazing husband, Iqbal, who continuously called me “professora” long time before I completed my PhD. He has always given so much love, support and help. He also spent long hours helping me rehearse for my defense. Many kisses go to my beautiful baby girl, Maryam. You came to this world to make me happier. I am proud of you and I hope you would be proud of me. I love you all and to you all I dedicate my work.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Egypt, with nearly a quarter of the population (24.3%) comprised of youth between the ages of 18 and 29, has witnessed an increasingly significant role of youth in politics during the past 2 years (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, 2012). As Bamyeh (2011) explained, the Revolution of January 25, 2011 is one of the most important political events that Egyptian youth have experienced in modern times because it has provided them with a “grand spectacle of the type that had shaped the political consciousness of every generation before them in modern Arab history” (p. 1). The youth in Tahrir square not only helped end the authoritarian and corrupt regime of former President Mubarak but also inspired millions of Egyptian youth in their pursuit of creating a better future for Egypt (Hauslohner, 2011). The fact that the occupation of Tahrir Square in January 2011 was organized by masses of youth , as Beinun (2013) explained, makes one wonder about the motivations driving young Egyptians to get engaged in such change movements and the impact such movements have on them as democratic citizens.

My interest in this subject stems from my experience teaching Egyptian university students in degree and continuing education programs. My work with youth in Egypt involved language, communication and job-skills training. This allowed me to closely observe their

attitudes towards Egypt and their understanding of citizenship before the Revolution. This also sparked my interest to explore such attitudes in the post-revolution context. Prior to the Revolution, youth had no channels through which they could be civically or politically engaged. Political participation was not encouraged because it usually led to problems with the state police. If one expressed disagreement with the system, they could be detained or imprisoned. This created a culture of fear that discouraged youth from voicing their opinions. The majority of the youth I previously taught or worked with did not seem to be interested in issues related to citizenship. Many were desperate and frustrated with the social, political and economic situation, leaving them to believe that change was an impossibility. Only a minority of the youth that were interested in civic issues participated in awareness campaigns or youth groups within their academic institutions. After the Revolution, many school and community civic programs started forming so that youth could organize and take action. The role that such programs play in teaching youth about citizenship in post-revolutionary Egypt, however, remains to be largely unknown. In addition, there has been scant research on the approaches to citizenship that shape such programs or on the impact they have on the students' understandings of citizenship.

Before providing an overview of this dissertation study, I believe it is important to give the reader some information about the study population. Therefore, in the next section, I discuss the role that youth have played in modern Egypt in an attempt to help the reader gain a clear picture of the position and role of youth in Egyptian society. After that, I move into a description of the study and its goals and significance.

1.2 YOUTH ACTIVISM IN EGYPT

Although there has been a long history of youth activism in Egypt, the current situation is particularly significant because it succeeded in changing a corrupt political system that had been in power for almost 30 years. As explained earlier, during the Mubarak rule, youth always felt frustrated or rather hopeless about civic participation. This was mainly because they continuously failed to change any of the conditions under Mubarak's power. According to Beinin (2013), in the early 2000s, youth organized a number of movements for different purposes such as solidarity protests with Palestine and Iraq in addition to participation in worker strikes. Perhaps the most significant movement in the 2000s was the Kifaya movement which demanded the end of President Mubarak's rule. Despite all of these efforts since 2005, according to El Mahdi (2009), Egyptians failed to end the oppressive regime of Mubarak. However, in 2010, an incident of police partiality incited youth anger and resulted in a series of protests and campaigns that eventually led to the Revolution.

Khalid Saeed, a young business man from Alexandria, was tortured and killed by the state police. The result, according to Giglio (2011), was a Facebook campaign against police brutality organized by young Egyptians under the name "We are all Khalid Saeed." The Facebook page soon became a site for political activism where young Egyptians exchanged ideas, posted news and shared information about the abusive actions of the Mubarak regime. After the massive uprisings in Tunisia in 2010, "We are all Khalid Saeed" started mobilizing youth to go out to the streets and demand the end of the Mubarak regime. On January 25, 2011, the whole world watched the crowds of Egyptians in Tahrir Square who protested to end President Mubarak's 30-year rule. As a result, Egypt has gone through a series of uprisings in which the public has

demanded mass political, social and economic reforms. Menezes and Makkawi (2013) observed that one significant aspect of the Revolution was the significant role played by youth.

Prior to the Mubarak era, youth in Egypt had a long history of activism, In *Youth and Youth Culture in the Contemporary Middle East*, Simonsen (2005) discusses history of youth activism in Egypt from the 19th century until the present day. In the late 1800s and particularly in the year 1882, youth played a significant role during the British bombardment and invasion of Alexandria through forming the Society of Egyptian Youth. A few years later, Mustafa Kamil, at the age of 20, established himself as a public orator and a political figure and founded the anti-British National Party. Kamil also founded the nationalistic newspaper, al-Liwa. After a number of violence incidents by the British against the Egyptians, Kamil organized massive rallies to support the nationalistic cause. When Kamil died in 1908, his successor Muhammad Farid founded a new newspaper called Misr al-Fatat or Young Egypt and continued to organize youth to support the public cause. In 1835, Egypt had witnessed one of the biggest student led series of uprisings against the British. As the researcher explains, such uprisings did not only allow students to enter the political scene of Egypt but also portrayed young people as a strong and dynamic force and a central point of public debate.

Simonsen (2005) goes on to explain that after the Egyptian Revolution of 1919 and under the rule of Muhammad Ali, Egypt had gone through mass development in the sectors of schooling, literacy and media. Cairo University was also established in 1925 just a few years later. Therefore, in the 1930s, secondary and university students formed a strong political segment of the Egyptian society. Around the same time, the Islamic sector also started to emerge in the Egyptian society through the Young Men's Muslim Association of 1927 and the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1930s. These two associations mainly focused on organizing youth through

activities such as boy scouts, sports and summer camps. Thus, one can conclude that in the early 20th century, different youth organizations were created in Egyptian universities each with a different background and ideology. The author then concludes that since then, Egyptian youth have been an important sector of the society that actively participates in social and political change movements.

1.3 THE STUDY

This study examines the role of one civic organization, Bokra, in preparing youth to be civically engaged. I was introduced to Bokra in September 2012 when the organization was offering its annual summer school for Egyptian youth, which I will be referring to as Bokra School throughout this study. For the following three months, I was directly involved with the school personnel and students either through observation, attending meetings, exploring curriculum drafts or through conducting interviews. By working closely with the school founders, organizers and students, I tried to gain a better understanding of the role that the organization played in teaching youth about citizenship in the context of new Egypt. In particular, I aimed to learn about the civic discourses that the organization promoted and how they fit in the context of post-revolutionary Egypt. It is worth mentioning here that I chose to use the term *discourse* throughout this paper mainly because it is a comprehensive term that refers to the ideas and ideologies promoted by an individual or an institution. It was the most fitting term to use in a study with such a scope. In addition to the school discourses, I also wanted to explore the teaching styles and methods used at the organization in an attempt to align them to research recommendations on the best practices of civic organizations. Finally, I tried to capture youth

voices in order to learn about their understanding of their role as citizens of Egypt after joining the organization's summer program in 2012.

In what follows, I first begin by stating the problem underpinning this study. To do that, I focus on the current socio-political and educational situation in Egypt. After that, I present the three main research questions of the study. I then move to a discussion of the reasons why this study is significant.

1.4 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In recent years, civic education research has increasingly focused on the preparation of youth for engagement and participation in their local communities (Yates & Youniss, 1999). This research focus has emerged as scholars began to discuss the importance of civic programs that not only theoretically teach youth about citizenship but also equip them with the civic skills necessary for community engagement.

Recent research has focused on the impact of civic education at school and community programs (Kahne & Sporte, 2008) on helping youth become participatory citizens who actively contribute to the development of their communities and engage in political action. In addition, researchers are also trying to link the role that outside-school civic programs play in the context where such programs are situated. Some studies, for example, examine the role that civic programs play in connecting urban youth to their communities (Kirshner, 2009; Nasir & Kirshner, 2003; Rubin, 2007). Other studies assess how such programs help youth understand what citizenship means in times of intense socio-political change movements (Yates & Youniss, 1999; Van Hoorn, Kimlosi, Suchar & Samelson, 2000). The present study belongs to the second

category of research as it aims explore the role of a civic organization in Cairo in teaching youth about citizenship in a context of intense social and political change. In addition, it adds to research in this category by also examining youth beliefs and attitudes about such change movements in light of their participation in an intensive civic program.

Nowadays, the power of Egyptian youth is not only in its number but also in its ability to organize and create a force for change (Menezes & Makkawi, 2013). One can see that after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, the role of youth has not only been limited to political activism but also expanded to community development. Golia (2012) explains that youth, in today's Egypt, have launched campaigns and started programs that aim to improve the Egyptian community. Many have also joined civic organizations that train young adults to assume more active roles in their communities. According to El Baradie (2011), Egyptian youth are now constantly looking for opportunities to be civically engaged for the purpose of contributing to the country's development. It is essential then that we explore the new channels that the Revolution has created for young Egyptians to develop their communities. Also, it is important to look at the potential role that civic organizations hold for preparing youth to participate as citizens in a post-Revolution context that is transitioning to democracy.

Traditionally, the goal of civic education was for students to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for minimal citizenship. Drawing on theories of political socialization, this approach conceived of citizenship as a largely passive activity that did not require participation beyond voting. As Hahn (1998) explains, however, political socialization theories can no longer be solely used to explain how youth develop and grow. While families, teachers and the media were previously viewed as means for transmitting civic and political skills and attitudes to young adults, youth nowadays are believed to play a role in shaping who

they want to be and in deciding what their civic roles should be like through direct interaction with the communities where they live (Hahn, 1998; Flanagan, 2008; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). One can conclude that looking at schools as the main venues through which students develop civic skills and values is now questionable (Kirshner, 2009).

In the Middle East, much of the literature on civic education has traditionally focused on formal schooling emphasizing knowledge of the political system (Faour & Moashar, 2011). The case of Egypt is not an exception. Citizenship education in Egypt is very limited to school civic curricula that are designed and written by the Ministry of Education (Waddell, 2013). There is limited research that looks at what experiences Egyptian students engage in through these curricula or on how effective these curricula are at preparing them for democratic citizenship. The available literature, however, indicates that citizenship education curricula is one way that the government controls the way students view their relationship with their country in addition to the ideologies that should govern that (Asik, 2010; El-Nagar & Krugly-Smolka, 2009). In other words, citizenship curricula include what the government wants the students to believe (Reuben, 2005).

In addition, there is confusion among civic educators as to what the purpose of citizenship education in Egypt should be. For example, Baraka (2006) conducted a study to look at the content and purpose of civic education curricula in Egyptian schools. When interviewing teachers, curriculum specialists, textbook authors and school principals, the researcher noticed that each of these groups had a different perception about the meaning and purpose of civic education. While textbook authors thought that the purpose should be to teach democratic and civic values, social studies teachers, viewed civic education in terms of teaching history and geography. School principals and other content-area teachers thought that the purpose of civic

education was to teach ethical behavior. Waddell (2013) asserts that even after the Revolution in 2011, citizenship education in Egypt has not really changed. She explains that despite the efforts to change citizenship education curricula after the Revolution, curriculum designers failed to address issues that the Revolution demanded, such as tolerance and equality. Instead, the curricula continued to reflect the ideologies of the ruling regime. In other words, civic curricula after the Revolution did not shift to teaching the civic skills necessary for building the country. They, however, continued to teach students about the government and its roles and responsibilities.

The climate where citizenship teaching takes place in school is also discouraging. As Faour (2013) and Waddell (2013) explain, the schooling in Egypt is very teacher-centered. Students look at the teacher as the authority figure and so there are not any opportunities available for them to question the teacher. Not only are the teachers authoritative but also the curricula are not interactive. They do not foster thinking skills through which students can solve problems or engage in constructive discussions about their communities. Instead, they present the information in a very traditional manner. In addition to the curricula, Faour (2012) explained that students do not view schools as safe environment where they can express themselves freely and share opinions openly. Students even question the credibility of extracurricular activities such as student government or student union (Waddell, 2013).

This situation illustrates the kind of civic experiences that Egyptian students acquire through school. These youth are the product of such an educational system that does not capitalize on their skills and capabilities and does not prepare them with the skills needed to assume an active role as citizens. What one can conclude from these results is that the schools do not prepare students to be civically engaged. Hence, it is essential to look at the role that outside-

school programs play in helping young Egyptians understand their roles and duties as citizens of Egypt.

Given the questionable role that schools play in developing civic skills and values, recent research studies give substantial attention to understanding how the role that civic organizations play in teaching youth about citizenship (Kirshner, 2009; Nasir & Kirshner, 2003; Rogers, Mediratta & Shah, 2012; Youniss & Hart, 2005). In this research study, I examine Bokra School to understand it as a case of civic education that emerged after the Egyptian Revolution, particularly in terms of the ways that it prepares the students for democratic citizenship.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given these issues, there are three major research questions that I aim to answer with this research study. These are:

- In the context of post-revolutionary Egypt, what civic discourse(s) underlie the learning opportunities that Bokra School provides to prepare Egyptian youth for civic participation?
- What are the learning opportunities that Bokra School plan in order to help the students perceive its discourse of citizenship?
- How did participation in the School shape the participants' beliefs about citizenship?

These three questions were selected for two main reasons. First, I wanted to learn about the role that emergent civic organizations play in shaping youth understanding of citizenship in post-revolutionary Egypt. To do so, I decided to focus on the overall approach to citizenship that the school promoted. Second, I also wanted to capture youth voices and learn about their beliefs

and attitudes about citizenship after their participation in Bokra School. The goal was to determine the extent to which the school succeeded in achieving its goals by listening to the students' reflections on their experiences. One can say that the three research questions are complementary. They also help give a comprehensive picture about the organization, its mission and the extent to which such a mission is achieved.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE

The scholarly significance of this study is its contribution to the understanding of the role played by the youth civic organizations that emerged in Egypt after the Revolution. In fact, educational research that looks at the impact of the Revolution, in general, on youth is scarce. Therefore, this study adds to educational research that focuses on youth civic engagement in countries undergoing political and social unrest. It stands out because it takes place in post-revolutionary Egypt, which is one of the leading countries in the Arab World and the Middle East. It also takes place more than two years after the Egyptian Revolution. Thus, both place and time distinguish the present study from others that may have a similar research focus.

First, in the context of post-revolutionary Egypt, ultimately little is known about how Egyptian youth are taking up democratic citizenship and putting it into practice. A focus on the ways that civic engagement experiences provide meaning for Egyptian youth, and what these meanings are, will contribute to our knowledge of the role of political context in youth understanding of citizenship. Participating in a civic organization and learning to work collectively contributes to such development by exposing participants to new viewpoints, allowing them to explore new frames for citizenship, and requiring that they make choices about

the kind of citizen they are and want to be (Rogers, Mediratta & Shah, 2012). Participants also acquire new understandings and attitudes toward citizenship, such as the relationship between public and private life, social responsibility, and identification with societal ideologies and beliefs (Kirshner, 2009). Of particular relevance to Egypt, this study explores the participants' attitudes toward the process of democratization with all that it entails in terms of the roles and duties of citizens.

Second, this study is also significant because of its timing. Egyptians now have the potential for greater democratic participation than ever before. Before the Revolution, organizing in civic and political action was discouraged due to the risk of detention and imprisonment (El-Taraboulsi, 2011). For this reason, families, in Egypt and many parts of the Middle East, brought up their children with the disposition that they should not have a political role mainly out of fear. Yet the Revolution is believed to have challenged the way Egyptians viewed activism (El Baradie, 2011). A significant number of civic organizations have started forming after the Revolution which, in return, created various opportunities for youth to engage in civic action. However, there is little research that explores the civic participation of young Egyptians following these dramatic changes. An exception is the study by Youniss and Billen (2013) in which they interviewed a number of Egyptian youth in their 20s who resided in both Cairo and Alexandria. They aimed to learn about youth perceptions of citizenship in light of the socio-political changes in Egypt. This study does not only look at the perceptions of youth on the Revolution but also looks at the ways through which a civic organization helped shape youth understanding of citizenship in light of the socio-political events in Egypt. It also focuses on the voices of youth in an attempt to learn about how their understanding of important civic values such as collective action and freedom had changed before and after the Revolution.

In the following chapters, I first begin by presenting the theoretical framework and the literature underlying this dissertation study. I then move to a discussion of the civic organization that I worked with for the purpose of completing this study. After the methods are presented, I discuss the study findings. I then conclude with a discussion of the results highlighting the impact of youth civic organizations in Egypt.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The field of citizenship education for youth is broad and constantly evolving. Therefore, the goal of this chapter is to establish a theoretical framework that would assist my understanding of the citizenship discourses promoted by schools nowadays. Another goal is to look at and review current research findings that explore citizenship education programs for youth, the goals they aim to achieve and the impact they have on adolescents. In the rest of this chapter, I first outline the conceptual framework used for this study, focusing on the three main contemporary discourses of citizenship that are currently promoted in schools: liberal, republican, and critical. Then, I review relevant citizenship education literature.

2.2 CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSES OF CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship education programs and curricula usually mirror the citizenship discourses of the societies where they exist (Turner, 1993). Societies view the relationship between the individual and the community differently. They also have different expectations with regards to the type and significance of an individual's contribution to his/her community. In this section, I discuss three of the major contemporary discourses of citizenship. In doing so, I focus on how each

discourse views the individual and his/her relationship with the community. The purpose of looking at civic discourses is to guide my understanding of the approach to citizenship that Bokra School promotes. In other words, I aim to find out which discourses about citizenship the school teaches and in what ways the school may challenge the students' understanding of the meaning of democratic citizenship.

When defining what citizenship discourses are, Cherryholmes (1988) explains that they are a product of social and historical events. They are the main tool through which ideology is created. Ideologies govern the way that people think about their communities and socially interact in them. There are many different types of citizenship discourses that guide scholars' understanding of citizenship nowadays. One notable model for understanding the goals of citizenship programs was developed Abowitz and Harnish (2006). The model consists of three kinds of citizenship discourses: liberal citizenship, republican citizenship and critical citizenship. The researchers describe these discourses as ideologies that govern the way citizenship education is taught in schools and civic programs. For this study, I chose to adopt this model because it is more comprehensive with regards to how it views the relationship between individuals and their communities. These discourses, according to the researchers, manifest themselves in school citizenship curricula. The goal of these discourses is that the students start forming dispositions and adopting ideologies that are in line with those of their political societies.

It is worth mentioning though that the model of Abowitz and Harnish (2006) is not the only model that describes how civic programs teach students about citizenship. In "What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy," Westheimer and Kahne (2004) proposed three kinds of citizens that citizenship education programs can create: the personally-responsible, the participatory and the justice-oriented citizen. The first kind is the personally responsible

citizen. Programs that attempt to develop this kind of citizen teach young people the value of honesty, integrity and hard work in addition to other values that facilitate personal growth and social harmony. The second kind is the participatory citizen. Some programs attempt to prepare students who are ready to participate in community-based efforts such as organizing events and drives to serve the community. The last kind of citizen that the researchers present is the justice-oriented one. Some programs prepare students to go beyond immediate and quick efforts that conceal societal problems to efforts that aim to solve problems from the root for the purpose of spreading justice and social welfare. In these programs, students are usually engaged in problem-solving discussions and activities that prepare them to be in leadership positions in order to improve the conditions around them.

In fact, there are similarities and differences that exist between the types of citizenship discourses proposed by Abowitz and Harnish (2006) and the model of Westheimer and Kahne. The liberal citizenship discourse, for example, which focuses on building the individual could be compared to creating a personally-responsible citizen who acts responsibly and respects others in the community even if not necessarily civically active. Moreover, the republican discourse contains some aspects similar to those that are essential for creating a participatory citizen. Both, the republican discourse and the participatory kind of citizenship, prepare students to take action that would make one's community a better place. One difference that exists between the two is that while the republican discourse of citizenship promotes civic action that supports and maintains one's government, the participatory kind of citizenship promotes civic action that improves current conditions without necessarily being loyal to one's government. Finally, the critical discourse of citizenship calls for the importance of creating citizens who are not only participatory but rather ones who believe in grassroot change. This could be easily compared to

the goal set for creating a justice-oriented citizen according to Westheimer and Kahne. In what follows, I discuss the three discourses of Abowitz and Harnish (2006) in more detail.

2.2.1 Liberal citizenship

The thinnest version of citizenship, according to Vimo (2010), is liberal citizenship. This conceptualization of citizenship solely focuses on the individual citizen and the rights one receives as part or a member of a political community. Liberal citizenship involves a type of political ‘contract’ through which individuals think of their nation states as a means for securing their rights. Abowitz and Harnish (2006), explain that liberal citizenship prioritizes the rights of individuals so that they pursue what they see as good life. This should be done in a way that does not contradict with the freedom or rights of other citizens. In this discourse, equality and individual liberty are two major values. In other words, everyone is viewed equally in the society and everyone is entitled to the same rights and owes the same duties and responsibilities. Also, everyone is free to decide for themselves and seek the life path that helps him/her accomplish his/her personal goals.

Two sub-discourses, neoliberalism and political liberalism, emerge from the broader discourse of liberal citizenship. Neoliberalism is a market liberal ideology that is also very individualistic. According to researchers such as Wells, Slayton and Scott (2002), it merges both the capitalist and democratic spheres together. Many scholars have discussed neoliberalism as a citizenship discourse and the influence such a discourse has on the society. Apple (2001), for example, views neoliberalism as a discourse that focuses on self-interest and individual gains rather than national and communal development. For this reason, neoliberalism is a controversial discourse of citizenship among educators. Political liberalism, on the other hand, is one that

includes a “thin” element of community participation. In this discourse, civic pluralism is strongly promoted and reinforced as there is lack of social agreement on the values, identities and forms of participation in the society (McLaughlin, 1992).

When it comes to its views on the individual, the liberal citizenship discourse gives the biggest weight to the rights of the citizen and his/her prospects for success. The primary focus is thus on the idea of autonomy (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). Individuals believe that they are free to make their own decisions and pursue their own dreams with no interference on the side of governments or ruling parties. For this reason, individuals strongly support democracy and fight against tyranny or dictatorship. In this discourse, citizens believe that there is always a better way of doing things and that one should not submit to any oppressing system.

The notion of patriotism, however, takes different shapes in the liberal discourse. According to Bern (2002), patriotism goes beyond loyalty to traditions and bloodlines to loyalty to principles and ideas. One needs to be loyal to principles that guarantee equality, freedom and liberty for everyone. This kind of patriotism, according to the researcher helps citizens see from the perspective of different nations and distinguish the good from the bad. It is not based on sentimental or blind love to one’s nation state but rather on clear principles that preserve the rights of everyone.

With regards to the community, the liberal discourse highlights the importance of teaching civic skills that allow individuals to create and contribute to the democratic communities where they live. The first set of skills that are necessary for citizens to possess is multicultural skills so that they can live in a society that respects different cultures and protects the rights of individuals who come from different backgrounds (Feinberg, 1998). In addition, citizens need to possess civic knowledge about their nation state and its history. Therefore, civic education in the liberal

discourse stresses the link between civic knowledge and communicative and deliberative skills (Hobbs, 2001; Singleton, 2001). It does not only focus on factual information but also prepares students to think critically and take part in political and communal activities (Parker, 2003). The liberal discourse encourages discussion and debate for the purpose of reaching the best solutions in a way that guarantees respect, tolerance and freedom for everyone.

As one can see, the focus of the liberal discourse of citizenship is individual autonomy. However, this does not mean that individuals are free to do what they want with no restrictions. In the liberal discourse, individuals are taught that there are right and wrong ways of exercising freedom. In addition, individuals need to consider the rights of fellow citizens. When it comes to civic participation, individuals are expected to stand for freedom, equality and liberty so that a democratic system is constantly maintained.

2.2.2 Republican citizenship

In contrast to the focus in liberal citizenship on the individual, republican citizenship discourse is distinguished from other discourses by its focus on the political community (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). While the main principles of the liberal discourse are individual freedom, liberty and equality, the republican discourse focuses on community service, patriotism and loyalty so that individuals develop a strong connection to their nation states. Educationally, the republican citizenship discourse focuses on expanding students' civic literacy (Milner, 2002) along with the civic skills necessary for students to take part in a democratic system via participation in both political and communal activities.

The republican discourse differs from the liberal discourse in the way it looks at the individual, national identity and community participation. With regards to the individual, the

republican discourse does not give as much weight to citizen rights as it gives to citizen responsibilities. Civic republicans believe that democracy is negatively affected by giving much attention to the rights, gains and achievements of individuals (Sandel, 1982). The focus should be on making the political community a better place. In their discussion of the republican discourse, Abowitz and Harnish explain that one of the reasons for breaking democracy is the “growing cynicism, apathy and the selfish focus on individual rights over collective responsibilities” (2006, p. 661). Civic republications, thus, believe that the new generation should not focus on exercising their rights. They should, instead, be aware of their civic duties and responsibilities.

When it comes to identity, one needs to feel great love and belongingness to his/her nation-state. Self-sacrifice, patriotism and respect are very important civic virtues as they are believed to be the only way a political community can be maintained. Perhaps one of the most comprehensive definitions of civic identity from a republican perspective is that of Damon (2011). He explains that civic identity refers to one’s allegiance to a certain system as well as one’s moral and emotional commitments to actively participate in that system out of love and social responsibility. Contrary to the liberal discourse that values multiculturalism, the republican discourse does not view such a notion as important. Instead, one’s loyalty should be solely to his/her country and people (Viroli, 2000).

With regards to the community, the republican discourse focuses on civic knowledge and literacy for the purpose of fostering a sense of belongingness and loyalty of citizens to their country. Civic literacy in this discourse refers to teaching citizens about the history of their political communities in addition to highlighting the importance of maintaining the democratic ideals and traditions of the country. Civic knowledge and literacy also emphasize the importance

of respect to political symbols and preserving the heritage and culture of the nation state. Complementary to civic literacy is civic participation. Participation according to civic republicans is a means through which one can develop social responsibility towards his/her community and fellow citizens. Participation should also support the political system and its governmental institution and should aim for the common good (Milner, 2002; Nie, 1996).

To sum up, the republican discourse of citizenship gives more weight to the political community and its institutions rather than the individual. The citizen, in this discourse, can play a strong role in maintaining the stability and prosperity of the democratic system where they live. Citizens need to be aware of their duties and responsibilities to participate in ways that would benefit everyone and strengthen the political community.

2.2.3 Critical citizenship

After they analyzed a sample of school curricula, Abowitz and Harnish (2006) concluded that the republican and the liberal discourses are the most dominant civic discourses in school curricula nowadays. However, they also observed emerging types of citizenship discourses that they thought were promising if given enough focus and attention. They referred to these discourses as critical citizenship discourses. Critical discourses aim to fill the gaps that both the liberal discourse of citizenship and the republican discourse do not address. The aim of critical discourses is to create citizens who go beyond their personal interests to ones who are proactive and actively engaged both on the political and the communal levels (Johnson, 2012; Johnson and Morris, 2010). Given the Marxist and Deweyan threads within these discourses, they account for what the researchers refer to as “exclusions.” Critical discourses focus on groups of people who are marginalized in the other two discourses based on their gender, culture, language or race.

Critical discourses of citizenship differ from the liberal and republican discourses in their view of the individual, identity and participation. Such discourses value the individual no matter what background he/she comes from, what language he/she speaks or what his/her gender is. They pay close attention to the poor and the marginalized groups in a way that protects their rights and guarantees their inclusion in community affairs (Giroux, 2003). With regards to identity, the notion of national identity is replaced by an appreciation of diversity and cultural understanding. The main goal of these discourses is to help citizens coexist and live in harmony (Warner, 2002).

Perhaps one of the major differences that distinguish critical discourses from other discourses of citizenship is how civic participation is viewed. Critical discourses of citizenship promote a very progressive type of citizenship which takes the form of activism. These discourses focus on agency and reasoning and not on mere civic knowledge. Critical discourses do not view critical thinking as a means for helping students support already existing systems but rather as a vehicle through which citizens can come together and initiate change to face systems that are not working for the common good. Therefore, Kincheloe (2001) explains that citizenship curricula in these discourses are not fact-based but rather ones that encourage students to question, discuss and argue. They go beyond factual knowledge to a critical curriculum that expects students to think, react and understand the reality of the social and political system where they live (Apple, 2000; Johnson & Morris, 2010; Kincheloe, 2001).

To sum up, there are three main discourses of citizenship that are prevalent in societies and largely promoted through citizenship curricula. These discourses govern the relationship between the individual and the community. Each discourse has its unique way of viewing the importance of the individual, national identity and civic engagement. One can use these

discourses as a general guideline for classifying the kind of discourses that citizenship education programs promotes in different places and at different times.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are four major categories of citizenship literature that are directly related to the focus of the current study. The first pertains to studies that look at the impact of citizenship education on youth development. The second category shifts attention to studies that look at pedagogical approaches to citizenship education. The third category looks at student learning in citizenship education. Since this study looks at youth civic development at times of socio-political change, I include a fourth section that summarizes studies that had been conducted with adolescents in countries in transition. In what follows, I discuss each of these four categories. It is worth mentioning though that most of the literature on citizenship education looks at in-school citizenship programs or activities. Some studies also look at programs that exist outside schools either for the purpose of occupying youth spare time (Kahne, Nagaoka, Brown & O'Brien ,2010) or for the purpose of organizing youth and preparing them to assume their roles as citizens (Kirshner, 2009). Although the focus of this study is on youth programs and initiatives outside the boundaries of formal educational institutions, I still draw on literature that looks at schools and youth organizing programs because it contributes to our understanding of the link between civic education and civic engagement.

2.3.1 Studies of citizenship education and youth development

Researchers have been interested in the role that citizenship education plays in the civic development of youth for a long time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Erikson, 1968). Parker, Wilkins and Dale (2010), for example, explain that civic involvement creates the space for helping youth form an identity that includes political/civic development. During adolescence, youth are continuously exploring different commitments and possible options in order to eventually choose the path that defines who they become as citizens. Similarly, Obradovic and Masten (2007), explain that commitment to civic engagement is a mindset that is developed during adolescence. It is then essential that youth receive guidance that pertains to how they could be more productive citizens within their communities. Research shows that citizenship education helps empower youth by equipping them with civic knowledge and skills and connecting them to the communities where they live.

First, the goal of many citizenship education programs is help youth develop the knowledge and skills necessary to be well-informed citizens who are proactive, feel responsible for initiating and participating in community change movements and activities, act politically and achieve public goals (Carnegie Corporation of NY, 2003). Researchers have found that there is a number of target skills that programs try to instill in students. For example, Kirshner (2009) conducted a study where he worked with a group of youth in a youth organizing program to look at what civic skills adolescents developed through participation in a civic organization. After observing and interviewing minority group youth, the researcher concluded that being part of a civic organization helped adolescents position themselves with regards to the community where they lived and become aware of their roles and responsibilities in improving communal conditions. They also developed skills such as social responsibility and teamwork which added

to their repertoire of civic skills and competences. Another important finding that Kirshner (2009) discussed was that the students began to realize the importance of working collectively as opposed to working alone. The researcher referred to these concepts as collective agency and atomism, respectively. The students in his study shared their beliefs about how being part of a youth organizing initiative changed their views on the significance of collective work if one was to enforce change.

Other studies that looked at the civic skills that youth develop through citizenship programs include one by Hansen, Larson and Dworkin (2003). The researchers surveyed a number of adolescents using the Youth Experiences Survey (YES) to determine what skills youth gained through civic participation. The results showed that two of these were leadership and linkage to community. Youniss and McLellan (1997) also explained that perhaps one of the most important civic skills that adolescents develop through civic activities is developing awareness of the organizational practices required for future adult civic. In 2002, Kirlin introduced a model of skills that youth develop through participating in civic activities. This model included skills such as working in groups, organizing others to accomplish tasks and communicating and working out differences. Building on that, Parker, Wilkins and Dale (2010) conducted a study in which they explored the development of each of Kirlin's civic skills through a number of designed civic activities that they planned for adolescents over a period of one week. By working closely with youth in simulated civic activities, the researchers were able to identify which civic skills the students gained. Their findings showed that the students in their program reported that they became more aware of the world and more interested in solving its problems. They also reported that they became more aware of diversity. Finally, they expressed that they became motivated to participate in developing their communities. The researchers

concluded that focused and well-planned citizenship programs can equip youth with not only the skills but also the civic knowledge that is essential to engender citizenry in adulthood. Therefore, citizenship programs should develop civic skills and provide the educational resources that are essential for youth to acquire civic knowledge as well (Flanagan, 2003; Kirlin, 2002; Parker, Wilkins & Dale, 2010).

Second, citizenship education programs play a significant role in connecting youth to their communities. In a long report about the civic education in the USA, Coley and Sum (2012) discuss the important role that civic education can play in connecting American youth to their country. The researchers explain that schools can build the civic knowledge necessary for youth to support democratic institutions, develop trust in governments and lead to greater civic involvement both politically and on the communal level. In addition to these contributions, Galston (2004) adds that through building civic knowledge in schools and academic institutions, youth are also taught to deal with critical issues in their communities and to develop less fear of immigrant and minority groups.

Another attempt for identifying the ways through which civic education serves as a link between youth and their community is the work of Schugurensky (2000). The researcher explains that citizenship programs have two major goals. They either aim to enlighten students or prepare them to be civically engaged. Enlightenment programs aim to create citizens who are informed and aware of the issues in their communities. Engagement programs, on the other hand, have the goal of developing active citizens who are willing to initiate action and participate in the development of their communities both civically and politically. Both enlightenment and engagement programs are complementary and both are necessary for helping students become participatory citizens. At the end of the day, the goal should be to prepare students for

“participatory democracy” which is, according to Schugurensky (2004), “a process of deliberation that is bound to real and substantive decisions” (p. 607). What this means is that classrooms should be democratic spaces where students can engage in purposeful activities that help them understand and seek solutions for persistent problems in their societies.

In fact, the notion of participation is not new. Historically, researchers have agreed that civic engagement in the form of active participation is crucially important for maintaining a democratic community. It is believed that only through participation would individuals learn about democracy. Therefore, the goal of citizenship programs should be to develop the capacities of individuals so that they become democratic citizens who possess personal skills that allow them to think and act critically. The goal should also be to develop citizens who believe in their political efficacy and their ability to change the oppressive or unjust conditions of their communities (Schugurensky, 2004).

To sum up this section, citizenship education programs aim to achieve one or both of the previously discussed outcomes. The extent to which they succeed in doing so varies from one program to another depending on the specific objectives and activities set by each program. As Arnett (2000) and Flanagan (2008) explain, youth enjoy the privilege of being ‘free’ to explore social issues and possible future roles that they can play. This continuous process of exploration helps solidify their notions of self-concept which affects the way their civic knowledge and skills are formed. Therefore, it is essential that several opportunities be created for youth inside and outside school to help them explore their political and communal potentials.

2.3.2 Pedagogical approaches to citizenship education

Another big area of citizenship education research focuses on pedagogical approaches to teaching students about citizenship. Perhaps one of the very influential works that formed the basis of research on citizenship teaching practices is Dewey's writings on the critical pedagogy of community service learning. Among the main principles that Dewey (1916) discussed was the importance of linking knowledge to practical experience. Students cannot be prepared to participate in their communities unless they have enough knowledge and a good understanding of the problems that exist around them. Similarly, knowledge alone is not enough to motivate students to be civically engaged.

Another principles that Dewey discussed is the importance of reflective inquiry so that students can critically think about and analyze problems. Reflective inquiry includes stages such as doubt and confusion about the situation and its complexity, interpretation of elements and relationships, careful survey and action- taking for the purpose of fixing the situation (Saltmarsh, 1996). Dewey also signified the importance of serving the community for the purpose of transforming it. He explained that one does not need to contribute in the area that directly affects him/her but should participate in efforts that aim to improve the quality of life for all citizens. In fact, Dewey was not the only researcher who spoke about the importance of change that stems from social justice. In the 1970s, Freire introduced the theory of critical consciousness in Brazil. He strongly advocated reform that was based on grassroots change. He also called for the importance of using critical pedagogies in preparing students for their roles as citizens. In recent years, many researchers have continued to highlight the significance of critical pedagogies in citizenship programs for the purpose of transforming communities and promoting social justice

(Giroux, 1988; Johnson & Morris, 2010; Ten Dam & Volman, 2004; Hyslop-Margison & Thayer, 2009; Myers, 2007).

Based on this research orientation, many contemporary scholars have discussed a number of teaching pedagogies that are effective in citizenship education classrooms because they empower students and connect them to the real world outside (Campbell, Levinson & Hess, 2012; Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2013). In this section, I discuss the importance of discussions and community projects as two teaching pedagogies in the civic education classroom.

One teaching pedagogy that has been the center of research is discussions especially given the role they play in helping students develop crucial civic skills and values. Researchers like Campbell (2005) and Niemi and Junn (1998) identified classroom discussions as one of the best practices in citizenship education for a number of reasons. First, discussions help students gain necessary knowledge about their communities. Second, they teach students reasoning and critical thinking skills. Finally, discussions help students practice skills that are essential for success in civic situations outside the classroom such as listening to others in addition to debating and arguing. Parker and Hess (2001) also highlighted the importance of discussions especially to help students understand and conceptualize controversial and public issues. They, however, stressed the importance of training teachers to lead effective discussions and explicitly teaching students the art of effective classroom discussions. For this reason, Hess (2001) concluded that teachers should teach *for* discussions in order to improve students' discussion skills and teach *with* discussions by making discussions a significant component of instruction.

A major study that stressed the importance of discussions is one by Feldman, Pasek, Romer and Jamieson (2007) in which they closely worked with students and teachers in 22 public schools in Philadelphia. The goal of the researchers was to identify the best practices used

in a complementary civic program in the target schools. The researchers concluded that students in the 22 schools made great civic gains mainly due to the nature of activities taking place in the program. Of these activities was classroom discussions. Similarly, in his paper on the civic mission of schools, Peter Levine (2006) listed a number of benefits that schools can obtain by utilizing more discussions in their classrooms. Some of these benefits include enhancing communication and increasing knowledge and interest in politics.

Another teaching pedagogy that researchers highlight as effective in citizenship education is community projects. The idea of hand-on projects as an effective civic education teaching tool was discussed as early as 1916 by John Dewey. Dewey explained that community-based activities can enhance students' self-concept and self-efficacy through realizing that one's efforts can make a difference. Recently, researchers have come to the conclusion that community projects where students have voice and can practice planning and decision-making is believed to be crucial in teaching students about their roles in their communities later on. It is also a way of helping students become more politically engaged and more tolerant to various social groups in the future (Morgan & Streb, 2001; Keeler, Zukin, Andolina & Jenkins, 2002, Gibson & Levine, 2003). Kirshner (2009), on the other hand, emphasizes the role that community projects in youth organizing programs play in teaching students civic skills and values that are essential for civic participation outside the classroom. Through working closely with and observing urban youth as they worked on a campaign to improve local high schools, the researcher concluded that the students developed better communication and decision making skills. In addition, the youth in the program started to realize that for their community project to succeed, they needed to work collectively rather than individually. Discussions and community projects are not the only practices that are believed to be effective in citizenship education. Quintelier (2008), for

example, discussed other activities such as inviting government guest speakers and planning field trips. Such activities connect youth to their communities by exposing them to different people, ideas and places. Such exposure is essential for fostering love and loyalty to one's country.

To conclude, there seems to be a number of effective civic practices and pedagogies that researchers agree upon. It is worth mentioning that these activities need to complement classroom instruction so that students' knowledge gaps are filled and then complementary activities reinforce such knowledge. In fact, researchers believe that citizenship instruction inside the classroom is a very effective tool to build the knowledge base of unprivileged youth and minority group adolescents (Toney-Purta & Wilkenfeld, 2009, Levine, 2006). Therefore, citizenship programs should combine classroom instruction with a number of other activities so that the students can achieve the best civic outcomes.

2.3.3 Studies of student learning in citizenship education

The third category of citizenship education literature that is directly linked to this dissertation study is one that looks at student voice in citizenship education. The purpose of research in this area is to look at how students perceive the citizenship education experiences that they engage in at school. Student voice helps inform researchers of the gains that students make, highlight gaps in the students' learning and suggest ways through which citizenship education experiences can be improved. In fact, most of the research available in the area of student voice focuses on school children while some focuses on college students. Some of the trends that emerged in literature that focuses on student learning in citizenship education can be classified in two different categories. First, research shows that there are external variables that determine the student learning in citizenship classes. Second, research highlights some of the activities and practices

that students think are most effective in their learning. In this section, I review some of these research findings.

A big portion of research that surveys the knowledge and attitudes of students comes from reports on the civic performance of students in the United States. One major finding that a number of reports focus on is the fact that students perceive civic experiences differently according to their socio-economic and income status, ethnic groups and family education. Coley and Sum (2012), for example, analyzed the 2010 results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in order to look at the kind of civic knowledge and attitudes that students in various grade levels acquire. It is worth mentioning that the NAEP surveys students civic knowledge in terms of their deeper understanding of what citizenship means, civic skills especially in the form of critical thinking skills in addition to civic dispositions or attitudes about future civic action (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007). The researchers reported that students who come from lower socio-economic and family education backgrounds along with minority group students possessed only basic civic knowledge when compared to their higher socio-economic White counterparts. In addition, the former group of students also showed less interest and motivation in being civically engaged in the future.

Another significant finding that informs citizenship education researchers pertains to the types of citizenship activities and practices that students think have the strongest impact in enhancing their civic knowledge and attitudes. The IEA CIVED study aimed to learn about the knowledge and attitudes of youth in 28 countries around the world, around 90,000 adolescents were surveyed in order to examine the relationship between the civic education experiences they had and 21st century skills such as media literacy, economic knowledge, political efficacy and openness to minority groups (Torney-Purta & Wilkenfeld, 2009). Among many of the important

findings of the study was the medium of instruction that students thought had the greatest impact of their learning. The researchers concluded that lecturing or formal class instruction was an extremely effective teaching tool for students of low-socioeconomic backgrounds. Other teaching tools that helped students make significant gains was discussions. Therefore, the researchers recommended combining both teaching styles in order to attend to the needs of everyone in the classroom and maximize the gains of any citizenship education program. A similar conclusion was drawn by Coley and Sum (2009) in which they concluded that the students they surveyed benefited more from a combination of traditional teaching methods as well as activities such as guest speakers, role plays and community service.

Aside from studies that looked at the performance of school-aged students, several other studies aimed to explore the attitudes of college students in order to learn about their beliefs and perceptions about civic participation. One of these studies is the work of Keisa, Orlowiski, Levine, Both, Kirby, Lopez and Marcelo (2007) in which they surveyed and engaged in focus groups with 386 college students in various universities across the United States. The study yielded a number of interesting findings. One of them was that the youth surveyed indicated that they were more interested in public service and communal participation than formal politics. The adolescents expressed that they thought politics and politicians lacked credibility and so they were seeking more genuine ways through which they can directly help in their communities. The students also explained that they thought that colleges and universities were not providing them with enough opportunities to explore different channels of civic participation.

In addition to studies that aimed to look at the general attitude of youth with regards to civic education efforts in universities, other studies looked at the direct impact of some programs on youth understanding and commitment to civic engagement. One of these studies is the work

of Einfeld and Collins (2008) in which they interviewed a group of college students who participated in a service-learning program. The students expressed that participating in the program made them more aware of societal issues such as social inequality. In fact, some of the students explained that they would like to be committed to social justice issues in the future. The students also told the researchers that they developed better communication skills through interacting with different groups during their service-learning experiences. Finally, all of them expressed interest in continuing civic participation efforts in the future.

A similar but older study that looked at the impact of supplementing classroom civic instruction with a community-based project was one by Markus, Howard and King (1993). The researchers followed the control group-treatment group protocol in order to compare the performance and experiences gained by the group that received traditional classroom instruction and the other that had a hands-on component. The researchers concluded that the students in the treatment group performed better in terms of acquiring course material in a more effective way and obtaining higher overall grades. The treatment group students also expressed that they became more interested in various societal issues and aware of problems that existed in their communities. In fact, indicating interest in and commitment to future civic engagement was a conclusion drawn by other researchers who surveyed the impact of service-learning and community-based projects on college youth. For example, when Giles and Eyler (1994) explored the attitudes of youth on a 1- credit service-learning project in college, the students explained that the experience helped them understand reality better and become more interested in serving their communities in the future. Another interesting finding was that the students believed that such an experience helped them realize that they could make a difference in their society.

One last study that is similar in nature to the present study was the work of Beaumont and Ehrlich (2006). The researchers examined the effect of an intervention program with a focus on political participation on college students. They aimed to find out how the program would influence the knowledge and attitudes of the youth involved. The results indicated that the students reported high gains in the areas of political knowledge and skills. In addition, they expressed more positive attitudes about political participation in general. The students also developed an increased sense of identity as political participants in their communities. One important conclusion that the researchers make is that civic engagement comprises knowledge, skills and attitudes. If civic programs are well-designed, they can make a strong impact on youth that is not only enlightening but also motivating for future civic commitment.

To conclude, it seems that studies that explore youth learning in civic education have two major contributions. First, they help us understand the impact of civic education programs on adolescents by listening to how youth perceive these experiences. Second, they help inform research on civic education by highlighting experiences, practices and activities that youth perceive as most effective in linking them to their communities. For this reason, an integral part of studies should be devoted to listening to youth and using their feedback as a guide for improving civic programs and promoting better and continuous civic action.

2.3.4 Studies of youth at times of change

Researchers have always been interested in studying both the impact of socio-political change movement on youth civic knowledge and skills as well as the role that youth play in societies in transition. In the early 1990s, countries in Eastern and Central Europe witnessed massive sociopolitical change movements demanding economic and political reform. Macek, Flanagan,

Gallay, Kostorn, Botcheva and Csapo (1998) explained that youth in these countries were trying to understand their roles in their communities during a time when society as a whole was forming its new identity. The researchers attempted to highlight the opportunities that socio-political change movements created for youth. They concluded that such movements gave youth more opportunities to explore their roles as citizens. In the past, youth in Eastern and Central Europe had very limited opportunities that were dictated by governments to control youth actions for the purpose of maintaining political stability.

Many researchers who worked with youth in Eastern and Central Europe attempted to use developmental theories such as those of Erikson, Marcia and Bronfenbrenner in order to understand how youth perceived and were influenced by the sociopolitical changes in their countries. For example, Van Hoorn, Kimlosi, Suchar and Samelson (2000), closely worked with and interviewed Hungarian and Polish youth in order to look at youth understanding of citizenship in light of major sociopolitical changes. They explained that youth understanding of abstract ideas such as government and democracy deepened. While students knew the definitions of such ideas in the past, they started to actively discuss issues related to politics and to show more interest in public welfare after the uprisings. Similarly, Walker and Stephenson (2010) explained that youth in the former Soviet countries were no longer viewed as immature individuals who should be told what to do by adults or as young inexperienced individuals who needed protection. Instead, they were citizens who were genuinely interested in the political affairs and social problems of their countries. In addition, they experienced a sense of freedom that they had not had before the uprisings which motivated them to seek opportunities to help their communities. In Tereshchenko's (2010) study on the impact of the Orange Revolution on Ukrainian youth, the researcher explained that although youth in both West and East Ukraine

experienced the Orange Revolution differently, the students she interviewed from each group showed great awareness of their societies. She added that young people after the uprisings expressed concern about the well-being of their cities and villages, were more aware of historical and present issues and had more hope in the future.

Researchers also agree that the sociopolitical movements in Eastern and Central Europe had a positive impact on youth attitudes towards their countries. Tereshchenko (2010) discussed the idea of trust and belongingness. She along with Osler and Starkey (2005) and Syvertsen (2006) explained that this sense of trust, love and loyalty to one nation-state drove youth to be civically engaged. In addition to trust and love, Van Hoorn et al. (2000) discussed the idea of hope. They explained that hope was at its highest level immediately after the uprisings and started to slowly weaken afterwards especially when youth realized that their expectations for reform were not fulfilled. For this reason, many adolescents shifted their civic efforts to community development rather than to political activism (Osler and Starkey, 2005; Tereshchenko, 2010).

Due to the significance of sociopolitical change movements in the civic development of youth, researchers discussed the importance of teaching pedagogies that make use of the sociopolitical changes in the country. Tereshchenko (2010) discussed what she referred to as *place-based pedagogy*. According to the researcher, a place-based pedagogy is a critical pedagogy that raises youth awareness of the social, political and economic situation in their societies and helps them develop critical thinking skills to respond to any social injustices. This kind of pedagogy also helps students understand societal problems in a deeper level and embrace and practice democratic values that are essential for future civic action. Therefore, youth outside-school programs and NGOs should adopt such a teaching pedagogy in order to create active

citizens who know how to serve their societies and solve its problems. The focus should be on raising youth awareness of the history and future of their societies and on identifying problems and taking action to address these problems (Hahn, 2006; Osler & Starkey, 2005).

To sum up this section, there seems to be many similarities that exist between the case of post-communist societies and that of Egypt. Not only is the similarity in the nature of socio-political change movements but also in the way that youth make sense of such changes as well as the kind of attitudes that youth develop towards the societies they belong to. It is worth mentioning, however, that there is not as much research that looks at youth attitudes and civic development after the Egyptian Revolution as that which have been conducted in post-communist societies. Therefore, this study is an attempt to learn about the role that outside-school programs play in teaching youth about citizenship and the attitudes of Egyptian youth after the Revolution of January 25, 2011.

Through this study, I take into account previous research findings that identify the roles, goals and activities that effective civic programs should plan. I use the citizenship discourses framework in order to understand the school's general approach to citizenship and what it entails. I use literature review findings in order to analyze the civic practices and experiences provided to the students in the school. Also, I try to bear in mind previous research findings in the area of student voice when analyzing the beliefs and perceptions shared by the youth involved in the summer school.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

For this study, I utilized a case study research design in order to understand the workings of the organization and its influence on the students. Within this design, I collected data from two primary sources, interviews and document analysis. These were supplemented by the use of observation field notes and video record so that I would be able to answer the study's main research questions. This chapter overviews the research design, methods of data collection, and the data analysis that were used for this study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

When planning this dissertation study, I decided to use the case study research design for a number of reasons. First, the study solely focuses on one organization for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the practices that take place within the organization as well as the nature of interaction and relationship of the participants involved. According to Lapan and Quartaroli and Riemer (2011), case study is the best design that a researcher could use when the purpose of the study is investigation and exploration of people, settings and practices. Second, the case study design is best used when one is researching a complex issue that cannot be fully

understood through the use of surface-level data (Merriam, 1998). In the case of civic engagement, especially in the context of Egypt where there is a lack of research, an important aim is to generate rich descriptions of phenomena. This is done through closely working with the organization and the people involved in it. It is worth mentioning, however, that due to my long involvement with the setting and participants of a case study, the data could be biased (Seidman, 1998). For this reason, I used multiple data collection tools, or what is also referred to as triangulation (Miles & Huberman, 1984), to avoid any biases and to provide descriptions that are as close to reality as possible.

3.3 THE STUDY

3.3.1 The setting

The Bokra Foundation is an Egyptian civic organization that was founded in 2006 by a group of graduate students in the areas of political science and human development in order to promote youth civic action and empowerment. It aims to equip young adults with the skills needed to be active citizens in the Egyptian society. Bokra is sponsored by an NGO in Cairo called Nahdet El-Mahrousa. The sponsoring NGO does not interfere in what the Foundation does. The only requirement that the NGO has of the Foundation is to make sure that it is as diverse as possible and that students from different social, religious and educational backgrounds get an equal opportunity to participate in its activities and programs.

One of the main programs offered by the Bokra Foundation, which is also the focus of this dissertation study, is an annual summer program called Bokra School for Sustainable

Development. I refer to this program as Bokra School throughout the paper. Bokra School aims to equip youth with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that empower them and help them become proactive members of their communities. The founders describe Bokra as a “school of sustainable development” because it aims to prepare better citizens who in return can continuously develop the communities they belong to. Each year, Bokra School takes place over a period of 3 weeks. To be part of Bokra School, youth go through a process of screening and interviewing with the school’s personnel before a final selection is made. Upon selection, the students receive a full scholarship that covers all the activities of the program in addition to accommodation and transportation expenses.

3.3.2 School mission

The mission of the school is to develop citizens with strong national loyalties to Egypt who are willing to work together to make Egypt a better place. Students are expected to acquire knowledge about different sectors in Egypt such as economics, education, politics, environment and media to understand their nation. Different approaches to community development and theories of reform in addition to different skills that are required to become an effective citizen are then presented. By the end of the summer school, students are asked to either develop civic initiatives or participate as interns in already-existing ones to practice what they have learned and to also take a first step towards being civically active.

To accomplish this mission, Bokra School helps students develop civic competencies that prepare them to play more active roles within their communities. The kind of competencies that Bokra School aims to help students develop, according to the school founders, fit into three

categories: (1) knowledge of self, (2) knowledge of the local community, and (3) knowledge through doing.

Knowledge of self. Knowledge of self is centered on the notion of self-discovery which is believed to be key for strengthening one's self-belief. The school aims to empower students through capitalizing on their points of strengths and helping them realize that they possess certain capabilities that help them be active participants in their communities.

Knowledge of community. Bokra School also aims to develop students' knowledge of the Egyptian community. This is done through creating opportunities through which students can learn about the current social, political, economic and environmental situation in Egypt. Students are also made aware of the areas in the community that need development so that they focus their attention and efforts on them. Moreover, they are introduced to current civic initiatives so that they can learn about how other individuals started such initiatives and, thus, test the feasibility of their own initiatives.

Knowledge through doing. Bokra School also aims to help students develop a personalized version of knowledge through doing. This is achieved through instilling the belief that the students will learn best about the reality of issues around them when they become part of these realities and hold conversations with individuals in these contexts. Providing students with all these types of knowledge is one way of making sure that they have a holistic and synergized rather than a fractured understanding of reality. This kind of synergy helps students realize that reform is multi-faceted and that many elements come into play when one intends to initiate change.

The target skills that Bokra School aims to equip its students with, according to the school's Checklist of the Path Keeper and various meeting minutes and planning documents that

I examined, include higher order and systematic thinking skills. These include analysis, synthesis, planning, application and implementation, networking with people and organizations in addition to evaluation. Through systematic thinking, students come to an understanding that reform is not a top-down or a bottom-up process. In fact, for reform to take place all the dots need to be connected and all the pieces of the puzzle need to be put together in an iterative way. In addition to knowledge and skills, there is a set of attitudes that Bokra School attempts to achieve. These include fostering a sense of belonging and nurturing the passion to give and develop. These also include enhancing the value of dialogue, understanding, cooperation, tolerance and human dignity. Add to that an appreciation of freedom, social justice and public welfare.

The knowledge, skills and attitudes that Bokra School intends to empower its students with could be viewed as means through which the long-term goal of the school can be achieved. This goal is to help youth become active citizens who understand their roles and duties and social entrepreneurs who are willing to contribute to improving their communities. In other words, Bokra intends to help its students transfer the knowledge, skills and attitudes they acquire in the school to real life situations so that they begin their journey of change making.

3.3.3 The participants

For this study, 26 individuals agreed to participate: 16 students, 8 organizers and 2 founders. As for the students, I interviewed a random sample that has an equal number of males and females. The selection was random because the students shared the same background especially with regards to age, educational performance and socio-economic background. As for the organizers, I interviewed the eight organizers that were directly involved in the summer school of 2012.

Through my visits to the school and observation of the different sessions, I was able to see that those eight organizers were the ones who were always present and the ones who played a big role in mediating between the students and the founders. Lastly, I interviewed the two founders of the civic organization who were the two individuals who started Bokra School almost 10 years ago.

All the student participants in summer 2012 were receivers of scholarships awarded to top students in Egyptian cities to attend private universities in Cairo and Alexandria. The students were between the ages of 20 and 21. I met with them during some of the school sessions. Then, I interviewed each one separately either in Cairo or Alexandria, based on the location of the universities they were enrolled in. Table 1 summarizes the basic demographic information of the 16 students.

Table 1: Demographics of students

Name	M/F	Age	City of origin	Major	University Location
Youssef	M	20	Hurghada	Business	Alexandria
Mervat	F	20	Kafr El Sheikh	Pharmacy	Cairo
Mariam	F	20	Beni Seuf	Engineering	Cairo
Linah	F	20	Minya	Management Sciences	Cairo
Roaa	F	20	Qina	Engineering	Cairo
Sondos	F	20	Cairo	Computer Science	Cairo
Bassem	M	20	Sohag	Computer Engineering	Alexandria
Ali	M	20	Qina	Chemistry	Alexandria
Hussein	M	20	Cairo	Dentistry	Cairo
Omar	M	21	El Arish	Chemical Engineering	Cairo
Karim	M	21	Minya	Mass Comm.	Cairo
Samar	F	20	Marsa Matrouh	Languages and Translation	Cairo
Manar	F	20	Giza	Engineering	Cairo
Selim	M	21	Mansoura	Engineering	Cairo
Moaz	M	20	Alexandria	Engineering	Cairo
Amira	F	20	Luxor	Engineering	Cairo
Total (<i>N</i> =16)					

As shown in the table above, the students come from a wide-range of cities that represent almost all geographic areas in Egypt. While some of them come from big cities like Cairo and Alexandria, many come from smaller cities such as El Arish and Marsa Matrouh. In addition,

many students come from Upper Egypt which is an area of the country that is more traditional and conservative when compared to the big cities.

I also interviewed the 2 main founders of the school: Seif and Ghada. One of them is a Human Development Manager at a multi-national company in Cairo in his late 30s. He is a strong supporter of capitalizing on human power. For this reason, he believes in the importance of civic initiatives that are grassroots-based and that improve the quality of the lives of the individuals in need. The other founder is a PhD student of political science in Cairo University in her late 20s. Her research interest is youth civic engagement and entrepreneurship in Egypt.

The eight organizers of the 2012 summer school were former Bokra School students. Each played a different role within the school. Some of them were responsible for the curriculum while others were responsible for evaluation, logistics, documentation, etc. Outside Bokra School, some of the organizers were senior undergraduate students in Egyptian universities while others were working for universities or companies in Cairo. All organizers, except for one, Abbas, were not employed at the school. They were just volunteers who devoted their time for three weeks in the summer to help with the school. They all related to me that they were strong believers in the impact of Bokra School on the community and so they chose to come back after completing the school themselves to help as organizers. Table 2 summarizes the demographic information of the eight organizers.

Table 2: Demographics of organizers

Name	M/F	Role in Bokra School	Job
Hana	F	Mentoring	Teaching Assistant at a university
Suhaila	F	Recording and documentation	No job
Salah	M	Evaluation	Teaching Assistant at a university
Laila	F	Mentoring	Teaching Assistant at a university
Mourad	M	Mentoring	Student
Nour	F	Academic planning/curriculum	Government employee
Abbas	M	Logistics	Bokra Organization employee
Mansour	F	Logistics	Entrepreneur
Total (N=8)			

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Four data collection tools were used to answer the three main research questions of this study. These are interviews, document analysis, videotapes and observation. In order to learn about the citizenship discourses promoted by the school and the learning opportunities they created, I interviewed the founders and organizers. I also conducted thorough analysis of the curriculum, school documents and planning and meeting reports and minutes. In addition, I used videotapes and observation field notes. In order to learn about how the students perceived the Bokra

experience, I conducted individual interviews with them. Table 3 illustrates the methods aligned to each research question.

Table 3: Research questions and data collection tools

Research questions	Data collection tools
<p>In the context of post-revolutionary Egypt, what civic discourse(s) underlie the learning opportunities that Bokra School provides to prepare Egyptian youth for civic participation?</p> <p>What are the learning opportunities that Bokra School plan in order to help the students perceive its discourse of citizenship?</p>	<p>Interviewing school founders and organizers Analyzing the school curriculum drafts Observation and videos</p>
<p>How did participation in Bokra School shape the youth participants' beliefs about citizenship?</p>	<p>Interviewing school students</p>

3.4.1 Interviews

The interviews with the organizers were conducted for two main reasons. First, they allowed me to learn about the school's vision in addition to the kind of civic discourses that the school promoted. Second, since the organizers themselves were former Bokra School students, the interviews created an opportunity for them to reflect on their own Bokra experiences especially in regards to how it helped shape their understanding of citizenship. This allowed me to look at the subsequent participation of those young adults who previously engaged in the civic organization.

The questions I asked the organizers followed the semi-structured interview protocol (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Although there were specific prompts that I had during the interviews, the purpose was to allow the organizers to share as many stories and significant events as possible. The interviews were conducted individually in public venues and lasted between forty-five minutes to ninety minutes. Some of the topics discussed in the interviews included the school's mission, learning experiences and activities in addition to reflecting on the impact that Bokra School aimed to achieve. The organizers were also prompted to speak about the reasons that motivated them to volunteer as school organizers after finishing the program as students a few years ago. The interviews were conducted in Arabic by the researcher, transcribed by an Arabic speaking professional and then analyzed by the researcher. A list of the interview questions is provided in Appendix A.

The interviews with the founders were essential as they were the ones who knew the most about the school and who have been committed to it since 2006. My interview with the founders was semi-structured as well but with more specific prompts about how the organization started and what it aimed to achieve. The two founders asked to be interviewed together so that their answers would complement one another. The interview took slightly more than sixty minutes. It was conducted mainly in Arabic then transcribed by a professional Arabic speaking transcriber. The questions of this interview are listed in Appendix B.

I interviewed 16 students in order to learn about how the students who participated in the 2012 school viewed their Bokra experience as a means through which they could learn about what it meant to be a citizen of Egypt,. In particular, I was interested in looking at how being part of Bokra helped the students position themselves within their communities and acquire new understandings of what it meant to be a citizen who initiated change in an emergent democratic

system. The overarching theme I looked at was how the students' understanding of citizenship changed before and after joining the school. The interviews aimed to capture stories and events more than direct answers to specific questions. Therefore, the students were asked to reflect on their experience at Bokra School and give examples of the skills they learned best and the activities that they thought were most effective. In addition, the students were asked to reflect on the Revolution and how the school helped them understand the current events in a more in-depth way.

In my interviews with the students, I adopted questions used by Martínez, Peñaloza & Valenzuela (2012) in a similar study that looked at how youth develop civic commitments through their involvement in a civic organization in light of the circumstances taking place in Chile. Like the interviews with the founders and the organizers, the students' interviews were conducted at public venues in both Cairo and Alexandria and were an average of forty minutes in length. Each student was interviewed individually after reading and agreeing to a recruitment form. The interviews were also conducted in Arabic by the researcher, transcribed by an Arabic speaking professional and then analyzed by the researcher. The questions are listed in Appendix C.

3.4.2 School curriculum and documents

I examined the curriculum drafts of the school that were used with the 2012 group of students. Through analyzing the curriculum, I examined the learning objectives of the school in an attempt to find out the kind of citizenship discourse (s) that the school promoted. I also looked at the learning experiences and activities conducted at the school to help the students develop an understanding of citizenship. In doing so, I used studies that focused on best practices for

enhancing civic skills as guides for my analysis (e.g. Feldman, Pasek, Romer & Jamieson, 2007; Smith et al., 2008; Quintelier, 2008). Looking at the curriculum was also useful because it helped me confirm or disconfirm what the founders and organizers communicated to me in terms of the school's mission and learning activities and experiences. Briefly, the curriculum is based on a set of general learning goals. The main learning goals are for the students to:

- Become aware of self, interests, personal skills and capabilities,
- Conceptualize the power of collective rather than individual effort,
- Develop an understanding of the reality of the community where one lives and the civic initiatives that are most needed to develop this community, and
- Develop an action plan to serve the community where one lives in one's area of interest.

During the three weeks of Bokra School, several topics that are directly linked to the community are presented to the students. Usually, for each week there is an overarching theme. The three themes are:

- Week 1: Self-discovery and national identity
- Week 2: Approaches to sustainable development
- Week 3: Application of change initiatives

In addition to the curriculum, I also looked at tens of school documents, meeting minutes and agendas, plans and outlines. Such documents helped me gain a better understanding of the mission and the objectives of the school as will be shown later in the chapter 4.

3.4.3 Observation and videotapes

In order to establish triangulation and for the purpose of using a wide range of data sources, I also use information obtained from my own observation of the school sessions and some

videotapes of school sessions that the school personnel made available to me. In total, I spent about 30 hours observing students. The observation included in-class activities such as guest speakers, games and discussions in addition to a 2-day field trip to the city of Fayoum. During the field trip, I had the chance to observe the students working in groups on planning their civic initiatives and consulting the school organizers to get their feedback on their civic ideas. I had the chance to informally talk to and get to know the students during break hours and lunch time. I also took notes of the events and the activities that occurred while I was observing the different sessions. The observation and the field notes helped me see the school mission in action. It also gave me first-hand experience of the learning experiences created for the students in the school. The videotapes, however, captured moments where students were actively engaged in activities. I use instances of these in the form of event description in order to better illustrate the activities taking place at the school.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

3.5.1 Qualitative analysis

Keeping with the case study research design, the main purpose of the analysis was to build a rich description of the setting and the participants (Creswell, 1998; Lapan et al., 2011). To do so, the different data sources were analyzed simultaneously to determine emergent themes and to fully answer the research questions. All the data in this study was analyzed manually and without the assistance of any qualitative methods software. This was mainly because the data was all obtained in Arabic which is not supported by qualitative methods applications. To obtain the best

results, I followed several steps while analyzing each of the data sets. For the interviews, I first used deductive codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These deductive codes were derived from the research questions. They referred to certain themes that I wanted to find out more about from the data. After that, I started coding the data inductively (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The inductive codes were derived after careful reading and analysis of the interviews. The step that followed that was categorization or what Creswell (1998) refers to as code aggregation. I started creating categories of codes. These categories represented the major themes that appeared in each set of interviews. During the data analysis stage, I tested initial understandings by continuously revisiting the data to check for alternative explanations or instances that would disaffirm these understandings. Although each of the data sets was analyzed separately, it was important to see common patterns across the data sets so that I would have a clear picture of what the school aimed to achieve and whether that agreed or disagreed with how the students perceived the role and mission of the school.

For the interviews with the organizers and founders, I focused on the themes that identify the kind of civic discourses that the school promoted. Since the school founders and organizers mentioned that the purpose of the school was to create an active citizen, I wanted to find out what specifically was done to develop that kind of citizen. After that, when I looked at the interviews with the students, I focused on how the students thought the school was preparing them for active citizenship. This included specific civic values that the students thought the school promoted. This way, the interviews with the students were some kind of an expansion of the interviews with the founders and the organizers. In other words, they helped me examine the extent to which the school succeeded in promoting a better understanding of citizenship in a country that is going through dramatic socio-political transition.

For the curriculum and document analysis, the process started during the data collection stage. In the summer and fall of 2012, I was asked by the school founders to put together all the documents and curriculum drafts in one coherent school manual. To do so, I was given access to tens of documents. These documents included curriculum drafts, meeting minutes, planning outlines and evaluation forms. The result was a school manual of more than 100 pages that detailed the school's purpose and mission, learning objectives, themes and topics, activities and assessment strategies. Working on the school manual gave me the opportunity to closely look at the school documents mainly in attempt to support the data I obtained from the interviews. As Bowen (2009) explains, document analysis is usually used in qualitative research for the purpose of triangulation.

When I started analyzing the documents, I followed two steps. First, I conducted what is referred to as content analysis. I put the documents in categories including documents that were informative and important and excluding unimportant ones (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These categories included the school mission and purpose, goals and objectives and themes and activities. Later on and while analyzing the interviews, I conducted a thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). I started looking for themes that would either support or contradict the ones I obtained from the interviews. Evidence and quotations from the documents were then selected to support my overall interpretation of the role that the school played as will be shown in the next chapter.

3.5.2 Validity

To insure the validity of the data, several techniques were used. First and as mentioned earlier, several data sources were used. Triangulation was used within each data source and across data

sources (Creswell, 1998). For example, when a certain theme was driven from the interviews, I would check the validity of that theme in other interviews too. I also would look at the curriculum to determine if the theme is supported by enough evidence. The second validity technique used was referring back to certain school personnel (e.g. the main founder) to check if my interpretation of the data was correct. This particularly took place during the curriculum planning and analysis stage. The last technique used, which is also widely supported by qualitative data researchers, was including as many examples and quotations from the different data sets as possible in order to support the derived themes or interpretations (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In fact, this technique did not only help validate the data but also provided a clear picture of the setting and the participants to the reader.

3.5.3 Role of the researchers

One of the major concerns in qualitative research is the role of the researcher and how it might lead to subjectivity in data analysis (Chenail, 2011). The fact that I spent time with the school organizers and the students through attending sessions and going on a field trip with them helped me develop some connection with the participants in the program. During the data collection stage, my perspective was more of an emic one. In other words, I was closely engaged with the school students, organizers and founders in the various school activities. This insider perspective helped me gain a better understanding of the dynamics of the school and the mission it aimed to achieve. I was, on the other hand, aware that once I start analyzing the data, I should look at the school from an outsider's perspective or an etic one (Fetterman, 2010). Therefore, I used a number of techniques to help me eliminate bias. For example, during my visits to the school and interviews with the personnel and the students, I took notes of what happened and what they

said. My field notes only included information that took place while I was there and were more descriptive than analytical. I tried as much to avoid including any personal interpretations so that I would capture events as they unfolded. These notes helped me further affirm or reject any findings I derived from the data. They served as reminders of what really happened rather than what I thought happened. In addition, I started working on data analysis at least six months after data collection. During that time, I was no longer in direct contact with the participants. Also, I was not personally attached to the experience anymore. This helped me develop a reflective and objective perspective on the data.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 BOKRA SCHOOL'S CITIZENSHIP DISCOURSE: RE-INVENTING EGYPTIAN CITIZENSHIP

4.1.1 Egyptian identity and patriotism

The first area that Bokra School focuses on is instilling a sense of Egyptian identity and patriotism based on tolerance. The school mainly fills the gaps in the education system in Egypt that ignores such important aspects of citizenship. In Egypt, as well as most Middle Eastern countries, civic education is based in formal schooling and emphasizes knowledge of the political system and the achievement of the government (Baraka, 2006; Fa'our & Moashar, 2011). Both the founders and organizers of the school believed that the school's mission was to complement and improve on civics in formal schooling. Mansour, the logistics coordinator at the school who was also previously a Bokra School student, commented:

What the school is doing should be included in the subject called Civics or Social Studies in schools. These subjects are [taught to students] but they don't achieve the same purpose. In fifth grade, for example, they teach children about the parliament and that it has four hundred and something members but no one stresses on other [important values] or works closely with the students.

In the previous quote, Mansour explained that through the school, the students learn the basics about their country in order to develop a sense of belongingness. He contends that this affective sense of citizenship—usually referred to with terms such as pride, patriotism, love of country, and national identity—unfortunately, is not fostered through formal schooling. Instead school-based civic education focuses on teaching students about the legalistic ‘structures and functions’ of government and its achievements. Mansour’s analysis echoes a common critique of civic education in Western democracies that it privileges knowledge of institutions (Myers & Zaman, 2009).

Mansour also expressed displeasure that only Bokra School students get a chance to engage in such opportunities that enhance their patriotic feelings for Egypt and examine their identities as citizens. He and many other school organizers stated that the next step was for Bokra School to expand its services so that more adolescents can be part of such an experience. One of the suggestions that the school organizers gave was for the school to start offering a winter session so that there would be two batches of Bokra graduates per year instead of one. This, in fact, started taking place in the winter of 2013. Another suggestion was to offer Bokra sessions to youth in other governates outside Cairo. This, as far as I know, has not yet happened.

Coming from this perspective, the school believes that an essential component of creating a new Egyptian citizen is restoring affective aspects of citizenship, such as love and loyalty to the country, and appreciating the culture and history of Egypt. One way that the school fosters this goal is by covering topics that directly relate to Egyptian identity such as language, history, civilization and culture. In the final report of Bokra School (Bokra School for Sustainable Development manual, 2012), some of the topics discussed in the summer of 2012 include:

- Arabic Language: Identity, history and culture

- Reasons behind Arabic language deterioration
- Arabic language as a tool for development
- Christian-Muslim relations in Egypt: Problems and suggested solutions
- How the different civilizations affected and were affected by the Egyptian character
- The Egyptian character
- Egyptian cultural identity and architecture
- Cairo city in the eyes of a country resident: A literary perspective

Tolerance is an important element of the way that the school frames patriotism and national identity. National harmony and the relationship between the different religions in Egypt is also a main topic in the curriculum. This is particularly relevant because of the violence attacks against Coptic Christians in Egypt in the past few years (Kingsley, 2013). The purpose of teaching about this, according to the school organizers and founders, is to help the students understand that social harmony is necessary for development. Only when all social groups collaborate can development take place.

In order to develop tolerance and social harmony, Bokra School gives a lot of attention to developing citizens who respect the points of view of others, listens attentively and believe in the importance of expressing one's opinions freely. Among the attitudes that the school aims to achieve, according to a document titled Path keeper's Goals List is to "be more open to others & respect views / cultures". Students are constantly reminded that everyone is equal and so everyone's voice matters or, as Mansour described it, "you are a human and I am a human too."

However, Bokra School's approach encourages the students' to consider these principles with a critical sense. Suhaila explained that by providing students with knowledge and different perspectives, they begin to realize the need to think critically about civic issues. She said:

One should not only stick to objectivity but also try to see the issue from multiple angles. One needs to try to expand his/her own thinking. You cannot judge based on seeing something once. No. One needs to go back and rethink about the issue more than one time.

To help with that, when the academic committee chooses the guest speakers for the school every year, they deliberately invite speakers with opposing ideologies, stands and viewpoints. As Nour explained in an interview, the goal is for youth to “develop the skill of constructive criticism.” By constructive criticism, she refers to the use of knowledge to understand realities, learn about problems, and brainstorm solutions as opposed to simple knowledge acquisition. An essential component is carefully listening to what others say about an issue. Nour summarized that by saying:

The most important skill that the school focuses on...is that the students can accept each other and communicate in a civilized way and in a way that is more humane.

Political theorists refer to this as discussion across lines of difference, which is considered a fundamental component of a healthy democracy (Kelly-Woesner & Woesner, 2008). What Bokra School tries to do, therefore, is to instill the belief that everyone should be willing to listen to opposing viewpoints no matter how hard this could be. Through exposure to various viewpoints by the school speakers and facilitators and then engaging in discussions with peers who come from various demographic, social and educational backgrounds, the students begin to see issues as multi-dimensional. Nour added:

The idea of accepting others...that all people despite their differences and even if they don't have the same ideology are important. Even if people don't think like you or share your religion and beliefs, [they are still important]...You are not the only one who is

right. I am partially right and you are partially right so we can collaborate and build on that with each other.

Laila, another organizer, agreed with Nour's viewpoint. She added that Bokra School trains students to seek knowledge from different sources and to listen to various viewpoints for the purpose of understanding issues in a better way. She explained:

In my opinion, the area that Bokra improves the most is respecting differences. You would find a speaker who talks from a government point of view and another who talks from a radical one. The student realizes that he/she is not here to merely compare viewpoints but rather to learn. The main goal is to learn how to respect this one and respect that one and engage in dialogue so that we both benefit from each other. It is not about me winning the argument against the other. I feel that this value always takes time to be achieved at Bokra School but I always see good results in the end even if not %100 [at least the students are changing].

Hanaa, also agreed that the idea of accepting others is perhaps the strongest aspect of Bokra School. She explained that people should be accepted anyway because the "earth is for everyone and so one cannot sort people and put them in categories". Mansour, another organizer, looked at the issue of accepting others from a different perspective. He thought that tolerance and acceptance create some kind of freedom. When individuals feel that they are accepted and that their opinions are valued, they feel that they are even "freer to express themselves". He also saw acceptance and tolerance as values that unite students so that they would combat injustice. Mansour reflected on his experience as a former student and an organizer, he explained:

In Bokra School, we come from very diverse backgrounds. Some people come from Islamic backgrounds while others are liberal. Some people are in between. In addition to this

diversity, you see speakers from different backgrounds so you start to accept everyone. The only thing you cannot accept anymore is injustice and oppression. The same issue of diversity was brought up by Salah, another organizer. He added:

When I was a Bokra student, I saw other students who were different in the way they perceived ideas. They were different both personality wise and mentality wise. They were different in the way they thought about issues too. This helped me learn that I was not the only one who always had the right view point or opinion.

As one can see, Bokra School tries to instill the value of freedom and that everyone can say and do whatever they want as long as it does not interfere with the right of the others. The diversity within the students and among the guest speakers help the students realize that tolerance and acceptance of others is essential. Students begin to realize that no one possess the truth and so it is important to give others the space to express themselves freely.

To sum up, one can see that Bokra School addresses problems created by the former regime of Mubarak prior to the Revolution. The end goal is to create responsible citizens who possess strong patriotic feelings to the country and who are willing to contribute to its development. This, in a way, is similar to the personally-responsible citizen that Westheimer and Kahne (2004) proposed as a kind of citizen that civic programs should aim to create.

4.1.2 Active participation and agency in civil society

Another way through which the school aims to create a new Egypt is by promoting active civic participation in society, which is a central theme in democratic theory (Pateman, 1970) and education for democracy (Gutmann, 1987). To do so, the school starts by helping students to feel

that they possess the ability to make change in their communities and to learn the skills of working collectively to solve social problems.

Bokra School tries to help youth realize the strengths they possess and the different channels through which they can contribute to the development of their communities. This task is not as easy as it may seem mainly because youth in Egyptian culture have not historically been empowered or taught in a way that valued their voices and opinions. It is typical of the educational system in Egypt to be very teacher-centered with almost no opportunities for students to question, think for themselves, listen to various viewpoints or draw conclusions. Information is usually presented superficially in the form of facts and teachers are viewed as the most knowledgeable ones (Loveluck, 2012). One goal of Bokra School, is to challenge this traditional master narrative of schooling. According to Seif, empowering youth means challenging students to think deeply about issues and to formulate their own perspectives on what is 'right':

Students come and ask you "what is the right solution?" There is no right solution and wrong solution. [They ask] "What do you think is the right thing from your own point of view?"...This is something that is deeply imbedded in the Egyptian educational system...The more choices you give them, the more they get confused. They are here to know the right answer.

In Bokra School, the goal is not to provide students with answers but rather to help them continuously question and seek understanding. For this reason, the students are continuously encouraged to think critically about what they hear and ask questions. Nour explained how this challenges the traditional approach in Egyptian schools:

The school focuses on the art of questioning. You need to learn to ask questions. The answer is not important because no one has the truth. Each person has part of the truth and so we try to help youth question things and think throughout the school as they engage in activities, lectures and field trips. [These are always followed by] reflection so that the students can ask their questions and voice their opinions.

As a result, a major part of the school curriculum in the first week is devoted to self-discovery. Through discovering their points of strength and their powers as individuals, youth can feel that they are important and that their voices and actions matter. Both Nour and Suhaila, who is another organizer responsible for documentation, explained that the school capitalizes on the strong points that the students possess in order to help them understand that everyone is ready to be civically engaged and everyone can contribute in one way or another. While discussing the idea of empowerment as one of the school missions, Nour stated:

The aim of the school is to prepare students who can discover themselves better and realize their abilities so that they can take actions, even if small, to positively impact themselves, others and the society as a whole.

Not only is the notion of individuality important as a tool to empower students but also it instills the belief that differences create power. For this reason, the founders of Bokra School view the experience as more than a set of sessions through which one acquires factual knowledge. It is, however, a learning journey through which one spends time with a group of people and engages in reflective experiences that help him/her discover who they are, communicate better with others and work collaboratively to seek solutions for problems in the community. Seif explained this approach:

A big part of Bokra School focuses on the human level and on the moral education of the individual. More important than factual knowledge is the learning journey that youth go through and all the confusion they experience [through challenging their own beliefs, exposure to different viewpoints and working with people]. Bokra School is not a schedule of speakers, lectures and themes but rather a learning journey or a form of transformative education.

Similarly, Hanaa, a former Bokra student and one of the organizers and a mentor in summer 2012, believes that only when young Egyptians discover who they are and realize their strengths will they begin to be civically engaged in their communities. When asked to elaborate, she said:

The purpose of Bokra School is to help individuals know themselves better and realize the ways through which they can improve themselves. It gives each student the opportunity to discover who they are which in return helps him/her discover the possible roles they can play in their communities.

Perhaps the most important reason for helping students discover who they are is fostering a sense of social responsibility. Bokra founders and organizers believe that responsibility is a strong motive that would push one to take action to fix the current conditions around them. Laila, one of the organizers, stated:

Bokra does something really good. It is actually the first thing that occurs to my mind when I think of the school. It makes you consciously aware [of the problems in your community]. It makes you feel that there are certain things that matter to you and so something needs to be done. Things need to change and be fixed!

Like Laila, Salah thought that the awareness of self and of one's surroundings that Bokra School aims to achieve has a strong impact on the students. Reflecting on his own experience as a student and then an organizer in Bokra School, he explained that the Bokra experience helps one change from being passive to being active. Reflecting on his own experience, he stated:

I started to feel more responsible when I see something wrong around me. All my colleagues at work noticed that I changed after this experience. My approach changed. There is no fear. I am not afraid of anything.

Similarly, in the interview with Hanaa, she said that Bokra School helps students to continuously question their integrity and dedication. It forces one to stop and ask whether an individual is fulfilling one's role or not. Hanaa also explained that to her, fulfilling one's role does not mean that one needs to initiate a big civic campaign or start a new project. It simply means that one effectively influences the social circle he/she belongs to. For example, she explained that when she was a Bokra School student, one impact was a sense of empowerment that made her a more effective teaching assistant at the university where she taught. She thought of Bokra School as more of a "personal" and "individual" experience that fosters a feeling of personal responsibility. She concluded that when a person goes through an experience where they are made aware of the importance of respect to fellow humans, appreciation of differences, honesty and charity, it helps the person to become a good citizen.

What is interesting about the school is that it does not solely focus on creating empowered citizens. It also focuses on empowerment as a stage that proceeds civic engagement. The general belief at the school is that being empowered, in itself, does not necessarily result in change. Although it helps create considerate individuals with an interest in making their communities a better place, it does not prepare youth to analyze issues in the society and seek

grass-root solutions. For this reason, the students are constantly reminded that being good and kind does not mean that one is capable of making a difference.

A key pedagogical strategy that the school employs to empower students is using the January 2011 Revolution to highlight the role played by citizens in changing their country. According to the founders, the Revolution is frequently discussed and referred to throughout the summer program in order to help the students realize that loving one's country is not enough if one does not take action towards change. For this reason, the school uses the Revolution in order to give youth an example of how patriotic feelings could be translated into action.

Seif explained that the Revolution taught Egyptians the value of freedom but also left them puzzled as to what needed to be done. He explained:

The Revolution attracted people but proved that people could not work together. People were not brought up to be civically engaged. Bokra School will only be successful when all Egyptians can work together for the common good regardless of what background they come from. They need to bridge the gaps and create some synergy.

The organizers agreed that the Revolution created hope that facilitated teaching about active civic participation. Some organizers even claimed that Bokra School and other similar civic organizations served as a nucleus for starting the Revolution. For example, the founder of the "We are All Khaled Saeed" webpage that played a major role in organizing youth to go to the streets and eventually led to the Revolution, was created by a former student at Bokra School. For this reason, Abbas explained:

Bokra School built the community for the Revolution. All the graduates of the school in 2011 went out to the streets together. They knew about it and communicated to each

other their intention to go. You can't claim that Bokra School incited the Revolution but... [it built the community for it].

Similarly, Salah, the evaluation organizer, explained that the connections that the students develop to Egypt during the school helps create a force of change. He said:

When I look at the students and the organizers of the school since 2006, I see that they were participants in the Revolution and were some of the early people who were in the streets on the 25th of January. Bokra School, in one way or the other, helped them put on a glass and see the reality more in depth. They felt the reality of people lives....that is why going to the streets was a definite decision for them.

What is interesting, though, is that Bokra School attempts to achieve such a radical and progressive aspect of citizenship at the same time it emphasizes citizenship affects and sentiments like love and loyalty to Egypt. Although the latter seems to be a very conservative or even a passive form of citizenship, one needs to bear in mind the status of youth activism in Egypt before the Revolution. As mentioned earlier, youth never felt a sense of ownership or belongingness to Egypt prior to January 2011. Living under the conditions of dictatorship for the past 30 years prevented youth from exercising their rights as citizens of Egypt. In addition, youth often felt alienated and excluded from the public and political agenda. Therefore, the school finds it important to build the base of citizenship and then empower youth and prepare them to start engaging in the society.

Once the empowerment phase is over, the school works on building students' knowledge and raising their awareness of social issues in Egypt. During initial informal meetings with one of the school founders, Seif, and two of organizers, Nour and Walaa, they explained to me that the order of the sessions in Bokra School is not random. It is, in fact, a systematic one that aims

to gradually acquaint youth with the current conditions in Egypt in a way that would motivate them to take action afterwards. The knowledge construction process, according to my informants along with the documents that I examined about the organization, consist of two knowledge-building stages that they refer to as “relevance and visibility.”

Relevance is achieved through making students consciously aware of the problems that exist in their communities. Through guided discussions with students, the school facilitators assist them in examining the problems and issues they come across in their daily lives and in bringing these issues to the surface of their thinking. Relevance is achieved through the various lectures and field trips that students have throughout the school. These lectures cover various topics about the current situation in Egypt. In order to make sure that the students understand the information that they receive and make connections between these different topics, Seif and Ghada, the two founders, explained that there are sessions that are led by the school facilitators that only aim to help the students connect the dots.

The school facilitators are the most important people because they are able to help youth in the program connect all the bits and pieces of knowledge they receive [through lectures and interaction with guest speakers].

According to the founders, through awareness of the problems in the society, the students move into the stage of visibility (Freire, 2000). Seif explained that *visibility* allows students to delve deeper into the reasons underlying these problems. This is done through engaging in active discussions with the students during which Bokra School facilitators offer their accounts on the nature and reasons of problems in the society. He added that in order to achieve visibility, the school aims to develop certain skills that help youth use the knowledge they gain to analyze the current situation in Egypt and seek solutions for major communal problems. One of these skills

is helping youth think reflectively about issues. Again, this is a challenge for Egyptian youth who are taught what to think rather than how to think in Egyptian schools and universities.

Elaborating on this point, Hanaa explained:

Bokra School does not teach people in a traditional way through lectures and papers and pencils. Not at all. They present life examples and real examples and give people [youth] the opportunity to reflect...the lectures that are presented to youth are not about content. The purpose is to show that this is a school of thought and this is another one. You can discuss as many perspectives as you want but in the end all should lead to the same end.

As one can see, the school does not it only focus on raising awareness of public issues but also helps the students think about the reasons that underlie such problems and realize the importance of taking action to fix the current situation. It also tries to connect the students to their communities so that they would use their knowledge and understanding of the current situation as a vehicle for civic engagement. This, in a way, reflects the discourse of citizenship that Bokra School promotes. In order to re-invent Egypt, the school attempts to create citizens who possess a strong knowledge base in addition to the skills that are necessary for active participation. The discourse of citizenship of Bokra School is best summarized in the following quote by Mansour:

When you join Bokra School, you automatically become concerned about the society and its problems. In Bokra, I did not only see the society differently and got exposed to new experience, I also learned to engage in the communities that we visited. I have to mix with the people and be part of the community so that I can learn more about it.

As the students learn about the problems that exist in the society, the school starts to instill the value of teamwork. Mansour described how tolerance and teamwork are connected together at the school. He said:

When you deal with different people, you start to believe that you can actually work with others [that you previously were not willing to work with]. You begin to see that you can cooperate with this one and that one and make use of the knowledge that each one has in doing something useful to the society. This is an essential value to learn because in reality, you do need to work collaboratively with everyone no matter what their background is.

Students are encouraged to work collectively and plan their civic projects together. This idea is referred to as “agency” by the school founders. The way they explain the notion of agency is similar to how Kirshner (2009) describes collective agency in his research with urban youth. Agency in Bokra School refer to working with others, as opposed to working alone, for the purpose of developing the community and alleviating its conditions. Two of the target attitudes listed in Path Keeper’s Goal List are:

- Understanding the power of collective impact and that the other is my strongest asset
- Developing a sense of agency – he/she is an agent of change.

As explained earlier, part of Bokra School helps youth plan and start a civic initiative to fix a problem in their communities. Once the students begin working together, they start forming their own networks of civic partners. Seif and Ghada, the founders, described this as the creation of “a conducive atmosphere for sustainable development.” They explained that from experience in past years, students benefit a lot from such connections and begin working collaboratively on civic issues outside the school. One of the organizers, Salah, also explained that this

“networking” aspect of the school is very strong because it provides a support system to the students when the school is over. He explained:

I do not have to be part of the group that, for example, works with orphans now. But I know that if one day I needed to be in contact with an orphanage, I will find somebody that can help me connect to them.

To sum up, the school emphasizes the importance of participation in a civil society. At Bokra School, active participation is viewed in terms of working with others to initiate change that would improve the conditions of one’s community. Such participation is based on two clear principles that the students gradually acquire throughout the school. These principles are social responsibility and collective agency. The students are consistently reminded that they are capable of playing an active role in the society. They also become aware of the problems that need to be fixed. Social responsibility then creates an urge for change and at that point, the students realize the importance of working collectively. The school promotes collective agency not only as a means for change but also as a tool that helps the individual develop a more eclectic approach of viewing and fixing problems.

4.1.3 Bokra School practices for citizenship

Given the citizenship discourse that it aims to promote, Bokra School also adopts a unique approach to prepare citizens to re-invent Egypt. The approach of the school utilizes several practices, or what Kirshner (2006) refers to as learning experiences, for the purpose of helping youth become informed and proactive citizens. The selection of practices at Bokra School is based on two main principles. First, the school aims to choose practices that would help youth develop the mindset of commitment to civic engagement (Obradovic & Masten, 2007). Second,

the school uses practices that best connect the students to their communities (Coley & Sum 2012; Galston 2004; Schugurensky, 2006). In doing so, the school chooses activities that would equip the students with the knowledge necessary for understanding the current social and political conditions where they live and the skills needed for improving such conditions. In what follows, I discuss some of the school main practices for citizenship. In particular, I look at how field trips, writing and speaking workshops, guest speakers, discussions and role-play are utilized so that students acquire the knowledge and the skills needed for re-inventing Egypt.

4.1.3.1 Field trips

One of the practices that is used throughout the three weeks of the school is field trips. As mentioned earlier, developing national identity and pride is on top of the list of the tasks that Bokra School aims to achieve. Field trips are viewed as a means for helping students discover their country and becoming more connected to it. In the summer program of 2012, the students in Bokra School went on about four trips inside Cairo and three trips to other cities in Egypt. The field trips in Cairo were to historical and cultural sites so that the students would be connected to their heritage. For example, the students visited historical sites in Cairo such as Moez Street and had a chance to learn about the history of the area's architecture, history and population. They also visited areas that needed development such as slums so that they would gain firsthand experience about the real conditions under which Egyptians live. The field trips outside Cairo, on the other hand, aimed to help the students learn about parts of Egypt that they had not known about before and gain a better understanding of the problems that existed in these areas as well as the current efforts for fixing them. For instance, the students visited areas that needed development in Minya and carefully examined the kind of problems cities far from Cairo had.

During the field trips, the students also had the opportunity to meet with prominent cultural figures who spoke to them about the history, language and culture of Egypt and highlighted the position that Egypt possessed culturally and historically in the past. When the students traveled outside Cairo, they were able to meet with fellow Egyptians and former Bokra students who went back to their home cities and started their own civic initiatives. This was planned so that the students would realize their responsibility towards Egypt. The students also had the opportunity to ask questions and to engage in interactive discussions during the trips and afterwards with the school facilitators who helped them digest the information and connect it to their own experiences. The goal, according to the organizers, was to help the students realize that for development to be attained, every individual should first appreciate the country and then take action to restore the glories of the past.

Planning and organizing field trips is one of the recommended teaching and learning practices and experiences in citizenship education (Hoge, 2002; Jakubowski, 2003). Not only do they equip students with knowledge but also they affirm the strong connection between the individual and the community which in return fosters the students' sense of belongingness and love to their nation-states. This was evident when I later interviewed the students and had the chance to listen to their reflections on such a learning experience as will be shown in the next section. The students felt that the field trips helped them re-discover Egypt and develop a sense of belongingness and ownership.

When Nour, one of the organizers who was also the curriculum coordinator in summer 2012, was asked to talk about field trips, she said:

We plan field trips not only inside but also outside Cairo. These trips are the base of knowledge for students. For example, the trips we plan in Cairo aim to increase the knowledge of the students about their identity and what it means to be Egyptian.

Laila, a mentor, agreed with what Nour said and also added that cultural activities within the school were among the strongest learning experiences that she experienced as a former student and a current organizer. Cultural music concerts, shows and visits to historic places, according to her, are tools that strongly foster students' nationalistic feelings and restore hope. She said:

We have trips where we go and live in cities for a couple of days. We also have entertainment events related to music or arts as well as historic visits that touch us and help us learn some information about the place and its people so that we start reading ourselves and our history differently.

One might think that the use of field trips to connect students to their country seems to be a passive and traditional pedagogy for a civic organization that aims to help students re-invent Egypt. One should remember, however, that the lack of civic culture due to the authoritarian regime of Mubarak required Bokra to build the basics of citizenship, although at the same time wanting youth to be active and work to change the society. For this reason, the school uses other pedagogies or teaching and learning practices in order to help the students transfer their patriotic feelings to action.

4.1.3.2 Writing and speaking workshops

Writing and speaking workshops are used as part of the school's goal to create personally-empowered citizens who can actively participate in a civil society. As mentioned earlier, the founders and the organizers believe that self-discovery is the first stage of empowering youth so

that a generation that believes in change could be created. Looking at the schedule of summer 2012, on almost every day during the first week of the school, there was a self-discovery activity. These included writing and speaking workshops where the students were asked to think about their lives, express their opinions and engage in reflective thought about who they were and what they wanted.

The purpose of the writing workshops was to help students delve deeper into themselves and reflect on the experiences that shaped who they were. In fact, writing narratives have not been overlooked by civic education researchers. Many studies that aimed to learn about how youth develop different types of identities utilized narratives as a means for helping students play an active role in discovering who they are, what they want and what commitments they intend to make with regards to self and the community (Daskalaki, 2012; Syed & Azmitia, 2008) . On the other hand, the speaking component of the self-discovery theme capitalized on the notion of the power of story-telling. Research shows that telling stories about self and one's position within the community where he/she live does not only help youth reflect on their life experiences and personal commitments but also helps them realize that their voices are heard and that their experiences matter. For the adults involved in these story-telling sessions, listening to the oral narratives of the students help them better understand youth preferences, visions and struggles of making communal commitments. In fact, many researchers use oral narratives and story-telling techniques to learn more about how the civic identities of young people develop (McAdams, Diamond, Aubin & Mansfield, 1997). Learning about civic development through stories does not only help a researcher understand the personal experiences that motivate a person to make certain civic choices or commitments but also about this person's notion of space and time through continuous reflection on the social, cultural and political context where one lives

(McAdams, 1996; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). The main facilitator at Bokra School, Nahla, described herself as a “storyteller” when she first met me. Nahla planned and facilitated many writing and storytelling sessions during the first week of the school for the sole purpose of empowering youth and helping them realize their own points of strengths.

The founders and organizers also explained that the first few days of the school are always considered research days during which the facilitators of the program collect data about the students in order to guide instruction during the rest of the sessions. Therefore, the utilization of writing and speaking learning experiences was a powerful tool that the school used. Not only did it help empower youth but also it helped the adults involved in the program to modify teaching and learning practices to better suit the needs of the students. The curriculum is continuously adjusted with each new group of students so that it best fits their learning and developmental capacities. In my interview with the two founders of the school, Ghada and Seif, they explained:

We try to be continuously responsive to students and their needs and ambitions. Sometimes it is year to year but also as much as possible, we try to do that day to day. For this reason, our schedule was not fully filled from day one so that there is space for [evaluation] and reflection [on our practices].

This kind of continuous evaluation and reevaluation of the school throughout the three weeks highlights the significant role of interaction between adults and youth in the program. Through my observation and conversations with the founders, organizers and students, I was able to see that the school intended to create a democratic climate where youth felt that adults were not in control of everything. Researchers like Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chavez, and Angelillo (2003) and Kirshner (2007) discuss the role that interaction between adults and youth in civic programs play in preparing youth for their future societal roles. As will be presented in

the second part of this chapter, the students I interviewed thought that the climate of the school was very democratic in the sense that power relations were equal and everyone's voice was heard.

4.1.3.3 Guest speakers

Another activity that the school utilizes is inviting guest speakers almost on a daily basis. Guest speakers are invited at the school based on two main criteria. First, they must be known for their patriotic feelings towards the country. Second, they must be citizens who play a role in the Egyptian civil society. They could, for example, be entrepreneurs who are interested in development, university professors who have started civic initiative or even artists whose art is directed towards civic development.

The speakers are usually carefully selected from various disciplines to make sure students get enough exposure to as many current issues as possible. These topics include politics, economics, social work and sustainable development. The speakers are usually leading figures in their areas with a number of success stories in their fields of expertise. When selecting the speakers, the school organizers take into account the achievements and contributions of the speakers in the Egyptian society. The significance of inviting guest speakers is to show the students that civic action can happen in Egypt and inspire them with stories from real life. The speakers, according to the organizers, are strong believers in the message that Bokra School attempts to convey to the students. Therefore, they exert so much effort in helping instill nationalistic and patriotic sentiments. Nour, for example, explained:

The speakers are usually influential figures who love the idea of Bokra School and who came to the school before and [understood its mission]. They like to see youth who care

about the country. When they talk, they help the students realize their points of strengths and the possible roles that they can play to help Egypt.

Mansour, on the other hand, explained that the speakers greatly influence the students because they, themselves, are sincere and devoted to Egypt. He said:

The speakers influence the students the most at the school. The students see that the speakers are very caring about the country and its development. This message is [immediately] sent to the students and so they begin to think differently.

Adding to the idea of the speakers' sincerity, Laila, another organizer, reflected on her own personal experience as a student in Bokra School. She explained that some of the speakers really helped her realize her own potentials and clearly see her role as a citizen of Egypt. She explained that one of the speakers influenced her the most because she felt that the speaker helped her "face her own self" and "begin to see who she truly was and what she was capable of doing". This, in return, had a great impact in helping her realize the responsibilities she had towards Egypt.

As one can see, the school plays an important role in developing students' feelings of belongingness. This is done through teaching them about Egypt and also helping them realize that they should contribute to the development of the country. The connection that the students develop with their country and culture create a force that motivate them to participate in protests and rallies. The school's aim is to help students feel that the country belongs to them and so they need to take a step towards developing it.

4.1.3.4 Discussions

Using discussions is a crucial part of the school's curriculum. It is mainly used to help the students understand the value of tolerance which is an essential aspect of effectively participating

in a civil society. The use of discussion has been identified as one of the key practices in citizenship education (Feldman, Pasek, Romer & Jamieson, 2007; Parker, 2006). Not only are discussions useful because they give students space to express their ideas but also because they help create a democratic climate in the classroom where everyone's voice is heard and everyone's idea is taken into consideration. What is also interesting about Bokra School is, as mentioned earlier, that when the organizers arrange to have guest speakers, they usually contact speakers who have different points of views. Some of the speakers would sometimes have very radical viewpoints that the students may not agree with. The purpose of doing that, according to my conversations with the organizers, is to show students that each person has the right to say what they want and what they believe. Seif explained this by saying:

Our aim is to bring the most sincere speakers from any ideological background. We bring the most sincere speaker from the Left, the Secular, and the Islamist and from those approaches that are very hands-on and those who tend to be more theoretical... We work on helping students see the best about the other side. So I [as the student] can take ideas from different schools of thought... and use them in the right context.

In the previous quote, Seif, the school founder, explains the importance of exposing students to different points of view so that they would have a comprehensive understanding of current issues, reflect on what they listen to and form their own opinions. Discussions in Bokra School usually come after lectures with guest speakers. The students get the opportunity to listen and ask questions and then engage in reflective dialogues with the speaker, the school facilitators and other fellow students. There are also designated reflection sessions that take place with the help of the school facilitators in order to help students put all the pieces of the puzzle together and gain a better understanding of issues and problems.

One of the videos of the school sessions gives an example of a reflection session that involved a number of opportunities for the students to share their opinions both in small groups and with the whole class. The purpose of the activity, which was led by a school facilitator and a former student, was to help the students reflect on the ideas that they had learned in the school. The session duration was around 90 minutes. The students were initially seated in a semi-circle as they listened to the facilitator and participated as a whole class. The facilitator, Yasir, started the session by telling students about its purpose. He explained that the purpose was for the students to reflect on their thoughts of what they had learned and consolidate their understanding of ideas. After that, each student was given two post-it notes and was asked to write down two ideas that were occupying his/her mind at the moment. Each student was then asked to post his/her notes on the board and present these ideas to the whole class. Yasir elaborated on each student's ideas and gave feedback on what the students shared. The following is an example of a dialogue between Yasir and one of the students.

Student: There are two ideas that are currently occupying my mind. First, I think we learn so much in Bokra School. I am now concerned about how to use this knowledge. I do not want to be overwhelmed with all the information and do nothing about it. So I am trying to think of a way through which I can use these ideas. Second, I have to expand my areas of reading. I have been focused on books on developments but now I understand it is important to read in all field.

Yasir: If I were you, I would take immediate action to find solutions for these two issues. For example, for the first idea, I might think of a way to share my knowledge with other people. Maybe I can replicate the Bokra example on a much smaller scale with a smaller

group of people that I know. Or maybe if I am a good writer, I can write about the ideas I learned and share them with the public. For the second idea, I can form a book club.

After each student presented their ideas, the students, as a whole class, reflected on how their ideas were adjusted or changed after participating in the post-it notes activity. Yasir, then summarized students' contributions and used the board as a tool to introduce a model of "action-taking" to help the students translate their ideas into actions and start their participation in civic initiatives. At that time, Seif, the founder of the Bokra Foundation, started contributing to the discussion by trying to connect the new knowledge that Yasir presented to earlier ideas and concepts discussed in the school. After that, the students were asked to form small groups to discuss their plans for civic initiatives. Yasir requested that the students use the discussion of today's session as a basis for determining which group each student needed to be in. Groups were described as follows:

- *"I think my idea can be merged with somebody else's"*: In this case, groups of students who were planning to work on different initiatives need to decide who they would like to merge their idea with and discuss that together in a bigger group.
- *"I think my idea needs to be changed"*: Group members that already had a civic initiative in mind but think that it needs to be modified in light of today's discussion need to get together and devise an adjustment plan.
- *"I think my idea will remain the same"*: Group members who already had a civic initiative in mind and still think it is valid need to come together and discuss it further in light of today's discussion.

After the students finished working in groups, they shared their ideas and reflections with the whole class. This session is one example of a structured reflection and consolidation session

that involved a number of sub-activities in which the students practiced listening to others, asking questions and sharing ideas. The session also included a number of instances where students were required to connect new knowledge to previously learned information so that a clearer mental representation is formed. The session's overall climate was very relaxed in a way that made every student eager to speak and share ideas without any intimidation. Student ideas were constantly reinforced and feedback was immediately given. The overall goal of the session was to create a democratic setting where student voices mattered. Also, the goal was to help students realize that it was acceptable to change one's ideas after gaining more information and after listening to the feedback and input of others. Another important observation I made is that the students were constantly reminded of the importance of being in a team or group. As Yasir was speaking, he explained that one can gain valuable experience through being part of a group. Seif, on the other hand, said that for one to be a good leader, he/she needs to also be a good follower because "if one knows how to support others as a follower, he/she will be able to gain people support and trust as a leader". The purpose of the small group activity at the end of the class was to instill the concept that one does not have to strongly hold to their ideas if he/she realizes that it would not be effective or useful to the public. For this reason, the students were asked to reflect on the feasibility of their civic initiatives and either hold to them or discard them and work with others for the sake of public welfare. Overall, this reflection session aimed to help students develop some skills and values necessary for being active citizens outside the classroom. These mainly included the value of freedom and the importance of teamwork.

4.1.3.5 Leadership role-plays

Another activity that the school uses is leadership role-plays in order to instill the value of teamwork or collective agency which is crucial for effective participation in a civil society. Role-

plays are usually selected because they help students develop skills and values that are essential for active participation outside the classroom. They also provide a simulated version of reality in which the students can practice such skills in a safe environment (Raphael, Bachen & Lynn, 2010). The school curriculum indicates that role-plays are used in a variety of situations to supplement lectures and information sessions. One example of a role-play that took place during the third week of the school was the Samurai Game. The game was presented and conducted by Fawzy, a guest speaker and a certified Samurai Game facilitator. He first explained the purpose of the game which was to instill the values of teamwork, commitment, integrity and leadership. The game lasted for around three hours. After introducing himself to the students and giving students time to introduce themselves, Fawzy asked the students to share ideas about what they knew about Samurais. Fawzy then introduced the game and its rules and procedures. He explained that its war simulation game in which two groups will be fighting. Each team will have a leader. The role of the leader is to establish a group culture and encourage followers to participate and be committed to the group. The game also has strict rules such as that the Samurais are not allowed to smile or maintain eye-contact with Fawzy, the game facilitator. The integrity part of the game comes from the fact that the students might violate the game rules without being noticed by the game facilitator. In this case, they can either stay in the game and endanger their integrity or admit their rule violation and die (leave the game). During the game, members of each team move around and participate in symbolic fighting techniques with each other. Whoever fails to win any of the techniques dies and leaves the game. The winning team is the one that has one member standing at the end after every other Samurai dies.

Following his explanation of the game and what it was about, Fawzy gave students the time to ask clarifying questions and to practice the fighting techniques before the game started.

He also gave each student the freedom to either participate in the game or just sit and watch it. The game then started and the students worked in teams and assigned group leaders. Fawzy signaled the start of the game and the students started fighting. After the game ended, the students had the opportunity to each talk about what they thought about the game, the challenges they faced and the values they learned.

The Samurai Game was quite an intense experience that helped the students gain insights about how one makes choices and how to be accountable for one's own actions. Also, it helped them experience feelings of tension, fear and loyalty within their teams. They also started to question their integrity as both leaders and followers in group work. The students explained that the game was challenging because it helped them face themselves and become more aware of their points of strength and weakness.

When trying to link the game to the mission of Bokra School, one can see that the game plays an important role in helping students experience the importance of teamwork and synergy. The game also aids students in developing decision-making skills and in testing their ability to commit to a project from the beginning until the end. Since the purpose of the school is to help students plan and start their own civic initiatives, one can see a resemblance between this goal and the goals of the game. In both cases, students need to exercise a great deal of commitment. Also, students need to learn to be effective leaders and followers within their teams so that, in the end, the team would win or the project would be completed. The game also emphasizes the importance of putting aside personal distractions and fears and of playing an active role within one's team. This is an important notion for youth who always feel intimidated to volunteer or to start working on a change initiative.

To sum up, the use of field trips, writing and speaking workshops, guest speakers, discussions and role-plays in the curriculum seem to be strongly aligned with the school's mission of creating responsible citizens who can re-invent Egypt. These teaching and learning activities are supported by civic education research as effective tools that not only aid in the development of adolescents but also equip them with necessary skills and values that help them become well-rounded citizens who know how to effectively interact with fellow citizens and work with them for the purpose of making their communities better places.

What I have presented so far is a description and an analysis of the Bokra School experience from the perspective of, mainly, adults: the founders, the organizers and myself. The second part of this chapter focuses on the perspectives of the youth in the school. I mainly focus on how the students understood citizenship in light of the learning experiences and practices that the school planned.

4.2 THE STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF CITIZENSHIP

In this section, I focus on capturing the students' ideas and perceptions of the school by looking at how they understood the school's citizenship discourse and how their beliefs about citizenship changed due to the Bokra experience. In doing so, I try to find out whether the kind of citizenship understanding that the students gained through this experience confirms or disconfirms what the organizers and founders discussed in the first part of this chapter. In my analysis of the interviews with the students, I look at three main themes. These include: (1) national identity and patriotism, (2) critical analysis of problems in Egyptian society and (3)

modeling active participation and agency. In what follows, I discuss each theme separately and in some detail.

4.2.1 National identity and patriotism

In the previous section, I found that the Bokra organizers placed a heavy emphasis on fostering a stronger—and different than what existed—sense of Egyptian identity and patriotism. According to the students, one of the main outcomes of their experience in Bokra is indeed that they started to feel proud of their roots, especially with regards to their language, culture and identity. They began to feel that they were an integral part of Egypt rather than an excluded age group that could not contribute to the welfare of the country. Many of the students I interviewed explained to me that through the school, they felt that they were “more Egyptian.” This phrase was repeated during the interviews, which I came to understand represented the belief that Bokra raised their awareness of big questions around the meaning of being Egyptian at that historical moment and their sense of belonging. One of the students, Moaz, explained:

What I see now is that the issue of identity, culture and language is the base. No one, of the big countries, will help us. No one will help us but ourselves. If we don't feel that we are part of this society and that we have a role to fulfill, no one will do that on our behalf.

Throughout the interview, Moaz stressed the importance of the identity component of the school. He even thought that the school should “spend more time focusing on the area of language, culture and identity.”

The same opinion was shared by Selim who also thought that language and identity are important vehicles for changes. Selim commented:

The idea of language and identity was very beneficial to me. We cannot progress if we left behind our language. This was not a concept in my mind before... [In the school], I felt that we should hold to our language and history. We should keep remembering the past but should hold to our heritage...in order to progress. We need to hold to our language.

In the previous two quotes, both Selim and Moaz seemed to realize the value of culture and identity after becoming part of Bokra School. Prior to that, such notions were taken for granted. They also seemed to be able to start linking the importance of language, culture and history to development. It is worth mentioning that, the value of language, in particular, received much emphasis from the school founders and organizers as well. This is mainly because the school wanted to help change the students' mindset that views English as the language of science and class. Reflecting on what the students said, one can see that the school was able to achieve this goal to a good extent.

Selim further elaborated that learning about his country and identity was a strong reason for him to realize that he should have a role in Egypt in the future. He said:

The things that I saw in the school such as the historical and religious sites that we went to made me see my history. It affected me a lot. When you see the history of your country and where it used to be, it motivates you to change the current situation.

When asked how the school helped them develop strong feelings of belongingness and loyalty the most, many of the students explained that the field trips were the most influential. The students explained that through the field trips, they were able to see places in Egypt that they had never seen before. They appreciated the country and the uniqueness of each place they visited. Sondos, for example, said that two trips that she really liked were those to Beni Seuif and Minya.

She explained that “they were very hands-on”. This was mainly because the school organizers always created opportunities for the students to interact with and ask questions to the people they meet at any site. In addition, the students were asked to observe and take notes so that their ideas could later be discussed during the reflection sessions. Sondos also explained that through Bokra School, she was able to explore different parts of Egypt that she had not known. This helped her feel more attached to the country.

Adding to that, Moaz thought that before joining the school, he did not realize how beautiful his country was. He explained that he originally came from Alexandria but he had to go to school in Cairo. Moving to Cairo for him was not a very pleasant experience as he thought the city was “very chaotic and ugly”. After joining the school, he said that he “rediscovered” areas of Cairo that he had never known about, such as historical sites. This was mainly because when the organizers planned these field trips, they did not focus on the informational aspect of these sites. Instead of planning a lecture that focused on historical facts, for example, the school organizers helped the students look at other issues such as architecture. This helped the students view places in a new way and think about the affective aspect of these sites. Moaz also explained that through the school, he was able to visit places in Egypt that he had never been to. For this reason, he also believed that the field trips planned by the school were very useful. He said:

When we went to Minya, I realized how beautiful this country is. I never thought of going to Minya. I started to feel that there is something nice in this country. I started to feel the places around me in a way that I have never felt before.

Similarly, Roa’a discussed how going on field trips helped her develop stronger feelings towards Egypt by helping her explore cities that she had not gone to before. She stated:

The field trips helped me see that there are nice places in Egypt that we usually do not go to. So we have to visit these places and small cities. We need to realize that there is beauty in the small things.

In the previous quote, Roa'a explained that visiting various parts of Egypt helped her "realize" that beauty was in everything. This attitude that Roa'a has towards Egypt reflects the mission that Bokra School tries to accomplish which is helping youth develop love to the country. Although Egypt might not be a perfect place, youth still need to love it and feel that they belong to it. Such feelings would encourage youth to contribute to the development of the country so that it would be a better place.

Sondos, Moaz and Roa'a were not the only students who explained how useful the field trips were in helping them develop stronger patriotic feelings towards Egypt. Most students explained that they were able to re-explore Egypt and see new places that they had never thought of visiting. During these field trips, the students also engaged in many reflection activities as well as discussions with the local people of the different sites so that they would develop personal connections to these places. Not only were the trips eye-opening in terms of helping the students see places that they had never seen but also they helped the students realize that development in Egypt should go beyond the boundaries of the big cities such as Cairo and Alexandria.

The students further elaborated that one way that the school helped them develop stronger patriotic feelings was by creating opportunities for them to communicate with fellow Egyptian citizens in more effective ways. The students had various opportunities to listen to each other and share ideas of how they viewed their roles and what change they wanted to see in Egypt. Listening to one another was also, according to the students, a strong tool through which

they developed respect for fellow Egyptians. Roa'a, for example, explained how the main facilitator of the school engaged them in lots of story-telling sessions where the students had to tell others about who they were, where they came from and what dreams they had for themselves and for Egypt. Such opportunities, according to Roa'a, capitalized on "basic human feelings" that she thought were important because they helped her and her colleagues see that they share more similarities than differences. Story-telling also helped the students realize that they share similar goals and dreams for themselves and the country which brought them closer to each other. Similarly, Manar agreed that story-telling was very powerful and beneficial. She said that stories helped her appreciate human feelings in addition to developing an understanding of what people go through in life.

Another opportunity that the school created in order to bring the students close to each other and highlight the similarities that existed between them was the writing workshops that took place in the first week of the school. Omar, for instance, thought that writing one's life story influenced him the most. He said that "it touched" him and helped him become more sensitive to the feelings of fellow humans. When asked about what aspect of the school affected him the most, Hussein told me that it was the times where the students and the organizers would "sit and talk with each other." Not only did that help Hussein and several other students appreciate the human experience but it also instilled the belief that personal stories were important. Soon after that, the students started to believe that no one deserved to live under oppressive conditions and that it was their duty to take a step to help Egypt and fellow Egyptians.

Coming from this perspective, the students also shared ideas for how they envisioned their roles in the future in ways that reflected how the school enhanced their feelings of

patriotism and love to Egypt. Linah, an outspoken female student from Minya, reflected on her upcoming study abroad experience and stated:

I want to show them [people in the host country] that I am not an ethnocentric narrow-minded girl. No. I want to show that as Egyptians, we have our intellect and our ideas. We want to do something for the future. This is what I will try to do while I am abroad.

One last aspect through which the school fostered patriotic feelings is by helping the students realize their rights as citizens who belonged to Egypt. The students explained that prior to joining the school, they were not very concerned about their rights as they always believed that the Egyptian citizen had no rights in a corrupt system. After joining the school, the students started to feel that the country was theirs and that they had rights as citizens of a new political system. Linah explained that prior to Bokra School, she always felt awkward when she took action against daily corrupt practices in the Egyptian society. After her experience at the school, she felt more empowered to take action and express disagreement because she felt that she had rights as a citizen to live in a society that valued the individual. In her interview with me, she said, "I felt that I should ask for my rights and if there is something that is bothering me, I should state it."

To sum up, the students at Bokra School seemed to agree with the organizers and the founders that one of the main purposes of the school is developing youth patriotism and national identity. According to the interviews with the students, the school helped them love Egypt more and feel proud to belong to it. They also began to feel that they became closer to fellow Egyptians. Not only did the school help the students develop emotional bonds with the country and its people but also it assisted them in becoming more aware of their rights as well as roles and responsibilities as citizens of Egypt.

4.2.2 Critical analysis of problems in Egyptian society

A second theme that arose from my interviews with the students is how the school introduced them to problems in Egyptian society so that they can develop an understanding of social justice. It is worth mentioning that the students discussed how the school helped them understand social justice more often than the school founders and organizers. Therefore, I decided to devote a section to capture the students' thoughts on that.

The students explained that the school helped them gain a better understanding of the Egyptian society and its problems in different ways. Samar, for example, expressed that through the field trips she went on as part of Bokra School, she realized that many Egyptians lived under very poor conditions. She also discussed the importance of giving attention to the group of the society that lives under the poverty line. She said:

There are people that nobody even looks at or cares to help. People see them and pretend that they do not see them. It [change] is not only about education or health care...there are people who eat from the garbage cans and others who do not have houses. Some people sleep on the sidewalks and others sleep under cars.

Similarly, Manar explained that Bokra School helped her see problems in her community that she did not realize before. She, for example, spoke about one of the change initiatives that her colleagues in Bokra School had which focused on educating the poor children of the doormen in the area where she lived. She also agreed with Samar that Bokra School opened her eyes to small issues that people tended to neglect or pretend not to see in daily life. Another participant, Mervat, explained that prior to joining Bokra School, she knew about some societal problems but never felt as strong about people and their sufferings. She said:

In Bokra School, the thing that really impressed me was that it was not theoretical. We did not only talk about children in slums. We actually went out and saw these areas and felt it [the suffering of people]. As long as we only talk, we will not feel or imagine anything. When you go and see the situation, you [develop a feeling for the community]

In addition to field trips, Moaz thought that another very effective tool that the school used to educate the students about the community was through inviting former Bokra students who graduated from the school and started their own civic initiatives. Seeing these students and talking with them about their experiences in developing their own communities was very inspiring. Moaz said:

The thing I felt the most in the school with regards to values is that you start to have a feel of the society. You see people [former Bokra students] traveling to the country borders....so that they would help the people there. They go and do things that nobody will reward them for...nobody will even see their actions. I really think I started to feel for the society and for the people [especially] when we visited a place like a slum and saw how people lived there.

Most of the students agreed that Bokra School did not only expose them to reality but also helped them “feel” the society and the struggles of the people around them in their communities. They thought that before this experience, they were very practical in the sense that they would mainly care about their personal interests more than those of others. When asked about the biggest difference that Bokra School made, Roa’a, just like almost all the students, used the expression “feel for the community.” She said that Bokra School confirmed to her that feelings were very important and that youth “should not be extra practical” in their actions. She then elaborated by giving an example of one person she was introduced to through the school

who used to go to an old poor woman and just spend time with her. The person did not bring any food or give any money to the woman. He just wanted to make her feel that she had support in the community. For Roa'a, this was very inspiring as she realized that she, as well, needed to think about others around her and do something "even if it was too small or non-materialistic", as she told me. What mattered more, according to her, was "human support".

Looking back at the student responses, one can see that the school devotes a significant part of its curriculum to opening students' eyes to problems in their communities. The students I interviewed all communicated to me that the school played a big role in educating them about the situation in Egypt and in exposing them to issues and problems that they were previously unaware of.

During my interviews with the students, they explained that through being exposed to current issues and problems around them, they started to realize that they needed to take action and play a role in making their communities better. Almost all students agreed that the school organizers did not explicitly ask them to have a role. Instead, exposure to reality in addition to looking at living examples of former Bokra graduates who continuously work to develop the community had the greatest impact on them. Moaz said:

[Through the school], I felt that the society needs work...they did not ask us to work on economic or political change. They only made us feel that we needed to have a role.

Moaz further explained that in Bokra School, a sense of ownership was created so that students would feel they were responsible for making Egypt a better place. He stated:

Individuals need to feel that this society is theirs and that they have a role. They need to realize that if they do not do their share of development, no one else will. The role they play will impact their lives and the future lives of their children.

Other students such as Selim, for example, added to the idea of ownership by explaining that the “biggest thing “that changed in him was that he started to have a strong belief that he needed to have a role. The role, according to him, does not have to be a big one because one needs to be realistic in terms of personal skills and capabilities. Instead, one needs to do their share no matter how simple it is. He explained that through the school, he began to realize that he was living in a country with a very corrupt system. He added that the only way to face corruption was for one to be positive and proactive and start working on developing his/her country even if he/she cannot see an immediate impact for his/her actions. Selim said:

The thing that I remember the most from the school is that when it comes to any problem in the society, I should look for what is possible for me to do to fix it. I do not care if my contribution will actually fix the problem or the corrupt system or not. I just care that I do my role.

Many other students such as Basem, for example, agreed with the previous statement. They believed that one’s role could be as small as spreading awareness or encouraging others to also contribute. Basem gave the example of how he used his talents in creating videos and Photoshop posters to spread awareness of societal issues. He also explained that it was important that one uses his/her educational background and skills to select the best kind of contribution he/she is capable of. In his case, it is the use of graphics. He stated:

In a country like Egypt that nobody cares much about or gives attention to, a picture with some effects and animations could help [educate the public]. Through this picture, I can make people feel that they are responsible for developing the lives of the poor and making them happy.

While, as previously discussed, everyone thought Bokra School helped them realize that they had a role, many students started to discuss how their understanding of what a role meant changed after being part of the school. They mainly discussed issues like charity and random acts of kindness in comparison to the notion of grass-root change. Many students also explained that their understanding of what the society needed began to be more in-depth after the Bokra experience especially when compared to how they viewed change and volunteering prior to joining the school. Of those students was Amira who said:

I knew in Bokra School that when I start to fix something, I look for the root. I learned that I should teach the individual [that I am helping] to develop himself/herself.... [We teach the individual] that we will give you the facilities and the skills and you will work hard to achieve something. We won't just go and give him everything and [expect them to do nothing in return].

Basem, who comes from Upper Egypt, explained that in his city, all the efforts of helping the needy and alleviating their lives were based on giving monetary donations and not on what he called "real development". He thought that the idea of empowering individuals so that they would start developing their own lives started reaching big cities like Cairo and Alexandria but, definitely, not in Upper Egypt.

Roa'a, who comes from Qina which is another city in Upper Egypt, discussed an interesting idea about how volunteering could be harmful rather than useful for one's community. She explained that some civic organizations focus on giving donations to the needy which, in return, makes poor people dependent rather than independent. She said that when organizations go and give "food, oil and sugar" to poor individuals, those in need will prefer not to work and rely on donations. Through Bokra School, Roa'a began to feel that for one to help

his/her community, he/she needs to fix problems and not conceal them. She said that through the school, she understood what “sustainable development meant.” She added that “most NGOs now do not help but rather make the situation worse.”

Another very interesting example was given by Linah. She mainly talked about her experience as a Christian Upper Egyptian citizen. She explained that at Bokra School, she began to reflect on the role of religion in understanding national identity. She said:

[I began to realize] that I live in a society of Muslims and Christians so if I want to contribute, I should help both groups. The government has always enforced separation. We, as Christians, focus our activities in the church. Bokra School made me look for my role as a citizen [not as a Christian] and serve the community as a whole. I even regret being only focused on my religious group for a very long time.

After the students talked to me about how the school helped them see their roles more clearly, I asked about the school sessions conducted at the school that had the biggest impact on helping them become more aware of the situation of Egypt and their role in changing it. Almost everyone agreed that reflections and discussion impacted them the most. These practices helped the students see the reality better and realize that they possess points of strength that they could easily utilize to help their communities. In addition, such practices made the students question, think critically and feel obligated to contribute. Commenting on these activities, Mariam said:

[These activities] made me think about who I was and what role I had. They made me realize that I will live and die without making a difference.

Another activity that the students felt had a strong impact on them was the discussions they had with guest speakers who came to present about community problems in addition to former Bokra students who came to share examples of their civic initiatives in their home cities.

Being exposed to these initiatives, helped the students realize that there were many sectors in the society in which one could serve and contribute.

As we have seen so far, the school plays a big role in educating students about the society in Egypt and what it needs so that development happens. What the students shared in this section reflects the impact of Bokra School discourse of citizenship on their characters. The students seemed to have grasped some of the aspects that are necessary for helping them become a generation that can re-invent Egypt. The students were not passive receivers of the citizenship discourse promoted by the school. Instead, they seemed to have a good understanding of what their roles should be in making the country a better place.

4.2.3 Modeling active participation and agency

Although the intention of the school founders and organizers was to help the students become active citizens, they perceived the school's efforts differently. The students claimed that the school introduced them to the importance of participation and agency in Egyptian society. However, the students did not get the chance to engage in actual civic projects during the three weeks of the school. When asked how the school introduced the value of civic participation, the students explained that two main techniques were used. First, the school created a democratic climate that helped them acquire civic skills essential for future participation. The students mainly discussed the different teaching styles that the school used in order to create a democratic space so that they can practice essential democratic skills such as tolerance and teamwork. Second, Bokra School used the Revolution to highlight the importance of civic participation.

The students discussed the various teaching styles and techniques that the school used to instill the value of tolerance and teamwork. They explained that after joining the school they

began to realize that each person is free to choose, think and adopt certain beliefs and ideologies. One major technique that the students thought was essential was that the organizers always consulted them and asked for their opinions about topics and activities. The students felt that their voices were heard and that their feedback was of value. Sondos explained that the reflection activities at the school were really important because they created space for the students to think about their experience in Bokra School. She stated:

The reflection activities focused on our opinions and helped the organizers change the curriculum to make it work for us.... [We were involved in planning]. We were not like children in a school where the teacher comes and tells us we will do something today.

The students also agreed that the school had a unique teaching style in which all points of view were presented and no specific view or ideology was promoted. This pedagogical approach is very rare, if it exists at all, in Egyptian schools and so it is unlikely that any of the students would have experienced it during their schooling. The students were presented with a variety of perspectives and then they were left to choose the ones that they thought were the most convincing for them. Karim said:

No one put us on a specific direction or told us that this direction is better. They only opened all the roads and told us there is this road and there is that one and that one. Which one do you want to choose? This is not easy to do but Bokra did that.

The students were impressed with the fact that there was no right and wrong opinion in the school and that each person could digest the information received in the way that he/she thought best worked for them. Omar commented on that by explaining that “each person could receive the information based on the background they come from, and the experiences he or she had.” Another student, Selim, shared another example of the freedom promoted at the school. He

talked about a situation where there was a guest speaker who was talking about a controversial issue. Although the organizers planned that the students would ask the speaker questions related to that issue, the students deviated and started asking irrelevant questions that were still important to them. The organizers continued facilitating the discussion and did not end it despite the side-tracking. Selim thought that such a technique was very positive because it showed that the school “cared about what the students wanted to know rather than only being concerned about offering a set of pre-planned sessions.”

The students’ comments on how the school organizers always asked for their feedback so that they would adjust the curriculum confirms what the founders and organizers previously discussed about the curriculum being dynamic. The students also explained that their observation of the interaction between the different school personnel helped them experience being in a “democratic climate” where everyone listened to each other and everyone collaborated for a good outcome. The climate of the school, according to the students, immersed them in constant discussions and conversations that not only empowered them and helped them express themselves better but also allowed them to become better listeners who respect the points of view of others. Mervat, for example, explained that prior to joining Bokra School, she had serious problems talking in public and expressing her opinion. She thought that the school “gave her an opportunity to learn how to talk in front of others.” She further elaborated:

Before I came to Bokra School, I used to get scared of being around many people. I was not able to talk in front of lots of people. Now I feel that I have my space to talk in the presence of others. I know how to prove and express myself.

Mervat felt that Bokra School broke the barriers. She felt that the safe and democratic climate of the school liberated her and made her realize that she had a place within the group and

that her opinion mattered. Ali agreed with Mervat that the safe environment created at the school fostered his ability to present his ideas and opinions and made him feel that he was a significant part of the group. He stated:

The first thing I acquired in the school is the skill to share my ideas and opinions with others. I was encouraged to talk. I realized that one can talk and express his ideas and can do something...you learn to present your perspective and see the perspective of others.

Not only did the students feel that they were more empowered to express themselves but also they began to feel that they were better listeners in a way that made them more respectful of people and ideas. The students expressed that through the Bokra School experience, they started to critically think about issues and also see things holistically or from a wider perspective. Amira, for example, explained:

[In Bokra School] We saw people that would come and say something and others that would come and say the opposite. It is amazing that I started to feel that some people in this group are correct and some in the other group are correct too. So what I learned is that I should listen as people are speaking but I will take what I think is right in this group and in that group.

Amira then gave the example of a session where the speaker presented about the different types of political parties in Egypt. She thought that the session was very informative in the sense that it equipped her with knowledge about the political sector in Egypt. She then added that the speaker was a supporter of liberal rather than rightist and Islamist parties. This did not change her opinion about the usefulness of the content presented by the speaker. She, however, disagreed with the speaker with regards to her opinion about certain political parties. Amira thought that each party had its positive and negative sides. She finally added:

I learned to take what is convincing for me. Your personal opinion is for you. You are free to say it and you are free to do what you want but it will not affect me.

Manar agreed with Amira that the discussions that took place during and after the different sessions either with other students or the organizers helped solidify the value of sharing and that individuals are free to express their opinions. Listening to the points of view of others was useful because it helped her consider the truth in what other people said even if she did not adopt such beliefs or ideas. She said:

I could be a strong believer in something but when I hear another person, I may begin to see things that I did not see before... this sharing can help me see things from a different perspective even if the person does not convince me.

Listening to speakers discuss different issues and viewpoints was not only valuable for the students so that they would adopt certain beliefs or ideas but also it helped them critically think and formulate their own interpretations. In issues related to politics, as Mariam explained, exposure was essential for the students to first understand the situation and then critically analyze it and adopt a certain ideology or perspective. Mariam said:

You may agree with one [speaker] in one area and agree with another in a different area.

You may also come up with your own point of view which bridges the gap between the speakers' points of view. The whole process was important in raising our awareness.

Many students also brought up the idea of teamwork. They explained that through the school, they began to appreciate working with others and started to view their colleagues as pieces that would make the puzzle complete. They also explained that their communication skills were greatly influenced through direct interaction with the other students and the organizers of

the school. For example, when asked about how the school enhanced his understanding of the value of working with people, Youssef commented on what he learned at Bokra. He stated:

People are a great asset. I now feel that I can communicate much better with people and in a more effective way. I feel more comfortable now dealing with people.

Mervat, for instance, explained that the form of teamwork she was introduced to in Bokra School differed significantly from that she was accustomed to. She said that before the school, teamwork was like a “routine” task that she was “obligated” to do so that she would complete a certain academic project. In Bokra School, she did not feel that teamwork was imposed on the students. She felt that her communication skills were greatly enhanced through the experience and that she was part of a whole that shared a common goal.

Just like Mervat, Selim came to the school expecting the typical structure and routine of any student activity. He thought that he would participate in Bokra School so that he would acquire more information in a traditional way. However, he was surprised by the team spirit in the school. Selim explained that the biggest benefit he came out of the school with was the connections that he made with the other students and organizers. Another participant, talked about how the diversity of this year’s group of students created a kind of harmony that helped students work together. She explained that diversity made everyone realize that the ideas of the other person were valuable and so seeking assistance from others was encouraged. Manar said:

In the school, we were always reminded that we are a team together. They even invited representatives of certain civic initiatives in the community and asked us to participate with them, suggest ideas to them or even seek their help in our own initiatives. The idea of teamwork [we learned about in the school] is that if I am doing something and I know

that you can help me with it or you know someone that can help me, then I should seek help. It is important to be connected.

Manar further explained that she now believed that flexibility is important when one is trying to initiate change. One might have an idea for a civic initiative that he/she is interested in but being alone would not help. She would rather find other people who also have a powerful civic initiative and work with them. She stated:

It does not have to be my idea that I work on. I do not mind working on another civic initiative that I also believe in. It is better to work together and as long as I believe in the goal of the initiative, I will contribute as much as I can.

Similarly, Hussein thought that the strongest value he acquired through the school was the importance of working together. He talked about how the school broke the barriers between the students and helped them understand the meaning of working collectively. Prior to the school, the students, according to Hussein, were separated into a group of boys and a group of girls. Day by day, the students began to communicate better and form teams based on the civic initiatives that they were interested in. Hussein, himself, started forming his team as well. He said:

I started forming a group that would work on spreading health awareness in poor areas and slums. We have not really started but at least we have the structure of how we envision this project to be.

What the students said in this section shows that the school aims to promote the value of collective agency as a vehicle for initiating change. For this value to be fully developed, the students are first made aware of the problems that exist in their communities. They then realize the importance of one's contribution and that for change to take place, individuals need to

collaborate. Through these stages, the students develop a deeper understanding of one of the values that a citizen should possess.

Second, the students also explained that the school utilized the Revolution in such a way so that they would realize the importance of participation in Egyptian civil society. Many of the students agreed that the Revolution was a major event in their lives that they were passionate about. Some, on the other hand, explained that the Revolution was “too big” to comprehend due to their age and lack of experience. However, the school helped them understand what the Revolution was all about, what its objectives were and what channels it opened for Egyptians. Almost all students explained that Bokra School played a big role in teaching them about the Revolution in a way that strongly connected them to Egypt and to fellow Egyptians. This connection made them feel more responsible for contributing to the development of the country. Roa’a, for example, gave the following example:

One time in Bokra School, they played a video of the Revolution and it was a song about the martyrs. Mr. Seif, the founder, was there and he was telling us about what happened in the Revolution and about the people who died. At that point, I felt that I am very close to those people (the dead) and that I need to do something. Those people died for me. They died so that I would have a better life.

The idea of responsibility was also shared by Amira. She felt that the Revolution was an eye-opening experience. She started to be more aware of her country and more concerned about the future. She said:

The Revolution provided us with the opportunity and gave us the space to think about tomorrow. Before that, I used to think “why would I think about tomorrow when the

future is already drawn for us?”... I will take care of the new generation... the children and youth in my family. I want them to learn what I learned [in the school].

Selim added that the school used the Revolution as a motive to help students realize the role they should play in their communities. It made the students realize that the Revolution was the only way that the country could be rebuilt so that the glories of the past could be restored. This agrees with the discourse that the school aims to promote by using the Revolution which is mainly to help the students realize that change is possible and that they should play a role in making this change happen. Selim stated:

The school, in light of the Revolution, increased my feelings that one can change the country. We should be willing to sacrifice and be fully convinced that we might not see the impact of our actions. You are building for a 100 years ahead and you know you will die without seeing the result. But you have to be sure that you will make a difference.

Similarly, Ali explained that the Revolution did not only connect him and other students to the country but also was an example that nothing was impossible. The Revolution took place when no one was expecting it and so one should never hesitate to initiate change in fear that it will never make a difference. He explained:

You can do something. The Revolution gave me an example of that... you have a commitment and you have to realize your strength. You can do something alone and nothing is ever small to leave an impact.

Another student, Basem, explained that he always liked the country even before the Revolution despite the corrupt government but he always felt helpless to make it a better place. He added that although the general atmosphere in Egypt a year and a half after the Revolution was dark and that everyone thought the country was collapsing, Bokra School “planted the seeds

of hope.” In addition, the students also agreed that Bokra School helped them understand the Revolution better which in return helped them realize that they have to contribute to the development of Egypt. Linah explained:

The Revolution helped me understand that I need to do something and speak up for the people in need. People say stop dreaming. But I want to be able to connect with the people in the villages and see what they need and work in coordination with the village heads to alleviate the lives of poor individuals.

As one can see in the previous quotes, it seems that the school used the Revolution as a tool to open the eyes of the students to not only foster patriotic sentiments but also to educate them that they need to be part of the chain of change. Other fellow citizens died for a cause and so they needed to not only appreciate those who died but also continue the struggle for a better future.

Bokra School also used the Revolution to help the students think about the political scene in Egypt in a more complex way. This was evident through the reflections that the students shared with me. Selim, for example, was aware of the complexity of the political events in Egypt. He stated:

The Revolution is great but it is the fault of the youth that they did not complete it until the end. We [the youth] expected that the people on top were transparent. We should have completed it.

Another important reflection was shared by Ali. Ali thought that the Revolution itself empowered youth and showed them the power they possessed. However, it also helped youth realize some mistakes that they made. He said:

The Revolution was good in helping us youth realize our strength but at the same time we did not know what we should do after breaking all the old barriers [the former system]....up till February 11 (when Mubarak stepped down), things were good. After that, I was not happy.

Along the same lines, Karim explained that the chaos that took place after Mubarak stepped down allowed certain political parties to fight for power ignoring the original demands of the youth in the Revolution. For this reason, he felt that it was his responsibility to try to enforce change and take revenge for the innocent martyrs who died during the clashes of the different political parties. He said:

I want change. I want to take revenge. I live in this country so I need to work hard to achieve the goals of those who lost their souls. It is frustrating now that I see that some people do not want real change.

What Karim was referring to was the fact that after Mubarak stepped down, many Egyptians were confused as to what came next. As a result, when it was time for the first presidential elections after the Revolution in June 2012, Egyptians failed to vote for a president who represented the Revolution. This resulted in a state of frustration among youth. The same sentiments of frustration were shared by Amira. She thought that although the Revolution was probably one of the best events that happened in her life, it would never be complete until Egyptians themselves change. She said:

I feel that the Revolution changed a system but did not change the people. During the Revolution, people respected each other...the streets were clean. Now, everything is the opposite. I want to see the influence on people. Yes. We have achieved a lot politically but what is the influence on Egyptians?! I do not see any change at all.

The previous comment by Amira reflects the depth of her thinking about the socio-political situation in Egypt. She did not see the Revolution as the only step towards change. However, she thought that individuals needed to work and contribute to the country for the Revolution to really be fruitful. This was the reason why she thought that her role in the future would be with children. She believed that only through preparing a strong generation would the country develop again.

Regarding future participation, Amira, explained that she became more aware of her role as a citizen of Egypt. This awareness resulted in a sense of responsibility especially with regards to future participation either civically or politically. When she particularly talked about political participation, she stated:

I feel that I have a responsibility now. I know that soon I will have to go vote. I am afraid to vote for somebody who will harm rather than help us. It is a responsibility so I am trying to make sure I educate myself to make the right choice.

Similar to Amira, Selim discussed the idea of responsibility that he acquired after joining Bokra School. He explained that he now felt responsible to educate children about the value and beauty of their country so that they would grow up with a sense of appreciation for where they come from. He said:

After I visited cities in Egypt for the first time and found out how beautiful they were, I had the idea of doing something similar to children. We take them to different parts of Cairo and different governates and do something similar to what Bokra School does. We should try to develop certain values in those children so that they can eventually take these values and skills and go back to develop their communities.

Going back to the citizenship discourses that the school aim to promote, it seems that the school succeeded in helping the students realize that active participation in a civil society is a multi-step process that is based on social justice. Reflecting on the previous quotes by the students, the students seemed to have a good understanding of the complexity of the situation in Egypt and the fact that change is a continuous process that aims to fix existing problems. Although the students seemed to have a good understanding of the importance of participation and the skills needed for successful engagement, one cannot conclude that the skills learned at the school are transferable. Bokra School created many opportunities for the students to practice essential democratic skills but there is no evidence that the students were able to use such skills in real life and outside the boundaries of the classroom.

4.3 CONCLUSION

To conclude this chapter, the discourse of citizenship that Bokra School promotes focuses preparing empowered citizens who can re-invent Egypt after the Revolution. My discussions with the founders and organizers of the school in addition to my observations and notes on the curriculum and the school documents reveal that creating patriotic citizens is viewed as a prerequisite for teaching students about what it means to be citizens. For this reason, issues pertaining to national identity are only discussed during the first few days of the school every year. After that, the students are introduced to the concepts of active participation and agency. They are not explicitly taught or told that they need to be active citizens. Instead, they are taken on a step by step learning process that introduces them to the kind of knowledge and skills that they need in order to assume their roles as citizens of a country undergoing massive social and

political change. Gradually and through careful guidance and a number of learning experiences, the students begin to realize that in order to assume an active role in the local community, one needs to be willing to work collectively with others and view fellow citizens as partners whose opinions matter. The students in the school then begin to develop newer and deeper understandings of citizenship. They also begin to challenge old ideas that they had about their country, fellow citizens and, most importantly, their future roles.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The Egyptian Revolution of January 25, 2011 did not only end a political regime but it also opened channels for youth to think differently and question their roles as citizens of a country in transition (Hauslohner, 2011). Civic organizations that aim to teach youth about citizenship started rising rapidly after the events of 2011. This study looked at one civic education organization, Bokra, in order to explore the ways through which it taught youth about citizenship and to look at its effect on the civic beliefs of students in the organization's summer school in 2012.

While the first and second research questions in the study looked at how the school promoted citizenship and what kind of citizenship it focused on, the third question looked at how successful the school was in conveying such a message. In other words, listening to the students' beliefs and ideas in the third question helped me determine if the school truly taught what it claimed to be teaching. Although the school was able to convey some of its goals to the students, the findings reveal that some of the intended goals of the school were not fully transferable to the students. This chapter provides a discussion of the study's findings, limitations as well as directions for future research.

5.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first goal that the school had for its students was that they would feel more attached and loyal to Egypt. This was done through teaching the students about their country and their heritage in a way that would foster their nationalistic feelings and instill the belief that the country was theirs. This was also done through the use of several activities such as guest speakers and field trips both of which are recommended practices by citizenship education researchers (Smith, Sheppard, Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Similarly, when asked about how the school impacted them, the students talked about how they felt that they belonged to Egypt more than before. In addition, they explained that the school helped them re-discover the country and explore aspects that they had never known about. Almost every one of the students agreed that the field trips were very useful learning experiences that brought them closer to Egypt and to fellow Egyptians and helped them gain firsthand experience of the kind of problems that existed in the country.

The second goal of the school was to foster active participation and agency in a democratic society. The school personnel I interviewed and the documents I reviewed indicated that the school followed a specific structure for achieving such a goal. They first worked on empowering the students. After that, they exposed the students to the knowledge necessary to critically think and analyze existing problems in Egyptian society. Through this knowledge, the students began to realize the importance of social responsibility. After that, the students were introduced the idea of teamwork and given ample opportunities to work with their classmates on tasks that require collaboration. When asked about how the school helped them become active participants, the students explained that they perceived what the school did as an “introduction” to democratic participation. There was no evidence that the students actually started

participating. However, they gained a better understanding of some civic skills that are necessary for active participation in a civil society. These skills included the ability to listen and accept various viewpoints and the ability to collaboratively work with others.

Although the results of the study show some consistency between all the data sources, one cannot use such findings to conclude that the Bokra experience was completely successful. In order for one to be able to fully analyze the Bokra experience, it is essential to link the findings to what contemporary literature in citizenship education sets as guidelines for determining the role of effective citizenship education programs. In what follows, I discuss three possible ways of looking at the results in light of previous research findings.

5.1.1 Bokra School and contemporary civic discourses

The citizenship discourse that Bokra promotes is very unique due to the context and time of the school. Bokra School attempts to prepare citizens who can re-invent Egypt at such an unstable time of history. One can describe the discourse that Bokra School promotes as revolutionary citizenship. Such a form of citizenship includes aspects from the three contemporary discourses of citizenship discussed in chapter 2. However, the citizenship discourse of the school is not identical to any of the three major discourses. The discourse promoted in Bokra School agrees with the liberal, republican and critical discourses in its focus on the individual, national identity and civic participation. Just like the three discourses treat the three themes in different ways, Bokra School has its unique way of looking at each theme.

As for the individual, Bokra School works on empowering the students so that they begin realizing their abilities and points of strength. Such realization helps the students begin to feel that they are an important part of the society and that they need to have a role in developing

Egypt. Similarly, contemporary discourses of citizenship place importance on the individual and work on empowering him/her so he/she can contribute to the development of his/her nation-state (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). As for national identity, the school conducts a number of learning activities with the purpose of fostering the students' nationalistic feelings. The school aims to help the students develop some kind of attachment to the country so that they become more eager to develop it. The students also began to develop feelings of ownership and that Egypt belongs to them not to a corrupt political regime. National identity in all citizenship discourses is very significant because it works as the vehicle that drives individuals to civic participation (Damon, 2011). The school also handles the theme of civic engagement in a unique way. It tries to prepare students by equipping them with the knowledge, skills and values that are essential to assume their roles as active citizens of post-revolutionary Egypt. In the same way, contemporary citizenship discourses view civic participation as a central part of preparing future citizens. They focus on teaching students the necessary skills that allow them to effectively play a role in the societies where they live (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Hobbs, 2001; Singleton, 2001).

Of the three discourses of citizenship outlined in Chapter 2, Bokra School's approach is most similar to the republican discourse. Both Bokra School and the republican discourse give one's country or the political community more weight than that they give to the individual. Unlike the liberal discourse, the school does not focus on personal gains and achievements. It, nevertheless, channels all human capacities for the purpose of developing the country. Bokra School views the individual as an agent who is responsible for making the society better. It works on empowering the students and developing their thinking and analysis skills for the purpose of making them responsible citizens who can contribute to the welfare of the society. Bokra School also tries to challenge the students' perception that one's self is more important

than one's country. Prior to the Revolution, youth tended to be more self-centered because they did not feel that Egypt belonged to them. For this reason, one of the missions that Bokra School aims to achieve through its program and activities is helping the students realize that everyone is responsible for developing Egypt and that the country matters more than one's personal gains and achievements.

Bokra School also tackles the issue of national identity in a way similar to the republican discourse. It promotes love, belongingness and loyalty to Egypt so that the students have a strong drive to make the country a better place. Developing national identity is, in fact, a central issue in citizenship education curricula all over the world as it is believed to play an important role in building strong nations. In the United States, for example, despite the calls for global identity, national identity is still viewed as an essential component of civic education because it is believed to play a strong role in keeping the society coherent (Reuben, 2005). Examples of developing countries that focus on national identity as a vehicle to drive citizens and organize them for the public good include those of Singapore, Ukraine and Turkey (Keyman & İçduygu, 2003; Spring, 2004).

The school also shares a similarity with the liberal discourse of citizenship in its view of national identity. In addition to developing students' patriotism, it also aims to help the students become loyal to principles so that equality, freedom and liberty are achieved (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Bern, 2002). The school attempts to help the students become closer to fellow Egyptians and consider the welfare of everyone in the society.

Finally, in its view of civic participation, the discourse of citizenship of Bokra School shares a number of similarities and differences with the three main discourses of citizenship. Similar to the republican discourse, Bokra School looks at civic engagement as a means through

which the society could be developed. Therefore, both discourses give weight to the importance of teaching students about their country's culture and history so that they become more motivated to restore the glories of the past. One difference between the two discourses is, however, that the school does not promote civic engagement for the purpose of keeping the political system stable (Milner, 2002; Nie, 1996). The students are not taught to be loyal to the system but rather to the country.

There are also some similarities that exist between the discourse of citizenship that Bokra School promotes and the liberal discourse of citizenship in its view of civic participation. Both discourses highlight the importance of teaching civic skills that allow individuals to contribute to the democratic communities where they live. Both discourses also stresses the link between civic knowledge and communicative and deliberative skills (Hobbs, 2001; Singleton, 2001; Parker, 2003). As for the critical discourses of citizenship, Bokra School also views civic participation as a critical and systematic way through which communal problems could be faced and fixed (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). However, Bokra School does not focus on issues of feminism and global participation which are central aspects of the critical discourses of citizenship.

To sum this section up, despite the strong influences of globalization in today's Egypt (Shabi, 2012), Bokra School attempts to promote a citizenship discourse that focuses on re-inventing Egypt by creating citizens who can restore past glories ,or what the school documents refer to as “ achieving renaissance.” In order to do so, the school borrows several aspects from the republican discourse especially in its focus on the society more than on the individual. Bokra School also devotes a significant part of its program to developing affective aspects of citizenship such as love, belongingness and loyalty to Egypt. Unlike the other discourses, Bokra School does not emphasize the importance of individual achievement or personal gains. Instead,

it views citizens as agents of change who should contribute to the development of Egypt. One can argue that the school still focuses on the individual as it devotes a number of sessions for the purpose of empowering the students and helping them discover themselves. However, one needs to realize that the school does so in order to achieve a bigger goal which is to develop the country and make it a better place. Perhaps the biggest difference between the discourse of Bokra School and the republican discourse is that the school promotes active participation to develop the country but not to maintain a stable political system. While the republican discourse views civic engagement in terms of political action that aims to keep the stability of the government, Bokra School views engagement as a means to initiate change. The school's discourse in this regard is similar to critical discourses of citizenship in their focus on social harmony and better living conditions for everyone.

5.1.2 The civic goal of Bokra School

One way of examining the civic goal of Bokra School is by aligning what the school does to the two major goals of citizenship education discussed earlier in chapter 2. In my opinion, Bokra School is more focused on enlightenment than participatory action (Schugurensky, 2000). Bokra School educates students about their communities and equips them with the skills needed to assume active roles in these communities. The school attempts to change the students' mindset about the importance of participation. It, however, does not civically organize youth to work on a certain project or cause. Although the school aims to help students develop and start their own civic initiatives after the three weeks, there seems to be no evidence that every student who finishes the program does that. Even though the actual participation component is missing, the

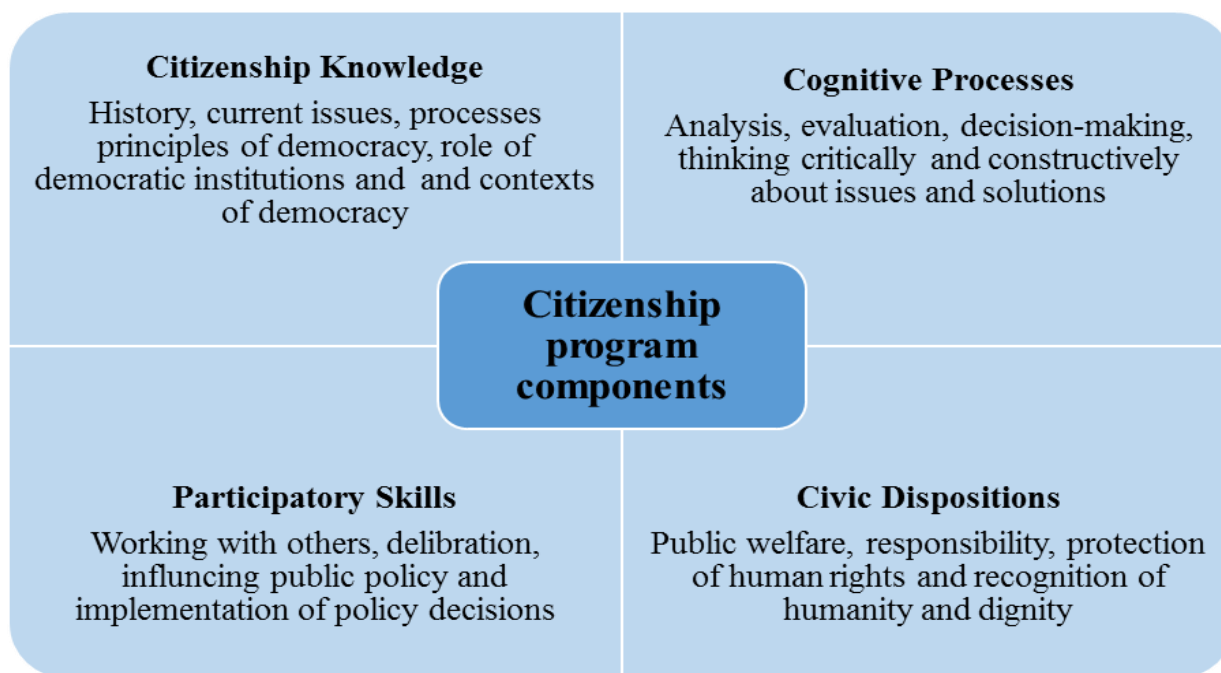
school still succeeds in helping students conceptualize the idea of participation in a way that assists them to become committed to future civic action.

In fact, one cannot assume that all the students would be civically engaged after the three weeks for two main reasons. First, the duration of the school is short and the information presented is condensed. This leaves students in a state of confusion after the school finishes. According to my interviews with the organizers who were also former Bokra students, they explained that many of them only started feeling the impact of Bokra School a few months after the experience. Many also chose to become organizers the year after they graduated from the school so that they would have more time at the school to digest the experience. In addition, some of the organizers explained that the impact that they felt was in the form of beginning to think and view one's role in the community differently. Some, for instance, said that they started to be more appreciative of the country while others explained that they began to feel that they appreciated people and respected individual differences. Not every one of the organizers started a civic initiative or even started volunteering in existing ones. However, they all explained that the experience was enriching and extremely eye-opening. Second, the school does not seem to have a devised follow-up system to keep track of its graduates and check whether or not they have indeed started the civic initiatives that they planned during the school. This will be further elaborated on later in the chapter.

Researchers explain that many citizenship education programs that are enlightenment-based “assume” that awareness will lead to engagement. This kind of reciprocity or “spillover effect”, as Schugurensky (2000) calls it, does not always take place. The researcher explains that the literature on citizenship theory views citizenship in terms of personal status or civic virtues such as tolerance, respect, social responsibility, self-discipline, etc. Therefore, many citizenship

education programs aim to develop these virtues with the assumption that students will consequently become active democratic participants. These programs, including Bokra, are effective in enlightening youth but they do not necessarily create citizens who will participate civically. Similarly, Patrick (2000) explains that for a citizenship education program to be effective, it needs to include four main elements as shown in figure 2. These elements are complementary which aids programs in creating a well-rounded participatory citizen.

Figure 1: Patrick’s (2000) components of effective citizenship programs



Patrick (2000) further explains that most programs only have some of these components. This does not mean that the programs are ineffective. In fact, many programs succeed in helping students reach a certain level of knowledge and awareness. However, only when students obtain the civic experience inside and outside the classroom would they grasp the true meaning of being

a participatory citizen. This leads us to the next point which has to do with the three kinds of citizenship proposed by Westheimer and Kahne (2004). If one is to determine what kind of citizen Bokra School creates, I would argue that it aims to develop a personally-responsible citizen. The school equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary to be responsible citizens who are aware of their communities and who can effectively deal with fellow citizens. The school also includes elements of the other two kinds of citizen. For example, it highlights the importance of participation and stresses the importance of grass-root change. However, this is all done theoretically in the classroom. Again, one cannot determine the transferability of such knowledge to the context outside the classroom.

To conclude, it is worth mentioning that much of the literature that describes the nature and outcomes of citizenship education programs is conducted in developed countries. In a country like Egypt where youth civic organizations are fewer in number and newer in the market, Bokra Organization stands as an example that should be both appreciated and nurtured. It puts students on the road of discovering who they should be as citizens of a country in transition. Even though the school does not necessarily implement every component of effective citizenship programs, it still impacts students in a way that citizenship education in Egyptian schools fails to achieve. Bokra School fills the gaps of the national educational system in Egypt and aims to introduce students to a new kind of civic understanding so that they begin to see their roles differently.

5.1.3 Improvements to the Bokra experience

Bokra School is a good example of a civic organization that intends to transform youth perceptions of citizenship so that they develop a commitment to their communities.

The findings of this study indicate that the goals of the School successfully translated to the students. Although Bokra School seems to be going on the right path of preparing youth for democracy, there are some considerations that one should bear in mind. First, the duration of the summer school is short if the aim is to influence the development of youth civic citizenship dispositions. Researchers agree that the development of civic identity should never be viewed as a simple or clear-cut process. Kirshner (2009) defines civic identity as “a person’s sense of belonging to a larger polis and a sense of responsibility to contribute to its health.” (p.415). Civic identity then could be understood in terms of belonging and commitment. The fuel for such feelings of belonging and commitment is ideology. Ideology refers to a set of personal beliefs that result from interaction with the different cultural, historical, social and political aspects of the context where one lives (Erikson, 1968; Kirshner, 2009; Rubin, 2007; Youniss & Yates, 1997). Therefore, the context where one lives largely affects the kind of civic dispositions they take and the commitments they make. In light of that, we cannot conclude that the students at Bokra School undergo a process of civic identity formation in a period of three weeks. We could, however, look at the Bokra experience as one that is eye-opening or one that positions the students in the spot that allows them to see reality more clearly. During the school, the students realize that they are part of a whole and that their contribution for the betterment of the whole society matters. Perhaps one of the suggestions for improving the Bokra experience would be to extend the duration of the program in a way that would help the students digest the content and apply it to real life situations. For the Bokra experience to be more effective, we need to make sure that the students are not merely accumulating information.

Second, the School needs to be more specific with regards to what they expect of the students after graduation. In other words, Bokra School needs to be focused on enlightening and

developing a civic mindset or on participation. The School organizers and founders need to be aware that achieving either one of these two goals is enough. They should not attempt to tackle both areas especially at this point of Egypt's history. It seems more suitable that they focus on enlightenment now so that the students develop a connection to the country and a stronger belief in the importance of participation. Helping Egyptian students value participation and view themselves as agents of change is in itself a big achievement.

If Bokra School continues to target the participatory aspect of citizenship, two issues need to be taken into account. First, a long-term assessment plan to track the impact of the summer school on the students on the long run needs to be devised. Although the curriculum includes some formative assessment strategies throughout the three weeks, mainly in the form of discussions and written narratives, the school needs to devise a follow-up plan to check whether or not the students have started their civic initiatives. The school organizers proposed the idea of meeting every three months for the year following the school to check the progress of the students. They also explained that previously, the organizers planned focus group discussions with former Bokra alumni to learn about the impact of the school on them one or two years later. They thought this was an effective strategy that they wanted to continue doing in following years. Again, these practices need to be well-planned and regularly conducted. Sperandio, Grudzinski-Hal and Stewart-Gambino (2010) explain that assessment in citizenship education is a challenge. However, institutions need to have a solid and consistent assessment plan in order to be able to determine how effective their civic instruction is. In addition, Bokra School needs to revise its curriculum so that more opportunities where students can implement their learning are created. Only when the school curriculum include both knowledge and practice would students start to learn what being a citizen means. As Niemi and Junn (1998) explain, only when students

are systematically exposed to ideas and are required to apply them to interpret, organize and solve problems and issues would learning happen. In other words, only when knowledge and practice are combined will students start to acquire the “the requisites of constructive and enlightened civic engagement (Patrick, 2000, 3).

5.2 LIMITATIONS

Although the current study is one of very few that look at the Revolution in Egypt from an educational perspective, there remains to be limitations that need to be considered. First, the dissertation only looked at one civic organization in Cairo. The founders of Bokra School are well-educated and aware of much of the research on citizenship education. This, however, is not the case of other civic organizations in Egypt. Many of the newly-established organizations that emerged after the Revolution are ones that are run and managed by young adults who feel that they want to contribute to the country in one way or another. Prior to working with Bokra Organizations, I met with heads of other youth groups and organizations to learn more about what they did and to determine if such groups were suitable to look at as a case for this study. Some of the groups I met were based in public universities. They were completely run by senior students who aimed to organize other students in order to spread awareness of current issues to the public or start campaigns to fix small issues such as traffic or trash accumulation. Other organizations were more project-based and so they only worked when need arised. For example, one of the organizations I visited focused on developing slum areas. They, however, only worked on two or three projects each year. These organizations are all interesting sites for research perhaps for somebody residing in Egypt. However, due to time limitations, I picked Bokra

Organization because it was very well-established and well-structured when compared to other youth programs. One can conclude here that Bokra Organization is not the norm and so caution needs to be exercised when generalizing the findings of this dissertation study.

Second, the group of the student participants in the summer school of 2012 was very homogenous when compared to previous Bokra School student groups. In previous years, as explained to me by the school founders and organizers, the groups consisted of varying age groups as well as different interests and diverse backgrounds. Therefore, not everyone digested the experience the same way. In fact, I was told that prior to 2012, there were students who were totally against what the school did. Some students even quit the program. What happened in 2012, however, was that an academic institute that offers scholarships to Egyptian students contacted Bokra School and requested that a group of its scholarship awardees enroll in the summer school of 2012. For this reason, the students were all the same age with similar kinds of experiences. This, in a way, worked well for the purpose of this study as my target group was youth in the university level. However, the data obtained from the students was very similar and so no contradictions or variations were found.

One last limitation of the study pertains to its timing. As explained earlier, data collection took place a year and a half after January 2011 and soon after the election of the first democratic president, Muhammad Morsi. During that time, everyone seemed to be relatively optimistic about the situation in Egypt. If one is to go back and interview the students three years after the Revolution, he/she might have different insights, ideas and opinions. The situation in Egypt three years after the Revolution remains to be very unstable. Also, the role of youth seems to be diminishing and again replaced by the control of authority.

To sum up, despite the significance of the present study, one needs to bear in mind these limitations if the findings are to be used to understand the role of civic organizations in Egypt. Bokra School definitely makes a difference but this is mainly because it has been working for the past 7 years. During that time, many changes and modifications were made to adapt the school content to the sociopolitical and economic situation in Egypt. The case of Bokra School is a unique example of one of the many youth organizations that are striving to make a difference in today's Egypt.

5.3 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research can take different directions. In the case of Bokra School, like I suggested earlier, the long-term impact of the school needs to be explored. This could be done through conducting focus groups with Bokra graduates a year or two after school completion to examine the impact that the school made in their civic lives. One can focus on whether or not the students actually transferred what they learned to the outside world. If so, one can also explore the nature of this impact and whether or not it is based on the principles of grass-root development that the school promotes. Only when the long-term impact of the school is examined would we be able to determine the degree to which the school succeeds in teaching youth about citizenship. Another direction for research would be to explore the beliefs and attitudes of different student groups in order to determine the role that age and background determine in the way students accept or reject the experience. One last research path would be to examine the beliefs and attitudes of Bokra School students now in light of the continued sociopolitical instability. It would be interesting to explore the link between the current situation in Egypt with all that it involves of

lack of hope and frustration and link it to how students digest the Bokra experience. Of particular importance would be to explore the degree to which the school helps the students face the current situation.

Aside from Bokra School, more research needs to be conducted on youth civic organizations in order to learn about how unique these programs are and what kind of citizenship discourses and values they promote. More ethnographic research needs to also be done especially to explore university-based youth organizing programs as well as ones that are fully managed and directed by youth and young adults. Finally, there is a strong need for researchers to be involved with youth civic organizations for the purpose of improving their programs so that they are more research-based. Only through the collaboration of education researchers and practitioners would programs be better structured and more effective in equipping youth with the skills necessary for them to assume their roles as citizens especially in countries in transition.

Bokra School is an example of a civic organization that aims to help Egyptian youth reflect on who they are and how they position themselves within their communities. It succeeds in helping youth develop a mindset of commitment and civic participation through various learning experiences that help bring youth closer to Egypt and to fellow Egyptians. The School uses a mix of traditional teaching methods such as lectures and discussions and others that help students develop critical perspectives such as games and role-plays. Whether or not the School helps the students actually become participatory is not clear. The School can fix this by specifying what kind of impact they want to achieve.

It is particularly interesting to see the rise of such civic organizations in Egypt; a country in which citizenship education at schools is usually a pass/fail subject that mainly focuses on historical events in a purely theoretical way (Fa'our & Moashar, 2011). At this stage of Egypt's

history, there is a strong need to restore hope in youth and enhance their sense of national identity and civic commitment. Only through a young hopeful and active generation of citizens can Egypt be rebuilt.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS TO THE ORGANIZERS

1. What do you think Namaa aims to achieve?
2. What specific skills do you think the students gain through the summer school? And how does that happen?
3. What organization role do you hold in Namaa' now? What skills do you think you develop through this role?
4. What motivates you to be a Namaa organizer? What keeps you involved?
5. How long has it been since you graduated from Namaa' school?
6. What did you personally learn in Namaa that influenced your life as a citizen of Egypt?
7. How would you describe the impact of Namaa' on your life?
8. Do you think the role that Namaa plays has been influenced by the revolution in any way?

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS TO THE FOUNDERS

1. How did the idea of Bokra come up and how was it introduced to the NGO?
2. To what extent does the NGO interfere in what the school does?
3. Where does the school funding come from?
4. Describe the school mission and goals.
5. What research background influenced the formation of Bokra School?
6. How have you been improving Bokra School year by year?
7. What are some flaws that you think need to be fixed in the school?
8. How is Bokra School different from any other school? What do you mean by sustainable development and active citizenship?
9. What is the impact of Bokra School in your opinion?
10. How the school did utilized the Revolution to teach students about citizenship?

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS TO THE STUDENTS

1. Describe your first impression after joining Bokra School.
2. How would you describe your overall experience at Bokra School? Elaborate and share stories of remarkable events.
3. Explain with examples what Bokra School taught you about the community.
4. How did participation at Bokra School help you understand your civic role in the society?
5. Describe the school sessions and activities that had the biggest impact. Why?
6. What have you learned from your interaction with other school students?
7. Did Bokra School meet your expectations? Why or why not? Give examples.
8. Describe how you feel about the Revolution.
9. How did Bokra School help you understand the Revolution better?

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