

Citizenship and Democracy in the Texas Social Studies Curriculum: A Historical Comparison

Jarod M. Lambert^{1*}

¹Sam Houston State University, United States of America

*e-mail: jml013@shsu.edu

ABSTRACT

Using exploratory qualitative document analysis, this article examines the conceptions of citizenship and democracy in Texas's social studies curriculum standards. In a historical comparison of standards from 2011 and 2018, conceptions of citizenship and democracy are compared to definitions developed by international civic education experts. Citizenship and democracy in the Texas curriculum are identified as inconsistent with the definitions of those terms developed by civic education experts. Instead, the terms are seen to be related to Barber's (1984/2003) thin democracy and procedural conceptualizations of citizenship. Moreover, conceptions of the terms remain the same from 2011 to 2018. Implications for teacher education and public school practice are discussed. Recommendations for future research are presented. Included among recommendations for future research is the analysis of curriculum documents in additional U.S. states and curriculum documents in countries outside the United States.

Keywords:

Citizenship; Curriculum; Democracy; Social Studies; Standards.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan artikel ini adalah untuk mengkaji, dengan menggunakan analisis dokumen kualitatif eksploratif, konsepsi kewarganegaraan dan demokrasi yang ada dalam standar kurikulum IPS di Texas. Dalam perbandingan historis standar-standar pada tahun 2011 dan 2018, konsepsi kewarganegaraan dan demokrasi dibandingkan dengan definisi istilah-istilah yang dikembangkan oleh para ahli pendidikan kewarganegaraan internasional. Kewarganegaraan dan demokrasi dalam kurikulum Texas diidentifikasi tidak konsisten dengan definisi istilah-istilah yang

dikembangkan oleh para ahli pendidikan kewarganegaraan. Sebaliknya, istilah-istilah tersebut terlihat berkaitan dengan demokrasi tipis Barber (1984/2003) dan konseptualisasi prosedural kewarganegaraan. Selain itu, konsepsi istilah-istilah tersebut tidak berubah dari tahun 2011 hingga 2018. Implikasinya terhadap pendidikan guru dan praktik sekolah umum juga dibahas. Rekomendasi untuk penelitian masa depan disajikan. Termasuk di antara rekomendasi untuk penelitian masa depan adalah analisis dokumen kurikulum di negara bagian tambahan di AS dan dokumen kurikulum di negara-negara di luar Amerika Serikat.

Kata kunci:

Kewarganegaraan; Kurikulum; Demokrasi; Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial; Standar.

1. Introduction

How people view, understand, and experience citizenship and democracy in democratic states impacts their ability to interact with others in their communities. Whereas Osler (2011) indicated citizenship might be conceived of as broader than national citizenship (e.g., cosmopolitanism) and Angyagre and Quainoo (2019) for a global perspective in citizenship education, Nussbaum (2019) disputes the utility of cosmopolitanism. Within the context of national citizenship, more than one definition of citizenship exists. For example, Westheimer and Kahne (2004b) identified three understandings of citizenship: (a) “the personally responsible citizen,” (b) “the participatory citizen,” and (c) “the justice-oriented citizen” (p. 239, emphasis in the original). In their seminal article, Westheimer and Kahne (2004b) indicated, for example, that:

- A personally responsible citizen would do what is right. In other words, personally responsible citizens follow the rules.
- A participatory citizen vote, participate in debates, and becomes a community or political organization member.
- A justice-oriented citizen, by comparison, questions the reality of society. Such a citizen may well follow the rules and vote. Still, the defining characteristic of justice-oriented citizenship is a propensity to ask questions and to work toward a better world (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004a, 2004b). To that end, a justice-oriented citizen “critically assesses social, political, and economic structures to see beyond surface causes” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004b, p. 240).

Democracy, too, can be defined in multiple ways, such as thin versus strong and local versus global. Barber (1984/2003) developed the notion of thin versus solid democracy. Thin democracy is typified by a belief that humans cannot live peaceably in close quarters with one another (Barber 1984/2003). As a result, thin democracy is structural in that it controls how people relate to one another. Practitioners of thin democracy are focused on managing the interactions between people. An emphasis on personal, independent action is also seen in thin democracy. That is to say,

proponents of thin democracy are focused on actions undertaken by individuals rather than the concentrated actions of groups of citizens.

Whereas the actions of individuals typify thin democracy for the sake of individuals, "strong democracy urges that we take ourselves seriously as citizens. Not merely as voters, certainly not solely as clients or wards of government" (Barber 1984/2003, p. xxix). Dewey (1916/2005) contemplated democracy as a means of associated living. Barber (1984/2003) included this idea in his thinking about solid democracy. Having acknowledged the civic society in which democracies function, Barber (1984/2003) asserted that "the very idea of democratic governance as the right of peoples to oversee collectively their common goods has been under siege" (xiii).

Different approaches to citizenship education rely on different political foundations (Westheimer & Kahne 2004b). Indeed, Merry (2020) suggests teaching citizenship may need to be undertaken correctly in public schools. The present study analyzes two curriculum standards required for Texas public schools regarding citizenship and democracy. The analyzed standards are from discrete points (i.e. 2011 and 2018), and the newer standards supersede the older standards. Moreover, Knowles and Clark (2018) challenge existing emphases regarding democratic education and civic engagement in teacher education. Vlaardingerbroek (2020) argues for including human rights education within the social studies curriculum. Jatuporn (2016) argues that colonial discourse in social studies education in Thailand impacts the development of national identity. Approaching citizenship from a perspective of personal responsibility is very different than approaching citizenship from the perspective of participatory citizenship or justice-oriented citizenship. Westheimer and Kahne (2004b) indicated that focusing on personally responsible citizenship in civic education could negatively impact the development of participatory and justice-oriented citizenship characteristics. Building on the prior work of scholars, Lambert (2022) conducted a Delphi study with civic education experts to define citizenship and democracy. Those constructed definitions (see 2.3 Definition of Terms) inform the analysis in the present study.

In the process of determining a conception of democracy within curriculum documents, it must be understood that education is a political act, and education for democracy takes many forms (Edwards 2010a; Knight & Pearl 2000; Westheimer & Kahne 2004b; Zyngier 2012). Democratic education extends beyond merely training for citizenship (Edwards 2010a, 2010b; Westheimer & Kahne 2004b). Additionally, democratic education is conceptualized within multiple theoretical frameworks (Edwards 2010a, 2010b; Knight & Pearl 2000; Osler 2011; Pearl & Knight 2010; Westheimer & Kahne 2004b). Moreover, a state's curriculum does not exist in a vacuum. Approaches to social studies curriculum are different around the world. Indeed, perceptions of required curricula can diverge among practitioners in the same jurisdiction.

Kılıçoğlu and Aydemir (2022) indicated that social studies teacher educators, teachers, and novice teachers identified a strength of the social studies curriculum in Turkey as "the constructivist approach with features such as student and activity-centredness, collective teaching, and thematic approach" (p. 276). Student-centredness was also seen to increase in Turkish social studies textbooks over time (Tomal & Yılar 2019). However, Turkish teachers in fourth grade identified the curriculum for the human rights, citizenship, and democracy course as abstract and too advanced for students

(Kaymakcı & Akdeniz 2018). Additionally, Göçer and Kaya (2023) determined that the human rights, citizenship, and democracy course curriculum was second (of 11 compulsory primary school courses in Turkey) to incorporate the country's ten root values. Social studies textbooks for fourth through seventh grades in Turkey incorporated root values unevenly, with Individual and Society identified 236 times and Honesty identified nine times (Tabak & Yaylak 2020). Moreover, when comparing Turkish and German social studies curricula, Pamuk (2021) argues that both curricula are based on active citizenship and developing a culture of democracy.

When, as Dewey (1916/2005) said, “each has to refer his action to that of others” (p. 95), we see that democracy requires us to learn how to live in community (Anderson 2004). Niebuhr (1944/1972) argued that nations are not morally autonomous. The truth of our communal living requires us to acknowledge that individuals are not ethically autonomous either. Democracy encourages diversity (Farrelly 2012). In such a society, individuals must negotiate among differences (Niebuhr 1944/1972). In truth, “despite its powerful appeal, the image of the unencumbered self is flawed. It cannot make sense of our moral experience because it cannot account for certain moral and political obligations that we commonly recognize, even prize” (Sandel 1996, p. 13).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Built on a limited conception of citizenship and democracy, the social studies Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) form the basis of weakened citizenship and a limited understanding of democracy (Lambert, 2014). This limited conception of citizenship and democracy is consistent with what Knight Abowitz and Harnish (2006) called “the pallid, overly cleansed, and narrow view of political life in Western democracies promoted by the dominant discourses of citizenship in K-12 schooling” (p. 654). The United States has been the center of a national story—some might say mythology—that focuses on the nation’s role as a beacon of democracy for the world (Barber 1992). Moreover, education plays a role in forming citizens (Barber 1984/2003; Geboers, Geijssels, Admiraal, & ten Dam 2013; Zyngier 2012). To understand what that beacon might illuminate, it is necessary to explore the character of democracy and citizenship within the curriculum documents used to guide public school instruction. The education we offer our children impacts the types of citizens they become (Barber 1984/2003; Levy 2013). Therefore, examining social studies standards related to citizenship and democracy is essential to developing a democratic nation of engaged and active citizens.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to compare select experts' definitions of citizenship and democracy, as defined in prior research (i.e., Lambert 2022), with conceptualizations of those terms in the citizenship strand of the 2011 and 2018 social studies TEKS. As such, the study was a historical comparison of the conceptualization of citizenship and democracy in two iterations of the social studies standards in Texas. Conceptualizations of citizenship and democracy in the citizenship strand of the social studies TEKS were described through qualitative document analysis (Bowen 2009; Morgan 2022), both for the 2011 and 2018 standards.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) How is democracy conceptualized in the citizenship strand of the 2011 TEKS for social studies?; (b) How is citizenship

conceptualized in the citizenship strand of the 2011 TEKS for social studies?; (c) How is democracy conceptualized in the citizenship strand of the 2018 TEKS for social studies?; (d) How is citizenship conceptualized in the citizenship strand of the 2018 TEKS for social studies?; (e) How does the conceptualization of democracy in the citizenship strand of the 2011 TEKS for social studies compare with the conceptualization of the term in the 2018 TEKS?; and (f) How does the conceptualization of citizenship in the citizenship strand of the 2011 TEKS for social studies compare with the conceptualization of the term in the 2018 TEKS?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The TEKS are the legally mandated curriculum in Texas. Conceptualizations of citizenship and democracy in the TEKS are a matter of public policy. Understanding these terms as they are conceptualized in the TEKS allows for an understanding of the idea of citizenship and democracy being advanced through public education in Texas. Moreover, types and definitions of citizenship abound (Bellamy 2008). Democracy, too, is defined in multiple ways in the literature (e.g., Barber 1984/2003; Zyngier 2012). In conducting this study, the intention was to employ definitions of citizenship and democracy developed through expert consensus to analyze the use of those terms in the citizenship strand of the social studies TEKS. Moreover, examining multiple iterations of the social studies TEKS, it was hoped that changes over time might be identified in conceptualizing those terms for public school instruction in Texas. Because standards are designed to drive practice in education, this study's findings might inform teacher education and public school practice. An analysis of current and historical social studies standards in Texas provides an understanding of the conceptualization of citizenship and democracy within the curriculum.

The conception of citizenship and democracy endorsed by teaching the social studies TEKS matters about the type of citizenship and democracy advanced in Texas public education. Writing about Australian schools, Zyngier (2012) argued that the focus was on political structures as the basis of citizenship education. Focusing on schools in the north of England, Osler (2011) asserted that citizenship education focused on the nation-state rather than a broader cosmopolitan view of citizenship. Westheimer (2008) claimed that citizenship education in Canada would be a little different than a program of citizenship education offered by a totalitarian regime. Pre-service teachers at a university in the southeastern United States tended to identify democracy with decision-making and voting (Sunal, Kelley, & Sunal 2009). Political efficacy has been linked to activities associated with justice-oriented citizenship (Kahne & Westheimer 2006; Levy 2013). Geboers et al. (2013) argued that teaching in schools might make a difference in learning citizenship. According to Westheimer and Kahne (2004b), “the choices we make have consequences for the kind of society we ultimately help to create” (p. 265). Examination and understanding of the perspectives implicit in Texas curriculum documents for social studies allows for a deeper understanding of the conceptions of citizenship and democracy being perpetuated across the state.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

This exploratory qualitative document analysis (Bowen 2009; Erol 2021; Morgan 2022) consisted of multiple phases such that an analysis was completed of the citizenship strand of the 2011 social studies TEKS followed by an analysis of the citizenship strand of the 2018 social studies TEKS.

These analyses were guided by the results of a Delphi study conducted to develop expert definitions of citizenship and democracy (i.e., Lambert 2022). Comparison across TEKS was undertaken to explore similarities and differences between standards at two distinct points in time (i.e., 2011 and 2018).

2.2 *Participants and Instrumentation*

The citizenship strands of the 2011 and 2018 social studies TEKS served as data sources for the present study. Sampling was purposeful (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Creswell 2018). The researcher served as the qualitative instrument (Farber 2006). Conceptualizations of citizenship and democracy were identified in the citizenship strand of the social studies TEKS, first for 2011 TEKS, followed by 2018 TEKS. Descriptive coding (Saldaña 2013) was employed to identify themes in the curriculum. Moreover, codes were used for thematic analysis (Morgan 2022) of the curriculum documents under investigation. As the qualitative instrument, the researcher was responsible for reading and interpreting the content of the citizenship strands. Coding was undertaken in light of the definitions developed by Lambert (2022) and with the understanding that, as Saldaña (2013) says, “coding is a heuristic (from the Greek, meaning ‘to discover’) – an exploratory problem-solving technique without specific formulas or algorithms to follow” (p. 8).

2.3 *Definition of Terms*

Citizenship. While it should be understood as evolving and contextual, citizenship is a legal status about more than partisan action. Requiring decision-making for the common good and with a critical disposition as an essential element, citizenship requires active participation and engagement. Citizenship is comprised of intersecting aspects like race, gender, and class. Moreover, citizenship can be considered plural due to varying levels of citizenship and dual citizenship. In addition, the fluid nature of citizenship results from the changeability of identities, responsibilities, and rights (Lambert 2022).

Citizenship strand. The citizenship strand is one of eight strands in the social studies TEKS. Standards in this strand are related to citizenship development among students in Texas.

Democracy. With structural and cultural elements, democracy is a mode of associated living based on rules by the people that require active participation. With the rule of law as an essential element, it remains possible for there to be different types of democracies. Further, with social justice as a critical element, democracy protects the rights of citizens and is based on the consent of the governed (Lambert 2022).

Social studies TEKS. The social studies TEKS are the Texas public education curriculum for social studies. The social studies TEKS explored in the present study are the versions implemented in 2011 and 2018. The 2018 social studies TEKS replaced the TEKS implemented in 2011.

Student expectation. Student expectations are the specific skills identified by a letter in parentheses (e.g., (A)), and students are expected to master them as required by the TEKS.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) is the legally mandated curriculum for Texas public schools. In general, TEKS are rewritten on 7-year intervals.

3. Results and Discussion

Document analysis was undertaken on the citizenship strand of the 2011 and 2018 social studies TEKS. The current (i.e., 2018) social studies TEKS are posted online on the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) website and are found at: [https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=19&pt=2&ch=113](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=19&pt=2&ch=113).

Previous versions of the social studies TEKS are not hosted on the TEA website. However, the 2011 social studies TEKS are archived on the website Archive.org and can be found online, as they existed July 20, 2014, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20140720150239/http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter113/index.html>. In each case, the full text of Texas social studies curriculum can be found; that curriculum includes eight strands. The strands comprising the social studies TEKS are (a) history, (b) geography, (c) economics, (d) government, (e) citizenship, (f) culture, (g) science, technology, and society, and (h) social studies skills.

The citizenship strand of the 2011 and 2018 social studies TEKS, from kindergarten through grade 12, was copied into a single Excel document. Regarding the 2011 social studies TEKS, the word citizenship—when used to identify the strand only—was struck through in the text and was not used for coding or analysis of the citizenship strand of the social studies TEKS. All forms of the word democracy were identified in the text and highlighted. Then, the text was coded at the meaning unit level. Coding was undertaken at the student expectation level within the TEKS. The opening clause of each standard was coded, and then individual student expectations within the standard were coded. Themes were identified as a posteriori from codes (Constas 1992), and codes were further developed to create a constructed meaning table. The exact process was followed for the 2018 social studies TEKS. After coding the citizenship strand of the 2011 and 2018 social studies TEKS, student expectations were organized side-by-side such that changes between each version of the TEKS were apparent. Procedures in the study were intended to identify the nature of citizenship and democracy in the citizenship strand of the social studies TEKS. Such identification occurred in light of Lambert's (2022) definitions of citizenship and democracy. Results are discussed in terms of each research question, as indicated below.

3.1 *How is democracy conceptualized in the citizenship strand of the 2011 TEKS for social studies?*

To understand the conceptualization of democracy within the citizenship strand of the 2011 social studies TEKS, specific attention was paid to any form of the word democracy identified in that strand. The word democratic was seen 12 times. Of these instances, democratic was paired with process seven times, paired with society four times, and paired with ideas one time. No other form of the word democracy was identified in the text. When paired with the process, democratic refers to participation. Representative use of this pairing was: "The student understands the importance of individual participation in the democratic process at the local, state, and national levels." Democratic was also paired with process in the following way: "The student understands the importance of voluntary participation in the democratic process." In student expectations associated with this

statement from the eighth grade TEKS, the roles of "significant individuals" are expected to be addressed, and students are asked to "evaluate the contributions of the Founding Fathers as models of civic virtue."

Interestingly, civil disobedience is also mentioned within this student expectation. It is, however, the only place civil disobedience appears about democracy in the citizenship strand of the 2011 social studies TEKS. Moreover, it is focused on "the Boston Tea Party and Henry David Thoreau's refusal to pay a tax."

When paired with society, democracy refers to aspects of that society: "The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a democratic society." Additional statements relating to democracy and culture focused on understanding citizens' rights and responsibilities and the importance of expressing different points of view in a democratic society. About the expression of other points of view, students are expected to "identify different points of view of political parties and interest groups on important Texas issues, past and present." Moreover, they are expected to describe the importance of free speech and freedom of the press and to take a position on a historical or contemporary issue in Texas.

The only instance of the term democratic paired with ideas was identified in the high school World History Studies TEKS. In that case, the pairing was related to using a democratic society, focusing on the spread of democratic ideas. The specific statement read: "Assess the degree to which American ideals have advanced human rights and democratic ideas throughout the world."

3.2 *How is citizenship conceptualized in the citizenship strand of the 2011 TEKS for social studies?*

As mentioned previously, TEKS was coded at the student expectation level. For each standard, the opening clause was coded. Then, individual student expectations within the standard were coded. In total, 143 meaning units were coded, using 158 codes, in the citizenship strand of the 2011 social studies TEKS. Five themes were developed from 130 codes, and the remaining 28 codes (17.72%) were classified as inconsistent with the identified themes. Procedure accounted for almost three times as many codes (36.71%) as any other theme. The remaining themes accounted for codes in the following percentages: People (15.19%), Symbols (12.66%), Identity (8.86%), and Events (7.59%).

Citizenship within the citizenship strand of the 2011 social studies TEKS was conceptualized as participatory and personally responsible citizenship. As a theme, procedure accounted for a significant plurality (36.71%) of the total codes. Codes within that theme focused on the procedural aspect of citizenship, centered on voting, trials, participation, rights, and responsibilities. Some versions of the word participate accounted for 14 of the 58 codes grouped under the procedure. Symbols and identity accounted for over 21% of statements coded in the 2011 social studies TEKS citizenship strand. These themes reflected personally responsible citizenship in that they emphasized pledges and virtue. Illustrative of statements associated with civic virtue was: "evaluate the contributions of the Founding Fathers as models of civic virtue." Such statements also support the idea that the citizenship strand of the 2011 social studies TEKS is an example of civic republican citizenship.

3.3 How is democracy conceptualized in the citizenship strand of the 2018 TEKS for social studies?

Consistent with the analysis of the 2011 social studies TEKS, specific attention was paid to any form of the word democracy identified in the 2018 social studies TEKS citizenship strand. Compared to 12 instances of the word democratic in the 2011 social studies TEKS, there were 11 instances of the word democratic in the citizenship strand of the 2018 social studies TEKS. Democratic was paired with process six times, with society four times, and with ideas once. No other form of the word democracy was identified in the text. When paired with the process, democratic refers to participation. Unchanged from the 2011 social studies TEKS, the representative use of this pairing was: "The student understands the importance of active individual participation in the democratic process." Significantly, the pairing of the words democratic and process remained remarkably consistent between the 2011 and 2018 citizenship strands of the social studies TEKS.

When paired with society in the 2018 social studies TEKS, democratic referred to aspects of that society: "The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a democratic society." As with the 2011 social studies TEKS, additional statements relating to democracy and society in the 2018 social studies TEKS focused on understanding citizens' rights and responsibilities and the importance of expressing different points of view in a democratic society. For example, one leading clause in the 2018 social studies TEKS at seventh grade requires: "The student understands the rights and responsibilities of Texas citizens in a democratic society."

The only instance of the term democratic paired with ideas was identified in the high school World History Studies TEKS. In this case, the pairing was related to using a democratic society, focusing on the spread of democratic ideas. The statement read: "Identify examples of American ideals that have advanced human rights and democratic ideas throughout the world."

3.4 How is citizenship conceptualized in the citizenship strand of the 2018 TEKS for social studies?

Coding and interpreting the citizenship strand of the 2018 social studies TEKS surfaced ideas of personally responsible and participatory citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne 2004a, 2004b). Civic republican citizenship (Knight Abowitz & Harnish 2006) also surfaced in the analysis. As with the citizenship strand of the 2011 social studies TEKS, the citizenship strand of the 2018 social studies TEKS represents a conception of citizenship that is consistent with such a discourse as opposed to the discourse of liberal citizenship, which is a discourse of individual liberties (Knight Abowitz & Harnish 2006).

The coding of the citizenship strand of 2018 occurred in the same manner as the coding of the same strand of the 2011 social studies TEKS. In total, 139 meaning units were coded, using 156 codes, in the citizenship strand of the 2018 social studies TEKS. Five themes were developed from 131 codes, and the remaining 25 codes (16.03%) were classified as inconsistent with the identified themes. Procedure accounted for almost three times as many codes (37.18%) as any other theme. The remaining themes accounted for codes in the following percentages: People (13.46%), Symbols (13.46%), Identity (13.46%), and Events (6.41%). Addition of Ethnic Studies: Mexican American Studies and Ethnic Studies: African American Studies courses at the high school level led to a noticeable increase in the percentage of Identity codes in the 2018 social studies TEKS (13.46%) as compared to the 2011 social studies TEKS (8.86%).

As with the 2011 social studies TEKS, citizenship within the citizenship strand of the 2018 social studies TEKS was conceptualized in terms of participatory citizenship and personally

responsible citizenship; as a theme, procedure accounted for a significant plurality (37.18%) of the total codes. Codes within that theme focused on the procedural aspect of citizenship, centered on voting, trials, participation, rights, and responsibilities. Some versions of the word participate accounted for 15 of the 59 codes grouped under the procedure. Symbols and identity accounted for nearly 27% of statements coded in the 2018 social studies TEKS citizenship strand. These themes reflected personally responsible citizenship in that they emphasized pledges and virtue.

3.5 *How does the conceptualization of democracy in the citizenship strand of the 2011 TEKS for social studies compare with the conceptualization of the term in the 2018 TEKS?*

Whereas there were 12 instances of the word democracy identified in the citizenship strand of the 2011 social studies TEKS, 11 cases occurred in the 2018 citizenship strand. One example of democracy was removed from a leading clause in the high school United States history TEKS. In the 11 cases remaining of democracy, there was no substantive change in the meaning of the standard. Indeed, in 10 of 11 meaning units, there was no change at all.

For the meaning unit with a textual change but no substantive change, which is in the fourth-grade standards, two names were removed (i.e., Sam Rayburn and James A. Baker III). The 2011 standard (i.e., 17(D)), which became standard 15(D) in 2018, reads: "Identify the importance of historical figures and important individuals who modeled active participation in the democratic process such as Sam Houston, Barbara Jordan, Lorenzo de Zavala, Ann Richards, Sam Rayburn, Henry B. Gonzalez, James A. Baker III, Wallace Jefferson, and other local individuals; and." The revised standard removed two white males (each representing a different political party) from the list of examples. The remaining examples of historical figures include a white male (i.e., Sam Houston), an African American female (i.e., Barbara Jordan), two Hispanic males (i.e., Lorenzo de Zavala and Henry B. Gonzalez), and one white female (i.e., Ann Richards). As relates to modern American political parties, three Democrats (i.e., Barbara Jordan, Ann Richards, and Henry B. Gonzalez) and no Republicans are examples listed in the standard. It is also important to note that such as in the standard indicates these are possible examples of important historical figures if the examples were explicitly required to be taught, such as would be replaced by including (Student Assessment Division 2015).

As defined by civic education experts, democracy requires, among other things, active participation and social justice (Lambert 2022). As presented in the citizenship strands of the 2011 and 2018 social studies TEKS, democracy is most closely associated with procedure and process. There is limited discussion of active participation and no identifiable association with social justice. In short, democracy in the 2018 social studies TEKS remains conceptualized as in the 2011 social studies TEKS. That is, democracy in the citizenship strand of the TEKS is most closely associated with Barber's (1984/2003) idea of thin democracy.

3.6 *How does the conceptualization of citizenship in the citizenship strand of the 2011 TEKS for social studies compare with the conceptualization of the term in the 2018 TEKS?*

The citizenship strand of the 2011 social studies TEKS comprises 143 meaning units. There are 126 meaning units in the citizenship strand of the 2018 social studies TEKS for the courses included in the 2011 social studies TEKS. In addition, 11 meaning units in the citizenship strand of the TEKS for high school courses were created in 2018: (a) Ethnic Studies: Mexican American Studies, and (b)

Ethic Studies; African American Studies. All meaning units from the 2018 social studies TEKS combined represent a decrease compared to the 2011 ones. Moreover, in a course-for-course comparison from 2011 to 2018, there was an approximately 12% reduction in the meaning units contained in the citizenship strand of the social studies TEKS.

Two examples of meaning units removed from the 2018 social studies TEKS, compared to the 2011 ones, are noticed here. In the first example, units 12(A) and 12(B) in the 2011 social studies TEKS for third grade were not included in the 2018 social studies TEKS. These meaning units required students to (a) “give examples of community changes that result from individual or group decisions;” and (b) “identify examples of actions individuals and groups can take to improve the community.” Compared to the 2011 social studies TEKS, the following meaning unit was removed from the 2018 social studies TEKS for eighth grade: “Explain how the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizens reflect our national identity.”

In all, the wording of standards changed in about 43% of meaning units between iterations of the social studies TEKS such that there were 82 meaning units with no change in wording, 42 meaning units with a change in wording, and 20 meaning units removed or combined with other meaning units. With the addition of two high school courses in the 2018 social studies TEKS, 11 meaningful units were added compared to the 2011 social studies TEKS. Among the 42 meaning units with changed wording, meaning was not necessarily impacted. There were 25 meaning units with no substantive change in meaning. In contrast, 17 meaning units changed meaning due to the change in wording.

As noted above, citizenship within the citizenship strand of the 2011 social studies TEKS was conceptualized as participatory and personally responsible citizenship. This remains true in the 2018 social studies TEKS. As such, citizenship in the 2011 and 2018 social studies TEKS is inconsistent with the definition of citizenship presented in the present paper and offered by civic education experts. That definition emphasizes, among other things, active participation and engagement, decision-making for the common good, and critical dispositions (Lambert 2022).

3.7 Implications for Policy and Practice

Understanding the conceptualizations of citizenship and democracy perpetuated in state standards allows for understanding the narrative taught in schools. Westheimer and Kahne (2004b) argued that our curricular choices affect the society we are working to create. Conceptualizations have been offered in the present study of the choices made about citizenship and democracy in the citizenship strand of the social studies TEKS. Implications for teacher education and public school practice are discussed in turn. These implications are filtered through the definitions of citizenship and democracy offered in this paper. Conceptualizations of citizenship and democracy in the 2011 and 2018 social studies TEKS are inconsistent with those provided definitions.

Implications for teacher education exist amid calls for democratizing teacher education programs. The impact of mismatched notions of citizenship and democracy between expert definitions and conceptualizations in curriculum documents is particularly telling for teacher educators. There remains to be debate about the necessity and direction of teacher education programs. Khatri and Hughes (2005) questioned the relevance of teacher education programs. Alternately, Zeichner et al. (2015) called for a shift toward democratic epistemology in the training of teachers. In either case, teacher educators are currently at the center of teacher preparation in the United States. What happens in schools of education plays itself out in public school classrooms, and there is at least

the potential for conflict between understandings of citizenship and democracy in those schools of education. As Zyngier (2012) noted, teacher educators in the Australian context tend more toward thick democracy than do their teacher and pre-service teacher counterparts, who were seen to associate with thin conceptions of democracy.

Moreover, Sunal et al. (2009) indicated that pre-service teachers would likely associate democratic citizenship with voting and decision-making. With this being the case, teacher educators need to understand that they may be in line with the definitions of citizenship and democracy developed in this study. Still, they may be at odds with the conceptualizations of citizenship and democracy seen in the citizenship strand of the social studies TEKS. For teacher educators, this potential conflict in understanding could lead to difficulties in the classroom. Teacher educators may ask pre-service teachers to take chances when preparing future educators to engage with a critical disposition. However, they are ultimately still responsible for teaching those pre-service teachers to use the curriculum mandated for their classrooms. In the instance where teacher educators in Texas employ definitions of citizenship and democracy that engage a critical disposition, there is the possibility that they are moving beyond the scope of the TEKS. Teacher educators, then, must work to figure out how to apply the requirements of the citizenship strand of the social studies TEKS while remaining consistent with their understandings of citizenship and democracy.

Practice in teacher education programs impacts public school practice. Since expert definitions of citizenship and democracy sway teacher education programs, there is room for conflict when prospective teachers move into the public school classroom. Once in the public education classroom in Texas, teachers are legally bound by the TEKS. As such, teachers must teach citizenship and democracy as conceptualized in the social studies TEKS. Revision of the social studies TEKS from 2011 to 2018 left foundational conceptualizations of these terms untouched. As such, teachers in Texas continue to teach citizenship and democracy in ways inconsistent with definitions provided by civic education experts.

3.8 *Recommendations for Future Research*

The findings and implications of the present exploratory document analysis suggest multiple recommendations for further research. In addition, this study's overall structure leaves avenues for additional research. Further research should explore the notions of citizenship and democracy in all strands of the social studies TEKS. By examining all strands of the social studies TEKS, future researchers can gather a more inclusive picture of citizenship and democracy throughout the social studies TEKS. Other researchers might also look at conceptualizing the terms in the state social studies standards of the fifty U.S. states. In addition to understanding the social studies TEKS, future researchers could explore the social studies standards in the fifty states. There are standards associated with social studies in the Common Core State Standards, but each state also has standards specifically for social studies. By exploring individual state standards documents, future researchers can improve our understanding of the conceptualization of citizenship and democracy in standards documents throughout the country. With such an understanding, we might develop a better grasp of the type of citizenship and democracy that is perpetuated throughout the United States. Finally, further research might focus on the conceptualizations of citizenship and democracy in history, government, or social studies curricula outside the United States.

4. Conclusion

Palmer (2011) argued that if the end of U.S. democracy came, it would result from Americans becoming fearful of each other. He said they would unravel "the civic community on which democracy depends" (Palmer 2011, p. 9). This study was undertaken to understand the conceptualization of citizenship, and democracy perpetuated through the 2011 and 2018 citizenship strands of the social studies curriculum in Texas. It has been an attempt to shed light on the civic community being advanced in Texas public schools.

In sum, definitions of citizenship and democracy offered by Lambert (2022) were employed to guide the analysis of the citizenship strand in the 2011 and 2018 social studies TEKS. Moreover, the analyses of those curriculum documents were compared to understand the similarities and differences between those documents at two specific points in time (i.e., 2011 and 2018). Definitions of citizenship and democracy developed with the assistance of experts in civic education (Lambert 2022) were not evidenced in social studies curriculum documents in either 2011 or 2018. Implications of the mismatch in definition and application are apparent in multiple areas, including teacher education and public school practice.

5. References

- Anderson, J. L. (2004). In my view: What is democracy? *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 41(1), 4-6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2004.10518801>.
- Angyagre, S. E., & Quainoo, A. K. (2019). What are the critical dimensions in Ghana's senior high school social studies curriculum? Under the lens of a critical global citizenship education framework. *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, 11(2), 142-158. <https://doi.org/10.18546/IJDEGL.11.2.02>.
- Barber, B. R. (1992). *An aristocracy of everyone: The politics of education and the future of America*. Ballantine Books.
- Barber, B. R. (2003). *Strong democracy: Participatory politics for a new age*, Twentieth anniversary edition. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. (Original work published 1984).
- Bellamy, R. (2008). *Citizenship: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>.
- Constas, M. A. (1992). Qualitative analysis as a public event: The documentation of category development procedures. *American Educational Research Journal*, 29, 253-266. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312029002253>.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Dewey, J. (2005). *Democracy and education*. Barnes & Noble Books. (Original work published 1916).
- Edwards, D. B., Jr. (2010a). Critical pedagogy and democratic education: Possibilities for cross-pollination. *The Urban Review*, 42, 221-242. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-009-0129-y>.

- Edwards, D. B., Jr. (2010b). Missing the point: A rejoinder to Pearl and Knight on the necessary cross-pollination of democratic education and critical pedagogy. *The Urban Review*, 42, 249-252. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-010-0159-5>.
- Erol, H. (2021). Reflections on the 21st century skills into the curriculum of social studies course. *International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies*, 9(2), 90-102. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.9n.2p.90>.
- Farber, N. K. (2006). Conducting qualitative research: A practical guide for school counselors. *Professional School Counseling*, 9, 367-375. <https://doi.org/10.5330/prsc.9.4.03j7315p7m5011m0>.
- Farrelly, C. (2012). Virtue epistemology and the 'epistemic fitness' of democracy. *Political Studies Review*, 10, 7-22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-9302.2011.00243.x>.
- Geboers, E., Geijsel, F., Admiraal, W., & ten Dam, G. (2013). Review of the effects of citizenship education. *Educational Research Review*, 9, 158-173. <https://doi.org/10.1013/j.edurev.2012.02.001>.
- Göçer, V., & Kaya, F. (2023). Investigation of primary school curricula in the context of values education. *E-International Journal of Educational Research*, 14(5), 274-295. <https://doi.org/10.19160/e-ijer.1367295>.
- Jatuporn, O. (2016). Education for enculturating the "Thainess" ideology: Decolonizing the Siamese colonial discourse in the social studies curriculum. *Journal of International Social Studies*, 6(2), 130-140.
- Kahne, J., & Westheimer, J. (2006). The limits of political efficacy: Educating citizens for a democratic society. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 39(2), 289-296. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096506060471>.
- Kaymakçı, S. & Akdeniz, B. (2018). Evaluation of elementary school 4th grade human rights, citizenship and democracy course's curriculum according to teachers' perspectives: A qualitative research. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10(5), 77-93. <https://doi.org/10.15345/iojes.2018.05.00606>.
- Khatri, D. S., & Hughes A. O. (2005). Color-blind teaching: Excellence for diverse classrooms. Scarecrow Education.
- Kılıçoğlu, G., & Aydemir, A. (2022). An evaluation of 2005 & 2018 social studies curriculum in Turkey: SWOT analysis. *E-International Journal of Educational Research*, 13(5), 275-296. <https://doi.org/10.19160/e-ijer.1169598>.
- Knight, T., & Pearl, A. (2000). Democratic education and critical pedagogy. *The Urban Review*, 32, 197-226. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1005177227794>.
- Knight Abowitz, K., & Harnish, J. (2006). Contemporary discourses of citizenship. *Review of Educational Research*, 76, 653-690. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543076004653>.
- Knowles, R. T., & Clark, C. H. (2018). How common is the common good? Moving beyond idealistic notions of deliberative democracy in education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 71(-), 12-23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.12.002>.
- Lambert, J. M. (2014, October). Conceptualization of democracy and citizenship in Texas social studies curriculum documents. Paper presented at the 2014 Texas Council of Professors of Educational Administration Graduate Research Exchange, Dallas, Texas.
- Lambert, J. M. (2022). Defining citizenship and democracy: A Delphi study. *Journal of Social Studies and History Education*, 6(1), 1-23. <https://www.uhd.edu/academics/public-service/urban-education/jsshe/Documents/Lambert-2022-Article-4-JSSHE.pdf>.
- Levy, B. L. M. (2013). An empirical exploration of factors related to adolescents' political efficacy. *Educational Psychology*, 33, 357-390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2013.772774>.

- Merry, M. S. (2020). Can schools teach citizenship? *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 41(1), 124-138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2018.1488242>.
- Morgan, H. (2022). Conducting a qualitative document analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(1), 64-77. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5044>
- Niebuhr, R. (1972). *The children of light and the children of darkness: A vindication of democracy and a critique of its traditional defense*. University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1944).
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2019). *The cosmopolitan tradition: A noble but flawed ideal*. Belknap Press.
- Osler, A. (2011). Teacher interpretations of citizenship education: National identity, cosmopolitan ideals, and political realities. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 43(1), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2010.503245>.
- Palmer, P. J. (2011). *Healing the heart of democracy: The courage to create a politics worthy of the human spirit*. Jossey-Bass.
- Pamuk, İ. (2021). The comparison of Germany social sciences (Gesellschaftswissenschaften) curriculum with Turkey social studies curriculum. *International Journal of Eurasian Education and Culture*, 6(13), 848-881. <https://doi.org/10.35826/ijoecc.398>.
- Pearl, A., & Knight, T. (2010). Rejoinder to D. Brent Edwards Jr. and his interpretation of our position on democratic education and social justice. *The Urban Review*, 42, 243-248. <https://doi.org/10.1077/s11256-010-0160-z>.
- Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.) Sage.
- Sandel, M. J. (1996). *Democracy's discontent: America in search of a public philosophy*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Student Assessment Division. (2015). An explanation of the terms such as and including on STAAR. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/STAAR%20Such%20As_Including%20Policy.pdf.
- Sunal, C. S., Kelley, L. A., & Sunal, D. W. (2009). Citizenship education in the elementary classroom: Teacher candidates photograph and describe their perceptions. *Journal of Social Studies Research*, 33(1), 33-70.
- Tabak, S., & Yaylak, E. (2020). The place of root values in social studies textbook. *International Journal of Eurasian Education and Culture*, 5(8), 1-51.
- Tomal, N., & Yilar, M. B. (2019). An evaluation of social studies textbooks in Turkey: A content analysis for curriculum and content design. *Review of International Geography Education Online*, 9(2), 447-457. <https://doi.org/10.33403/rigeo.579946>.
- Vlaardingerbroek, B. (2020). School social studies as a vehicle for human rights education: Caveats. *Journal of International Social Studies*, 10(1), 203-209.
- Westheimer, J. (2008). What kind of citizen? Democratic dialogues in education. *Education Canada*, 48(3), 6-10.
- Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004a). Educating the “good” citizen: Political choices and pedagogical goals. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 37, 241-247. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096504004160>.
- Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004b). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41, 237-269. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312041002237>.
- Zeichner, K., Payne, K. A., & Brayko, K. (2015). Democratizing teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 66, 122-135. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487114560908>.
- Zyngier, D. (2012). Rethinking the thinking on democracy and education: What are educators thinking (and doing) about democracy? *Education*, 2, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educ2010001>.