

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

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The article meticulously explores the intricate dynamics of Cuba's civic education system, offering a thorough examination of its ideological underpinnings within the broader framework of global citizenship education. The study of educational attitudes in diverse societies represents a compelling and intellectually significant facet, particularly in the contemporary context where understanding the impact of civic education on shaping views and social attitudes is paramount. The analysis of this impact within the unique context of Cuban citizens, facing distinctive circumstances, emerges as an exceptionally captivating and consequential area for research.

The methodology employed encompasses interviews with both teachers and students, coupled with classroom observations. While revealing an alignment between Cuban teachers' practices and official policy, the study identifies a notable disparity in underlying assumptions between Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and Critical Global Citizenship Education (CGCE). Regrettably, the applied research methodology is acknowledged as insufficient for drawing groundbreaking scientific conclusions. The authors, however, do not elucidate the rationale behind selecting a relatively small group of respondents, focusing primarily on two classes. Conducting research on such a small sample size presents inherent challenges. The study, being conducted exclusively in the capital, is likely influenced by the unique dynamics of the urban environment, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. To comprehensively address the nuances of state education, it would be valuable to investigate schools in various locations and across different educational levels. Therefore, the article serves as an intriguing introduction to the research, prompting the consideration of broader and more diversified studies to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the state's educational system.

The article underscores Cuba's exceptional position within the Global South, emphasizing its successful implementation of free education for all citizens. The research contends that Cuba's civic education is deeply entrenched in the ideology of the Cuban Communist Party, permeating social obligations towards the state. Education, as outlined by the Constitution, textbooks, and curriculum, plays a pivotal role in shaping a distinctive Cuban identity, woven into the societal fabric through one-party rule and a centrally planned economy.

The historical context, with civic education formally introduced in 1992 but integral to the revolutionary ethos even earlier, is deemed crucial. The Cuban paradigm extends beyond conventional teaching, aspiring to develop individuals with national and ideological identities. The introduction of "perspective consciousness" encourages students to transcend boundaries and cultivate a global outlook. Analyzing the duality within Cuban society and studying civic attitudes from this perspective is posited as a potentially more significant contribution to scientific research.

A pivotal aspect of the article revolves around the critical examination of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and the introduction of Critical Global Citizenship Education (CGCE). While GCE tends to overlook neocolonialism and Western dominance, CGCE adopts a decolonizing approach, addressing power imbalances and oppressive global structures. The authors highlight the asymmetry between Western and non-Western epistemologies in citizenship education research.

Cuban civic education is depicted as placing a substantial emphasis on oppression, both historical and contemporary, with citizenship closely tied to birth in Cuba or undergoing specific Cuban education. The curriculum seeks to instill socialist values, rejecting capitalism and imperialism. Despite its effectiveness in ideological socialization, dissent exists among students and teachers regarding the overtly political nature of the curriculum.

The article concludes by underscoring the profound ideological foundations of "Cubanía" and its role in shaping citizens' social obligations through civic education. It emphasizes how civic education contributes to state formation and highlights the contrast between Cuba's ideological perspective and Western interpretations of democracy. The duality within Cuban society, characterized by ideological differences and economic challenges, prompts questions about the state's future navigation of these complexities.