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Citizenship Education in Kenya:
Revisiting Westheimer and Kahne's, the 'Good Citizen'

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Abstract:
The concept of citizenship is at the core of democratic societies because the rights and responsibilities of the citizenry are drawn from it. Since independence in 1963, successive governments in Kenya have emphasised the importance of national unity, civic engagement and peaceful coexistence. To achieve the above, the past regimes introduced various forms of citizenship education in the country's education curriculum. The aim was to perfect social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy so as to strengthen the democratic space and to uphold dignity of every Kenyan. In-spite of the above actions, Kenya has experienced ethnic tensions and violence over time more-so during election periods which have resulted in loss of lives and properties – example being the violence after the disputed 2007 presidential elections. Studies report that health and stability of a modern democracy depends not only on the justice of its 'basic structure,' but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens which can be influenced by the education system. This study explored citizenship education in Kenya in relation to the arguments adduced by Westheimer and Kahne in 2004, in the 'Good Citizen'. It found out that, with the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010, Kenya's civic education now emphasizes on the justice-oriented citizen and personally responsible citizen. Personally, responsible citizen is found to be popular with politicians and community leaders who preach peaceful coexistence while participatory citizen who help organize community efforts to care for the less fortunate in the society are increasingly required. Thus, much is yet to be done to build good citizens in Kenya and this can only be realized through effective citizenship education which may also help reduce tensions among the diverse ethnic groups.

Keywords: citizenship education, good citizen, flagging democracy, Kenya

1. Introduction
The notion of citizenship is at the core of democratic societies. It espouses the rights and responsibilities of citizenry (Ramphele, M., 2001) and enhances harmony in multi-ethnic societies like Kenya. Since 1963, successive Kenya governments have emphasised the importance of national unity and civic engagement (Iraki, F.K., 2010). This has led to the inclusion of citizenship education in various forms in both primary and secondary education curriculum. These have included such subject names as Social Studies and, History and Government which are taught in Primary and Secondary Schools respectively. Effective citizenship education involves 1) social and moral responsibility, 2) community involvement, and 3) political literacy, and in general, is aimed at strengthening democratic life and the worth and dignity of every person "beginning in school, and radiating out" (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1999, p. 12). As Dewey, J., (1916) pointed out, a century ago, "a democracy was more than a form of government, it was primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (p. 87).
The 2007 disputed elections that resulted in over 1300 deaths led to political apathy in Kenya. Indeed, every general election in Kenya since 1991 has experienced violence (Iraki, F.K., 2010). Usually unemployed youths in urban areas are recruited by politicians to commit acts of violence (Anderson, D.M., 2002). Often, the goal is to achieve what is captured in the title of Wrong's (2009) book, *It's our turn to eat.* Political violence and the passing of a new constitution in 2010, underscores the urgent need for renewed emphasis on citizenship education to sustain Kenya's flagging democracy.

2. Schooling and Good Citizenship
This paper submits that there is a strong positive correlation between schooling and good citizenship. Indeed, the connection between education and democracy or 'good' citizenship has been made by many researchers and practitioners (Freire, P., 1985; Oloo J.A., 2016; Westheimer J. & Kahne, J., 2004). Freire, for example, point out that "education is simultaneously an act of knowing, a political act, and an artistic event" (p. 17). Pearl, A., (1997) writes "democracy must begin with schools because … no other agency can introduce democracy" (p. 215). In the same vein, Jones, K., (2006) asserts that "schools … have a moral mission to develop the citizenry needed to sustain the democracy" (p. 7). Goodlad, J. I., (2004b) goes further and submits that: "It would be the height of folly for our schools not to have as their central mission, educating the young in the democratic ideals of humankind, the freedoms and

responsibilities of a democratic society, and the civil and civic understandings and dispositions necessary to democratic citizenship" (p.20).

In this study, I explore citizenship education, or as locally referred to, civics or government, and how it relates to Westheimer. & Kahne's (2004), the 'Good Citizen'. The study by Westheimer and Kahne argued that, while there is consensus among stakeholders on the importance of developing democratic citizenship and the role of schools in that process, there is disagreement on requirements for effective democracy and the kind of school curriculum that can best promote it. Westheimer, J. & Kahne, J., (2004) submitted that there is a broad variety of what embodies 'good' citizens and educational programs that seek to enhance democratic citizenship. As they put it (Westheimer J. & Kahne, J., 2004a): "Everyone believes democracy is desirable. Indeed, educators, policymakers, politicians, and community activists alike pursue dozens of agendas for change under the banner of furthering democracy. The nature of their underlying beliefs, however, differs. We titled this article "What Kind of Citizen?" to call attention to the spectrum of ideas about what good citizenship *is* and what good citizens *do* that are embodied by democratic education programs nationwide" (p.1).

3. Types of Citizenships
Veugelers W., (2011) identifies three types of citizenship: adaptive, individualizing and critical democratic citizenship, each of which is connected with differing pedagogical and didactical practices. Similarly, Bennett, W.L. Wells C. & Rank A., (2009) describe two types of citizens: the actualizing citizen and the dutiful citizen while Veugelers, W., (2011) distinguishes between citizenship that is oriented towards individual rights and that which emphasizes active public involvement. Westheimer j. & Kahne J., (2004) identified three kinds of citizens that are needed to support an effective democratic society: the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen, and the justice-oriented citizen. These are described in Table 1 below.

	Personally Responsible Citizen	Participatory Citizen	Justice-oriented Citizen
Description	Acts responsibly in his/her community. Works and pays taxes Obeys laws Recycles, gives blood Volunteers to lend a hand in times of crisis.	Active member of community or organization: Organizes community efforts to care for those in need; promote economic development and cleaning up of the environment; knows how government agencies work and the strategies for accomplishing collective tasks.	Critically assesses social, political, and economic structures to see beyond surface causes; seeks out and addresses areas of injustice; knows about social movements and how to effect systematic change.
Sample Action	Contributes food to a food's drive.	Helps to organize a food's drive.	Explores why people are hungry and acts to solve root causes.
Assumptions	To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must have good character: i.e. they should be honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the Community.	To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must actively participate and take leadership positions within established systems and community structures.	To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must question and change established systems and structures when they reproduce patterns of injustice over time.

Table 1: Types of Citizens
Source: Westheimer and Kahne, p. 243.

The personally responsible citizen acts responsibly in and contributes to his/her community. Programs that seek to develop personally responsible citizens are aimed at building character and personal responsibility by emphasizing honesty, integrity, self-discipline, and hard work (Westheimer J. & Kahne, J., 2004). Participatory Citizens are those who actively participate in the civic affairs and the social life of the community at local, state, and national levels. Educational programs designed to support the development of participatory citizens focus on teaching students about how government and other institutions work and about the importance of planning and participating in organized efforts to care for those in need (Westheimer J. & Kahne, J., 2004). The Justice-Oriented Citizen is one that calls for explicit attention to matters of injustice and to the importance of pursuing social justice goals. Educational programs associated with the development of the justice-oriented citizen are generally connected with important and enduring social problems (Westheimer J. & Kahne, J., 2004).

Westheimer J. & Kahne J., (2004) argued that these three types of good citizens tend to have similar and different traits and that the "vision promoted by most school-based initiatives and the evaluations that judge their success is one of citizenship without politics - a commitment to service, but not to democracy" (p. 245). If we accept Westheimer & Kahne's assessment of the field as true, what implications does this hold for citizenship education in Kenya and other African countries? In this paper, I examine this question.

4. Kenya: Good Citizen - the Westheimer and Kahne Way
Westheimer & Kahne's (2004) work draws from the United States experience. Given that Kenya and the United States are at different stages in their democratic development coupled with the likelihood of facing different challenges and potentials, Westheimer & Kahne's 'good' citizen may not be equally good in Kenya as it is in the United States. When various stakeholders, such as politicians, teachers, and policymakers "pursue democracy, they do so in many different ways and towards many different ends" (p. 242). For many educators, though, making the case for democracy and the key role that schools play in its quest is not hard to fathom

(Westheimer J. & Kahne, J., 2004). Despite individual educator's subjectivity, it is possible for educators to be objective and learn from the experiences of others. However, Pinar W.F., (2012) suggests that educators are losing the battle to politicians who are keen on exploiting public education for their own selfish interests.

This is a very common case in Kenya where education systems and curricula have been changed time and again with the influence from the politicians and governments of the day. Reforming the 8-4-4 education system is on the way and various sectors are worried because not all stakeholders are brought onboard and the citizens given adequate education and made aware of the pending reforms. As a result, "much of current education reform is limiting the ways teachers can develop the kind of attitudes, skills, knowledge, and habits necessary for a democratic society to flourish" and school curricular approaches that teach students broader critical thinking put in place instead of spoon-feeding students to succeed on narrow academic tests (Westheimer, J., 2008, pp. 6-7). This has led to such phrases as 'school deforms' (Pinar, W.F., 2012) and 'no child left thinking' (Westheimer, J., 2008).

Westheimer & Kahne (2004) noted that, teacher perception of citizenship – that is, whether a teacher's ideas of the good citizenship reflect the personally responsible, the participatory, or the justice-oriented model – can have a significant impact on how teachers prepare students for their future roles in a democratic society. Therefore, Tupper & Cappello's (2010) call for teaching of democracy and citizenship in schools and faculties of education is very timely because, as Levinson (2005) rightly reminds us, schools are important "for the consolidation of the meanings about democracy" (p. 335). Kenya has a long history of ethnic tensions and violence which characterize general elections especially in urban areas (Oloo J.A., & Odek, A.W., 2012). The 2007/2008 violence following the disputed presidential elections is the worst in the history of Kenya given the number of lives that was lost and the properties destroyed. Such tensions and ethnic cleansing happen in a country where the successive governments have emphasized the importance of national unity since the attainment of independence in 1963.

The emphasis in citizenship education is based upon social integration and peaceful coexistence. The history of Kenya's struggle for independence from the British should have been a pillar on which to anchor national unity, propelled by successive governments as well as political changes that have occurred since independence, including introduction of multiparty politics. National unity is neither here nor their due failure on the part of past regimes and the present leadership to promote democratization and rule of law. Following the 2007-2008 disputed elections, Kenya now has a new constitution and its civic education tends to emphasize elements of the justice-oriented citizen and the personally responsible citizen. As well, statues of national heroes and freedom fighters are used to remind the youth of selflessness and love for the country. With respect to the Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) good citizen, here is how I think citizenship education in Kenya is: Personally, responsible citizen has become popular with politicians and community leaders who preach peaceful coexistence.

Under the new constitution that was promulgated in 2010, to be elected president, a candidate has to garner 51 percent of the votes. Politicians have now realized that they need votes even from tribes they previously perceived as enemies. The campaign slogan has actually changed to enhance personally responsible citizenship. During general elections in 2013, there were no reported cases of violence or killings. While this was, and continues to be a moment of pride for many Kenyans, it is important that the coming elections continue to be peaceful and fair. As Westheimer J. & Kahne J. (2004) submit, the personally responsible citizen "receives the most attention" (p. 243) from policy makers, program officers, and citizenship educators, but the traits valued by the personally responsible conception are inadequate for – even potentially dangerous to – a democratic system. Although most people would probably want young people to be honest and obey the laws, such behavior is not essentially democratic (O'Brien J.L.& Smith, J.M. 2011). While stressing loyalty and conformity with the law may run counter to the development of "the kind of critical reflection and action that many assume are essential in a democratic society" (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004, p. 244), in the case of Kenya, democratic education and citizenship education that aims to enhance personally responsible citizenship should go hand in hand because they are like 'two sides of a coin.'

5. The Genesis of Kenya's Problems

Kenya has a young population with the median age being 19 years. And, with the population growing way faster than the economy, unemployment rate is a concern (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009). About 800,000 young Kenyans enter the labour market each year and youth unemployment is a reported 35 percent, compared to the overall national unemployment rate of 10 percent. Studies report that, approximately 80 percent of unemployed Kenyans are below 35 years old (Business Call to Action, 2016). Further, the country has experienced drought and deaths due to HIV/AIDS, malaria, typhoid, and other infections. Because of the above scenario, there is a likelihood of an ever-present need to care for the less fortunate persons in the society including orphans, widows, and poor senior citizens. A participatory citizen is therefore always welcome, and schools continue to highlight the virtue of 'Harambee,' Kiswahili for 'pulling together,' so that the less fortunate are not left behind.

The gap between the rich and the poor in Kenya continues to widen even with the adoption of the new constitution (Government of Kenya, 2013). While some of the wealth may have been accumulated through legal means and hard work, Transparency International has consistently ranked Kenya among the most corrupt nations in the world, yet rarely do senior public officials get held accountable for the loss or misuse of public funds. Until 2010, the president of the Republic of Kenya had the powers to appoint public officials including judges and electoral officers. Such appointees would not undergo any public vetting, and as such the process was often used to reward friends and supporters. As a result, judicial reforms among other reforms were instituted following the adoption of the new constitution in 2010. It was expected that the new constitution enhances the rule of law and work towards eliminating corruption, tribalism and other menaces. But as things stand now, it is in the public domain both nationally and internationally that Kenya is at her peak on corruption.

6. Conclusion

Corruption in Kenya is working against citizenship education and therefore a barrier to producing 'good citizen'. It is characterized by tribalism, nepotism and friends of the government including those perceived to be loyalists to the leadership. Thus, the common phrase, *let's grab because it is our time'* is generally used by the civil society and the citizenry who pray for sanity in the country's leadership. It simply shows how the subsequent institutions of governance have failed to promote social integration, peaceful coexistence and national unity. The result has been cyclic ethnic violence and tension as people try to express their emotions over deprived rights and freedom of citizens, a situation that subjects them to abject poverty and social degradation. Such perceptions need to be changed for 'good citizen' to be nurtured and it is the prerogative of the national leadership to bring this to pass.

The justice-oriented citizen has been a rare group among the good citizens especially because linking poverty and embezzled public funds or highlighting injustices in the society is likely to be seen as a personal attack to the country's political leadership. The now Kenya's president, Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, and his deputy, Mr. William Ruto, were charged at the International Criminal Court with crimes against humanity following the 2007-2008 post-election violence – though not convicted for lack of evidence resulting in part, from what the prosecutor referred to as intimidation and forced disappearance of prosecution witnesses (Aljazeera, 2015). In such a context, the consequences of being a justice-oriented citizen can often be dire.

Kymlicka W. & Norman, W. (1994) noted that the health and stability of a modern democracy depends not only on the justice of its 'basic structure,' but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens. Thus, qualities and attitudes can be influenced by the education system, and Kenya has put considerable effort to realize this. However, there is still much to be done to build good citizens and school has an important role to play on this. Habermas (1992) writes that "the institutions of constitutional freedom are only worth as much as a population makes them" (p. 7). I submit that effective citizenship education can not only lead to the realization of the 'good' citizen (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) in Kenya, but may also reduce ethnic tensions in a country with diverse population groups like Kenya. It was John Dewey who, in 1889, said that "Democracy must be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife." His words are as true and relevant today as they were then.

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