Citizenship Education and the Concept of 'Nation-of-Intent'

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Abstract
This article explores Citizenship Education in Malaysia as it is a product of social fragmentation that carries legal and sociological meanings. This article refers to the learning and teaching as an educational process to improve or achieve the aims inherent to the legal meaning. The objective of this article is to pull together citizenship and education as central themes, not legal but the sociological aspects, with 'nation-of-intent' as a conceptual framework. Nevertheless, the present effort of citizenship education in Malaysia is based on a particular form of 'nation-of-intent' ('Bangsa' Malaysia). The concept of citizenship and citizenship education in Malaysia is prompting only one form of 'nation-of intent' available in the country, whereas there are other nations as well, apparently. The presence of plurality of 'nation-of-intent' in contemporary Malaysia demonstrates the fact that dissenting voices are present and heard, within and without government. Therefore, in the context of different 'nation-of-intent's which exist, there is a need to explore and clarify citizenship education in diverse and democracy in Malaysia.
Keywords: Citizenship Education, Ethnicity, Diversity, 'Nation-of-Intent', Malaysian Nation

Introduction
Citizenship education and ethnic diversity have been part of the educational agenda of Malaysia. Where meanings and values attached to these aspects have changed over time. Educational policies and programs in Malaysia have reflected these changes, characterized by attention to the fundamental notion of social cohesion that provides an opportunity to unite and strengthen the work in citizenship education. Unavoidably, education is one of the sectors to energize the greater development when attaining national unity is an objective that involves the process or steps taken in bringing together citizen of different races and languages, and molding their orientations towards a new nation, which had previously existed only physically.

Literature Review
The challenge of this paper is to find ways of addressing and theorizing unconscious ideas in divergent patterns of the nation, especially in Malaysia, which can be fragmented and

contradictory and which cut across the traditional fault lines of ethnicity. In a way, there is an opportunity for the concept of 'nation-of-intent' to be explicitly organized around ideas, identification and patterns which are recognizably multiple and sometimes, unstable, with visible contradictions in the Malaysian citizens 'personal locations' in education. Moreover, there is a newly focused understanding of the constructive nature of the process undertake socially and personally as citizens find their place in an identity grouping and explore the understanding of themselves and the social order which this can bring. The concept of 'nation-of-intent' is well attuned to the needs of the Malaysian socio-political landscape; as politics becomes more concerned with subjectivity, it more than ever needs a language in which to talk about interrelationships between the consciousness of the idea of the nation and social positioning. The concept of 'nation-of-intent' could, again in principle, supply such a language; it could make sense of the complex business of creating and re-creating 'identities' and building a nation, and of filling these out with content, as well as exploring the intense 'investments' which citizens hold in them, and the deep aggression to which they often give rise.

Shamsul (1996) conceptualized the 'nation-of-intent' as a vision of territorial entity, a set of institutions, an ideal-type citizen, and an identity profile that a group of 'social-engineers' have in mind and try to implement. It will often be an idealistic form shared by several people who identify themselves not only with one another, but with a whole nation whose other members they hope will join their vision. A 'nation-of-intent' can be the idea of statesman wishing to unite different groups under his government's authority, of opposing party, a separatist group, a religious or other community. The concept of 'nations-of-intent' depicts an idea of a nation that still needs to be constructed or reconstructed. It is employed as the basis for a platform expressing dissent or a challenged to the established notion of a nation. It promises the citizens an opportunity to participate in the process of nation building. It further confirms this highly fluid notion of nationality. The discourse of the nation can be constructed in many different forms. This suggests that the form and content of national identity can be defined and redefined through dialogue and democratic decision. Individuals experience their nationality very differently. Thus, the concept of 'nations-of-intent' refers to the various aspects such as of ethnic, class and gender, and are sources of identity that are transcended by the primary identity of nation. The idea of a modern large-scale republic must appeal to the understanding of shared history, common solidarities, and ideas of self-determination and autonomy which underlie national identity. However, the use of national identity as the foundation of citizenship involves several challenges such as of that national identity in any single case is associated with a particular history and a past which may be exclusive, especially of those potential new citizens who now seek membership. National identity can never be 'innocent'.

Citizenship in Malaysia is becoming a challenge for a communicative community that is fearful of the threat of normalization, exclusion, and silence. All these features aim to investigate how cultural diversity in Malaysia fosters a sense of overlapping and disputed 'nation-of-intent'. The impact of competing 'nations-of-intent' and social cohesion in Malaysia, the way it is influencing citizenship and citizenship education. In general, citizenship is not a widely recognized term in Malaysia. People do not have a good understanding of what it means to be a person, rather than one of the subjects of the monarch. Citizenship is not so much a term that has played a central role in Malaysia's political past. Citizenship in diverse Malaysia needs to consider a few issues – the explicit ideal of inclusive citizenship needs to be developed for diverse Malaysians. Diversity must be given public status and integrity, and Malaysia needs to

establish a modern social and cultural agenda capable of cultivating or nurturing ethnic identities.

Minority and majority groups in Malaysia must both have space for development, but in relation to each other. This suggests that the form and content of the 'official nation-of-intent' can be defined or redefined through dialogue and democratic decision- thus indicating that it is a highly fluid notion. Perhaps, it can be described that the main elements in the revitalization of the Malaysian notion through an 'open debate' of its national identity and its redefinition to accommodate cultural and territorial minorities.

However, if nationality is simple to be determined politically, what differentiates it from citizenship? With regards to the Chinese and Indians in particular, there is a sense in which the past always constraints the present- present identities are built out of the materials that are handed down and not started from scratch. Therefore, there is an existing of different 'nations-of-intent' in which: those who want to insist that membership of a national community is not an open choice versus those who seek to form an understanding of nation as a matter of choice. However, Malaysia's national identity is deeply rooted in its political culture, established over decades. But the point is surely that many of the key institutions that make up of the Malaysian culture, such as the monarchy, Parliament, and the Constitution, are simply incompatible with, and indeed are in opposition to the suggestion of an 'open debate on the Malaysian identity. Hence, citizenship education has been an undisputed feature of education in Malaysia in diverse subjects and under different titles. Different methods are used in teaching democracy, but also in different styles of schooling. Citizenship education through Civic Education as a subject in schools lacks acceptance and interest by students, other teachers, and parents. Civic education suffers not only from a difficult structure but also from a general weariness with politics, which is evident in an unwillingness to become engaged in political actions. The fact that there is no continuity in Civic education due to changes of the subject from primary school to the different forms of secondary school, and that Civic Education is now often part of a subject-field consisting of several subjects formerly taught, may be considered as a reason for lack of interest.

Research Questions
The national education policy, being the foundation for most educational development plans forms a crucial and key element with regards to building a nation. The idea of citizenship and citizenship education in Malaysia has been concerned with issues much related to the competing notions of the nation. Citizenship in Malaysia is becoming a challenge for a communicative community that is fearful of the threat of normalization, exclusion, and silence. All these features aim to investigate how ethnic diversity in Malaysia fosters a sense of overlapping and disputed 'nation-of-intent'. This article would discuss issues raised by citizenship education in Malaysia with regards to debates on the qualitative discourse, interpretation, and explanation regarding the field in the context of the contested notion of the existence of many 'nations-of-intent' as a framework. The impact of competing 'nations-of-intent' and social cohesion in Malaysia, the way it is influencing citizenship and citizenship education. Debates on questions related to citizenship and citizenship education in Malaysia have tended to overlook the 'idea of the nation' amongst the citizen of a diverse society are indicated. While these discussions invariably discuss topics related to notions of the political community, participation, and individual rights, they are frequently ignored when dealing

with more complex specific cultural backgrounds and political traditions of thought. There is a need to learn to balance the 'authority defined' and 'everyday defined' of being a Malaysian citizen at the same time. This indicates a type of citizenship education that addresses the 'occasional placeless-ness' evident in some groups of community with regards to citizenship while seeking to encourage fluid and complex understandings of the Malaysian nation.

Analysis and Discussion

The dichotomy between 'Malaysian' and ethnic minority must be overcome. The 'Malaysian' must be seen as having ethnic minority cultures and groups. Minorities are an important part of Malaysia and have as much to give and owe as much loyalty to civilization as do the rest. Minority and majority groups in Malaysia must both have room to grow, but in relation to each other. However, there are, of course, several logistical problems that can arise: ethnic rivalries may make collaboration within the state impossible, national identity may contain ethnic aspects that certain groups find objectionable, and the country may find itself being threatened, either physically or metaphorically. In Malaysia, the idea remains strong that its ethnically separated population will engage in a common project of self- determination through a clear and succinct conception of citizenship and citizenship education.

The most evident aspect is that the concept of a nation in question coexists within a common governmental unit, while at the same time each portion has maintained its own distinct ethnic features. However, the blueprint for good nation building in Malaysia requires more than just political integration and ethnic differences. It is proposed that facets of education in particular citizenship education, play a key role in communicating the notion of being Malaysian. Citizenship education is a significant but challenging topic because of its diverse elements, its engagement difficulties, and its connection to diversity. Diversity in the community adds to these challenges, as it turns out that citizenship education is still tacitly committed to homogeneity but must deal with the highly diverse school population in Malaysia. The 'Shared Prosperity Vision 2030' is a government blueprint released in 2020 by the Government of Malaysia to increase the incomes of all ethnic groups. It is a further example for the role of values with regards to economy embedded within the state. There is no doubt about different values existing in different ethnic groups, but the main question to be posed - are these values compatible within these groups? If the construction of a nation in Malaysia is perceived as a value orientation that encourages coexistence and the protection of a multiplicity of cultural cultures within the territory of a state, the question of national self- determination is not a matter of nation building. At any rate, the relation between nation- building and national self-determination is the product of the chaos wrought by the confrontation between one state and several nations. The Chinese and Indians for example have become major occupants of the territory to which they have migrated during the colonial period and gradually became nations through the process of national self-determination.

Citizenship education in Malaysia means creating a sense of social solidarity and patriotism and a sense of responsibility and duty to the society and to one& fellow citizens. It also includes the consistency of the initiative and the desire to participate. But the production of these civic qualities was sluggish. Part of the reason for this was the challenge of resolving the resistance of subservience required by the colonial regimes. In part, post-independence governments have acknowledged the possible ambivalence of successful citizenship education. For the process can undermine the very political cohesion it is designed to promote. Politicians have been very alert to difficulties of nurturing an effectively mature

style of citizenship and have placed great faith in the power of education to accomplish this. However, the complexities of the problem have not always allowed the setting or achievement of clear objectivities. Differences of emphasis have sometimes been evident as between politicians and educationists. Furthermore, practical difficulties have on occasion proved more impervious to the civic educational policies than the planners have anticipated. Whether complementary or mutually at odds, the total array of objectives in programmes of education or citizenship may be listed as: comprehension, integration, participation, and obligation.

In a similar view, Shamsul commented that the plural, diversified and fragmented Malaysian society is being well reflected in of the education system. Nevertheless, after surviving for a period in the 'state of stable tension', it is currently described as experiencing the process of 'social cohesion' in which he suggested aspects of 'humanizing' the education system that would address specific circumstances of the nation-state. Many critics often claim that national harmony in a western democracy is not based on a common identity, but rather on a shared fidelity to democratic values. However, shared principles are not sufficient. Social unity then requires not only shared principles, but also a sense of shared membership. Citizens must have a sense of belonging to the same community and a shared desire to continue to live together.

Rawls (1973) has drawn upon the question of different nations-of-intent. Are the political principles among them necessarily different? Rawls provided perspectives by giving a secular universal philosophical based moral principle without including different religious principles that apparently still divide people deeply, though at the secular level doing good is accepted as universal. This involves everyday life and the officially influenced social life structures in the political realm, people do not perceive things in terms of layers, secular and religious. Often dictated by ideology which drives the ultimate objective of that political existence- the ideology is then articulated in a political form which has content. Usually, the ultimate political form is the formation of a nation, before that could be a political party and before that a small political collective. Content could be whatever ideology that the group shares so in the construction of citizenship education, philosophical elements mentioned by Rawls are important universal values, but it is usually driven by nations-of-intent informed by ideologies.

Clearly, one of the big challenges facing educators in Malaysia is how to appreciate and understand community cultures and students' awareness while at the same time trying to create a democratic public community with an overarching collection of principles that will be dedicated to and identified by all students. In other words, the challenge is to create a citizenship education that can help to promote a fair and egalitarian pluralistic nation-state that is viewed as valid by both students and communities. This is a tremendous challenge but an essential task in a pluralistic democratic society. A significant goal of the tertiary curriculum should be to prepare students to provide the awareness, behaviors and skills required to help them build and live in a public society in which all communities should and will engage. The goal of citizenship education should be one that can create a civic education programme that will be viewed by all students within the nation-state as being of broad public interest. And in this way will civic education be given that encourages national unity and represents the different cultures of the nation-state. This is a daunting but vital challenge in a culturally

complex Malaysian state with many nations who are serious about developing and introducing democratic education. The topic of Malaysian education must be carefully examined in the sense of ethnic minority schools in nation-building.

Citizenship education in Malaysia, which is publicly funded by education that is defensible in line with a democratic ideal, should teach the younger generation to be able to assume the privileges and correlative obligations of equal citizenship, including respect for equal rights for other persons. In brief, democratic schooling should convey and grow the potential of all people to be equal citizens. Citizenship education in Malaysian democracy will lead to the development of civic equality in two important ways: first by voicing the democratic principle of tolerating cultural differences between most Malays and the minority of non-Malays, compatible with civic equality; and second, by understanding the importance of cultural differences between the majority and minority groups. However, not all education that goes by the name multicultural in the Malaysian education system serves the ideal civic equality in one of these ways, but citizenship education can do so.

Malaysia is characterized by deep diversity along with the dimensions of class, gender, region, age, culture, religion, and ethnicity. Hence, the ethnic communities, incredible differentiation is found within and between communities. The diversity in Malaysia is much greater than that involving the visible and sizable minorities. Significant features of Malaysia are of central importance to the analysis of citizenship, citizenship education and the contested notion of the existence of many 'nations-of-intent'. These include the position of the ethnic minorities including class, gender, region, educational background, and their shared experiences in history of the country.

Therefore, citizenship and citizenship education in Malaysia is the struggle for a democratic society that enables a plurality of people to lead reasonably meaningful lives that respect the creation of diverse hybrid identities, provide them with a protective social state and give them access to an education system that seeks to explore the possibility of living in a domain-free future. Citizenship education is required in the complex Malaysian society that can make sense of contemporary changes and give young people the space to share and critically question the various experiences and practices, allowing them to consider how they can best ensure the flourishing of everyone as citizens. It would also mean that they are able to recognize themselves as Malay, Chinese, Indian or any other ethnic groups and of course, as interconnected Malaysian citizens that would contribute towards to process of building a nation. Such a feat would require, as this paper have sought to emphasize, not only the cognitive capacities to reason, but also a renewed sense of being 'Malaysian' as sympathetic and compassionate beings through citizenship education. It is citizenship and citizenship education, as this paper has insisted, thus far, is intimately connected with questions of competing notions of 'nations-of-intent' in Malaysia and will continue to be so in the future regardless of how the dominant institutions are designed and developed. As seen over the period of progress in achieving a 'built Malaysian nation', these ideals need to be radically re-interpreted to meet the complex challenges of the present. The requirements of diversity and cultural citizenship are challenged by notions of citizenship in Malaysia, and there have been differences as to the unifying habits and attitudes of citizenship. Malaysia is a state without common nation and citizenship is fundamental to forming a democratic nation in the constitution of moral people from different ethnic groups who continue to express different

nations of purpose through citizenship education. The concept of 'nations-of-intent' further emphasizes the subjective and changeable aspects of nationhood and opens the possibility within the same nation of several co-existing or competing forms of identity.

Conclusion

Malaysia is a state without a nation (and has many 'nations-of-intent') and the present effort does not include ideas to the nation when promoting citizenship education- the notion of 'equality in diversity' and not only 'unity in diversity'. It is suggested that the Malaysian nation needs a more explicit citizenship education and clear-cut statement of intent about its vision and direction of citizens towards attaining national unity. While debates on diversity and multiculturalism have dwelt with the role of citizenship education in preserving democratic ideals, there has been little or no attention to the role of learning in relation to the nature of building a 'state without a nation' in bridging the 'authority-defined' and the 'everyday-defined' idea of a nation, where various social groups are able to voice their different 'nations-of-intent'. Apparently, the concept of citizenship and citizenship education in Malaysia is prompting only of form 'nation-of intent' available in the country, whereas there are other nations as well, apparently. The presence of plurality of 'nations-of-intent' in contemporary Malaysia demonstrates the fact that dissenting voices are present and heard, within and without government. Citizenship and citizenship education should therefore respond to the contextual challenges of multi-cultural groups within the Malaysian society, and to diverse multicultural societies, by supporting democratic deliberation within the society, among other important matters, about how the Malaysian education system can best educate all from different ethnic groups as civic equals.

Acknowledgements

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