

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

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This article offers interesting ideas about Cuba's civic education from diverse lenses including nationalism, governmentality, communist party control, and social identity construction. However, additional literature review is required to contextualize the study within existing scholarship. A conceptual framework could strengthen analytical coherence when substantiating arguments made and examining the logical interconnections between assertions. Currently, the paper leans descriptive rather than evaluating empirical evidence to support claims or unpacking concepts that surface. Rather than reiterating previous reviewers' comments, I suggest some areas for improvement include building a stronger academic scaffolding - conceptual framing and methods - to orient the analysis, deepening examination into salient issues identified to compel well-reasoned conclusions.

1. Regarding Critical Global Citizenship Education (CGCE) and Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in the Cuban context:

- The author argues for the potential benefits of introducing CGCE in Cuba, such as addressing global power imbalances and encouraging critical thinking. However, this seems to contradict the paper's acknowledgement of the significant obstacles to implementing CGCE given Cuba's rigid ideological curriculum, lack of open debate, and focus on shaping "good Cuban citizens."
- The discussion sets up CGCE as a more progressive alternative to GCE, which is presented as potentially Western-centric. But the author does not fully support why CGCE is inherently better for Cuba or engage deeply with potential limitations of global citizenship models. Asserting CGCE's superiority seems largely an assumption.
- More analysis is needed on whether core CGCE principles like critical dialogue, contingency, and pluralism actually align with or challenge fundamental pillars of Cuban education promoting national identity and revolutionary ideals. The tension is acknowledged but not fully explored.
- There is an assumption that introducing global perspectives through CGCE would benefit Cuban students without considering potential complexities or unintended consequences. Students' global consciousness seems conflated with adoption of CGCE discourse.
- While arguing Cuba should shift towards CGCE, there is little discussion of whether elements of Cuba's approach could positively inform international progressive education models. It falls into a somewhat binary CGCE vs Cuba's ideology framing.
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- 2. The methods section lacks concrete methodological grounding and details on sampling, site selection, and cross-case analytical strategies. Specifying the underlying philosophical assumptions is also key:
- The methodological approach lacks clarity. The author states it is a qualitative case study exploring the "lived experiences" and "true essence" of civic education, suggesting a phenomenological lens. However, the inclusion of document analysis and cross-case comparison implies more of a realist perspective to identify common themes and test theories around state ideology. Explicitly stating the philosophical assumptions would strengthen the rationale.
- There is little justification provided for why those specific participant samples were selected - 5 teachers, 1 organizational leader, 5 9th grade students, and 4 5th grade students. More details on sampling procedures, even if purposive/convenience given location constraints, would boost academic rigor. The sample diversity in terms of access to different viewpoints is also not analyzed.
- It is unclear whether the classrooms observed, comprising the 28 5th grade students and an unspecified number of 9th graders, were the same students interviewed. If so, directly observing those providing interview data could enable richer analysis. If not, the relationship between observation insights and interview narratives is questionable. This interconnection needs elaboration.
- There is an implied comparative case study element between schools/grade levels. However, details on how the author selected those sites, established access, and will compare findings across cases are missing. Justifying and outlining multi-case analysis procedures is important for qualitative research replicability.
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- 3. The paper's main claim is that the Cuban state uses civic education to shape national ideology and identity. This claim needs expansion on a few key assertions, and additional case evidence and nuance would further enhance the discussion. There is potential for an even more multifaceted understanding of this interplay between education and state power:
- The concept of an "inclusive nationalism" shaping ideas of Cuban identity and collective membership is intriguing but underexplored. More analysis connecting this to historical nation-building agendas, existing ethnic/racial diversity, and promoting social cohesion would add complexity.
- Describing uses of education for ideological socialization and equating independence with subversion provides helpful framing. But concrete examples of how this manifests in civic education content, pedagogy, and student experience could better illustrate the mechanisms of social control and indoctrination.
- The role of civic education in reinforcing state ideology and nation-building is a pivotal issue largely asserted rather than demonstrated. Examining things like curriculum, textbooks, teacher training, etc., and how they ingrain state ideology could enrich this argument.
- While the Revolutionary regime's effective use of education as a socialization tool is presented, how non-state actors like families may complicate or support this process in practice is lightly touched upon. Exploring this would strengthen the analysis.
- Although critiqued for being highly controlled, little comparative analysis is made to identify strengths/limitations of Cuba's system relative to variant civic education models - this could better situate Cuba's approach.

