

# Review of: "The Young Pioneers of Cuba: The Formation of Cuban Citizens through Civic Education"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

## General comments

Thank you for the opportunity to read this paper. I enjoyed it and commend the authors. The comments I have made below are in the interests of improving the paper as it stands.

- This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of civics and citizenship education in Cuba.
- It examines the institutionalised approach to civic education as well as, briefly, some of the challenges brought about by the economy and external influences.
- The paper would be improved with more attention paid to how this fits within the broader context of civics and citizenship education. Numerous claims are made that Cuban civic education is ideological. This is of value and interesting, but I would encourage the authors to examine more fully a) whether this is different in nature to other forms of education around the world and b) in what ways/what pedagogical approaches are used in the teaching of this ideology, and how effective they are?
- I would also encourage the authors to more fully explore the ideas of tensions that were raised as part of this fieldwork. I think comments about the role of the internet, and also the teaching of oppression, are particularly pertinent to civics educators and academics globally, and not just those with a focus on Cuba.

I've made some more specific comments below.

## Specific Comments

### Introduction

- Isn't all education inherently ideological? If so, in what way is Cuba different? Or the same? I think a brief clarification about ideology in education in general might be of value.

### Ideology in Cuban Education

- Does 'Conciencia' have any relationship with the conscientisation espoused by Freire and other popular/ critical pedagogues? I think this section might benefit from some historical context for the development of these ideas

(external to Cuba).

- Similarly, is the concept of double conciencia related to the idea of double or false consciousness?

#### Civic education

- This section is a little unclear. I agree with the statement that civic education doesn't necessarily need a defined subject to be taught in schools, but I don't think the authors make it clear how else it might have been delivered (before the introduction of the subject in 1992). Furthermore, some discussion about why it changed - i.e., why it became a separate subject - would be interesting to read.
- The discussion about global citizenship education is central to the argument of this article; however, as it is positioned, I think it is lost in the discussion of civics and citizenship. I think this section might work better with a focus on GCE rather than civics and citizenship education, and a recognition that there has been a shift from politico-legal definitions of citizenship to newer forms, such as GC and GCE.

#### Methods and analyses

- There's little discussion of the kinds of analysis that were performed on the interviews or classroom observations. I would be curious to read this.

#### Findings

- Some more examples here would be interesting to read. For example, what are some examples of the alignment with official documents (that is, in the classroom, not just through what the teachers said)?
- The other themes are more fully described.

#### Discussion

- From the introduction, I thought that there would be more consideration of the tensions. There is some in the discussion, but it's brief.
- The quote "There's no conflict between the state's convictions and mine" - appears twice - once attributed to a teacher, once to a student.