

**Mosaic of Silence: Hearing What Young People in Canada Have to Say
About Citizenship**

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation identifies some of the current conceptions of citizenship as it pertains to youth. Typically viewed as nothing more than citizens in the making or problem citizens, youth are often overlooked within discussions of citizenship and their voices often silenced. This exploratory research hears from 429 youth from across the country through focus groups and an online survey to better understand how young Canadians conceive of citizenship, traditional forms of politics and volunteer activity. Findings show that despite lowered traditional political involvement (i.e. voting, party membership), youth give great value to community participation and involvement and their levels of participation reflect this perceived value. Based on these findings, a new broadened interpretation of citizenship that would acknowledge and value diverse forms of participation is put forth. This includes traditional and non-traditional forms of political involvement as well as volunteerism and extra-curricular activity allowing for a renewed interest in the current political system and greater value being given to the importance of social cohesion and capital as they contribute to the significance of citizenship for the individual.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of citizenship has proven to be difficult to define and, over the years, has resulted in much contestation. Even today, despite continued debate and discussion by scholars and governments on the topic, little consensus has been reached. General and often nebulous definitions of citizenship, shifting membership, and broadened views of community and the nation-state have resulted in few definitive answers to questions such as “What is citizenship?” and “Who is a citizen?”. What *has* remained clear within this debate, however, is that citizenship is about belonging and group membership. Over time, different groups have fought for membership and inclusion, and definitions of in-groups and out-groups have shifted and expanded (Brodie, 2002; Siltanen, 2002; Bosniak, 2000; Joppke, 2008).

While there has been a waxing and waning of interest in citizenship theory in general over the years, today we are seeing renewed attention being given to this area of study in many parts of the world including Canada, the United States, Britain, Germany and Australia. Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman point to several reasons for this resurgence including the field’s ability to combine issues of individual entitlement and community membership, increasing voter apathy, declining volunteerism, and increased diversity through immigration (1994). In the face of all of these political and cultural realities which have brought the topic of citizenship to the forefront, it is important to remember that citizenship studies include more than simply discussions of

voting and state membership. The concept of citizenship throws a much wider net as it encompasses the qualities and attitudes of citizens, their identities and views on how these identities exist within the boundaries of nations, regions, communities, ethnicity and religion. Furthermore, citizenship as a term combines the micro elements of an individual working together with others to complete a small project within his or her community to participation at the macro level of political processes and governmental accountability. Citizenship studies can even encompass an individual's ability to exist in harmony with the people and spaces around them in a socially acceptable and law-abiding manner (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994).

Such issues and others have garnered much discussion in recent years. Within these current discourses, marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, aboriginals and new immigrants have added to the citizenship debates with respect to inclusion, rights and equality¹. A group which continues to be overlooked within citizenship debates, however, is that of youth. More specifically, until quite recently, one could find only limited discussion within Canadian literature on the topic of youth and citizenship, and still today, we see a marked lack of youth voices or empirical study on this issue both within the Canadian landscape and beyond².

¹ For further reading regarding citizenship debates on other marginalized groups see the following: ethnic minorities (C. Joppke; N. Glazer; and W. Kymlicka), gays and lesbians (D. T. Evans; A.M. Field; K. Plummer), aboriginals (R.C. Walker; J. Y. Henderson), the poor (K.R. Arnold; L.C. Feldman), and new immigrants (S. Gordon; M.W. Varsanyi).

² Researchers such as Madeleine Gauthier, Gilles Pronovost, and Nicole Gallant have done considerable work on Quebec youth and citizenship, but English Canada has been as less prolific in its efforts. A good overview of the state of research concerning youth citizenship in Canada has been done by Beauvais, McKay and Seddon (*A Literature Review on Youth and Citizenship*; 2001). Since that report was released, the Canadian Policy Research Network released six

The small flurry of interest in youth citizenship in Canada which we have witnessed in recent years can be linked, as Kymlicka and Norman suggest, to the decline in voter turnout at election time. Specifically, since the late 1980's, voter turnout in Canada has gone from 75% to 59% in the most recent 2008 federal election, and while turnout has decreased across all age groups, youth turnout is dismally low. In fact, in the 2000 federal election only 25% of 18-24 year olds voted, spurring concern amongst scholars, the media and Elections Canada alike (O'Neill, 2007; Kingsley, 2003; Drake, 2008; Slodovnick, 2004)³. This concern resulted in targeted discussions of youth as citizens focusing specifically on their voting habits and their civic mindedness. The primary goal of much of this research and media coverage has been to discuss the ways in which young people can be brought into the fold of 'better citizenship practices' and much of it focused on voting-aged youth between the ages of 18 and 30⁴.

Decline in voter turnout and concern over youth's civic mindedness is not a phenomenon unique to Canada, however. Other western democracies such as the United States and many Western European countries have experienced similar trends (O'Neil, 2007; Instituto di Ricerca, 2001; Dalton, 2008; Putnam,

papers about youth and civic involvement for their Democratic Renewal Series under the title of *Charting the Course for Youth Civic and Political Participation* (available online at www.cprn.org). This research focuses primarily on youth between the ages of 18 and 30.

³ The most recent federal election held on October 14, 2008 showed voter turnout at a record low with only 59% of registered voters casting a ballot. This means that just over a quarter of registered voters bothered to vote (Chianello, J., 2008: A1). In a 2005 Elections Canada report on voter turnout by age (*Estimation of Voter Turnout by Age Group at the 38th Federal Election*) it showed that while 60.9% of Canadians voted in the 2004 federal election, of those aged 18-24, only about 37% went to the polls. This compared to 67% of those aged 48-57 and approximately 73% of those 58 and older voted in 2004 (comparable data is currently not available for the 2008 federal election).

⁴ Some examples of the literature which emerged following the 2000 federal election which targeted youth voting specifically includes Elections Canada, 2003; CPRN, 2006; MacKinnon, Pitre & Watling, 2007; Dallaire, 2006; Valpy, 2006.

2000; Slodovnick, 2003). The United States, for example, hit its lowest voter turnout in 1996 when less than half (49%) of the voting population and only 37% of those under thirty cast a ballot in the presidential election. These numbers have climbed steadily since then with 57% of voting age Americans heading to the polls in the most recent 2008 election and approximately 52% of young Americans voting (McDonald, 2008; CIRCLE, 2008). While this increase is reassuring, these numbers are still cause for concern when one considers that nearly half of the population in a democratic society is still not taking the time to vote. In light of this trend, researchers such as Alan Wolfe (2006) as well as Joseph Nye, Philip Zelikow and David King (1997) produced work which addressed political apathy and civic engagement for America as a whole. Others began to focus on youth (dis)engagement specifically. Robert Putnam (2000) for example, points to the decline in the civic-mindedness of younger generations and Jean Twenge (2006) identifies cynicism and a belief that action will not result in change as the reasons behind declining political participation by young people. In contrast, Russell Dalton (2008) suggests that young Americans are not, in fact, disengaged but are simply changing the definitions of engagement and the way American politics needs to work as they move away from duty-based citizenship and towards engaged citizenship practices. Two important steps taken here are the use of youth voices and perspectives in Twenge's research and the consideration of broader conceptions of citizenship beyond that of voting and paying taxes in Dalton's work.

The United Kingdom, provides further examples of how declining voter turnout affected the research landscape. Specifically, during the 2001 general election, voter turnout amongst 18-24 year olds dropped to 39% – a 27% drop from the previous turnout in 1997 (O'Toole, Marsh & Jones, 2003). With concern growing over declining political participation and the civic engagement of young people in general, the British government commissioned the Crick Report⁵ in consideration of teaching citizenship education in schools (O'Toole et al., 2003). Further, this concern led to numerous studies on youth participation, many of which failed to accurately capture *youth's* understanding of 'participation' or 'citizenship' and focus largely on political participation and volunteering (O'Toole et al., 2003; O'Toole et al., 2003a; Smith, Lister, Middleton & Cox, 2005). Others such as Ruth Lister, Noel Smith, Sue Middleton and Lynne Cox in their 1999 to 2001 longitudinal study on youth citizenship have begun to engage young people directly in conversations regarding their understandings of citizenship, political involvement and participation (Lister et al., 2003; O'Toole, 2003). In addition to including youth voices and broadening their discussion of citizenship beyond that of political and civic duty, Lister et al. also spoke to young people under the voting age of 18⁶.

Keeping in mind the work which has been done both locally and abroad, this dissertation aims to fill some of the voids which currently exist in the youth citizenship research in Canada. Two key research questions will be addressed:

⁵ The Crick Report (named after its chairman Bernard Crick), lead directly to the institution of civics education in British schools citing the importance of teaching social and moral responsibility, political literacy and community involvement (Crick et al., 1998).

⁶ Other researchers who have begun to engage youth directly and in broadened discussions of citizenship include O'Toole et al., 2003 and Park, 1999.

1) How do young people envision and define ideas of citizenship in their own words, and how do youth interpret their own identities as citizens?

2) In what ways do youth currently contribute to and participate in society and how do they address or counter claims of political apathy?

As in the work of Lister et al., this research takes the opportunity to speak with young people who are not yet of voting age. Further, methods such as focus groups and an online survey have been used to tap into youth voices directly. Previous work in Canada has primarily focused on youth between the ages of 18 and 30; however, this study takes the opportunity to address the topics of citizenship and participation by connecting directly with youth between the ages of 14 and 18 as many of them begin provincially mandated civics classes and volunteer requirements. Further, this dissertation follows the lead of researchers such as Dalton who sees the importance of thinking more broadly about the concept of citizenship beyond just the activities of voting and state membership. By speaking with youth about their perceptions of who is a citizen, definitions of good and bad citizenship, voting, volunteerism and community involvement, this research takes the important step of including youth voices and ideas as well as extending the discussion of citizenship beyond the currently central issues of voting and volunteerism which dominate the Canadian literature at this time.

This dissertation focuses directly on young people's understanding of citizenship and their place within it. Through this focus on youth, it is possible to identify some of the shortcomings of the concept of citizenship and some of the

ways in which the concept itself, definitions of participation as well as politics in general must change if they are to become inclusive of this important demographic. Youth, in their own diversity, provide the unique opportunity of being able to bring the experiences of many other marginalized groups together as well as being able to bring to the forefront the importance of acknowledging citizenship at the various levels of community – local, national, and global. With voter turnout for those under 25 years of age at an all time low in Canadian history; persistent discussions of youth apathy in the media during election times⁷; and the dissolution of youth wings in some of the major political parties⁸, there has never been a more critical time to address the citizenship of youth. After all, if the concept of citizenship currently fails to include and address youth issues adequately, then how can we expect to continue (or begin) to engage young people in a national context let alone a local one? A failure to engage and the political disillusionment of today's youth can have detrimental effects on both countries and communities. With an aging population, there needs to be a contingent of replacements at the polls, in political and leadership positions, and of volunteers. If society fails to capture the interests, energy, and participation of its youth, then it may ultimately fail to find these necessary replacements.

⁷ Nelson, M. Go and vote, youth urged. (2000, November 9). *The Globe and Mail*, pp.A26; Slodovnick, M. (2004). On Engagement of Their Student Communities. *Forum*, (30)3: 8-9; Valpy, M. Few answers as to why young people disengaged. (2004, May 26). *The Globe and Mail*, pp.A3; Cobb, C. The end game. (2006, January 15). *The Ottawa Citizen*, pp.B3; Petrescu, S. Finding new ways to engage voters young and old. (2006, January 12). *The Globe and Mail*, pp.A5; Valpy, M. How can we get young Canadians interested in voting again? (2006, January 23). *The Globe and Mail*, pp.A7; Drake, L. Too apathetic to be alienated. (2008, October 4). *The Ottawa Citizen*, pp.B1-3

⁸ Conway-Smith, E. (2004). "Young Conservatives rarin' to go, but don't have any clear role" *The Ottawa Citizen*. March 4, 2004: B2-3.

Further, can we still consider ourselves a democracy if the majority of citizens cease voting?

In addition to the many complexities of defining citizenship and envisioning youth's place within it, there also exists the difficulty of uniting definitions of 'youth'. Even within Canada, there exists parametric variation of this life stage making discussions of youth and youth citizenship difficult to reconcile. This next section will expand upon definitions of youth and some of the contentions which exist because of its shifting characterizations.

DEFINING YOUTH

As is evident in the foregoing discussion, the category 'youth' is variously identified. There exists a broad range of who is included within the category 'youth'. Before continuing discussions of citizenship, it is important to address the identification of youth as a category since the protean nature of the concept of youth further complicates discussions of youth citizenship as it injects still more shades of grey into already muddied waters.

While many government agencies have attempted to set an age to the definition of youth, the results of these efforts have proven to be widely varied as is evident in the multitude of age ranges shown in the following Table 1.1 (Beauvais et al, 2001:4; Tysskä, 2001).

Table 1.1
Definitions of Youth*

Organization	Age Range
National Youth in Care Network	14-24
United Nations	15-24
Canadian Labour Congress	15-24
Leeds University Study, "Researching Young People's Transition to Citizenship"	16-24
Quebec, for its "2000 Youth Summit"	15-29
Observatoire sur les jeunes, INRS – Culture et Société	15-29
Quebec Federation of Labour (GLF/FTQ)	15-35
Recent Studies on Youth Citizenship	
Lister, Smith, Middleton & Cox (1999-2001)	16-23
CPRN	18-25**
This Research	14-18

*The first part of this table outlining the age definitions of youth within various organizations appears in Beauvais et al., *A Literature Review on Youth Citizenship, 2001*. The information regarding the age ranges of youth included within various studies has been added.

**While the bulk of the research included those aged 18 to 25 some work was done with youth as young as 15 and as old as 30 years of age.

In the past, there was a sense that youth was a period of time where a steady trajectory of events could be mapped out on the path to adulthood – finishing school, leaving the family home, getting a job, purchasing a home, beginning a family. While these markers of adulthood can be considered somewhat narrow and stereotypical, they provide a base of comparison to a less defined trajectory evident in the paths of many of today's youth. What is also

evident from this 'stereotypical' path is a sense that as youth transition into adulthood, they will become more and more independent (both physically and financially) of the original family unit. Increasingly, however, more youth are remaining in school for longer, and hefty tuition costs spanning over more years often means starting out with mountainous debt (Grossman, 2005; Tyyska, 2001; Jones & Wallace, 1992). In Canada for example, recent Statistics Canada information shows that the number of people enrolled in colleges and universities has climbed steadily through 2006 with greater numbers than ever before continuing on with advanced education. Between 2001 and 2006, there was an increase of 32% and 30% in the number of people who obtained Masters' degrees and Doctorates respectively (Statistics Canada, 2006). Furthermore, according to the Canadian Federation of Students, as tuition fees continue to climb steadily, approximately 385,000 students will require loans this year leaving the average student with a debt of between \$21,000 and \$28,000 at the end of a four-year program (Giroux-Bougard, 2009). These economic realities make transition toward the fiscal independence associated with adulthood and full-citizenship difficult for many youth to attain. As will be discussed below, the connection between financial security and full-citizenship attainment can have repercussions not just for youth but for other marginalized groups within society as well.

As is the case within many westernized countries, there has been a blurring of the markers which signal the transition from youth to adulthood (Côté, 2000, Grossman, 2005). In fact, since the 1990's many countries including

Canada, the United States, Japan and Britain have witnessed this phenomenon of transitional limbo or what James Côté refers to as the “the individualization of the life course” (2000: 33; Grossman, 2005)⁹. More specifically, poor paying jobs and soaring housing costs in most major cities mean that many young people are remaining dependent on their family (economic or otherwise) for longer. Whether it be living at home for increasing periods of time, receiving financial assistance from family or government sources, or even returning home once again possibly with partners and even children, it is often difficult for young people to attain (or retain) economic independence so often associated with adulthood, and hence, full-citizenship status (Grossman, 2005; Tyyska, 2001; Côté, 2000; Jones & Wallace, 1992). For these reasons, restricting the definition of youth to an age category has become a difficult task as some of the rites of passage to adulthood are being spread over a longer period of time (Beauvais, 2001; Côté, 2000; Jones & Wallace, 1992).

Because each individual's experiences are different and span different periods of time, these factors and more contribute to the heterogeneity of the youth population making it extremely difficult to make singular definitions which can accurately encompass all members. As well, dealing with broad age ranges can blur some of the difficulties which may be specific to older or younger youth within that category. Due to these definitional challenges, some have argued that youth cannot correctly be seen as a specific age range but should be

⁹ Terms such as Twixters, Freeters, the Boomerang Generation, NEETs (Not Engaged in Education, Employment or Training), Thresholders and the Peter Pan Syndrome have all been coined in reference to this phenomenon of extended transitions from youth to adulthood (Grossman, 2005; Yugi & Mie, 2004; Apter, 2001).

viewed as a period of life, a social status, or a social construct (Beauvais, 2001; Caputo, 2000; Guppy, Curtis & Grabb, 2004; Stasiulis, 2002; Tyyskä, 2001).

The definitional problem of 'youth' becomes an issue within discussions of citizenship because this complexity has high stakes as it plays a critical role in the attainment of full-citizenship. There are certain stepping stones over which each of us passes as we move towards adulthood and full-citizenship status. At 16 we can drive, at 18 we can vote, at 19 we can drink alcohol (or 18 in Quebec) – each of these events acts as a rite of passage in the eyes of the nation and often for the individual him or herself as well. For the purposes of these markers, the definition of youth as a numerical value seems reasonable. Certainly, at 18 with the attainment of the vote, an individual should be considered a full-citizen. As previously mentioned, however, the acquisition of adulthood and, hence, full-citizenship is not measured solely by these events; the most common indicator of adulthood and full-citizenship, is independence as it affords the individual access to the key elements of citizenship including rights and responsibilities, political participation and a sense of belonging (Grossman, 2005; Beauvais et al., 2001; Côté, 2000). Sometimes independence is achieved through personal responsibility for one's own actions (your parents are no longer held accountable for your behaviour). More often than not, it is measured through economic factors. As will be discussed in the following paragraphs, it is this focus on economic independence which becomes problematic in the face of extended youth. While it may be considered normal within our society for a person 16 years of age not to be considered a full-

citizen, it seems questionable for an individual 18 or even 25 years of age who is deemed old enough to make his or her own personal, political and legal decisions to *not* yet be considered a full-citizen (Beauvais et al, 2001).

Further confusion over the definition of youth can arise because youth are simultaneously both a product and a conception of the society and the adults within it, meaning that youth experience and are socialized to their social environment while at the same time being defined by the adults who have produced this experience. As society changes, so too does the youth of that time period in opportunity, definition, and experience. Essentially, based on the needs of a society at any given time, youth as a category can and does fluctuate by age, freedom, experience, and opportunity (Brown & Larson, 2002; Fussell & Greene, 2002; Tyyska, 2001; Clausen, 1986). In fact, youth are often seen as a "...key indicator of the state of the nation itself: it is expected to reflect the cycle of booms and troughs in the economy; shifts in cultural values over sexuality, morality and family life; and changes in class relations, concepts of nationhood, and in occupational structures" (Griffin, 1993:8). As such, youth can become protean or even disposable figures within citizenship discussions that are brought to the forefront only as necessary to illuminate some other phenomenon.

This explanation of youth can seem contrived and hegemonic and others would argue that it is in fact youth who create their own history which is both tied to and separated from the dominant ideologies of the society in which it evolves. For example, young people can create their own 'culture' with their own experiences, patterns, and 'maps of meaning' that make life understandable to

them as a group while still being intimately tied to the dominant culture. Youth culture both shares an understanding and creates its own unique understanding of society; in this way, differing cultures are both similar and separate as they simultaneously experience a common society. The diversity of youth is brought to the forefront as youth 'subcultures' develop within the umbrella culture allowing for differentiated means of expression and understanding within the larger youth culture (Clarke et al, 2006; Bennett, 2000; Epstein, 1998). Essentially, as subordinate cultures to the dominant culture, youth engage in a "...continuous struggle over the distribution of 'cultural power'" (Clarke et al, 1976:12). In so doing, however, subordinate cultures and subcultures must often resort to using existing materials and items of consumption provided by the dominant culture such as warehouses, parking lots, museum stairs and railings, railway cars and the Internet. Covering walls with graffiti, using stairs and railings for skateboarding tricks, socializing in non-sanctioned public spaces (loitering), holding raves in abandoned buildings and blogging are just some of the ways through which youth re-appropriate and redefine the meanings of existing cultural forms as sites of resistance (Epstein, 1998).

Young people both represent and challenge the ideals laid out for them. This perspective also allows for us to give due importance to youth's socialization of each other within peer groups, social organizations, and through communication technology and media (Brown & Larson, 2002; Arnett, 2002; Austin & Willard, 1998; Lasko, 2001). In this way, youth are not just mindless receptacles of culture but are provided with a more active role where they can

appropriate and manipulate the experiences and messages provided to them in order to create unique and sometimes subversive alternatives.

Within this dissertation, the term youth as it pertains to this research will include young people between the ages of 14 and 18. All data presented which originates from this research will refer specifically to respondents between those ages. Outside of the presentation of original research, however, when used, the term 'youth' may also refer to any individual between ages of 14 and 30 or an age range defined explicitly by the research being discussed. For example, the majority of research dealing with voter turnout defines youth as an eligible voter under the age of thirty. For this reason, unless otherwise defined, references to 'youth' within this context include those between 18 and 30 years of age.

FOUR POINTS OF CONTENTION

Taking into account the complexity of defining youth, their diversity and the various milestones present in the attainment of 'full-citizenship', I wish to move now to a discussion of some of the additional road blocks and ideas which exist within citizenship and youth literature today that ultimately play a part in the research of youth citizenship. As one begins to study Canada's younger inhabitants, it is possible to argue that citizenship as a concept is simply too antiquated to adequately address and include youth. I contend, however, that it is more useful to identify existing shortcomings and build upon the solid framework which many theorists have helped to construct over the last several decades. Certainly, T.H. Marshall's classic liberal rights-based definition of

citizenship can seem somewhat isolating and limiting by today's standards as it points to three primary aspects: civil (right to individual freedoms – speech, justice, property), political (the right to participate in the political process – or not) and social (the right to live a certain standard of living in a manner which you see fit – provided it is also legal) (1950). More recent definitions of citizenship offer increasingly balanced and socially based conceptions. For example, Beauvais, McKay and Seddon suggest that citizenship has three primary dimensions: 1) rights and responsibilities, 2) access to these rights and responsibilities, and 3) feelings of belonging and identity (2001) and L. Bosniak puts the study of modern citizenship into four categories: 1) citizenship as legal status, 2) citizenship as rights, 3) citizenship as participation, and 4) citizenship as identity and solidarity (2000). Beauvais et al.'s and Bosniak's definitions combine both liberal rights-based and communitarian theories of citizenship as they point to not only rights but also the responsibilities of the citizen and the importance of community and group identities. Further, they identify some critical aspects of citizenship with respect to youth by referencing participation and belonging which did not exist within earlier conceptions. These additions also point towards an important shift in citizenship theory at large moving the definitions away from a 'passive' concept of the citizen where status is based primarily on entitlements or rights and towards a more 'active' conception of citizenship where civic engagement and collective identity become important factors (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994; Bosniak, 2000).

Despite these theoretical elaborations, citizenship still fails youth in several ways. Specifically, I suggest there are four key ways by which citizenship falls short in its acknowledgment of youth:

1. Youth are often absent in discussions of citizenship.
2. The concept of the 'good' citizen is narrow and exclusive (e.g. ageist) in nature.
3. Full-citizenship is a construct which is reserved for the economically advantaged and creates a socio-economic divide.
4. Youth participation is not adequately acknowledged or valued as a citizenship practice.

1. The Absence of Youth

As mentioned above, one of the clearest expressions of how youth are perceived as citizens comes from the lack of youth and their voices in the citizenship literature. This oversight speaks volumes about the perception of youth in society and within the nation state. Historically, much of the earlier thinking on citizenship focused primarily on the activities of men as citizens, and women are only mentioned in passing if at all. When youth are mentioned it is either as children who are seen as part of the women's domain, citizens in the making or problem citizens. At one point, Marshall even goes so far as to state "...children, by definition, cannot be citizens" and "...children cannot fully appreciate their own interests..." (1950:16; Jones & Wallace, 1992; Mill, 1994; Turner, 1998). While he does not define what he means by 'children', it seems

clear from this statement that young people are not viewed as equals with respect to citizen rights. For example, while Marshall goes on to state that education is a right, he clarifies this assertion by saying that it is not the right of the child to be educated but the right of the adult to have been educated (1950). Within this clarification, young people are stripped of personal access to rights only receiving access as an extension of their status or that of their family members as full-citizens. This may occur by drawing on the credit of future full-citizenship status or the full-citizenship status of those related to us.

Even more recent writings on citizenship devote chapters to the “systematic forms of domination and oppression that misrecognized and marginalized” (Isin & Wood, 1999:1) gender and sexuality issues, ethnic minority and postcolonial identities, and even ecological issues, but still with little or no mention of youth as anything more than problem citizens (Shotter, 1992; Turner, 1998). What work has been done in regard to young people often continues to equate their experiences with those of women as part of the private domain, drawing on the economic dependence to the head of the household which they both share. Despite recent desires within theoretical discussions to be inclusive and universal, Isin and Wood point out that there is always an underlying knowledge that full-citizenship will never be extended to all members of society. Whether it be due to place of birth, economic factors, sexuality or age, there are many members of society who are seen as second-class citizens (if citizens at all) within the polity regardless of their official citizenship status (1999; Jones & Wallace, 1992; Young, 1989).

When it comes to studying the topic of youth citizenship specifically, there is noticeable irregularity. The United Kingdom and France have both done considerable work in the areas of youth and youth citizenship¹⁰. In Canada, however, this area of study has not been taken up with the same force. As previously mentioned, there has been some important work done in Quebec¹¹ on the topic, but there is still a lot of room for improvement across Canada in general where "...insufficient attention has gone to the vital matter of young people's rights, responsibilities, current citizenship status, and possible access to full citizenship" (Beauvais et al., 2001: iv, 3; Kennelly & Dillabough, 2008; Jenson, 2001; Jones & Wallace, 1992; Tyyskä, 2001). Recently, there has been a growing interest in youth citizenship within Canada¹², but it often focuses narrowly on the tasks of voting and volunteering specifically while failing to address broader conceptions of citizenship such as belonging, perceptions of identity, and lived experiences. Furthermore, the primary area of study for many Canadian researchers currently producing work on young citizens is not in fact youth or youth citizenship specifically which often results in an isolated cluster of youth related work being released followed by another period of silence on this important topic.

¹⁰ Researchers such as Ruth Lister, Sue Middleton, Noah Smith, Therese O'Toole and Bernard Roudet have done extensive work in the area of youth participation and citizenship in Europe.

¹¹ Quebec researchers such as Madeleine Gauthier, Pierre-Luc Graval, André Thibault, Julie Fortier, and André Blais, just to name a few, have done extensive work on youth and citizenship. Also, working groups like the Observatoire Jeunes et Société (www.obsjeunes.qc.ca) do an excellent job of bringing much of this work together and promoting further research.

¹² As mentioned earlier, Elections Canada (2003) and CPRN (2003) have recently released research focusing on the voting habits of youth in Canada.

Finally, there is an absence of young peoples' voices in citizenship studies and political affairs in general. What has been written about youth is most often written by an adult researcher, and even on the few occasions where young people are permitted to have a say, their words are often not taken very seriously (Beauvais et al., 2001; Jones & Wallace, 1992; Turner, 1993). More specifically, by applying existing models of participation and engagement to youth without hearing how they define these topics, the importance of young people's interpretations and experiences are diminished.

2. *The 'Good' Citizen*

In addition to the continued deficit of research concerning youth as citizens (both on the part of adults and young alike), a second area where citizenship has failed with respect to youth is through the concept of the 'good citizen'. Within the term 'good citizen' there are several issues which combine to create a problematic image which is then being used as an ideal type to which youth are compared. Perhaps, first and foremost, is the troubling 'good' portion of the phrase. This value-laden term not only suggests that there is a 'bad' citizen as well, but also it raises the question of who has the authority to define what 'good' and 'bad' mean (Beauvais, 2001). Throughout the literature, reference is made to the concept of the 'good citizen'. In some instances, it is assumed that the reader will have a preconditioned knowledge of what is meant and what duties are involved (Marshall, 1950) while at other times there is also an explanation as to what this entails¹³.

¹³ A more detailed discussion of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship will follow in later chapters.

The concept of 'good' citizenship behaviour is introduced early on in the life cycle at a time when young people are supposed to develop an understanding of what it means to be a 'good' citizen. Representations and definitions of 'good' and 'bad' are controlled by those in positions of power, namely the media, academics, politicians and public officials, corporations, and so on, and as citizens-in-becoming, children and teens are socialized through various institutions regarding the ways in which they are to conduct themselves as adults. Furthermore, while liberals and radical democrats allow for the personal perception of good to come through, it is virtually impossible to recreate such value-laden terms as 'good' or 'bad' as entities separate from the society within which they function.

At the same time as young people are being taught about what makes a 'good' citizen – obey the law, help your neighbours, find employment, raise a family and so on – they are also internalizing messages about what a 'bad' citizen is. Interestingly enough, many of these qualities are equated with youth in the eyes of adults and those in positions of power. Qualities like being uneducated, being dependent on the system, not making full use of their citizen rights and responsibilities, criminal behaviour or having poor moral values are just some of the characteristics which have been associated with being a 'bad' citizen. Similarly, youth are often seen as incompetent, lazy, prone to deviant or criminal behaviour and poor decision making, and dependant on others (namely their family or the state) for their care. Youth sexuality and teen pregnancy are also pathologized within Western cultures, and adults always

become fearful it seems when a young person has too much unstructured leisure time (Beauvais, 2001; Perkins & Borden, 2003; Caldwell & Baldwin, 2003).

From this, one might wonder who actually benefits from these negative representations of youth. In fact, the many complexities created by the diversity of youth get smoothed out into convenient dualities such as predator/prey, good/evil, and right/wrong with convenient definitions of 'good' and 'bad' leaving the public and policy makers with cleaner parameters by which to address the 'issue' of the moment. As well, negative imagery of youth and the moral panics which portray these images provide a buffer around the issue allowing society at large to point a finger from a safe distance. For example, when the media or government agencies such as Elections Canada draw attention to the apathy of youth and the reduced voter turnout among the youngest segment of the population, it can cease to address the larger issues of the state of politics and the political process in general which may be contributing to a more widespread apathy among the Canadian population as a whole. By creating an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy, the dominant culture is able to examine the problem in a concerned yet distant manner – "It's sad that so many youth just don't care about politics and their future. What will we do about this?".

It is this indirect equation of youth to 'bad' citizens and the alarmist notions or moral panics concerning young people which ultimately contribute and support their lack of inclusion in the citizenship process.

3. The Road to Full-Citizenship

A third point of contention for citizenship and youth is the reality that full-citizenship tends to be based on the achievement of independence or, more specifically, economic independence. This is not to say that independence, economic or otherwise, is not a desirable end. Problems arise, in part, because within the ideal of full-citizenship youth are set up to fail and then offered second-class status as result. This is done in three ways: i) through the recreation of the status quo at the institutional level, ii) through the absence of youth and youth voices, and iii) through inequality.

i. Status Quo

In what Iris Marion Young calls the 'paradox of democracy', "...social power makes some citizens more equal than others, and equality of citizenship makes some people more powerful citizens than others" (1989: 259). More specifically, society and citizenship feed off of each other to recreate a *status quo* which is built on inequality and exclusionary practices. For example, societal inequalities grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, age, economic status, geographical locations and social class are all reiterated within citizenship status (Kennelly & Dillabough, 2008; Marshall, 1950). Here, there is a distinction between the acquisition of rights which may simply come with age and the ability to access these same rights. Whether it be due to a lack of knowledge about what rights one actually possesses, a fear of accessing these rights because of possible repercussions, or socio-economic factors which limit our ability to gain full access, full-citizenship status becomes the badge of honour granted to those

with sufficient cultural, symbolic and economic capital (Beauvais et al., 2001; Jenson, 2001; Jones & Wallace, 1992; Bosniak, 2000). Furthermore, it is often those privileged with socio-economic means who possess the material, personal and organizational resources to allow them to access these rights and a sense that having a voice and being heard is indeed their right (Young, 1989). More directly, in order to make full use of citizen rights and freedoms, a culmination of means, resources and a sense of privilege is needed. When these items are in place, certain people are treated with the right to a voice as well, further reinforcing the cycle of access.

Bourdieu's concept of the reproduction of capital helps to explain the unequal acquisition of citizenship further. More specifically, levels of educational attainment (cultural capital), socio-economic status (economic capital), and even community involvement (social capital) all contribute to one's potential to become a full-citizen. While each of these aspects of capital can be attained and nurtured within our own lifetime, a great deal of the capital one has the potential to possess is passed down generation to generation through domestic and hereditary transmission (Beauvais et al., 2001; Bourdieu, 1986; Isin & Wood, 1999; Jones & Wallace, 1992; Bosniak, 2000). In this way, youth who come from parents who possess full-citizenship are more likely to obtain full-citizenship status than youth who come from parents who do not possess full-citizenship status. Further, the education system which begins to streamline young people into academic and applied pools very early on is one example of institutional segregation, and the high cost of continuing education has only

continued this process in that while the number of people going on to post-secondary education has increased dramatically, the growth is not equal across socio-economic categories ultimately helping to continue the cycle.

Policy and social programs provide another example of embedded segregation as many programs will not financially support youth until they are 18 years of age, making the assumption that it is the responsibility of the family to support the child. While it may be convenient for the state to push responsibility onto the family, this is not always a reality of the situation as policies fail to take into account reasons for young people leaving home, the inability of the family to financially support the youth, or the potential for the youth themselves to have children of their own to support. They also do not take into account the potential for youth to be still living in the family home but at the same time being expected to be completely self-sufficient (Beauvais, et al., 2001; Isin & Wood, 1999; Jenson, 2001; Jones & Wallace, 1992).

ii. Absence

Youth are also set up to fail, due to the absence of youth and their voices in the political arena and the public domain. Limiting a group's voice also limits their access to power (Griffin, 1993; Young, 1989). For example, Young argues that white, middle class men assume positions of authority more often than other groups and are more practiced at speaking persuasively. For this reason and others, "even though all citizens have the right to participate in the decision-making process, the experience and perspectives of some groups tend to be silenced" (1989: 258). As such, young people can become silent and easy

targets of moral panics and pathologies as we have seen above in the discussion of 'good' and 'bad' citizens:

Prohibited from speaking as moral and political agents, youth become an empty category inhabited by the desires, fantasies, and interests of the adult world...When youth do speak, the current generation, in particular, their voices generally emerge on the margins of society – in underground magazines, alternative music spheres, computer hacker clubs, and other subcultural sites (Giroux, 1998:24).

While I would argue that 'computer hacker clubs' have expanded to a much wider use of the Internet as a means of expression for youth (blogging, chat groups, YouTube), Giroux makes a valid point that youth voices are often marginalized and given only limited access for public and political expression. This absence is due to several factors, some of which have already been outlined above. One issue which may contribute to this silence is the heterogeneous nature of youth. Because of the diverse backgrounds, experiences, gender issues, sexuality, age and ethnicity of young people, it is impossible for youth to speak as a group (Jones & Wallace, 1992). Another contributing factor to this 'absence' may be related to a general lack of interest in the youth voice with respect to anything but popular culture, which ultimately results in a scenario of "you reap what you sow". If you only listen to young people on topics such as what's popular in fashion or what hot new artist is out there then that may be where they will focus their time. In this way, politicians and academics can then point to the political malaise of youth. But is this a matter of young people wanting to be involved only in aspects in which they feel their voice actually matters, hence making the political process less appealing,

or is it more that young people are, in fact, involved, but no one is listening? A combination of both scenarios is most likely.

An example which illustrates this division is to look at young voter activity on pop idol shows such as *Canadian Idol* and compare it to young voter activity in the recent Canadian elections. On *Canadian Idol*, young people had the opportunity to listen to singers from across Canada and vote for whom they would like to see win. From the votes, the most popular contestant wins a record contract with a major label. Thus, more than 4 million votes were cast during the most recent show's finale (Canadian Idol website, 2008)¹⁴. Contrarily, only 37% of 18-24 year olds voted in the 2004 federal election (based on 2006 Census data, this translates loosely to under 1.5 million individuals – less than half the number who voted for *Canadian Idol*).

Further, contributing to the minimization of youth participation in politics, of the four major political parties in Canada, the Green Party and the NDP are the only two groups which have actual links to their youth wings on their official party sites¹⁵. The Liberals have a youth wing, but it is not readily available through the primary party site and the Progressive Conservatives (PC) dissolved their youth wing in 2004 when they merged with the Alliance Party¹⁶. While

¹⁴ While it is clear that there is a substantial number of young people watching and voting for their favourite 'Idol' each week, it is important to note that it is not exclusively youth who contribute to the 4 million vote total and it is also possible for the same person to vote more than once. To put the voting numbers in perspective, over 3.7 million Canadians watched some portion of the show's finale.

¹⁵ The Green Party is the only party which actually has a mandate to include large numbers of youth. In fact, it was their goal to have one-third of their candidates be under the age of 30.

¹⁶ The official youth wing of the party was dissolved and no youth were appointed to the governing interim council. A group called CPC Energy was created to replace the youth wing, but it holds neither the same official status nor power as the previous group. It is important to note that at this time, however, the Conservatives have the youngest caucus in Canadian history.

some feel that this change in the Conservatives simply means that youth are accepted into the party as equals and do not need special treatment, others, including Keith Marlowe (former president of the PC youth wing) feel that "...[i]t's sending the message (to other youth) that they should join another party. Young people go where they have a voice" (Conway-Smith, 2004:B2). Further, in addition to having no link to any youth related sites or material on its party page, the Conservative site then goes on to balance this deficit with a large opening page link to its policy on tackling youth crime. A diminished capacity for youth involvement added to limited campaigning efforts by all major parties to young voters, paints a dismissive picture for youth.

While voting for a new pop star does not equate with the importance of choosing a leader of our nation, I would argue that one of these two experiences offers young people the opportunity to have a say, have their choices be heard, and have their opinion come to fruition. In fact, popular culture and access to these markets offer youth "a form of freedom and independence rather than oppression" (Jones & Wallace, 1992: 120). The other experience of voting for a country's leader, which is arguably more important, shows young people that their votes and voices are not important enough to be worked for. In this way, expecting youth to be active in politics is like asking them to support an institution which has only dismissed and segregated them (Christodoulidis, 1998; Isin & Wood, 1999).

iii. Inequality

As discussed briefly above in reference to financial independence and life transitions to adulthood, a final factor which hinders youth in their achievement of full-citizenship status is inequality. The relationship between citizenship and quality has been a matter of great debate. The ambition of citizenship, particularly social citizenship, is the promotion of a general sense equality, and the belief that each individual should have the right to a certain standard of living where some may still prosper, but no one should be forced to live in poverty or without basic human necessities (Beauvais et al., 2001; Isin & Wood, 1999; Marshall, 1950; Turner, 1998). Further, because citizenship as a concept is rooted in equality among citizens, then anything which limits the equal distribution of rights, responsibilities and access can be seen as detrimental to the attainment of full-citizenship (Beauvais et al., 2001; Côté, 2000).

In Canada, for example, data suggests that since the late 1970's the wages of young workers have been decreasing in all occupational sectors and for individuals with all levels of education (Guppy et al., 2004). Lower wages in conjunction with increased school debt¹⁷ and rising housing costs¹⁸ has resulted in a greater dependence of young people on the welfare state in Canada (Guppy et al., 2004; Beauvais et al., 2001).

¹⁷ As post-secondary education becomes more commonplace, students are staying in school longer to achieve advanced degrees in order to give themselves an advantage in the work world as even many blue collar occupations now require at least a college diploma (Grossman, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2006; Côté, 2000). Rising tuition costs leave many students with mountainous debt upon completion – between \$21,000 and \$28,000 for the average four year program (Giroux-Bougard, 2009; Grossman, 2005).

¹⁸ According to the Canadian Real Estate Association, the average cost for a home in Canada in January 2009 was \$274,000. In major cities, this cost can rise to over half a million in Vancouver (\$536,000) and \$344,000 in Toronto (Living in Canada, 2009).

In light of these economic realities, the achievement of economic independence can be delayed or even put off indeterminately for many youth. Further, if economic independence is a key to full-citizenship status, then logic would state that any individual who stays at home to raise children is also not a full-citizen. In this way, unpaid work or even part-time employment is undervalued along with those who do it (Jones & Wallace, 1992; Tyyskä, 2001). Here, capitalist forces are being used as a weapon to segregate women, youth, and any other member of society who is not currently employed, employed in precarious work, or independently wealthy into a separate and lesser category of citizenship. This kind of economic division of citizens also affects the homeless, individuals who have low incomes, and those who cannot find adequate employment which extends the problematic nature of citizenship beyond economic division to a more classist division of society as well (Beauvais, 2001; Jones & Wallace, 1992).

Conveniently, regardless of one's status as a citizen, he or she can, and is even encouraged to, participate in consumption. Moreover, some suggest that the frenzied consumptive behaviour which is encouraged in Western culture, in fact, delays youth's ability to attain economic independence and, therefore, full-citizenship (Jones & Wallace, 1992; Grossman, 2005). Lev Grossman in his 2005 article, *Grow Up? Not So Fast*, states that even as young people strive for economic independence, "...corporations and advertisers have a real stake in keeping them in a tractable, exploitable, pre-adult state – living at home, spending their money on toys" (2005: 8). For example, if young people

see mass consumption being glorified in the media, how can saving for education, families, and homes also be priorities?

With this combination of factors playing into the attainment of full-citizenship, or rather, factors working *against* the attainment of full-citizenship, it is not surprising that so many young people are denied access to this 'badge of adulthood' for longer and longer periods of time.

4. Participation

A fourth and final issue to address with respect to youth and citizenship is that of youth participation. Essentially, youth participation is not adequately acknowledged or valued as a citizenship practice. As well, lack of vision has resulted in priority being given to political participation over other kinds of involvement while at the same time young people are not given many opportunities to take part in the political process at any level. Certainly, most discussions of citizen participation take place at a national level. For youth, however, it is often at the municipal or community levels where they are provided with the greatest opportunities for active citizenship (although even this is questionable as will be discussed through this dissertation).

Perhaps the most important idea here is that youth *do* want to have a voice and they *do* want to participate in decisions which affect them (Caputo, 2000). From this, it is critical to draw on the point about 'decisions which affect them'. Many young people have shunned politics in a conventional form because they feel that the primary areas of debate do not affect them. Political issues such as health care, day care, tax cuts, and paying down federal deficits

are not, for most youth, topics which they feel passionate about. Education, the environment and global issues such as war are often topics of greater importance. Politically then, one of two things tends to happen. Either youth do get involved politically but with the issues that matter to them and in sometimes unconventional ways, or they turn away from political involvement because it does not interest them. Certainly, some young people do become involved in formal politics, but this is not the norm. Ultimately, young people are expected to fit themselves and their methods of participation into the existing boxes which society has created instead of being allowed to change society to suit their participatory needs (Tyyskä, 2001).

Just because youth have low rates of conventional political involvement is not to say that they are an apathetic group who simply do not participate. "Young people are much more 'action' oriented than adults and want to see the results of their efforts. Many youth see endless meetings which do not result in any action, as a waste of time and effort" (Caputo, 2000: 14). Protests and rallies surrounding WTO, rising tuition costs and environmental issues are often largely attended by youth, and activities like the creation of alternative recreation facilities such as skateboard parks are both of interest to youth and offer tangible results. With a focus on action and change, websites such as 'Apathy is Boring' (www.apathyisboring.com) and 'TakingITGlobal' (www.takingitglobal.com) are geared towards encouraging youth interaction, education, and involvement. These non-governmental organizations tackle such diverse issues as homelessness, global poverty, the environment, and gay and

lesbian rights through discussion and activities organized by youth with change/action in mind. While these forms of participation are not often associated in traditional political processes, the majority of issues addressed by youth are ones which affect not only young people but society at large, and as such, should be acknowledged as valuable forms of participation as well.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

In light of the aforementioned complexities and contentions within the areas of youth and citizenship, this dissertation addresses present weaknesses in an effort to give direction to citizenship studies as it pertains to the needs of young people. Specifically, using a multi-method approach including focus groups, visual stimuli and online survey techniques, a diverse cross-section of youth between the ages of 14 and 18 are given the opportunity to express their views on citizenship, participation (both political and otherwise), the youth voice, and Canadian culture.

The primary objectives of this exploratory study are two-fold: 1) to fill the existing void within Canadian citizenship literature with respect to youth identities, voices and perspectives; and 2) to expand our current understandings of citizenship to encompass various forms of participatory and community involvement. The first objective is met through multiple focus group interviews conducted across the region of eastern and southern Ontario with youth of varied demographic profiles and levels of involvement. Further to this, an online survey including both open- and closed-ended questions was completed by

young people from across Canada. Within each of these methods of collection, attention is paid to expanding and encouraging the discourses of youth with respect to their ideas surrounding the concept of citizenship and their place within it. The second objective of this study is met, again, by encouraging dialogue with youth through both group discussion and open-ended questioning online. Specifically, respondents are asked to engage with policy related discussions pertaining to the education system and its current 'citizenship training' curriculum (community service requirements and civics classes); opportunities for youth voices to be heard at the community level; and methods of engaging youth politically at the national level.

Turning now to some of the theoretical contributions of this work, several research questions have been asked: How do young people envision and define ideas of citizenship in their own words, and how do youth interpret their own identities as citizens? In what ways do youth currently contribute to and participate in society, and how do they address or counter claims of political apathy? Through the process of answering these questions, this research provides a view of citizenship from the vantage point of young people. As discussed previously, within the current Canadian discourses on youth citizenship, there exists a deficit in research which provides youth with a means of expressing their views on citizenship beyond their voting patterns and hours of volunteerism. Not only does this research provide youth with an opportunity to identify the parameters of citizenship and the types of contributions within which they place themselves (instead of using the more typical practice of

forcing youth to fit themselves into existing models of citizenship and participation), but also it allows young people to identify and rectify barriers which they feel exist with respect to traditional forms of political contribution.

In addition to its theoretical advances, this dissertation makes several empirical contributions as well. Firstly, this research takes advantage of a multi-method approach by combining qualitative focus group discussion data with quantitative online survey data. By creating a research project which uses mixed methods, this work provides more thorough results as it combines both the specificity of numbers with the experiential quality of discourse. Secondly, this dissertation takes advantage of the useful but highly underutilized tool of visual stimuli to aid in the discussion of complex and nebulous topics pertaining to citizenship. Exploring the benefits of this research method within this study provides further evidence of the potential for this tool in future work. Finally, the decision to make this research exploratory meant that all interested youth had an opportunity to have their voices heard, since, for the most part, the sample was self-selected.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter two outlines the methodological approaches, the ethical review process and data analysis within this thesis. A combination of focus groups and online surveys involving youth from across Canada were used, and the benefits and setbacks involved with each method are discussed. This chapter also

addresses the benefits of multi-method research in its ability to create a more complete and well-rounded view of citizenship and youth's place within it.

The three subsequent chapters outline the major findings of this research. Chapter three looks at how the focus group participants and online respondents used photos to help them to decide who is and is not a citizen of Canada. Five primary models of citizenship arose: universal status, mosaic, middle-classist, ageist, and participatory. Each of these models and the key visual prompts aligned with each model is present. This is followed by an analysis of which youth were most likely to support each model of citizenship. Chapter four expands on youth's interpretations of citizenship to look at how teens theorize concepts of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship. This chapter brings together further focus group discussion of visual stimuli (photo activity) as well as the responses from the online survey. In an overview of the top behaviours which youth associate with 'good' citizenship we see a combination of character traits – kind, hardworking, trustworthy – and citizenly duties – national pride, community involvement, voting, abiding by the law. The top 'bad' behaviours are also discussed and while breaking the law is clearly the most common behaviour associated with 'bad' citizens, character traits dominate the top spots. Being rude, intolerant, disrespectful, mean, or dishonest all rank as aspects of 'bad' citizens; failing to be politically active does not break the top 10.

Chapter five turns the focus away from defining citizens and their behaviours towards the concept of active citizenship itself. This chapter centres on capturing youth voices as it outlines how youth themselves feel about their

opportunities for participation within the community and politics at large. Despite their high rates of volunteerism and participation in extra-curricular activities both in school and in the community, many youth spoke about their lack of interest in politics. Five general themes for regaining the youngest segment of voters are discussed: the importance of giving youth a voice in politics; getting youth's attention at election time; providing more information; accessibility, and rewards and consequences are discussed. This extends to a discussion of how youth feel they can involve more young people at the local level as well.

Chapter five concludes with a discussion of how four primary types of youth participation – traditional political participation, non-traditional political participation, on the ground involvement, and extra-curricular activity – can be combined to expand current conceptions of citizenship.

Chapter six summarizes the key findings of this thesis, and the extent to which my research goals have been met are reviewed. The chapter also addresses limitations of the study and sets out directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY AND PROJECT DESIGN

This chapter will outline the methods used, the research process and the steps taken to guarantee the ethical treatment of the participants. In an effort to address both the theoretical and empirical voids within the youth citizenship research today, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in this project. To ensure that a diversity of youth voices is heard with respect to citizenship, participation and political involvement this study is designed to highlight demographic heterogeneity.

To begin, in order to operationalize young people's perceptions of the concepts of citizenship, politics and volunteerism, this research is divided into two primary methods of data collection:

1. focus group discussions with youth living in eastern and southern Ontario
2. an online survey available throughout Canada.

This multi-method approach provides a more complete view of youth's perspectives as it allows for both qualitative and quantitative study on key issues within this research including youth's understanding of citizenship, their place within it and participation. Furthermore, this mixed method research, as will be outlined below, has been designed with an interest in ensuring diverse voices be heard including rural and urban views, provincial and national understandings, advanced and applied education levels, and the ideas of high achievers as well as those considered to be underachievers. This two-pronged data collection strategy is then followed by analysis including both qualitative and quantitative data sets, an overview of civics education in Ontario, and comparisons with some

of the complementary work done by Lister et al. with British youth and the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) with slightly older youth.

THE BENEFITS OF MIXED METHOD STUDIES

Qualitative and quantitative methods of study have a long history of alleged incompatibility according to many researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Smith & Heshusius, 1986). In fact, only recently have the 'paradigm wars' (as this debate has been labelled), subsided leaving room for more pragmatic positions on research "...that by and large quantitative and qualitative research can be meaningfully integrated" (Bryman, 2006:114; Brannen, 1992, 2005; Bryman, 1992, 2006). More specifically, pragmatism allows us to move beyond commitment to any one method exclusively and focus on what options benefit the research specifically (Bryman, 2006; Seale, 1999). Combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies strengthens the epistemological soundness of the data received and allows us to "...answer research questions that the other methodologies cannot" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003:14; Axinn & Pearce, 2006, Brannen, 1992, 2005). Furthermore, mixed method analysis creates the opportunity to do research that highlights the strengths and minimizes the weaknesses of each method and can help to identify (and eliminate) method-specific bias. As well, the redundancy in research which uses strikingly different methods provides opportunity to study the same phenomenon from multiple perspectives (Palys & Atchison, 2008; Axinn & Pearce, 2006; Seale, 1999)¹⁹. By

¹⁹ Other research which takes advantage of the mixed method design includes Lowman & Fraser, 1995; Menzies, 1998; Palys, Boyanowsky, & Dutton, 1984.

marrying the quantitative realist's value of *facts* with the constructivist knowledge that there can be more than one *truth* provides what I consider to be a more balanced and comprehensive outcome. In fact, Ted Palys and Chris Atchison speak quite eloquently about the potential benefits of pairing of qualitative and quantitative methods when we go beyond the traditionally oppositional relationship of these two camps of thought. "Perhaps the opposite of a great truth is not a great falsity, but yet another great truth" (2008: 27). This suggests that the researcher need not view these methods as mutually exclusive but as two sides of the same coin which can only broaden our understanding of an issue.

In addition to the benefits for the research specifically, other broader benefits can arise from mixed method research. Cross-national appeal for research findings in a climate where some countries tend to value quantitative methods over qualitative research and vice versa; the demand for mixed method research to inform policy and political demands; the need for research to transcend ivory towers and be seen as valuable at the 'ground level' as well – each of these pressures drives researchers to incorporate mixed methods into their own studies (Brannen, 1992, 2005).

Practically speaking, Brannen suggests there are three phases of a research project where a secondary method can be introduced – during research design, during fieldwork, or during analysis (2005). Within this study, mixed method analysis was initiated in the research design phase and carried through the fieldwork and analysis phases. In formulating the research design it was

decided that the first phase of research would entail qualitative focus groups which would then be followed by a second data gathering phase of a primarily quantitative online survey. The online survey would be designed to build on the findings of the focus groups. Specifically, the use of mixed methods is present through the focus groups and open-ended questions which provide authoritative²⁰ information from youth themselves along with empirical data of statistics gathered both from this research and others. In addition to the focus groups and online survey, it is important to note the inclusion of visual stimuli as a methodological tool within each of these methods. The use of visual stimuli in the form of 25 images shown to respondents as an aid to the discussion of citizenship provided further opportunities for comprehensive study. This strategy will be discussed in greater detail below.

A strength of quantitative data methods is their ability to identify relationships between different variables. Building upon this strength, qualitative data methods can then provide descriptions of those relationships (Becker, 1996). In conjunction, these methods can provide a more complete picture of findings within a study. With this in mind, the online survey allows clear connectivity between variables to be seen (i.e. are females more likely than males to identify visible minorities as citizens of Canada?), and the focus groups allow us to explore these relationships further. By combining these two methods, the research also aims to achieve what William Axinn and Lisa Pearce call

²⁰ Because so much of the current research fails to include the youth voice, they also fail to identify the subject as the authority of their own lived experiences. This study gives epistemological value to youth as an authority on the concept of youth citizenship and their place within it.

“method balance” (2006:25). Method balance encourages the use of less structured methods of research (the focus groups) with more structured methods (the online survey) as well as the use of methods which have high levels of investigator involvement (the focus groups) with methods which have low levels of involvement (the online survey) (Axinn & Pearce, 2006).

Within this research, there were moments when each method played a pre-eminent role in directing the study. For example, during the research design phase, the qualitative data received from the focus groups helped to mould the design of the online survey (or the quantitative portion of the research). Not only did the interests of the youth within the focus groups help to identify questions which would be kept and questions which would be removed within the survey, but also, their responses allowed for some questions within the survey to become closed-ended in format. Contrarily, during the analysis portion of the study, the quantitative data of the survey results were used to lead the analysis as the statistical findings from the online survey were then supported through the use of quotes from the focus group respondents. With this being said, however, due importance must be given to the qualitative responses as well in that they often gave direction to the analysis providing valuable clues as to where to start data exploration. Allowing each methodology to take a leading role at different stages of the research provided a greater equality and synergy between the two forms of data as a whole.

The data which is produced within mixed method studies can evolve in several ways according to Brannen – corroboration, elaboration, complementary,

or contradiction. Evidence of the first three result types are present in various findings, but elaboration was most prevalent throughout as the “qualitative data analysis exemplifie[d] how the quantitative findings appl[ied] in particular cases” (2005:176). Overall, the findings from both aspects of this research proved predominantly iterative in their results. While fully contradictory results are not present in this study, in the few instances where data from the focus groups and online survey show some variation, the methods themselves were often the cause. More specifically, the solitary nature of the online survey as compared to the more dynamic process of the focus group format can result in variation of the data. Focus group discussions and activities occurred in a group setting where one person’s experiences could spark ideas, opinions and memories of another individual making for potentially different outcomes, while online respondents were faced with answering questions cold and without others’ input.

Further, the organic movement of a discussion group setting with respect to the order of the questions in contrast to the fixed structure of the online survey could also have contributed to any variation in results which exist between the two methods. For example, if youth began to speak about a topic naturally as an extension of a previous topic, regardless of the existing order of the questions, we would move onto that topic and then return to previous questions after in order to encourage flow and conversation. This luxury does not exist within most quantitative methodologies. In cases where qualitative and quantitative methods did not produce complementary results, both results have been presented and, when necessary, further explanation for the possible differences is provided.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

The target population for this study included respondents who are English speaking²¹ males and females predominantly between the ages of 14 and 18²². Students from across Canada who attended various institutions and were receiving varying levels of academic instruction²³ were also included. This allows for the relationship between traditional forms of achievement and conceptualizations of citizenship to be studied. These youth provide insight into the developmental point at which young people are still forming their impressions of citizenship and exploring various avenues of participation. The additional aspects of mandatory civics studies at the grade 10 level and the required volunteer hours to complete high school also made this an opportune time to speak with youth. Further, the timing of the data collection component of this study fell within the backdrop of a recent federal election (with the possibility of another election being called in the near future) which provided interesting insight into how the process of voting is linked to young people's understanding of citizenship.

In total 429 youth offer their voices to this study. These young people vary by age, sex, educational attainment, socio-economic status, citizenship status

²¹ This research focuses only on English-speaking youth because it was felt that moderating focus groups in a second and less proficient language would affect the flow of dialogue among respondents and affect outcomes. This study also did not specifically target Aboriginal youth or their communities; they were, however, included in all aspects of the study when possible.

²² It would have been ideal to interview the same youth both before they were eligible to vote and after they were eligible (this is how the Lister et al. study was organized), but it was impossible to perform a longitudinal study due to time constraints.

²³ Students from public and separate schools were included within the focus group stage and, of course, the online portion of the study. Also, youth in 'academic -- university' and 'applied' -- college streams at the high school level were included (previously known as advanced, general, and basic respectively).

(established Canadians, first generation Canadian born citizens of immigrant families, and landed immigrants), and rural/urban differences. Despite this diversity, certain trends and ideas still emerge in unison as will be shown throughout this thesis.

Moving now to a more detailed discussion of the methods used within this research, the following sections will outline the development of the focus group and online portions of the research. As well, the benefits of visual stimuli as an important but currently underutilized research tool will be explored.

FOCUS GROUPS

Participants

Within the phase of the fieldwork, focus groups provide an 'enhanced' qualitative view of the subject of youth citizenship, politics, and volunteerism. In total, the focus groups were made up of 89 participants who attended one of 13 sessions which took place within five high schools (grades nine through twelve) across Eastern and Southern Ontario, two youth centres, and two volunteer and leadership organizations. For the most part, research sites were chosen based on their proximity to Ottawa (where I was residing during the time of this research). Because of this, all group discussions took place within a five hour driving distance from the city centre. Further, groups and institutions were also earmarked for inclusion based on whether their youth came primarily from rural and small town or urban communities.

Most of the participants were between the ages of 14 and 18, were from diverse backgrounds both ethnically and socio-economically, and experienced varying degrees of success within the education system. Using a double-layer design to choose the first four high school groups helped to ensure that the key characteristics were represented within the sample population (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The first layer dealt with community size, placing participants either in the category of rural/small town or urban. The second layer of the design involved academic achievement placing the participants in either the academic group discussion or applied group discussion. The groups were divided based on this second layer not only to study how academic achievement can affect understandings of citizenship, but also to provide students with a more open and comfortable space in which to speak. It was my concern that teens from the applied stream would feel less confident and possibly offer fewer comments if they were placed in the same groups as academic level students, deferring to the students who they might feel were 'smarter' to provide answers²⁴.

The youth in each group also varied by age/grade level and gender. Focus group liaisons (guidance counselors, teachers, group leaders) within the schools and youth groups were informed of the goal to include diverse populations within the focus groups so as to deter them from encouraging only their 'best students' or the 'most articulate' teens to participate within the

²⁴ Because the applied and academic streams were separated from the onset of the focus groups it is impossible to be certain whether this concern of deferral by the applied students to the academic students was warranted. It is possible to say, however, that respondents in groups from both streams appeared to speak freely and without open concern of being judged.

discussions (see Appendix 8, Tables 1 through 3 for a demographic breakdown of the youth).

To begin the process of recruiting students for the actual groups to be used within the study, four high schools were contacted. Two of these schools were located in rural areas, and two were located in urban areas²⁵. Due to the limited amount of time available before the end of the school year, it was necessary to locate schools whose administration did not require additional Board Approval since this process can take several months and might not result in a positive response. Only one of the urban schools which were approached made the decision that Board Approval would be necessary²⁶ and another urban school was chosen. All of the other institutions found that Carleton University's Ethics Approval, a police check, and parental consent from the participants' guardians to be sufficient.

Due to the fact that current discussions of citizenship fail youth in part by reserving 'full-citizenship' status for the economically advantaged and in part by failing to adequately acknowledge or value much of youth participation as a citizenship practice, four more groups were approached in order to address these issues. These groups followed a multiple-category design placing groups into either the category of 'disadvantaged' or the category of 'leaders' (Krueger & Casey, 2000). For the purposes of this study, 'disadvantaged' youth were

²⁵ One of the urban schools was a Catholic school. All others were Public schools.

²⁶ Getting Board Approval in this instance would have meant completing a lengthy and detailed application as well as waiting for the next Board Meeting to occur. Due to the timing of these meetings, approval could not have occurred in time for the existing school year (and possibly not until half way through the following school year) and was not guaranteed even if all of the appropriate paper work was completed.

defined as those teens with lower socio-economic status, troubled homes, limited educational opportunities and/or criminal records. Some might see this group as 'outsiders' within a community. The teens labeled as 'leaders' on the other hand, were those who were highly involved in the community and at school and spent a good portion of their spare time volunteering. Two groups were approached within each category.

Ethical Review

Following the guidelines identified in the Tri-Council's "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" policy document (2001), approval for this project from the Carleton Research Ethics Committee has been obtained. With approval in hand, principals or leaders of each school and organization were approached. Following a verbal overview of the project which was sometimes followed by a written summary if requested, the administrators provided their consent to speak with their students based on the knowledge that their students and their institution would never be named within the dissertation or any future publications.

The second level of informed voluntary consent came from the students and their parents or guardians. Because most of the participants within this research were under the age of 18, consent was required both from the student and his or her parent or guardian. Following a verbal overview of the project provided in class (or group meeting) by either myself, a teacher, a guidance counsellor or group leader, any interested youth were given a letter of information and consent form (see Appendix 1 and 2) to take home to have signed by their

parent and returned to their teacher or guidance counsellor. Each student was guaranteed limited anonymity as only those in their focus group would know of their participation; however, full anonymity was guaranteed within the thesis itself (see Appendix 3)²⁷.

Follow-up announcements, reminders and visits were made over the following weeks in order to ensure as high a turn-out rate as possible. Time away from class, snacks provided during the session and the chance to win a Nano iPod© were all used as incentives for their participation.

At the beginning of each focus group session, each participant was presented with another letter of information which included contact information for myself and my supervisor should they have any questions. The purpose of the research as well as the student's right to anonymity and his or her ability to abstain from answering any questions which they felt uncomfortable responding to was also verbally reiterated. They were also reminded that they had the right to leave the group at any time. Each of the focus groups was digitally video recorded and transferred to DVD to allow for easier transcription of group discussion, to allow the conversation to flow more smoothly and at a natural pace, and to ensure that all of the comments would be recorded. The transference of the information on the digital cassette to DVD was done by the Media Production Supervisor of the Carleton University Instructional Media Services who signed a confidentiality agreement. The transcription of the focus groups was done by an outside source who also signed a confidentiality

²⁷ Each student has been provided with a pseudonym which will remain his/hers throughout the thesis. Only those quoted within this thesis have been listed in Appendix 3.

agreement. The digital cassettes, DVDs, and computer files were all saved with codes as opposed to their actual institutional names and were kept in a locked filing cabinet for security purposes.

Pretests

Once the discussion guide was created and ethics approval from Carleton University was obtained, two trial focus groups were performed in order to identify any necessary changes in question format or design and to provide a sense of the time needed to complete each group. One group of academic level students and one group of applied level students were used in order to ascertain whether the questions used would be suitable for both levels. After the first group of academic level students, the decision was made to use 25 images in order to discuss the concept of citizenship instead of using the previous method of open-ended discussion questions (see Appendix 4). The 25 images were gathered from periodicals and online image sources and were chosen based on their ability to depict people of varying age, sex, economic status, and ethnicity. As well, images depicting individuals and groups performing various activities ranging from playing to working in various professions to sitting or dancing were also included. Primarily, it was important to provide the respondents with a diverse series of images from which they could draw cues during their discussions of citizenship. Finally, while some of the images had visual cues which could suggest Canadian citizenship (logos of the maple leaf or a jersey from a Canadian university) the bulk of the photos had none of these

distinguishing qualities and an effort was made to choose photos of individuals who were unknown (not famous actors or athletes for example).

Benefits of Visual Stimuli

Visual stimuli has been incorporated into the research of social scientists and market researchers for decades; and while the practice has experienced varying levels of popularity over the years, growing numbers of qualitative researchers are beginning to realize the benefits of this methodology²⁸. Despite growing popularity, however, relatively little has been written about the technique of 'photo-interviewing', 'photo elicitation', or 'image-based research' as compared to other methods (Hurworth, 2003; Epstein et al., 2006). Within this study specifically, the benefits of using photos to assist in the discussion of the complex topic of citizenship are numerous. For example, using visual stimuli provides a means for participants to connect more easily with the topic at hand. Images can help participants "...decode questions they sometimes find too abstract to understand or too confusing to answer, especially if their language skills are not as well developed..." (Anastas, 1994; Goldman, 1992; Hurworth, 2003; Bagnoli, 2009). The technique of using photos, art or video clips during focus group discussions has been used with consumers in the market research field for quite some time now in order to help participants to discuss abstract ideas and articulate complex thoughts, and it was hoped that the benefits would

²⁸ Recently O'Toole et al. (2003) used this technique of visual stimuli to aid in their research with young people between the ages of 16-25 as they explored the meaning of 'the political' and how youth define this concept. Kennelly & Dillabough (2008) encouraged their youth respondents to engage with the topic of "good citizens" through the creation of drawings and the taking of photos.

be evident within this research as well (Anastas, 1994; Goldman & McDonald, 1987).

Specifically, using images gave the youth a jumping off point for discussions on citizenship for various reasons. First, it provided a new visual way of interacting around a topic. Sandy Fraser, in her discussions of youth research, points to the importance of finding youth-friendly methods where both young participants and researchers can bridge potential gaps in experience and vocabulary necessary to discuss certain topics. She states that youth-friendly methods such as drawings, photographs and diaries are "...negotiated compromises that allow communication between the different conceptual outlooks of children and young people on the one hand, and those of researchers on the other" (2004:25; Anastas, 1994; Patton, 2002; Hurworth, 2003; Epstein et al., 2006). Furthermore, using photos allows the visual learners in the group to interact in the discussion in a new way. By combining a visual stimulus with the request to articulate their thoughts on the matter, it means that even youth with limited vocabulary or those who prefer to interpret thoughts through images are able to participate in the focus group (Anastas, 1994). Without saying a word, the participants could express what they feel about citizenship.

Second, because this research included youth at various levels of academic achievement, the images gave them the chance to relate to an abstract and complex topic. In addition to this, many young people find it difficult to articulate their ideas and are not often provided with the chance to give their opinions on things, so it can be awkward for them to suddenly be asked to give

their thoughts on a topic such as citizenship (Anastas, 1994; Epstein et al., 2006). The photos really allowed the youth to sort through some of their thoughts, got the creative juices flowing, and acted as a jumping-off point for many of the discussions. More specifically, using photos "...liberate[d] participants from inhibitions about expressing their own preferences or opinions, while also concretizing associations they might not [have been] able to express without the aid of a picture" (Goldman & McDonald, 1987:85).

Third, by giving the packages of photos to small groups, it allowed the teens to interact with each other and lessened the pressure for some of the more introverted youth when they were asked to speak. They could contribute to the smaller group discussion and then one of the more extroverted individuals in the group could speak on behalf of the team to present their thoughts. In fact, as a researcher, it was this process of hearing the youth discuss the images in their small groups, then their explanation of their decisions with the larger group and sometimes the subsequent debate amongst the whole group which ensued which made this activity so useful. In essence, it provided me with three separate levels of discussion – intimate, public, and explicative. At the intimate level, I was able to learn from the participants' first look, off-the-cuff comments regarding the pictures. Sometimes the most telling information came from comments as they debated amongst themselves who is and is not a citizen or who they thought belonged in the 'good' and 'bad' citizen categories.

Adam²⁹: *If I knew who this was it would be easier [referring to one of the photos when asked to think about who was a citizen and who was not].*

More was learned from the public stage where the youth presented their decisions to the rest of the group and to me. Here, the responses were more refined as some of the initial discussions from the small groups had clarified their thinking. At this stage, it was interesting to see how groups differed from each other in their decision making process. For example, in the same focus group, one group suggested that some people were citizens and others were not.

Oren: *I think you're only citizens by choice. Babies can't make a choice yet, so they're not citizens.*

This was contrasted by another group who felt that everyone was a citizen.

Adam: *They're all citizens; it's just these citizens made bad choices.*

Occasionally, as a group presented their decisions, an individual from another group would question them on their thinking and the explicative level of discussion would take place. This process forced the presenter and his or her group to clarify and support their argument. These debates remained amicable but allowed for different points of view to be addressed and flushed out the youths' ideas even further. Here, examples and stories often came into play as the participants further explained their perspectives.

Beth: *We're all citizens here, but if I were to hit him [boy sitting next to her] or something then I would be a bad citizen because you're putting someone else at risk, not me.*

²⁹ Each respondent has his or her own pseudonym which will be used each time they are quoted within the thesis. A complete list of pseudonyms with corresponding gender, age, grade, educational stream, citizenship status and economic status are available in Appendix 3.

Oren: So you [referring to Beth] say that if you hurt him you're a bad citizen but this guy kills people [referring to the image of the soldier – Fig. 2, Appendix 4]!

Beth: No, no, no, I said...Ok how do I put this? If that's a job and they have to do it and are paid to do that for our country then they are fighting to defend us for our freedom. It's different if I just hit him for no reason or just because I don't like him...

Oren: Ok, but say this guy was a Nazi who was trying to take over countries and not to defend Germany. How do you know he's not a Nazi?

And the discussion continued. Ultimately, the use of each of these levels of discussion created an opportunity to learn more about how young people think about citizenship.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, using photos within the focus group process makes talking about a potentially dry topic like citizenship into a game or activity which was fun and interactive (Anastas, 1994). Speaking for an hour about citizenship (or any topic for that matter) is more than can be expected from some of these youth. The photos broke the ice and set the tone for the discussion as something that would be fun, painless, and possibly even enjoyable. It also allowed the participants to be creative, interact, tell stories, and debate a topic through the safety of images which were outside of themselves. Further, this process forced respondents to commit to their views even if they did not match with the larger group. Because they had already come to a consensus in their smaller group and the images were already in piles, it would have been difficult for those who were nervous about expressing a conflicting opinion to alter their first impressions based on the larger group's input. So ultimately the photos provided a greater authenticity to the process as a whole.

Finally, photos are an excellent tool for discussion because the same image can be understood in multiple ways by different individuals based on their lived experiences. Certainly, there are certain characteristics of each image which could be agreed upon by the population at large based on a shared socialization (gender, approximate age, skin colour). "Visuals, like language, are understood within specific contexts, where shared meanings and experiences contribute to shared interpretations" (Morgan, 2005:150; Scott, 1994). Following a constructivist perspective, however, other aspects of an image can be interpreted varyingly based on the fact that complex cognitive processing of photos involves drawing upon an individual's 'vault' of tacit knowledge where past experiences and information become synthesized with the visual cues within the photo itself (Morgan, 2005; Watkins et al., 2004; O'Toole et al., 2003; Scott, 1994). It is this tacit knowledge which each youth brought to the group during the discussions which allowed for such interesting and diversified responses and understandings of citizenship. Further, it is these types of diversified discussions which support the concept of multiple meanings based on the polysemous nature of visuals and the individuality of the viewer (Messaris, 1997; Cornin, 2005).

Question Guide and Group Format

The design of the focus group format and questions are based on tools for engaging participants³⁰, questions designed to address how young people think

³⁰ Krueger and Casey suggest opening focus group discussion with a quick and easy to answer question to which everyone in the group will respond. I asked participants to go around the table and tell me their first name, what the last thing they did for their school volunteer hours was and something they like to do outside of school in their spare time. Questions such as these get the participants talking early on, help them to feel more comfortable and connected to the group, and provide some direction for the coming conversation (2000: 44).

about citizenship and related issues, and questions drawn from similar research (Lister et al., 2003). Following a few icebreaker questions, participants were asked to work individually or in small groups of two or three people to place images in piles of who they consider to be a Canadian citizen and who they did not and to then discuss their decisions with the group, enabling frank discussions of how youth labeled Canadian and non-Canadian citizens. Using the same images, participants were then asked to create piles of those photos which depicted 'good' citizens and those which depicted 'bad' citizens and then to discuss those decisions with the group. Because previous studies on youth and citizenship described the difficulty for youth to articulate ideas around citizenship (Lister et al., 2003), using photos provided the participants within this study a fun and alternative way to express some of their understandings.

The final version of the interview guide for the focus group included questions under three major areas – Citizenship, Community, and Political Involvement and Making Change (see Appendix 5). The questions within this guide were used to direct discussion but were not used exclusively, and the youths' comments during these groups were used to further guide the conversation to allow for a more organic development of the discussion overall. Each focus group took about one hour and concluded with the 'Personal Information' survey which asked each participant a series of demographic questions (see Appendix 6).

One of the biggest challenges faced during this process proved to be the translation of interest by the students to the action of returning a signed consent

form and being present for the group. Despite initial interest on the part of many students, constant reminders, and incentives for participating, schools noted frustration due to the fact that sometimes more than 100 consent forms would be handed out and only 30 would be returned. Of those students who returned forms, many needed to be reminded multiple times not only prior to the focus group but the morning of and in some cases needed to be called from class because they had forgotten. This was experienced at each of the schools.³¹

After completing the initial focus groups within each of the four high schools, there was a deficit in the number of urban applied student participants. To supplement these numbers a summer school which drew youth from several urban regions was approached. Most of the youth who participated in the two focus groups within this school were at the applied level. It was at this point in the research that the two focus groups of 'disadvantaged' and two of 'leaders' were done. The 'disadvantaged' groups were performed at two community youth centres and the 'leaders' groups were performed at two community-minded volunteer programs. With the addition of these final four groups, saturation of the sample was achieved, and the focus group portion of the research was concluded.

Following the completion of the focus groups, findings from these discussions were used to identify the questions which were used in the online survey portion of the study. Specifically, the focus groups provided the

³¹ Perhaps organizing the focus groups at a different time of the school year would have made a difference. Many of the groups took place near the end of the school year when students can be too pre-occupied with the excitement of summer holidays, upcoming exams, and year-end events. It is also possible that while the students themselves felt that missing class was a good idea, perhaps their parents did not feel the same way and so would not sign the consent form.

opportunity to see what types of issues mattered most to the youth ultimately resulting in the removal of a set of questions regarding definitions of community³². Because youth are often absent from discussions on citizenship, it was a critical aspect of this research to include youth voices, perspectives and ideas. Further, the information gathered from the focus groups allowed for some of the survey questions to become closed-ended, hence reducing the time needed for participants to complete the online questionnaire.

ONLINE SURVEY

Using the Internet as a Research Tool

The second portion of data collection was in the form of an online survey which was available to youth across Canada. Again, this method of data collection is not new, and since the inception of widespread domestic Internet access there has been significant interest in the tool of web surveys (Coomber, 1997; Nesbary, 2000). While initially there was concern that research samples might be skewed due to the higher populations of wealthy, educated, white, males with online access (Coomber, 1997; Sherman et al., 2000), this concern has dissipated with the ubiquity of access in Canada today. For example, in the most recent Media Technology Monitor Survey of 12,000 Canadians over the age of 18, 83% of respondents had used the Internet from some location in the

³² In total, four question lines were removed. 1) You often hear people talk about this idea of 'community'. What types of communities are there? What types of communities do you feel like you most belong to? (Prompt: like the community on your street or in your town, communities of friends who are close by or far away, national communities, global communities, or even on line communities) 2) Is nationality something that's important to you? How would you define yourself? As Canadian or something else? 3) Do you feel included in Canadian society? 4) Who do you feel isn't included in Canadian society?

past month, and 74% had used it from their home in the past week (MTM, 2009). Youth also have greater access to the Internet today than ever before in the home, at school, in local libraries and youth centres or at friends' homes. In fact, in a similar survey of Canadian teens between the ages of 12 to 17, 96% had used the Internet in the past month and 89% had used it from home in the past week (TNT, 2007). Ultimately, as Internet penetration increases, "concerns around sampling bias will come to resemble more closely those which regularly affect conventional surveys" (Coomber, 1997:2).

One of the primary benefits of online surveys is to gain access to hard to reach populations (Coomber, 1997; Nesbary, 2000). Within this study, using an online survey as opposed to a hard copy or paper survey provided the opportunity to hear what youth from across the country thought about citizenship, community and participation without being geographically restricted. Further, Internet surveys have many strengths such as "delivery/response speed, lower costs, worldwide geographic coverage, favourable response rates, ease of editing, openness responses, environmental correctness, semi-interactive nature, and response options" (Truell and Goss, 2002 ; Mehta & Sivadas, 1995).

Overall, there were only a few negative aspects to the use of the Internet as a survey method that came to light within this study. First, some youth tried to 'beat the system' and respond to the survey multiple times most likely in hopes of bettering their chances to win an iPod©. Some respondents would respond identically more than once. Others would have provided only a few of the answers and skip to the end. By reviewing responses and email addresses (to

be used for contact if they won a prize), most if not all of the duplications were caught.

Second, there were some difficulties with the photo images being accessible on all computers. Some teachers mentioned that the images would not open because of firewall restrictions at their schools. If this was the case, I sent an email version of the images to the teacher directly so they could make paper copies for the class.

Third, it is impossible to know if everyone who responded to the survey actually was between the ages of 14 and 18 and that their responses were truthful. Ultimately, however, this can be a problem in any survey. Even with mail surveys and phone interviews, it is impossible to know if the respondent is actually who they say they are.

Despite these few difficulties, the benefits in using the Internet as a research tool far outweighed the negatives. The survey portion of this research played a key role in informing the rest of the research with quantitative data and provided a balance to the qualitative data retrieved from the focus groups.

Survey Development and Design

Based on focus groups responses, questions from the interview guide were reformulated into closed-ended and short answer responses for the online survey portion of the fieldwork. Some demographic questions were also added. From this, a questionnaire was developed using the online survey design program SurveyMonkey© (surveymonkey.com). This program allows for multiple question design techniques to be used (chart format, closed-ended and open-

ended, single answer and multiple response questions, scroll down menus) and also offers 'skip technology' which allows respondents to skip over questions based on their previous responses. A secure data storage and display function as well as extensive layout and design options made this an ideal site for this research.

The online survey included 58 questions and took approximately 15 minutes to complete (see Appendix 7). It included the questions from the focus groups which garnered the most discussion and used 15 of the 25 images originally used for discussing citizenship within the focus groups (see Appendix 4, Fig. 1 through 15). The online survey also included more demographic questions as well as questions about Canada's national identity, and the section on "Community" was removed since this had been a less dynamic discussion area within the focus groups. Prior to the online launch of the questionnaire several high school educators and youth were enlisted to review the survey and provide input on the design, length, continuity, wording, and format. Based on the reviewers' comments, final adjustments to the questionnaire were made and then it was activated. Links to the survey were added onto the Town Youth Participation Strategy (TYPs)³³ website and to a MySpace page created specifically for this research. The link was also sent out to several youth related list serves, personal contacts, researchers, educators, and those who had

³³ TYPs is an organization which provides knowledge and training to groups and communities across Canada in order to help them create centres and opportunities for youth. TYPs allowed me to make contact across Canada with many youth who might be considered 'outsiders'. Many of the youth involved with these youth centres have experienced difficulty in traditional school settings and dealt with issues of family conflict, poverty, drugs, alcohol and teen pregnancy. At this time, there are approximately 60 youth centres affiliated with TYPs.

participated in the focus groups who were encouraged to send the link along to all of their contacts. The possibility of winning the iPod Nano® was used in this portion of the study as well in order to encourage more young people to participate and a winner was chosen randomly from those who completed the survey or took part in one of the focus groups.

Participants and Consent

This portion of the study was based primarily on a self-selected purposive sampling methodology, but the use of directed emails and electronic postings did provide an opportunity for snowball sampling to take effect as these tools allowed youth from across Canada to hear about the existence of the survey. In total, 340 youth from every province in Canada responded to the online survey³⁴ (see Appendix 8, Tables 4 through 7 for a demographic breakdown of the online respondents).

While it was impossible to confirm parental consent within the online portion of this research, the survey respondents themselves were provided with a letter of information which outlined the purpose and goals of the research and informed them of their right to anonymity and their ability to stop the survey at any point. This information along with the contact information of myself and the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee Chair were provided as the first screen of the survey. To accept the terms of consent, the respondent simply clicked on the “Yes” box stating they had read the information provided and wished to continue with the survey. If the respondent clicked the “No” box, he or

³⁴ In actuality, just over 400 youth were counted, but once duplicate respondents and those who had only logged into the survey but had not responded to the questions were removed, 340 participants remained.

she would be directed out of the survey and thanked for their time. Contrary to the focus groups, complete anonymity could be provided to online subjects as their names were never given and their only distinguishing information was in the form of an email address provided at the end of the survey if they wished to be placed in the draw to win the iPod Nano©.

ANALYSIS

The analysis portion of this research involves three primary aspects – focus group transcripts, online survey data analysis and a smaller overview of civics education in Ontario. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques are used to draw conclusions from the diverse youth sample in contribution to the exploration of this underdeveloped area of research.

Focus Group Transcripts

The general philosophy of grounded theory played a guiding role in the analysis of the qualitative data. From the use of theoretical saturation to guide the inclusion of additional focus groups and ultimately the cessation of data collection to the open and descriptive coding which followed, the analytical process of grounded theory provided useful guidelines for achieving qualitative validity.

Specifically, in order to locate emerging ideas from the qualitative data gathered from the focus groups a content analysis of the transcripts was performed. Through this process of inductive analysis, core themes and patterns presented themselves and were coded accordingly. Generally, five broad

categories of information were present: defining citizenship, definitions of good and bad citizenship, volunteerism, civics classes, and ideas for encouraging more youth to vote. Within each of these categories, the themes which emerged were then used as a foundation for the interpretive phase of analysis in conjunction with quantitative data gathered from the online survey.

Survey Data

SPSS was used to analyze the quantitative data. The key dimensions of socio-economic status, citizenship status, and rural/urban dwelling are used to account for variations in young people's views; as well, sex, age, citizenship status, political participation, and community involvement are analyzed. Drawing from the abundance of data acquired through the mixed method approach, the findings from the focus group discussions as well as the open-ended questions from the online survey are used to bring a voice to the numbers and supplement the quantitative portion of the data. Using the quantitative data to drive the analysis, data management began by moving the online results from the online storage system within Survey Monkey© to Excel. Once the data arrived in Excel, cleaning the data began. This task involved removing any respondents who had responded to the survey more than once, those who had only completed the front and back portions of the survey (in order to win the iPod), and those who had clearly falsified their responses. In total, the responses of 63 youth were removed from the data. This cleaned data was then uploaded to SPSS. Following this, several variables were created in order to improve the analysis process.

The primary variable created was a socio-economic indicator (SEI) variable which was produced by creating an index of question 59 and is intended to act as a proxy for broader discussions of socio-economic status³⁵. Originally, this information was to be combined with that of question 60 which asked respondents to identify their parents' employment. Due to the fact that the information received in this question was simply too vague to be deemed reliable, only question 59 was used (see Appendices 6 and 7 for a complete list of the questions included in the Personal Info Sheet and online survey). For this index, respondents received one point for every item their family possessed and two points for every item they possessed themselves. Once the totals were calculated for each respondent, the final numbers were divided into three equal groups³⁶. All of the respondents were then placed into one of three groups (low SEI, moderate SEI, and high SEI) based on their total score.

Other smaller variables such as a Younger/Older Age variable which divided youth into groups of 14-16 and 17-18 and two Community Size variables which grouped population sizes into two (community size of less than 50,000 and community size of more than 50,000) or three (rural/small town, small city, mid/large city) groups were also created amongst others.

Any open-ended questions from the survey were coded through content analysis in order to outline any emerging themes or patterns. Using both the

³⁵ Question 59 within the online survey reads: "Place a check mark (✓) next to each of the following possessions you have personally. If you do not have one yourself, but if someone in your household does, then put a check mark in that column." This question was also included in the focus group 'Personal Info Sheet' completed by respondents at the end of each group discussion.

³⁶ The groups could not be made completely equal in size because this would require splitting groups of like totals into two groups in order to accomplish even numbers. With this in mind, however, groups were kept as equal in number as possible.

themes found within the open-ended survey questions and the themes which emerged from the qualitative focus group data, typologies for 'defining citizenship' and 'encouraging youth voter turnout' emerged. These are explored throughout the following chapters.

This study provides an exploratory look at some of the patterns and themes which arise in the research of youth citizenship, participation and volunteerism within Canada. Given this objective, this study does not report statistics of statistical significance (except in Chapter 5 where sample sizes permit). While the total sample size of respondents within this study is large enough for claims of statistical significance to be made, two factors suggest such a procedure is not warranted: the primarily self-selected nature of the online sample³⁷ and the limited numbers within some demographic groups. Through the use of a mixed-method approach, grounded theory philosophies and comparative data, however, the findings discussed in the following chapters demonstrate rigor and quality as well as substantive importance. The thesis aims to contribute to further, more confirmatory research by presenting highly interesting and promising directions for more systematic analyses.

Additional Analysis

Due to the strong focus that schools across Canada have given over the last decade to the development of 'good' citizens, it seems pertinent that some time be spent on understanding whether the messages being taught are the messages being received by youth. More specifically, while youth perceptions of

³⁷ The online sample is described as *primarily* self-selected and not *completely* self-selected because some teachers took class time to have all of their students complete the survey.

the mandatory volunteering program and civics classes are included within the online portion of the data analysis, the messages within the class textbooks themselves as well as Ministry of Education guidelines could not be included. Educational guidelines are laid out provincially while the online survey reached youth across many provinces. For this reason, a final portion of the analysis included a general overview of civics education within Ontario schools. Based on a content analysis of the seven textbooks³⁸ approved by the Ontario Ministry of Education for the teaching of grade 10 civics classes, themes surrounding definitions of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship practices as well as the rights and responsibilities of citizens emerged. Additionally, Ministry documents outlining the expectations and guidelines for mandatory volunteer hours were reviewed.

³⁸ The seven approved textbooks include: *Active Citizen – You Can Make a Difference* (2006); *Civics Now* (2006); *Canadian Civics* (2005); *Civics Today* (2000); *Participating in a Democratic Society* (2000); *Citizenship – Issues and Action* (2000); *Canadian by Conviction – Asserting Our Citizenship* (2000).

CHAPTER 3

SHOW ME A CITIZEN

INTRODUCTION

As was discussed in the introduction, citizenship as a concept is both complex and shifting in its meaning, with academics and politicians alike entering into debates about this concept. All of this discussion, however, has only proven that there are multiple ways to think about the notion of citizenship, and within many of the discussions there fails to be an acknowledgment that 'lived' citizenship can be much different than that of the clearly delineated forms written about in books and journals³⁹. These complexities and discrepancies coupled with the fact that citizenship is not "part of the everyday language" of youth (Lister et al., 2003:237) can create roadblocks for researchers who wish to engage youth in conversations about citizenship. To mediate the distancing effects of such obstacles this research utilized the youth-friendly method of visual stimuli (25 photos including a variety of people of differing ages, sexes, socio-economic status, ethnicities, activities). This chapter will outline how youth use these photos to interpret citizenship status and provide an overview of the correlations between citizenship models and the youth who ascribe to them.

³⁹ A broader example of this discrepancy can exist in discussions of cosmopolitanism and global citizenship as they often fail to address how refugees and those with no existing citizen status fit into the equation (Nyers, 2003). Even within Canada, examples of how lived and theorized citizenship can be different exist. For example, recently, the legal rights of Canadian citizens for "life, liberty and justice" and to not be subject to "cruel and unusual treatment or punishment" have been cast aside depending on the citizen in question. Suaad Hagi Mohamud, a 31 year old Canadian woman, detained by Kenyan authorities as an imposter was left to her own devices after a plea for help to the Canadian High Commission saw her passport stripped and her case handed over to the Kenyan government to resolve. In the end, Suaad requested a DNA test to prove her identity and hence her Canadian citizenship (Mehta, 2009). Another example of complex citizenship exists in the case of Maher Arar and his fight to prove his innocence of al-Qaeda connections. He suffered torture and imprisonment in Syria while Canadian authorities remained uninvolved in supporting his case for nearly a year (maherarar.ca, 2009).

According to Robert Goldman, “reading [images] is an intrinsically social process, even when the process is performed alone” suggesting that individuals use a socially constructed cultural knowledge set which helps them to make sense of the world around them and the images they see (1992:xi, 2). This knowledge alters with place and time and is different for each individual depending on his or her lived experience. Within this research, each image used was chosen for a reason – to depict some reality such as poverty, employment, family – but each person looking at these images brings their own reality or cultural knowledge to bear. “Readers are neither homogeneous nor passive. Interpretations vary by subculture and interpretive community, as well as by class, gender and race” (Goldman, 1992:40). The use of photos in this research is based on an understanding that the way people interact with the photos reflects their image of themselves and their identity as a citizen.

MAKING DECISIONS

The first task involving the photos consisted of the youth being asked to decide whether each of the images depicted a citizen or not. This question was asked of both focus group participants and online respondents⁴⁰, and several trends emerged. In the focus groups for example, although this undoubtedly occurred with the online participants as well, it became evident that many of the youth required/desired some type of strategy for labeling citizens and non-

⁴⁰ The focus groups' question did not specify Canadian citizenship as a parameter while the online survey did (“Would you say that the person(s) in the photos below are citizens of Canada?”). Many of the focus group participants, however, used Canada as a guideline regardless. Also, the online survey included only 15 of the original 25 photos which had proven to be the most useful from the focus group discussions.

citizens. Taking note of this trend, several strategies seemed to emerge as youth began to use different tools of analysis to help them in their decision making. Some youth attempted to use numbers which had been printed on the back of the images for storing purposes as an attempt to decipher the who was a citizen and who was not.⁴¹ Some participants asked directly if there was a 'right' answer to the task to which they were assured there was not. These first two assessment tools used by the youth are of interest because they highlight some of the potential power constructs at play during the focus group discussions as many of the focus groups took place in a school setting. Robinson and Kellett warn that the adult/child power imbalance can be particularly acute within the school setting (2004) which could explain the participant's initial hesitation to simply give their opinions without first searching for the desired 'correct' answer. After the initial questions, however, the youth appeared to feel at ease and were willing to give their opinions quite freely.

Other tools respondents used to make decisions about the images included the use of 'clues' in the photos such as names on jerseys or sports equipment to help discern their citizenship status. For example, one image included a girl wearing a University of Toronto Varsity Blue's jersey while another included two young men standing with a football which had the insignia of a Canadian flag on the side of it. These points of reference within some of the photos were enough for some of the youth to decide that the individuals shown were also Canadian. Finally, youth attempted to decide who the individuals in

⁴¹ The images in each package were numbered on the back so they could be returned to the correct envelope following each session.

the photos actually were. Despite the care taken to choose images of individuals who were neither famous nor known, many of the teens tried to associate those in the photos with someone they had encountered before – one photo was thought to be of an actress in 'Kill Bill', another was said to resemble Chris Angel – the famous illusionist (in neither case were these associations correct). Failing an actual label, many youth would go so far as to create stories around the individuals in the images giving him or her characteristics and a history. By labeling each person in this way, as someone with a larger context than that which exists in a single photo, it was easier for the participants to make decisions regarding citizenship status

Adam: If I knew who [this] was it would be easier.

Others simply felt unable to move onto the next image if they could not decide 'who this person was'. Interestingly, the discussions which took place seldom, if ever, revolved around the person's actual birthplace, and more often than not dealt with the person's occupation, clothing, or gender. One such image which caused much discussion was that of an older woman who was very androgynous in appearance.



Fig. 24, Appendix 4⁴²

⁴² To aid in the discussions from this chapter and the next, the most prominently mentioned images which the respondents used to think about who they feel is a citizen and who is not (as well as 'good' and 'bad' citizenship practices in the following chapter), have been inserted. By

Each group seemed to stop briefly at this photo to debate the gender. Some would point out that the sex of the individual had no bearing on the final decision, but still groups were stalled. Many felt the individual looked like an author or a professor possibly. This returns to the point addressed above that the youth seemed determined to place each individual within a broader context than the photo showed. Who was this individual? What did he or she do? Is this a he or a she? More specifically, until the people within the photos could be provided with a narrative, he or she could not be labeled as a citizen or otherwise.

Similarly, Mike Anastas speaks extensively about the 'narrative' aspects of visual stimuli within market research as people tell colorful stories using images as their guide (1994). Robert Goldman in his discussion of advertisements and how people interpret them suggests that images invite "...a series of imaginative exchanges between viewers and the advertisement which positions viewers as subjects of discourse. Viewers must supply the interpretive labor necessary to assemble sign values..." (1992:38). For example, in a 2004 study which asked youth to identify images within a textbook, Watkins, Miller and Brubaker found that the young respondents commonly "elected to construct their own elaborate explanations and interpretations of the illustrations" rather than read accompanying text or ask clarifying questions (Watkins, Miller & Brubaker, 2004:27). These tools remind us that the images used do not exist within a vacuum. In order to make sense of the photos they saw, the youth within this study were drawing upon both their own lived experiences and knowledge and

referring to Appendix 4 you will see all 25 images used within the focus groups. The first 15 of these images are those which were used in the online survey.

visual clues present within the images in order to provide a grounding context by which to draw conclusions.

With the aid of the photo packages, the youth seemed able to surmount any foreseeable difficulties in articulating who was a citizen and who was not. Ultimately, five models of citizenship within Canada emerged through the focus group discussions and online surveys: universal status, mosaic, middle-classist, ageist, and participatory.

1. *Universal Status*

The first and most prominent understanding of citizenship is that everyone shown in the photos is a citizen regardless of their age, gender or ethnicity. Regardless of whether the original question included the specification of Canadian citizenship or citizenship in general, the universal status model is expressed by the majority of the youth. This model can be seen within existing literature on citizenship, and while contested on many accounts for its ability to white wash over inequality and reinforce homogeneity of the experience and status of white middle-class males, suggests that citizenship status allows us to transcend differences and individuality. “Whatever the social or group differences among citizens, whatever their inequalities of wealth, status, and power in the everyday activities of civil society, citizenship gives everyone the same status as peers in the political public” (Young, 1989:250; Joppke, 2002; Bosniak, 2000; Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). Further, within the ideal, universal citizenship calls for the participation and inclusion of everyone within a society

where rights are equally available to all and second-class treatment is not tolerated (Bosniak, 2000).

Within this task specifically, however, the youth were not asked to think about the rights or treatment of those whom they labeled as a citizen, only to decide on the status itself. With that in mind, universal status here simply refers to the label of citizen as a static formal status and not necessarily an active role. Lines of nationality were also not necessarily important within the focus group discussions. For example, some youth felt that even if an image depicted someone who was not likely a citizen of Canada, such as those living with famine and extreme poverty, they were still citizens somewhere.



Fig. 19, Appendix 4

Sarah: *Well, they're all citizens.*

Tammy: *Some are better than others, but they all belong some place.*

Others felt that because Canada is so diverse, even images of those who might not be seen as 'traditionally' Canadian could still, in fact, be labeled as a citizen of this country. Altogether, a third (34%) of all online respondents felt that all of the images represented Canadian citizens, and regardless of the respondent's gender, ethnicity, age or country of birth, a universal model of citizenship was the most common understanding. This perception of inclusivity

suggests that most youth do not feel that citizenship itself is something which must be earned or attained – it simply is. Furthermore, youth who fall within this category of defining citizenship are unique to this group. It is not possible, for example, to believe that everyone is a citizen and also believe that only those who are involved in the community are citizens. In contrast, other understandings of citizenship which will be discussed later provide youth with the opportunity to have multiple views on citizenship as the respondents might feel that age *and* involvement are important factors in defining a citizen. Lister, Smith, Middleton and Cox's British study on this topic also found universal status to be the most common model of citizenship⁴³. Within their study, however, two thirds of the youth fell into this category.

Despite universalism being the most common model of citizenship amongst the youth, in this study there are some variations within various demographic groups. With 15 photos of potential citizens included online, the average number of photos which people thought were citizens of Canada was 12.1 with 34% of the total population giving all 15 photos a positive vote ("Yes, they are a Canadian citizen"). The groups with the highest positive response rates are those who plan on going to work directly after high school (mean:13.1; 43% chose all 15), those who lived in a rural area (mean: 12.3; 40% chose all 15), and those with fewest socio-economic status indicators (mean: 12.3; 38% chose all 15). The groups with the lowest positive responses were those who live in big cities (mean: 12.0; 31% chose all 15), those who moved to Canada at

⁴³ Lister et al.'s universal model includes treatment of citizens as well as aspects of belonging; within this research, however, labels of behaviour and treatment have been kept as a separate discussion.

five years of age or older (mean: 11.9; 22% chose all 15), and those with the most socio-economic status indicators (mean: 11.7; 30% chose all 15). This suggests that those who plan on entering the workforce directly after high school, rural dwellers and those with low socio-economic status will be most likely to see everyone as Canadian or be the most accepting and that urban dwellers or those with high socio-economic status will be the least accepting of diversity when it comes to citizenship status within Canada.

To explore this interpretation further, variables which combined some of these demographic variables were created⁴⁴. As such, wealthy city dwellers tended to give an average of 11.3 positive responses and applied to the universal model of citizenship 32% of the time. Poorer rural dwellers tended to give an average of 11.7 positive responses out of 15 and applied the universal model of citizenship 47% of the time. Therefore, rural youth with the lowest socio-economic indicators are approximately 47% more likely than wealthy urban youth to feel that everyone is a citizen.

It is also pertinent to note that while gender does not have an impact on the likelihood that a respondent will apply to the universal model of citizenship (35% of males and 34% of females chose all 15 photos), it does seem to have an impact on the general level of acceptance overall. More specifically, while males were slightly more likely to identify all photos as citizens of Canada, they were generally less accepting as a group with an average of 11.9 photos being

⁴⁴ Due to the fact that so few respondents plan on entering the work force directly or had moved to Canada after 5 years of age, it was impossible to include these variables as part of the larger computed variable.

identified as Canadian. On the other hand, females were generally more accepting overall with an average of 12.3 photos being identified as Canadian.

If future plans for continuing education are used as a proxy for current educational success, it seems that of those with the highest levels of success (or those who plan on attending university), 34% fit into a universal understanding of citizenship while 43% of those planning on heading straight into the workplace feel the same way. Those planning on attending college fall in the middle with 36%. Based on this additional piece of information, it is possible that individuals with the highest socio-economic status and the highest levels of educational success are not simply less inclusive but are more likely to think about some of the complexities of what makes an individual a citizen. This differentiation in levels of acceptance will be further explored in the following chapters on 'good' and 'bad' citizenship qualities.

Table 3.1
Demographic Overview of Those Who
Ascribe to a Universal Citizenship Model

Demographic Group	Mean*	% Universal Model**	N
TOTAL ONLINE POPULATION	12.1	34%	340
GENDER			
Male	11.9	35%	112
Female	12.3	34%	228
VISIBLE MINORITY STATUS			
Visible Minority	12.1	37%	96
Non-Visible Minority	12.1	32%	244
COMMUNITY SIZE			
Rural/Small Town	12.3	40%	116
Small City	12.2	32%	97
Mid/Large Sized City	12.0	31%	125
AGE			
Younger (14-16years)	12.2	34%	175
Older (17-18 years)	12.1	34%	164
CITIZENSHIP STATUS			
Whole Family Born in Canada	12.1	35%	222
Moved to Canada at the Age of 5 or Later	11.9	22%	10

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS			
Lowest Socio-Economic Indicators	12.3	38%	74
Highest Socio-Economic Indicators	11.7	30%	83
EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS			
Plans to Attend University	12.1	34%	249
Plans to Attend College	11.9	36%	60
Directly into Workforce	13.1	43%	17
OTHER			
Urban Dwellers with High Socio-Economic Indicators	11.3	32%	34
Rural Dwellers with Low Socio-Economic Indicators	11.7	47%	32

2. *Mosaic*⁴⁵

The second most common means of discussing Canadian citizenship was through a multicultural lens. While certainly there were youth who excluded certain images based solely on the fact that they depicted visible minorities, this was rare and was usually expressed by a handful of rural males within the focus groups. In fact, only 8% of online respondents excluded all visible minorities.

What was more common was the exclusion of images which depicted *only* visible

⁴⁵ Unlike the Universal Status Model, the following 4 models will not be presented with reference to the statistical popularity of the model as a whole, only with reference to individual images which promote such an understanding. More specifically, the Universal Model was evident for online respondents in their choice of all 15 photos as citizens. Contrarily, it is impossible to know whether an online respondent's commitment to a specific model of citizenship helped to make their decisions of who is and is not a citizen of Canada. It is only possible to draw conclusions based on a combination of focus group discussions and corresponding photos from the online survey. Further, with each of the other 4 models it is possible to adhere to more than one model at any given time. For example, it is possible to feel that Canadian citizens are diverse (Mosaic Model) and that they must also contribute to society (Participation Model), but if a respondent believes that everyone is a citizen (Universal Model) then no other model can apply.

minorities in group settings. For example, many participants would *include* the photo of the African American nurse who stood alone but would *exclude* the group of Asian women working on computers or the group of Middle Eastern construction workers. When asked to explain why this was the case, the youth would express their belief that it just is not 'normal' to see this in Canada.



Fig. 9, Appendix 4



Fig. 13, Appendix 4



Fig. 18, Appendix 4

Tara: Well basically it seems like for all of our pictures we looked for things that were familiar to Canada...like a group of Asians and in a specific spot is a little different. Usually we're a lot more diverse so that's probably why it's not Canadian.

Joe: And this computer one, they're all, they're all Chinese people, and there's different types of people here...so they're all probably not Canadian citizens.

While others disagreed with the exclusion of groups of visible minorities, they did suggest that a 'traditional' Canadian is still Caucasian.

Kevin: Seeing like whatever, the three Asians together, I mean a lot, most of the big places anywhere whether it's Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto – there's almost always different communities like ethnic communities where you find lots of everyone together so I think personally Canada's at the point where this is possible. Although if someone asked me to show like a typical Canadian I'll probably still show like a white male or a white family, whatever. But it's not like that's who I think Canadians are, that's just the majority. As far as different ethnic backgrounds, I don't know, like even just our class has so many.

Within a mosaic model of citizenship then, diversity is the critical point which was missing from the aforementioned images. More specifically, groups of

only Caucasians were acceptable, but not groups of people who were all of the same non-white minority group⁴⁶. Certainly, this model was evident online as well with 36% of the respondents suggesting that the Asian office workers (Fig. 13, Appendix 4) were not Canadian citizens. This image received the second lowest number of positive responses. This was true across the board except with youth who were born in Canada but neither of their parents had been born here. For them, the image of the tattooed man (Fig. 6, Appendix 4) earned lower scores than the Asian office workers.⁴⁷ Aboriginal youth were the least likely to feel that these women were Canadian citizens (38%) while children born in Canada to only one Canadian born parent were the most likely to consider them Canadian (73%).

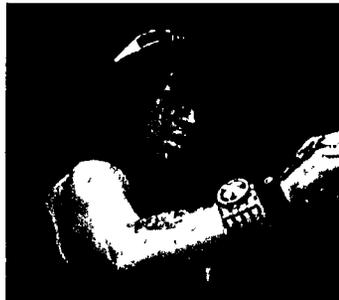


Fig. 6, Appendix 4

While not directly related to the mosaic model of citizenship, an image which warrants some discussion here based on the issue of cultural diversity is that of the woman wearing a burqa. In general, there were several photos which generated more discussion than others, and this was one such image. Many of the youth found this image confusing, often wondering if this was a person at all.

⁴⁶ Interestingly, it would seem despite what the youth claim to be the 'average' Canadian (white family), a photo which included no one of this description, but included a variety of visible minorities from *different* ethnicities would have been Canadian.

⁴⁷ Further qualitative analysis would be required to understand why this is the case.



Fig. 17, Appendix 4

Jill: She's really scary.

Aden: I didn't even know if that was a person or a statue.

These comments seemed surprising in today's post 9-11 world where so much discussion and media attention has been given to the culture of the Middle East. Because the first focus groups were located in rural and small town communities, it seemed completely plausible that these comments were indicative of the lack of diversity within rural schools. Certainly, if a young person is not exposed to other cultures, they cannot be expected to identify with images foreign to their experience. This was not the case, however, and these comments continued in the urban schools as well where multiculturalism and diversity are realities in most settings. Indeed, some of the comments were made while we were sitting in a room where an image of a woman wearing a burqa hung on the wall, but still this image seemed new and foreign to the youth. Despite most, if not all, of the youth having been exposed to Muslim women wearing some form of head covering, they still seemed unfamiliar with someone wearing a burqa.

Perhaps first hand exposure to diversity is more important in young people's lives than images presented in the media or through school. The necessity of lived experience with respect to diversity becomes even more of a

reality if one considers the current state of multiculturalism in the news and prime time media. Despite Canada's commitment to multiculturalism at both the policy level and through the views of its citizens and the fact that 16% of its population considers themselves to be a visible minority, these realities are not necessarily available in the reflections of the media (Fleras, 1995; Statistics Canada). For example, in a 2008 study of four prime time news shows on each of the three major cable news networks in the United States – Fox News, CNN and MSNBC – it was found that during one month of shows, 84% of guests were white (and 64% were male). During that same month, only 4 people of Middle Eastern descent were interviewed and only one of those was a woman – she was almost certainly not wearing a burqa (MediaMatters, 2008). Minelle Mahtani argues that Canadian news media has similar deficiencies as minority groups are repeatedly marginalized or absent while the dominant culture is presented and reinforced as the norm within key broadcaster roles (2001; 2008).

It could be argued that traditional news media is not a central source for information gathering for many youth, so it is also important to look at the content of other prime time television shows as they occupy "...a central position in our culture as a storyteller, conveying much about what is normal, acceptable and expected as well as what is irrelevant and outside of the mainstream" (Children Now, 2002; Shohat & Stam, 1995). In one study of American primetime entertainment shows, the Children Now research organization found that during the 2003-2004 television season, almost three quarters (73%) of all primetime characters were white, only 18% were African American and 0.5% were of

Middle Eastern descent (Children Now, 2004). Of the minorities shown on television they often take on the specific roles of 1) invisible and irrelevant, 2) race-role stereotypes, 3) social problems, or 4) tokens of entertainment or decoration (Fleras, 1995).

In Canada, our children and youth programming is well known for reflecting diversity, but primetime viewing is another story (Media Awareness Network, 2009). Mahtani references the same concerns of invisibility which are evident in American television in Canadian media as well. Further, when they are present, minorities are often characterized as negative, deviant and threatening with little balance between uni-dimensionality or sensationalism (2001; 2008; Media Awareness Network, 2009; Karim, 1995). If popular North American media at large are any indicator of the diversity experienced by many youth then it is not surprising that so many young people seem unfamiliar with some other cultures⁴⁸.

An interesting diversion from the original comments based on a lack of knowledge came from two young Muslim women (both wearing head scarves themselves) as they too discussed the photo of the woman in the burqa but from a very different perspective.

Farah: *To be honest I haven't seen somebody wear this.*

Jasmin: *Either have I, not this style.*

Farah: *Usually they're going to wear their regular one.*

Jasmin: *Because this style is an Afghani style so...*

Farah: *She's from Afghanistan.*

⁴⁸ The relatively new show *Little Mosque on the Prairie* available on CBC has changed the primetime landscape somewhat as almost all of the main characters are Muslim and many wear traditional clothing such as hijabs; burqas are still not shown, however.

For these young women, it was not a question of whether this photo was of a person or a statue, but of how specifically the individual was wearing her covering and where that meant she was from.⁴⁹

Discussions of ethnicity and skin colour are important with respect to conceptualizations of citizenship because they signal that despite a growing acceptance for diversity within many nation states, there is still an underlying sense of insiders and outsiders – those who represent ‘typical’ Canadians and those who came after. As previously mentioned, according to current Statistics Canada findings, approximately 16% of Canadians consider themselves to be a visible minority, but this number is expected to rise to between 19% and 25% by 2017 as Canadian residents continue to have smaller families, baby boomers begin to pass away and immigration becomes the driving force behind population growth (Bélanger et al., 2005; Cheadle, 2007). With this shift in the population, it is inevitable that Canada, at some point, will be faced with a tipping point where ‘those who came after’ eventually out number ‘the typical Canadian’. As this happens, it will be interesting to see whether perceptions of what a Canadian looks like will change as well.

Ethnicity and visible minority status were discussed by some of the youth in Lister et al.’s research, but it was not considered a defining factor in labeling citizens. For example, within their study some individuals of ethnic minority commented on the importance of everyone being treated as equals regardless of their ethnicity. Lister et al. included these comments as evidence of a universal

⁴⁹ Due to the fact that this image resulted in so much discussion – most often from the point of confusion – it was excluded from the online survey.

model of citizenship. Other respondents from their research referenced ethnicity in relation to national identity. Some felt that when minorities continue to speak another language and have different cultural beliefs, they cannot consider themselves to be British as well. Others were more accepting. For these respondents, regardless of whether a minority group chose to keep a distinct set of cultural practices or beliefs, they should still be considered the same as any other British citizen. These last remarks are more in accordance with the mosaic model of citizenship discussed by Canadian youth above and the value they place on multiculturalism and diversity.

3. Middle Classist

Another model used by youth to identify Canadian citizenship was that of 'middle classist'. Both online and within the focus groups many of the respondents tended to exclude not only those living in abject poverty, but also those of extreme wealth. The youth from the focus groups clarified that it was not that these individuals were not citizens in general – just not citizens of Canada. With respect to the image of people living in poverty (Fig. 19, Appendix 4), the teens felt that while poverty did exist in Canada, we have social programs in place to mediate the impact.

Melanie: *We didn't think that Canada would let children starve in their community.*

Wendy: *Like we could have citizens that look like that, but they would have been treated different kind of.*

Melanie: *Yeah. Like someone with Family or Child Services or something would help basically.*

With respect to the image of extreme wealth, this too did not seem very 'Canadian' according to the youth. When asked to explain, they had this to say about the image of a young man leaning on a Rolls Royce.



Fig. 10, Appendix 4

Farah: Because of his suit, and the nice car and the attitude that he looks American. Not so much Canadian.

Jasmin: Yeah and like I'm so much better than you with the Rolls Royce, right?

While the image of abject poverty was not included in the online portion of the study, the image of the wealthy young man was the photo to be considered a Canadian citizen least often. Only half (52%) of all online respondents felt that the Rolls Royce driver was a Canadian citizen. Interestingly, again it was respondents of Aboriginal descent who were the least likely to feel that this individual was Canadian (only 33% thought he was a citizen of Canada)⁵⁰ and respondents who were born in Canada to only one Canadian born parent were the most likely to think that this individual was also Canadian (67%). The low rate of positive responses from the Aboriginal community may be related to the fact that the reality of many Aboriginal youth is so far removed from the luxury depicted in the photo – almost half of all Aboriginal youth living both on and off of

⁵⁰ This was followed closely by the youngest respondents (14 years old) with only 34% feeling that he was a Canadian citizen.

a reserve live in poverty (Campaign 2000, 2002). Because of this, it would seem unlikely that this person is Canadian at all.

Overall, the perception of Canada as predominantly middle class could be interpreted as an interesting by-product of our past. As reports of a dwindling middle class circle in the media, it seems that the majority of young people (and arguably adults as well) still feel that Canadians are predominantly part of the middle class with equal access to possessions, the possibility of home ownership and the ability to purchase consumer products above and beyond life's bare necessities. The Canadian belief in classlessness or uniformity is further perpetuated through advertising and the media in general (Coupland, 2002; Raboy, 1997; Porter, 1965; Mahtani, 2001). This is not the case with American content, however, and speaks to the Americanization of our air waves as the youth within the focus groups almost unanimously felt that the wealthy young man in the photo was American.

The reality of the current global climate would suggest that neo-liberal forces have played an important role in current citizenship debates through the erosion of nation-state notions of sovereignty. More specifically, as global economies and international corporate structures emerge and thrive, governments begin to focus on markets and economic determinism rather than the previously popular Keynesian strategies to guide their policies. As such, social citizenship has begun to suffer at the hands of the neo-liberal policies of leaders like Thatcher, Reagan, and Mulroney who saw social programs as a drain on the economy rather than an investment in the nation's citizens (Biel,

2000; Brodie, 2002; Siltanen, 2002; Stasiulis, 2002). The reduction of state participation in the redistribution of economic aid leaves NGOs (non-government organizations), volunteer organizations and families to pick up the slack. This creates growing divides between the haves and the have nots as “distinct segments of society, especially those with tenuous links to the wage economy” become further isolated (Brodie, 2002). Further, some scholars such as Siltanen (2002) argue that the idealization of past social citizenship practices is misplaced and blurs historic inequalities in social policy. Siltanen also points to a reported “...shift away from a commitment to equality as a social policy goal...” in current literature; however, this observation seems to have gone unwitnessed by some of the youth who pointed to the social programs in place to mitigate the realities of poverty in this country.

While social class (‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’) was used as a demographic variable amongst the youth in Lister’s study, it also did not act as a defining factor for citizenship status.

4. Ageist

A fourth way of contemplating citizenship was to think about this status in terms of age. While age was more explicitly discussed by many respondents in terms of the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ qualities of a citizen (based primarily on one’s ability to contribute) as well as one’s treatment as a citizen, it was also used by some to differentiate who should be considered a citizen at all. This was a much less common model but, nonetheless, some respondents felt that it was not possible

to include a baby or young children as citizens because they could not yet *choose* to be one.



Fig. 12, Appendix 4



Fig. 21, Appendix 4



Fig. 23, Appendix 4

Aden: *I think you're only a citizen by choice; babies can't make a choice yet.*

Bill: *It's not a citizen; it can't speak; it's a baby!*

Others felt that infants couldn't be counted as citizens because they were too young to contribute. When discussing the image of the baby one youth stated:

Phil: *No, she's not a citizen because she's not active in the community yet.*

Still others pointed out that:

Susan: *They can't really help.*

Bill: *They're a burden.*

When asked at what age an individual would be considered a citizen, there was little consensus on the matter, and it was difficult for some of the youth to articulate an age. Some suggested that at the age of 5 or 6 one should be considered a citizen; others felt that 16 would be an appropriate age; some even suggested that 18 would be an appropriate age although this was quickly dismissed by the group as unreasonably old. Of the exact ages provided, 16 did seem to be the most popular amongst the groups; however, ultimately it was decided that the age could vary depending on the maturity of the individual. One

young man pointed out that a person could be considered a citizen when they began to contribute.

Tom: When you start working, when you can start helping, giving back to the community rather than taking...

Others, however, reverted back to the importance of consciousness:

Aden: When you start thinking for yourself you can be a citizen. I don't know what age that is but...

Contrary to these discussions, within the online survey, the baby was actually the photo which received the most positive responses. In fact, 89% of the respondents felt that this was a Canadian citizen. An explanation of the variation between the focus groups and the online survey may stem from the opportunity within the focus groups to discuss thoughts with others. Specifically, thinking about who was a citizen and who was not became a process of interaction where any hesitation over what might make someone a citizen or not could be discussed and taken into account – hence, the creation of a ‘maybe’ pile for some groups of respondents. For other groups, the discussion of age was simply a precursor to a final decision that these images of children were, in fact, citizens. As a moderator, I was able to tap into these discussions and probe these hesitations over age further. Respondents from the online survey worked alone resulting in only their final decision about the image being recorded. Perhaps similar concerns over age arose for online respondents as well, but without an outlet to discuss these thoughts, it is impossible to know. This variation in responses provides a useful example of how a mixed-method approach can add greater depth to research findings.

Interestingly, with respect to decisions about citizenship status these comments of productivity and contribution did not spill over to other segments of the population who lived in poverty or who were disabled in some way and might also be considered a burden on society. Even though citizen participation was clearly part of the discussion, age was the deciding factor. For this reason, it seemed necessary to differentiate ageism as a model from the participatory model below.

Despite the fact that age itself was not considered a model for defining citizenship within the Lister et al. study, age did present itself as a key to self-identification as a citizen within their research. Within the youth aged 16-26 during the course of their study, older respondents were more likely to consider themselves citizens than younger respondents. Many of the British youth felt that until they had made societal contributions such as holding employment, volunteering and voting, they could not classify themselves as citizens (2003). Although youth within this study spoke about age and contribution with reference to images and definitions of citizenship and not with reference to their own status as citizens, similar ideas emerged. Respondents within this study, for example, spoke of employment and community involvement as key factors to defining who is a citizen. They also mentioned the importance of 'thinking for yourself' which ties into the conceptions of full-citizenship being tied to independence – both economically and socially. While not explicitly expressed by Lister et al., it can be argued that age becomes a proxy for these achievements made throughout the life cycle and a defining factor of citizenship or at least full-citizenship.

5. Participatory

Intertwined with each of the previous models of citizenship is the participatory model of citizenship. Many of the youth would combine this concept with others when thinking about definitions of citizenship. For example, while some participants would speak of universal citizenship as the reality of citizenship, they clarified that when they thought about being a citizen it went beyond a passport or birth certificate.

Tina: You can't just come to our country and get a piece of paper to say you're a citizen. You have to live in the country, you have to experience a thing, participate and other stuff. So maybe a government might say it's alright, but other people might discriminate against you or whatever.

Tania: See like for anything it's not about if you have a piece of paper that says you're a citizen. I don't think, I mean, like I know that's what a citizen is, but I think it's just like what you do.

Here, it is evident that while the mosaic model of citizenship is being taken into consideration, it is being overshadowed by the importance that to be a citizen of any country means more than just arriving bags in hand – it means getting involved and becoming part of a community.

When speaking about the photo of the seemingly loitering youth some participants placed them in the non-citizen pile.



Fig. 14, Appendix 4

Ewen: I think what makes them not citizens, or what we define as not citizens is that they're not contributing to anything productive or not so much productive but they may be, maybe they're you know, they're evil (laugh) I can't think of a way to say it but...

Whenever the youth spoke about participating, they seemed clear that while this is not the legal or juridical definition of a citizen, it was such an important aspect of citizenship, it should be used as a defining factor. It also suggests that many youth see citizenship both on a larger national level, but also, more pertinently, at a community level. Citizenship within this model blurs the boundaries between macro and micro scales of being a citizen and raises important ideas about actualizing our citizenship instead of merely carrying it with us in our wallets. Essentially, citizenship becomes a verb instead of a noun within the participatory model.

Youth within the Lister et al. study also found participation to be a key factor in defining citizenship. Their 'constructive social participation model', however, discusses both the importance of abiding by the law as well as the importance of community involvement. Comparatively, in definitions of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship practices, British youth as well as Canadian youth see the importance of participation as will be discussed in the following chapters.

DEFINING CANADA

There are specific ways through which we define and differentiate ourselves as Canadians. These models, for example, speak as much to how we think about Canada as it does to how young people think about who can be

labeled as a citizen. The universal and middle-classist models remind us that Canada is seen as an inclusive and moderate nation where everyone has the opportunity to be part of a community and everyone has the right to a certain standard of living (whether through their own labour or through social assistance). Contrary to a belief in the 'American Dream' where with hard work anyone can be rich, the youth in this study exhibited a belief that in Canada everyone has the possibility to achieve a reasonable standard of living and to be treated with respect and as equals. These principles are reiterated by the youth in the following chapters on 'good' and 'bad' citizenship as well. In Reginald Bibby's 2000 survey of Canadian youth he found that 79% of respondents felt they would be more financially stable than their parents and 72% felt that anyone who works hard will rise to the top (2001). Despite this expectation of 'rising to the top', however, it seems that extreme wealth is still not considered very realistic. The youth in this study very clearly differentiate between Canada and the United States with respect to opulent wealth, and the media only helps to reiterate these beliefs through programming such as *Gossip Girl* (CTV) or *My Super Sweet Sixteen* (MTV)⁵¹ which focus on the lifestyles of extremely wealthy American teens. In contrast, Canadian content tends to portray a more attainable or average standard of living through such shows as *Degrassi: The Next Generation* (CTV), *Flashpoint* (CTV) or *Being Erica* (CBC)⁵². Mahtani expresses just this sentiment concerning the media explaining that, in Canada,

⁵¹ *Gossip Girl* follows the trials and tribulations of Manhattan's wealthiest youth and *My Super Sweet Sixteen* is a reality TV show depicting spoiled 16 year olds and their wealthy families holding lavish and over-the-top parties to celebrate this milestone birthday.

⁵² One contradiction to this programming is a recent drama added to the CBC lineup entitled *Wild Roses* which, in part, follows the lives of rich oil families in Calgary.

the primarily middle class makeup of media workers and management results in the images and stories presented being those which reflect their experiences, stereotypes and frames of thinking – primarily those of the middle class white male. More specifically, as media gate-keepers, the middle class make decisions about what the 'real' Canada looks like (2001; Raboy, 1997; Porter, 1965). Even public figures support our understanding of a more moderate lifestyle than that set out by Americans: "Canadians live longer, healthier lives than do Americans, at least in part because of the more equal distribution of wealth in our country" (Suzuki, 2000). Further, helping those in need to achieve this 'middle ground' is expected, but receiving a free ride (from wealthy family or the state) is frowned upon.

Multiculturalism is another distinctively Canadian characteristic which is echoed in the Mosaic model of citizenship outlined here. The youth within this research very clearly see Canada as a place of diversity despite the fact that they also paradoxically fall back on the 'white family' as a traditional Canadian image. As part of the mandated curriculum for all students as well as a unique branch of the government within Heritage Canada, multiculturalism is a well defined part of Canadian culture. In fact, Canada and Australia are two of only a handful of countries around the world that have put a multicultural form of citizenship into practice encouraging "the freedom of all members of Canadian society [not just minorities] to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage" (Kymlicka, 1998; Joppke, 2002). Further, the Spicer Commission of 1991 identified an 'appreciation for diversity' as one of the key cultural values held by Canadians

(CFCF, 35-45; Lipset, 1964; Ravelli, 2004; Fleras, 1995). In support of these findings, according to Bibby in his 2000 study, 66% of the Canadian teens he interviewed prefer a 'mosaic' style of immigration over a 'melting pot' style (2001). In 2008, he found that 79% of youth felt that "diversity is good for Canada" (2009:14).

It is important to note that in the post 9/11 world we live in today, there has certainly been some strain placed on multicultural ideologies. The Twin Tower attacks in 2001, the 'War on Terror' which began shortly after, and the British subway bombings in 2005 repeatedly placed a negative media spotlight on Muslim extremists. This balanced with the now questionable attack on Iraq and the uncovering of mistreatment of Iraqi detainees by US forces has created race tensions in the United States and abroad (Cunningham, 2005; Sivananden, 2006). Generally, these racial tensions have resulted in renewed discussions of immigration policies and a fear in many developed nations of 'the other'. Also, multiculturalism has been blamed for breeding terrorism by allowing immigrants to a country to continue to value their own cultural and religious beliefs at the expense of becoming enmeshed in the country where they now live (Sivananden, 2006). Even within Canada where we have, to date, remained free of any successful terrorist attacks and abstained from participating in the war on Iraq, changes to our immigration policies have also occurred. Falling in line with American practices, our previously more open policies now view immigrants as either preferred or non-preferred with many being seen as potential threats to

security based on their country of origin or their religious beliefs and affiliations (Kruger, Mulder & Korenic, 2004).

Despite these more recent political realities, overall, the data on Canadian lifestyles and beliefs discussed here contributes to a general sense of equality seen within the models of citizenship outlined by the youth above. Whether it be ethnic equality, economic equality, or equality in general as seen within the universal model, many youth point to the important quality of impartiality in citizenship. Interestingly, while youth do not tend to use much of the language common in citizenship literature – rights, responsibilities, civic duty – to discuss their ideas about being a citizen, equality is one aspect where they seem to find common ground. For example, Janoski and Gran speak about the importance of “universalistic rights” and the ideal of “citizenship [as] a statement of equality” even when this is not the reality (2002:13).

EVERYONE BELONGS

One point that it is critical to highlight here, is that within these classless and multicultural models of citizenship even those who are excluded are only excluded on the basis of *Canadian* citizenship. It is not as if the youth spoke of those excluded individuals as being in limbo without any citizenship status. Rather, they saw their ‘non-citizens’ as part of another county or nation, as ‘belonging’ elsewhere – Germany, Japan, United States. What about those who live outside of the protection of a nation state? Refugees, the Roma, the exiled – where do they belong within these tidy examples of citizenship? This level of

thinking is not yet evident within the youth from this study – that being said, this line of reasoning has been excluded from much of the past scholarly work on citizenship as well.⁵³

With five models for defining citizenship – universal status, mosaic, middle-classist, ageist, and participatory – youth understandings of who is and is not a citizen drew upon the overarching themes of equality and community involvement (for a complete overview of the demographic groups and their levels of acceptance for each photo see Appendix 8, Table 8). Within their discussion of citizenship status several images, including that of the young man and the Rolls Royce (Fig. 10, Appendix 4) and the woman wearing a burqa (Fig. 17, Appendix 4), generated a considerable amount of discussion. As the youth move onto discussions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ qualities of being a citizen, the prominence of these images and others continue. The following chapter will discuss the behaviours youth see as positive and negative as they relate to citizenship.

⁵³ For further discussion on excluded and abject citizens see Sharkey & Shields (2008); Nyers (2003); and Bennett (2004).

CHAPTER IV

GOOD AND BAD CITIZENS

CALL IT AS YOU SEE IT

Following the questions put to youth about who is and is not a citizen, the focus of discussion turned to articulating good and bad citizenship qualities. In this chapter, the characteristics of a 'good' and 'bad' citizen and how youth interpret these identities will be discussed. In the same way that definitions of citizenship change and evolve over time, so too do the definitions of 'good' and 'bad' citizens (Dalton, 2008). Certainly some qualities and behaviours such as traditional political involvement have had a more consistent presence within the story of citizenship; other behaviours, however, can be linked to transformations in the world around us. Societal and political changes, for instance, can contribute to altered understandings of what it means to be a 'good' citizen. For example, variations within the labour force such as women joining the paid work world or rising unemployment rates can shift the priorities of 'good' citizenship within a society as it changes the way people view those requiring financial assistance from the government (Rentoul, 1989). Broader shifts such as the neo-liberal movement in politics and state policies which takes the responsibility of citizen care out of the hands of the government and places it into the hands of the public itself can also affect our perceptions of 'good' citizenship. Specifically, as society experiences a greater need for everyday citizens to step in to help care for those in need, the definition of the 'good' citizen begins to shift towards priorities of community involvement and volunteering (Dalton, 2008; Smith, 2002;

Dagger, 2002). Some even argue that the general shift of importance from political activism to civic duty that we are currently witnessing actually satisfies those in power despite outward cries against apathy as this shift ultimately serves to encourage the public fulfillment of social care (Smith, 2002). In addition, Dalton argues in his recent book, *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation is Reshaping American Politics*, that everything from generational differences and ethnicity to education levels and standards of living can affect how we view the practices of 'good' citizenship or what he calls "citizenship norms" (2008). The real question, however, is whether these theoretical arguments of shifting definitions of 'good' and 'bad' seen within the citizenship literature and the broader political community will be evident in the definitions put forth by the youth within this study.

As outlined previously in the introductory chapter, the dichotomous terminology of 'good' and 'bad' is riddled with pitfalls which should give many academics pause. While some authors define these terms, (Kingswell, 2006) others simply rely on the reader's existing cultural knowledge in order to draw conclusions (Marshall, 1950). Even with explanation, there is often much room for interpretation ultimately leaving the reader to make value-based decisions about citizenship behaviours based on his or her own belief systems and lived experiences. For example, some argue that an important aspect of 'good' citizenship is a sense of morality and virtue (Wood, 1991; Putnam, 2000). This type of language can be problematic in that it leaves itself open to interpretation and begs the question of who decides how these terms will be defined and

actualized at any given time (Selznick, 1998). It is a very Habermasian view that there could actually be an agreement upon the definitions of a public good. Aside from the lofty aspiration of being able to agree on a common goal or good, one must again question whose definitions are being put forth. Which governing bodies will judge right and wrong, good and bad, and how will these judgments be enforced (Habermas, 1996a; Habermas, 1996b; Rose, 2000; Bowden, 2003; Chandler, 2003)? With reference to this research, it will be interesting to see if the definitions provided within the literature are similar to those expressed by the youth or whether their interpretations of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship behaviours are unique.

LEARNING THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

As citizens-in-the-making, young people are socialized as to the ways in which they are to conduct themselves as adults through the norms reflected in middle class society – obey the law, help your neighbours, find employment, raise a family and so on. In order to internalize definitions of right and wrong, good and bad, Sutherland (1947) suggests that differential association must take place through interactions with significant people and groups in our lives (see also Repinski & Shonk, 2002). Becker (1973) argues that no act is deviant until it has been labeled as such by those in positions of power (see also Geiger & Fischer, 2005). In addition to the important influencing factors of friends and family within an individual's life, there are many institutions which can be influential as well; governments, religious groups, academics, and the media

contribute to understandings of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship for the public at large. An important agent of socialization in the lives of youth specifically is the education system. Historically, these 'socializing duties' were considered primarily the task of the family. When 'the state' realized that the values of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship were not always being promoted to their satisfaction within the home, these lessons were extended into the schools (Beauvais, 2001; Durkheim, 1968; Kalberg, 1993; Roche, 1994; Marshall, 1950).

Today, citizenship is formally taught within the curriculum of Canadian high schools in the form of civics classes, but it could be argued that the lessons of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship extend beyond these classes specifically. For example, some suggest that while civics classes promote the manifest functions of the education system which can lead to the creation of 'good' citizens, the education system itself promotes the latent functions which also contribute to the same end-goal of well-adjusted citizens. In addition to learning math, civics, English and chemistry, young people are being taught to be obedient, tidy, well behaved, submissive to authority, take on appropriate gender roles, follow schedules, and regurgitate rather than question what they are taught (Kennelly, 2009; Flanagan & Van Horn, 2003; Beauvais, 2001; Tyyskä, 2001; Bowles & Gintis, 1976). As these latent functions are taking place, however, we are seeing an increasing push for the creation of "engaged citizens" (Dalton, 2008:5).⁵⁴ While a more in depth discussion of civics classes will follow in the

⁵⁴ R.J. Dalton differentiates between *duty-based citizenship* which focuses on the more traditional activities of a citizen such as voting, paying taxes and being part of a political party and *engaged citizenship* which defines the citizen who volunteers, participates in the community, or even takes part in protests.

next chapter, it is useful to note here that in addition to the 'required' community service hours needed to graduate from almost all high schools across Canada many of the text books used within the civics classes themselves focus heavily on the participatory (or engaged) aspects of citizenship (Kennelly, 2009)⁵⁵. In fact, all of the text books used in Ontario schools go one step further by combining lessons about being a 'good' citizen with being a 'good' student. More specifically, each of the texts reinforces the benefits of participation but also reserves multiple pages for information on how to be a 'good' student – both in class and within the school community at large (study techniques, learning to read information more efficiently, presenting information, being a team player, following rules). With this in mind, will these clear leanings within the education system towards participatory citizenship and superior student behaviour be evident in the definitions of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship by youth within this study?

In light of some of these aforementioned pitfalls, one might question the use of the often value-laden terms of 'good' and 'bad' within this study at all. It is, however, with terms like these that we can often be given the clearest understanding of the society in which we exist – a living snapshot of our mores and values at any given time (Dalton, 2008). In addition, because the terms can

⁵⁵ Within Ontario schools, for example, there are seven textbooks approved for the civics curriculum by the Ministry of Education. Based on an overview of these texts, it is evident that much of the information centres on participation in all aspects of one's life – community based (volunteering, getting involved with municipal affairs), politically (traditionally and through protests), and internationally (Doctors Without Borders, Craig Keilburger's Free the Children) – although some texts place youth in the central roles of action more readily than others (Evans, M., Slodovnick, M., Zoric, T., Evans, R. 2000; Bolotta, A. et al. 2006; Ruypers, J. & Ryall, J. 2005; Brune, N. & Bulgutch, M. 2000; Watt, J., Sinfield, I., Hawkes, C. 2000; Gordon, D., MacFadden, J., Watt, J. 2006; Skeoch, Al, Flaherty, P., Moore, D.L. 2000)

be so intangible and nebulous, they can often be overlooked in studies of citizenship despite the common belief that 'good' citizenship practices – whatever that might mean – are important for people to uphold (Ricci, 2004). Finally, it is important to use these terms because words like 'good' and 'bad' often prove to be one of the most accessible ways for youth to relate to ideas of citizenship. For example, Dean and Melrose argue that in their 1995 study "...some of the clearest expressions of the meaning which people attach to the idea of citizenship were obtained when respondents were asked first, what is a good citizen; and second, what might a bad citizen be?" (1999:110; Lister et al., 2003).

Within this study specifically, the respondents in the focus groups again used the photos they had viewed to discuss concepts of citizenship to help them consider what 'good' and 'bad' citizenship meant to them (see Appendix 4 to view the photos which were used). Respondents in the online survey portion of the study were asked to provide a list of five characteristics which would make someone a 'good' citizen and five that would make them a 'bad' citizen. These questions were asked on a page separate from the photos which they had viewed previously to discuss who they considered to be a citizen.

STICKS AND STONES

The fact that we are often just expected to *know* what behaviours and activities constitute being a 'good' or 'bad' citizen was confirmed within the focus group discussions as the majority of respondents stated that they had not talked about 'good' and 'bad' citizenship practices explicitly within their classes.

Interestingly, of the 115 respondents from the online survey who had taken a civics class, just over half (54%) said that they had talked about 'bad' citizenship practices in class and almost two thirds (63%) had talked about 'good' citizenship practices. In an overview of the class texts, four of the seven books discuss 'good' citizenship specifically, many even using "The Good Citizen" as the title of their first chapter. Qualities such as obeying the law, paying taxes, helping others, voting, and being respectful and responsible were often mentioned as examples of good citizenship. In addition to these behaviours, every single text discusses at length the importance of being informed (having a knowledge of the needs of our communities and how government works), purposeful (having an understanding of our role and relationship with our community and the government) and active (applying our knowledge in a constructive manner; participating). Regardless of whether the respondents had previously discussed these topics, the exercise of placing the photos into piles of 'good' and 'bad' citizens proved to be much more accessible for the youth than having to label who is and is not a citizen.

This being said, it was made clear by several youth within the focus groups (more often those in applied classes) that it was impossible to label someone as a 'good' or 'bad' citizen simply from a photo.

***Chloe:** We didn't have piles of good and bad because all that's just stereotypes.*

***Carrie:** We couldn't separate good and bad because I know a lot of people that look a certain way, and people think certain things of them, but they're completely opposite of that. They could be good or bad so we can't decide.*

For some, these labels of 'good' and 'bad' simply seemed too confining and the expectations of the terms too traditional.

Tara: *It just seems like society has a specific view of what a Canadian citizen is and what they should do -- like they should get married; they should have children; they should buy a house; and that's considered going along with everyone else that's a good citizen. But if someone decides to go against all that and be different, then all of a sudden it's like 'What are you doing?'*

For others, it was specifically the term 'bad' which they had trouble accommodating.

Adam: *We don't say they're bad; we say they make bad choices.*

Wendy: *Like the pictures of the junkies or something, they're not necessarily bad citizens; they just make their own decisions, but that doesn't mean they're a bad citizen.*



Fig. 14, Appendix 4

Still others found methods of sidestepping these labels of 'good' and 'bad' altogether by using terms like "average citizens" and "leaders". Some even took the next step of three piles suggesting that some citizens make things worse in the community, some just exist in the community and some are leaders in the community who are respected by others.

There seem to be two possible explanations for why some youth seemed hesitant to label others in terms of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship practices. First,

the experiences of many youth of being labeled just for looking a certain way, listening to certain music or congregating with others their own age causes them to feel uneasy in using similar labels on others. Cooley's theory of the 'looking-glass self' can help to understand how labels and those around us contribute to our self-image. Cooley's theory suggests that we use how we think other people see us to construct our own self-identity. Regardless of whether our belief of what they think of us is correct or not, our understanding of others' impressions of us contributes to how we see ourselves (Cooley, 1922; Yeung & Martin, 2003). What can be drawn from labelling theories such as this is an understanding that the dominant culture has the power to define youth as it pleases and these definitions are then used by others and youth to interpret the reality around them. Even the terms 'youth', 'teen' and 'adolescent' themselves are simply words until society gives these words meaning and, more importantly, value. Just as words begin to carry value (either positive or negative), images are created using these words (again, either positive or negative), and these images and meanings are then reflected back to youth and become internalized. The fact that experiences of labelling and segregation are often more acute for those who might come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds or are viewed as less academically inclined only highlights their added dislike for the screening of others based solely on appearance.

A second reason for why some youth are hesitant to label individuals as 'good' or 'bad' citizens might also be related to the apparent link for some respondents between the practice of good *citizenship* and being a good *person*.

In fact, Ricci outlines three forms of citizenship, the third of which requires an individual to act in a virtuous or decent manner even if in doing so one must contradict the state or its laws. More explicitly, it requires one to be a good person (2004). As will be discussed below, many of the traits which young people tend to associate with 'good' or 'bad' citizenship are actually personality traits as opposed to civic duties as such. For example, many youth use terms such as 'nice', 'honest', 'friendly', 'clean', 'happy', or 'loyal' to describe what being a 'good' citizen means. Contrarily, respondents use descriptives such as 'rude', 'mean', 'lazy', 'dishonest', 'greedy', or 'conceited' with reference to 'bad' citizenship practices (see Appendix 8, Tables 9 and 11 for a full list of the qualities listed by the youth). While these are terms one might consider using when listing desired qualities in a friend, it is not generally how academics, politicians or the literature tends to describe 'good' and 'bad' citizenship behaviours. This being said, Aristotle makes reference to the connection between 'the good man and the good citizen' in *Politics* as he points out that sometimes these can be the same while at other times these two men must be different. Furthermore, an individual can be a good citizen while not being a good man but a good man is always a good citizen (*Politics III*, 1995).

For the youth within this study, the connection between being a good person and a good citizen may not be as clearly demarcated as it was for Aristotle, but a connection is present nonetheless. Certainly, concepts such as 'pays taxes', 'votes', 'law abiding', 'volunteers' which are more traditionally associated with discussions of citizenship, were still commonly used by the

young people within this study, but 71% of all online respondents also used at least one 'personality trait' type term when describing 'good' and 'bad' citizenship qualities. None of the teens used personality traits as indicators for all 10 of the qualities (five for 'good' citizenship and five for 'bad'), but 20% of the respondents did show favoritism for these types of terms using six or more personality traits in their descriptions.

Looking generally at how respondents answered it seems that while there was greater variation in the types of individuals who cited personality traits to describe a 'bad' citizen, there was only one demographic variable which proved to be linked to both 'good' and 'bad' descriptions. The younger respondents (those between the ages of 14 and 16) tended to be more likely to use a larger number of 'personality traits' (between 6 and 10 terms) as opposed to terms which are more commonly associated with citizenship behaviours. More than a quarter (26%) of all 14 to 16 year olds as compared to 16% of all 17 and 18 year olds used at least six personality traits out of a possible 10⁵⁶. It is possible that there is simply a language barrier or maturity which is lacking in the younger respondents which is causing them to think about citizenship practices in a more personalized way. More importantly, however, is the fact that these types of descriptors reiterate the connection in the minds of many youth that the definition of a citizen is "a person" or "everyone is a citizen" as we witnessed in the previous chapter. Therefore, to describe or define citizenship or its qualities is to define the person his or her self. It is this apparent connection then between

⁵⁶ There was also a 5% lead for the use of personality traits by males, those who had not taken a civics class and visible minorities (although not new immigrants).

labelling someone as a bad *person* and not just a bad *citizen* which caused some youth to hesitate with respect to the task at hand.

'GOOD' CITIZENSHIP

Even with the general dislike of the terms 'good' and 'bad' displayed by some, there were several key characteristics which were highlighted by the youth. The online survey question which asked people to list five characteristics which would make someone a 'good' citizen was open ended in that the youth could respond with any five words or short phrases which they chose. Because the respondents often used different terms to indicate similar ideas, like words were coded into concept clusters in order to make the list of characteristics more manageable⁵⁷. Further, for an idea to be included in the list, at least three respondents had to record the characteristic as one of their five; any outstanding items were placed in the "other" category. In total, 29 different themes were listed by the youth (see Appendix 8, Table 9).

⁵⁷ It is important to note that words can often have broad meanings based on the intent, age, intellect, or mindset of the user. For this reason, it is possible for one person to feel that a word belongs with one cluster of terms while another individual would disagree wholeheartedly. Because these clusters are subjective based on this reasoning, I have done my best to be transparent by listing all of the words which were placed together in any given group.

The top five most popular responses listed by the online youth are as follows:

Table 4.1
Top 5 Qualities of a 'Good' Citizen as Listed by Online Respondents

Rank	Quality	% of Respondents Who Cited as Top 5
1	Caring; Nice; Giving; Thoughtful; Helpful; Help in Emergencies	43.3%
2	Involved in the Community; Volunteers	36.5%
3	Respect Others; Respect Those Who are Different	26.5%
4	Politically Aware; Informed; Informed About Canada	21.8%
5	Law Abiding	21.1%

Being a Good Citizen and Being a Good Person

Looking first at the most common quality given by the youth within the online survey, most respondents feel that a good citizen is someone who is “nice, caring, giving and thoughtful”. Forty-three percent (43%) of all respondents listed one of these words as part of their top five. Interestingly, each of these terms falls under the aforementioned discussion of “personality traits” suggesting that the most widespread understanding of a ‘good’ citizen also connects with what it is to be a good *person*. This view of ‘good’ citizenship where an individual is judged on a more personal level than how they fulfill any specific responsibilities to the state is echoed by the youth in the focus groups as well.

Imad: *This guy's smiling. He looks like he's a nice person – he's good looking. He's a good citizen.*

Tina: *A good citizen is someone who's smiling...looking friendly.*

Samir: *These people are all just smiling and doing something. They might not be playing basketball, but you just know when you look at them. Like this picture of the old man. You don't know what he's doing, but he's smiling. He just has that feeling of being optimistic, and he just feels good. You just get a good vibe.*

Hannah: *If she was doing something bad, she wouldn't be smiling.*

Ellen: *I'm not sure where to put this one because the face is hidden. You can't see if they're good or bad.*

In this last quote, it is evident that some youth took this idea further by suggesting that a person's face is a key indicator to whether they can be labeled as a 'good' or 'bad' citizen. Here, the expression of 'the eyes are the windows to the soul' proves true as actions are removed from the definition of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship altogether and the individual is judged (or not) based solely on the way they look. An example of this occurred when one youth felt that she could not tell if the woman in one picture was good or bad because she was wearing a burqa which covered her face.



Fig. 17, Appendix 4

The fact that 'being nice' is the most commonly listed quality of a good citizen at first glance might seem overly simplistic and misguided in its naivety. More importantly, however, the idea of 'being nice' translates into a more general

concept of harmony and community, and in valuing niceness as an important quality of good citizenship, youth are bringing this abstract concept into their lived reality – in essence, being a good person *is* being a good citizen in many ways. Even the relative importance which the youth gave to the qualities of being “friendly, outgoing, and good natured” as it tied in eighth place with “being politically active or voting” with 10% of the responses demonstrates just how significant community cohesion is for many of the youth when they consider what it is to be a citizen. In their own way, youth are making a connection with one of the more current ideas surrounding citizenship – that of cohesion. Writers such as Kingswell, Putnam and Bosniak are just a few of the people who have identified the importance of cohesion and community mindedness within citizenship literature. Kingswell, for example states that “[a]t its best...citizenship functions as a complex structure for realizing our deeply social nature...” (2000:5). While the youth within this study may have expressed this cohesion in different terms, they too see the importance for citizens to foster kindness, community, and friendship amongst themselves. Furthermore, Kingswell acknowledges the importance of practicing citizenship at a local level for these youth as he points out that “...our day to day lives are rarely lived at the level of nations, and for most of us the fabric of existence is determined far more by municipal than by national character” (2000:6). With this in mind, the preoccupation of many youth with the *person* as he or she relates to citizenship practices begins to make sense.

Contribution and Involvement

The second most popular understanding of 'good' citizenship with 37% of the teens is that it is important to be "involved in the community or volunteer". While this cluster of terms falls more directly in line with the traditional understanding of 'good' citizenship according to the literature, in each of these top two responses, the important theme of community mindedness and social cohesion is evident. For focus group respondents this idea of participation and contribution is an important quality in a 'good' citizen as well. The youth state again and again how giving back to the community, helping others and contributing is a key aspect of 'good' citizenship.

Tammy: *The older people [senior citizens] are usually good citizens because they contribute a lot back. We put all the old people in our good pile.*

Ellen: *[A good citizen is] a person who tries to help people – tries to make their country better by doing things. Or people who volunteer their time at a soup kitchen for the homeless or people who give up their time to help others.*

Peter: *The people who are good citizens are the people who are working hard and like having kids and just contributing to overall society.*

One of the most articulate statements about the importance of contribution was one made by this young man.

Kevin: *I think that what makes you a good citizen is just what you do in your everyday life. It really comes down to what you do for other people. Because, I mean, we go through life or when you go through any day, you're going to get helped by however X number of people. So I think what makes you a good citizen is how you make equilibrium with that. Like if you're just taking and taking and taking from society, like taking all the free handouts or whatever and not giving anything back, I think you're being kind of selfish and you're not being a good citizen.*

In the last two quotes, there are glimpses at the potential importance of employment or financial independence with respect to this idea of 'contribution'. When focus group respondents were probed further with respect to the relative importance of employment, most of the youth felt that having a job was not what made someone a 'good' citizen. For example, many of the groups would place the health professional in their pile of good citizens, but when they were asked to explain their reasoning, they stated that it was not the fact that she was working but the fact that she helped people in her work that made her a 'good' citizen. One group placed the image of the office worker in their 'average citizen' pile.



Fig. 9, Appendix 4



Fig. 7, Appendix 4

Again, when asked for the reasoning behind this placement (as opposed to the 'good citizen' pile) they responded that he wasn't 'doing anything' and was just 'sitting at work'. For these and many of the youth, employment as a form of *financial* contribution to the state is not what makes someone a 'good' citizen. Furthering this 'average' citizen idea with respect to financial contribution one young man clarified that paying taxes also did not make one a 'good' citizen.

Joe: *Everybody pays taxes – house tax, property tax, mortgages and all that so it just makes you the same not better.*

Discussion of economic forms of contribution also extended to some interesting debates surrounding the ever popular image of the young man standing with the Rolls Royce.



Fig. 10, Appendix 4

Sarah: *I wasn't sure how productive he was.*

Hakim: *He looks like a greedy guy, thinks about his money always.*

Many of the focus group discussants were left wondering whether this individual actually contributes to society in some way. More specifically, if he was rich then he might not be a good citizen. He did not work hard to earn that money because he was so young, and he was most likely greedy because he was the owner of such an expensive car, so he was not giving to others. On the flip side, others felt that perhaps the young man in the photo was not rich himself but was simply a model or a car salesman even, in which case he was contributing. He was a hard worker and was just doing his job to earn a living. For that reason, he *would* be a 'good' citizen.

It is this distinction between being employed and working hard evident in the quotes and scenarios above which is what really mattered to many of the youth. More specifically, respecting the balance of giving more than we receive (whether that be in our relationships with acquaintances, community members,

our country or our government) is what really makes someone a 'good' citizen. This sentiment is echoed by the online respondents as the cluster for "hardworking, drive, motivated, passion, and initiative" ranked ninth with 10% of the responses whereas the cluster for "working or financially independent" only received 6% of the responses putting it in 12th place. Furthermore, "paying taxes and paying bills" was only suggested by 2% of the respondents (17th place) as a defining quality of 'good' citizenship.

This differentiation shows an interesting distinction between the literature and how young people actually interpret understandings of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship. Within the literature, there are discussions of economic divisions with respect to citizenship. Traditionally, it is understood that those with money hold more power and more respect as citizens than those with fewer economic resources at their disposal (Young, 1990; Beauvais et al., 2001; Marshall, 1950; Lister et al., 2003). For some of the youth, this perception of wealth actually lessened the individual in their eyes rather than elevated them as the literature would suggest. Wealth might provide a person with opportunities, but it meant that he or she probably does not have some of the key qualities present in 'good' citizens such as being productive and helping others. Perhaps the fact that the photo of the man with the car depicted a younger individual instead of an older one made the youth think that he had not earned his money and had only inherited it which meant he did not work hard for what he had. Perhaps the Rolls Royce signaled that he was more into spending the money on luxury for himself than helping those in need. It is also possible that pop culture affects youth's

perceptions of the very wealthy. Most exposure to extreme wealth comes in Hollywood packages of excess and frivolity. One could hardly describe Paris Hilton or Lindsay Lohan as having the qualities of a 'good' citizen based on being productive, helping others (or being law abiding for that matter). By association perhaps, youth see all examples of extreme wealth as vaguely negative.

Another image which provided some cause for debate with respect to contribution was the photo of the aboriginal children. Some of the youth questioned whether they could be labeled as 'good' citizens if they only contributed to their own aboriginal communities and did not support Canada or the larger community. These respondents suggest that aboriginals are self-excluding in that they do not wish to be part of Canadian society and so separate themselves. The youth go on to explain that because aboriginals do not pay taxes and often receive financial assistance in various forms from the government, they should be considered 'bad' citizens like others who acted similarly which expanded on the general idea of giving more than one receives.



Fig. 15, Appendix 4

Keith: *They don't pay any taxes; they don't contribute to Canada for one thing. They stick to themselves.*

Cindy: *They contribute only to the aboriginal communities.*

Simon: *They prefer to seclude themselves from the rest of the country. They basically almost consider themselves separate.*

Within these comments made by the youth in the focus groups, two points of contention arise. First, by secluding themselves, these individuals were going against the behavioural norm of community cohesion. Second, by failing to help others who were not also of aboriginal descent these individuals were not truly embracing the importance of helping *others*. This commentary is interesting in that the youth did not seem to be concerned by other instances where an individual might only help their immediate neighbours and not those farther away or with different sets of needs. For this reason, it would appear that it was the perceived insular nature of aboriginal culture which ultimately caused the youth to be concerned with this image⁵⁸. This position draws on Canada's colonial past when First Nations people were segregated from settler colonies and given land rights in more remote regions which would not be in direct competition for agricultural development (Simmons, 2005/06). Barker, suggests that segregation paired with attempts at assimilation through means such as residential schools has left Canadians with a "Settler" mentality which still persists today as we try to encourage First Nations people to integrate into broader society (2009). It is this continued colonial attitude towards aboriginals which contributes to perceptions of insularity by some respondents.

⁵⁸ Some useful concepts to consider here are those of bridging (the creating cohesion and capital outside of a community or group of people) and bonding (the creation of social cohesion and capital within a community or group of people) as these terms suggest that while some bonding can be positive, too much (especially at the detriment of bridging) can be harmful or negative. Although not articulated in the same way, the youth within the focus groups are suggesting this same concern. For further reading on these concepts see Putnam, R.D. (2000); Putnam, R.D. (2002); and Edwards, B & Foley, M.W. (1998).

An interesting balance to this perspective comes from the aboriginal respondents themselves. Within the online survey, virtually all of the youth from the various demographic categories placed community involvement in either first or second place with respect to their voting patterns. In contrast, when looking at the top ten responses given, aboriginal youth considered participation to be the least important item with respect to 'good' citizenship. In fact, less than 1% (n=1) of those of aboriginal descent (as compared to the aforementioned 37% of total online respondents) included this action; instead, 'respect for others' rose to the number two position (see Appendix 8, Table 10 for a complete overview of the demographic breakdowns and their perspectives on 'good' citizenship). Perhaps, community involvement and participation is seen as an engrained part of the aboriginal culture, and therefore, is not worth mentioning as it would seem to be an obvious requirement. Perhaps aboriginal youth view the qualities of being 'nice, kind, giving' (which they also placed in first place) as ubiquitous with community involvement. Regardless, the reasoning behind this anomaly is not clear and will require further research.

Another point of interest is that youth who have taken a civics class are only slightly more likely than those who have not to feel that community involvement is a key indicator of 'good' citizenship (44% versus 41% respectively). The fact that the civics curriculum is so focused on the importance of participation and the fact that each of the civics textbooks centres heavily on active participation suggests that after taking this course, youth will have a strong understanding of the benefits of involvement. The findings here suggest that this

is the case, but it would seem that even without this instruction youth see the benefits of community participation. Perhaps this suggests that young people are learning this aspect of citizenship outside of the confines of the classroom contrary to the concerns of the education system.

Perhaps most interestingly in this discussion of contribution is the fact that not all of the youth thought that it was fair to include community involvement as a quality of a 'good' citizen at all. One group of youth actually highlighted the fact that including this only further labels people and divides the haves and have nots.

***Beth:** Just because you don't do something, like, he [another youth in the group] hasn't done community hours, but that doesn't make him a bad citizen. It doesn't make him a good citizen if he does 1000 hours. It's just the way you control yourself I guess. That's like saying you're the king of whatever; you're better than everybody else because you volunteer. That's also putting minorities, or if you have a disability or you're on welfare or something in one group. That's like saying the rich people are better.*

This understanding of volunteerism is extremely interesting and poignant in that it highlights the fact that when we volunteer we often do so to help out those less fortunate or with the understanding that we have time to spare. This young woman points out that for those who have greater constraints on their time (single parents, those who work shift work or long hours in low paying jobs) or for those who are in the position to be helped rather than in a position to do the helping, volunteering is not a reality. She also alludes to the idea that just because someone donates time or money to a cause does not mean that they are a kind or altruistic person. Clearly, her impression of volunteering is that it is something that those of higher socio-economic standing have the luxury of doing

but that it is not the reality for many individuals. These types of discussions bring to light the importance of perspective and point of view. What is labeled by some as a characteristic of a 'good' citizen might be viewed very differently by others. This understanding is certainly in line with the belief held by many of the youth that it is unfair to judge people as 'good' or 'bad' without knowing more about them.

This being said, 'good' citizenship as "contribution and participation" as well as the aforementioned cluster of "caring, giving and being kind" are common understandings supported by several academic sources as well. Lister et al., for example, found that the most common understanding of 'good' citizenship for youth within their study was to have "...a considerate and caring attitude towards others and a constructive approach towards active participation in the community" (2003:244). Similarly, respondents in Dean and Melrose's study also defined a 'good' citizen as "someone who looks after other people [and] contributes to the community" (1999:110). Kingswell also considers decency, civility and sensitivity to be qualities of a 'good' citizen which falls in line with the views of the youth in this study (Atherson, 2006).

R-e-s-p-e-c-t

Another important aspect of good citizenship which was evident in the online survey but not as clearly defined within the focus groups was that of respect. Respect for others, respect for those different than ourselves was a quality that earned 27% of the votes online. The inclusion of respect as a key characteristic of 'good' citizenship connects well with the mosaic understanding

of citizenship discussed in Chapter 3. Specifically, because youth see diversity as a defining characteristic of Canada, without respect for this same diversity it is an impossible reality.

Certainly, the concept of respect did arise in several instances within the focus group discussions but it was not in relation to 'good' and 'bad' citizenship practices specifically. It did tie into the importance of respect for diversity, however, as one youth spoke about the effects of many nationalities living in one country. When asked about whether once immigrants moved to Canada they should automatically think of themselves only as Canadian and leave behind their previous affiliations, the youth from one focus group felt that this was not the case.

Chloe: *You can be whoever you want to be. It's all just respect for people – where they want to live and how they want to live and what they want to do.*

For others, the concept of respect connected to global citizenship. For these youth, to be a global citizen meant showing respect for those at home and abroad. Regardless of whether one actually *likes* or *agrees* with people in another country, it is important to treat everyone with civility and respect.

A final notion of respect is expressed by some youth who spoke about how young people are often treated as second class citizens just because of the way they dress. For example, one young man spoke about the lack of respect young people often receive just for looking a certain way.

James: *Yeah, well like I'm sure if you were like young and dressed like him [points to the young man with the Rolls Royce wearing a dress shirt and tie - Fig. 10, Appendix 4] then people would respect you a lot, but I don't know, if you're young and*

dressed like you don't really care like that [points to the group of young men on the street corner wearing jeans and t-shirts – Fig. 14, Appendix 4] then they would see you as less.

Again, the inclusion of both this and the characteristic of being 'nice' or 'kind' suggests that definitions of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship are perhaps intuitive for members of a given society and are not necessarily unique to 'citizenship' specifically but to larger societal mores. Further, contributing to the understanding of universal citizenship where everyone is a citizen somewhere, many youth see 'good' and 'bad' citizenship practices as being the same as that which makes a 'good' and 'bad' *person*. This suggests that for many youth a citizen is a person and, therefore, everyone can claim citizenship status. This understanding also ties being a citizen to the individual and how they connect with the community around them. Lister et al. also found that youth spoke about the importance of respect for themselves and others. While these aspects of respect fall closely with those of the youth within this study, the British youth also spoke about respect for the law in terms of caring for other people's property and the community at large and being a law abiding citizen overall. While discussions of graffiti, property damage and abiding by the law also arise within this study, they have been coded as separate clusters of 'good' and 'bad' behaviour.

Staying Informed

According to online respondents, another important aspect of 'good' citizenship was that of being politically aware or informed. Twenty-two percent (22%) of the respondents agreed that being aware made you a 'good' citizen.

Interestingly, the actual action of voting or of being politically involved only received 10% of the votes. The fact that for youth, the *action* of being involved is at the same level of importance as being friendly and outgoing speaks volumes. Within the focus groups, the distinction between action and awareness was not made as virtually no one mentioned the importance of political activity during the discussions of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship. The act of voting became more prevalent within the focus groups once the parameters of rights and duties were introduced and certainly political involvement was discussed at large by each of the groups with respect to youth participation and interest. This point will be expanded upon within the next chapter. Overall, it seems interesting that many of the online respondents see the importance of action in citizenship at the level of participation and contribution to society but not within the political arena. Again, this is a telling understanding of citizenship in that it draws out the importance of local versus national levels of contact for the citizen. Participation for many youth often occurs at the community level whereas the political activity of voting tends to be at the provincial or national level. This divide between participation in general and voting specifically also points to the different ways that political action can be expressed and the importance of seeing both as beneficial and contributory as will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The relatively low importance of voting speaks volumes with respect to the current state of voter turnout in general and youth non-participation specifically during recent elections – only 59% of registered voters cast a ballot in the 2008 Canadian federal election (the lowest turnout in history). As mentioned during

the Introductory Chapter, with voter turnout at an all time low, the dissipation of youth wings within the major parties, and confidence in our leaders having been left beleaguered in recent years, it is not surprising that youth place a reduced importance on the act of voting. It is also possible that because the bulk of respondents were under the mandatory voting age of 18, their young age could explain the general lack of priority given to political involvement since the task of voting is outside of their realm of experience. In fact, the online respondents who said they planned to vote (or already did vote) and those who had already taken a civics class (or were currently enrolled) were the most likely to say that political awareness and activity were key factors in being a 'good' citizen, suggesting that knowledge of voting and the political process impact youth's perceptions of political involvement. The Lister et al. study also found that "political conceptions of good citizenship were less frequently articulated" (2003:245).

Laws of the Land

Rounding out the top five most commonly listed qualities of a 'good' citizen is "abiding by the law". Twenty-one percent (21%) of all respondents online felt that obeying laws was an important trait of 'good' citizenship, and within the focus groups this was equally as important as contributing to the community although it was more readily discussed as the antithesis of being law abiding. Using the photo of the youth loitering on the street corner many respondents saw them as 'bad' citizens because they broke the law (this will be discussed further within the next section).

Wendy: *A good citizen would probably be someone who's not disrupting or breaking a whole bunch of laws.*

Despite the stereotypical portrayal of youth as delinquents, more than 1 in 5 young people equate obeying the law with 'good' citizenship practice, and in his 2001 study, Bibby found that 71% of youth feel that the Young Offenders Act needs to be stricter. Youth within Dean and Melrose and Lister et al.'s research also see abiding by the law as a trait of good citizens (Dean & Melrose, 1999; Lister et al., 2003). As well, Lister et al.'s study of British youth found abiding by the law and being non-disruptive to be the second most popular distinction between good and bad citizens (2003).

In addition to the placement of the law-abiding cluster itself, one of the most interesting discussions brought to light is the importance of perception. For some youth, it was, as was explained earlier, that they felt it was unfair to label someone as 'good' or 'bad' simply based upon a photo. For others, an individual's status might change based on the story the respondent saw in the photo. One photo which garnered this type of discussion and debate within each focus group was that of the soldier.



Fig. 2, Appendix 4

The first debate here was with respect to his citizenship status. Was this image a picture of a soldier or a peacekeeper? The answer to this question for many of the youth meant that the person was either Canadian or American. If the photo

was of a *soldier*, he was non-Canadian (most often American); if the photo was of a *peacekeeper* then he was a Canadian citizen. This distinction arose when one group was asked why they had placed the soldier photo in their non-citizen pile.

Jane: Just because you know, you usually don't see Canada fighting...I see Canada as usually peaceful. You usually see places outside of Canada fighting.

One young man was unsure if he was a citizen at all because of his role as a soldier. When asked to clarify his thoughts on this, however, he was unable to. Perhaps, his reasoning may have stemmed from the fact that the army often places people outside of their own country and they live outside of normal guidelines for what is traditionally expected of citizens.

More directly linked with the aspect at hand here – abiding by the law – further discussion arose based on whether the soldier could be considered a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ citizen. Why is it alright for some people to kill and not others? If killing another human being would normally place one in the ‘bad’ citizen category then why is a soldier exempt from this distinction? Others argued that because a soldier might be killing in the name of their country, the situation was different than that of the general population, therefore making him a ‘good’ citizen. A final discussion regarding the soldier was based on who he was fighting for. Perhaps this image was of a German Nazi. This, the group felt would put him squarely back in the ‘bad’ citizen pile – unless of course you were on the side of Nazi Germany at that time (as one teen pointed out). Here is the conversation which followed.

Oren: *So you [referring to Beth] say that if you hurt him you're a bad citizen but this guy kills people [referring to the image of the soldier – Fig. 2, Appendix 4]!*

Beth: *No, no, no, I said...Ok how do I put this? If that's a job and they have to do it and are paid to do that for our country then they are fighting to defend us for our freedom. It's different if I just hit him for no reason or just because I don't like him...*

Oren: *Ok, but say this guy was a Nazi who was trying to take over countries and not to defend Germany. How do you know he's not a Nazi? Or the States only came into WWII because they were bombed. They were doing it because they were mad, their personal issues. So are they bad citizens?*

Beth: *Who knows? I don't know.*

Chloe: *It's all just opinions.*

This discussion, which is ultimately about whether someone is still law abiding if they do things which are potentially 'non-law abiding' for a career, demonstrates just how critical one's perspective is within debates surrounding these terms of 'good' and 'bad'. Certainly, one person's impression on the subject can vary from another's, bringing to the forefront the importance for youth voices within discussions of citizenship. This point on perspective is expressed quite succinctly by one young man at one of the youth centres as he talks about the images before him.

Abdi: *I think our experience plays a role in our perception when we look at this picture, right. So someone would define this picture as bad where others will completely relate to it. So often it's the experience that we carry individually that will affect our decision.*

'BAD' CITIZENSHIP

Turning now to the qualities of a 'bad' citizen, while many of the youth 'generally' took issue with the term itself, there are clear aspects of an individual's behaviour which the respondents felt were indicative of poor

citizenship. In general, youth tended to think about 'bad' citizenship in negative terms. For example, as opposed to an action or personality trait which would result in the label of 'bad' (lazy, addict, violent), it was often the lack of action or absence of a trait which garnered the moniker (uncaring, dishonest, not proud to be a Canadian). Perhaps this is due to limitations of the English language or perhaps it has to do with the fact that youth were asked first to list five 'good' qualities leaving their thoughts to fall to the absence of the qualities when asked to list the 'bad'. Regardless of the reasoning, however, more than half of the response clusters involve concepts in the negative tense.

There are also a larger number of concept clusters provided by the online respondents. Whereas there are 29 clusters provided as 'good' qualities, there are 34 clusters listed as 'bad' qualities (see Appendix 8, Table 11 for a complete list of 'bad' citizen qualities). Overall, however, the characteristics which youth provide for 'bad' citizens are very much in line with qualities that are opposite of those they speak of when thinking about 'good' citizens. Also, in a similar vein to how the youth conceived of 'good' citizens in sometimes personal and superficial ways, some of the youth spoke metaphorically about what a 'bad' citizen was to them. For example, talk about the image of the youth sitting on the corner (Fig. 14, Appendix 4) resulted in these comments from one group.

Richard: *And those people look like they're supporting the darkness.*

Ewan: *Darkness.*

Carla: *The bad side.*

Deborah: *The dark side.*

Others spoke about the same image but used different metaphors to extend their meaning.

Robyn: *It looks like they're up to no good or they're gloomy or something like that.*

Deborah: *The ground is all dirty, and they look dirty.*

Jane: *It's a stereotype, you see them and that's what you think. You're not going to be like "Oh they're good". They're not. They don't look good, like clean.*

These interesting comparisons made by the youth between 'bad' citizens and the darkness, dirt and gloominess again can seem overly simplistic as can the personality traits used to describe 'good' citizens. More aptly though, these types of associations only further indicate how 'good' and 'bad' citizenship are often nebulous and left to the imagination for definition. For example, as previously mentioned, where the textbooks would often give examples of what it means to be a 'good' citizen, discussions of 'bad' citizenship specifically were entirely absent. In its absence it would seem that some youth simply replace the concept of 'bad' with storybook understandings of 'bad' in its place.

Turning now to the five most popular conceptions of 'bad' citizenship as listed by the online respondents, they are as follows:

Table 4.2
Top 5 Qualities of a 'Bad' Citizen as Listed by Online Respondents

Rank	Quality	% of Respondents Who Cited as Top 5
1	Breaks Laws	32.9%
2	Uncaring; Selfish, Unhelpful; Unsupportive	21.2%
3	Uninvolved; Doesn't Volunteer; Apathetic	18.8%
4	Disrespectful	17.9%
5	Racist; Intolerant; Discrimination; Sexist, Ageist; Homophobic; Hateful	15.6%

Law Breakers

As is evident from the table above, the most common quality of a 'bad' citizen is someone who breaks the law with 33% of online respondents listing this idea. Despite "abiding by the law" being in fifth place for qualities of 'good' citizenship, "breaking the law" rises to the number one position for 'bad' citizens, and the notion of breaking the law appears to be a common understanding of 'bad' citizenship behaviour as it surfaced in both the Dean and Melrose and the Lister et al. studies as well (although in the latter it was the second most common understanding of 'bad' citizenship). It was by far the most common understanding of poor citizenship behaviour within the focus groups of this study.

Logan: *If you commit a crime or break the rules or break the law you can be considered a bad citizen.*

Within the focus group discussions, there was also the addition of graffiti and vandalism to this general term of breaking the law. While in the online responses the act of vandalism and disrespecting property was kept as a separate cluster item (it came in at 19th place with 4% listing this activity), it is useful to discuss here because the youth within the focus groups often lumped these ideas together within their discussions. Because the images which the focus group respondents were using to discuss bad citizenship included the specific image of the young loiterers sitting next to graffiti-covered walls (Fig. 14, Appendix 4), this represented unlawful behaviour for many of the youth, and they consistently placed this image in the 'bad' citizen pile.

Jane: You could just tell they're probably writing on the walls or something. You could just tell they're doing something bad – not a good influence.

Ellen: Well because they're on the corner, even if it's in Canada or anywhere else they're loitering, they're smoking and they're surrounded by graffiti.

Tania: And there's the teenagers where they're just sitting there. They might have jobs we don't know, and they may have done that vandalism, and that's not very good.

In addition to the vandalism which the youth saw as problematic, the teens from the focus groups also took note of a potential for drug activity as a form of breaking the law. Again, within the online survey the cluster for drugs and addiction were kept as a separate item ranking 15th with 6% of the respondents listing this as a quality of a 'bad' citizen. For the youth within the focus group, however, several photos brought this negative activity to mind. For some it was the youth on the corner who might be using or even trafficking drugs, but for

others it was images of individuals who they thought might be rock stars who were rebels and drug users and hence, bad citizens.



Fig. 6, Appendix 4

Ted: Some people say some rock stars do drugs, and that's not very good.

Still others made the more startling link of athletes being 'bad' citizens because they might also be using and abusing drugs or steroids.



Fig. 4, Appendix 4



Fig. 11, Appendix 4

Robyn: Athletes are usually bad. They usually do drugs and sometimes they can be so competitive and abusive.

More importantly than the specific actions which the respondents spoke about with respect to breaking the law, however, were the effects these actions had on others. Some youth extended this concern with breaking the law to the more pertinent problem of how others might view this behaviour. Many people saw breaking the law as more than just something that affects the individual. Whether it be providing poor role models for young impressionable minds or

simply making things worse for the community at large, several youth spoke of the impact that bad citizenship can have on society overall.

Ted: *The kids see that [doing drugs], and they think it's cool to do it, so they start doing it.*

Joe: *I think they're doing some kind of drugs or something, and then they're passing it on to other people also, so they're making the whole society bad also. It's all interlinked.*

Wes: *This one we picked because they're smoking; they're setting a bad example for young kids. They visualize them as a role model, so they're setting a bad example for people.*

This link between personal action and the broader effects these actions can have on those around us shows how the youth are making critical connections between the individual and society at large. In the same way they value the cohesive effects of 'good' citizenship, they also see the potentially detrimental and disintegrative effects of 'bad' citizenship. Comments such as those seen above, highlight how youth place the citizen within the broader context of the community, the province and the country. There is clearly still a tendency for the youth to favour the more immediate social equation of the community, but this demonstrates still further how often citizenship is conceptualized at the macro level of nations but is experienced at the micro level by the individual each and every day.

Another critical point which the quality of "law breaker" brings into focus is how youth are a product of their environment in their understanding of both the abstract concepts of the 'bad' citizen and themselves as young people living in Canada. For many of the groups, for example, it was as if youthfulness itself became a marker of 'bad' citizenship. Time and again, the respondents within

the focus groups would place the majority of the images depicting young people in the 'bad' citizenship pile. Certainly, as has been shown above, the young loiterers fell into this category for numerous reasons. Surprisingly, many youth would also see the image of the young partiers and even the babies and children as depictions of 'bad' citizens.

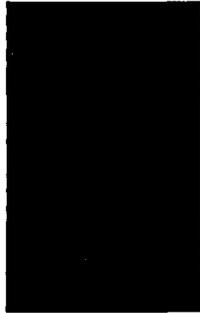


Fig. 4, Appendix 4



Fig. 12, Appendix 4



Fig. 21, Appendix 4



Fig. 23, Appendix 4

Jane: *And these people [teens dancing; Fig. 4, Appendix 4] just look like crazy people. They might break the law and break some rules and stuff just because they're all out there. I know it's stereotypical but that's how it is usually.*

Ewen: *Yeah, I think teenagers are sort of citizens, but they abuse it. Like lots of times it'll be teenagers that you see who are graffiti-ing and things like that.*

Aden: *I bet more kids skip school than they did before, more kids taking drugs than they did before, more kids drinking than they did before and more kids getting pregnant now than they did before. They're definitely doing something wrong.*

Jasmin: *I guess gangs and crime are going crazy. I don't know; it just seems like all the kids are getting worse, younger and younger.*

Ted: Well they can't contribute too much because they're so young and they're just so little.

Again and again the young respondents speak of the 'problem' youth echoing common moral panics present in the media and academia today. While they did not seem to include themselves in this negative category, the pervasiveness of this stereotype speaks volumes as to how youth are affected by the images and messages surrounding them. In the same way that youth are a partial product of the society in which they live, the language of a society also contributes to this understanding and development of youth culture. Essentially, beliefs about youth are reflected back to them through language -- language holds meaning, and words pertaining to young people are no exception. For example, many of the civics textbooks would discuss law from the perspective of the Young Offenders Act and would engage in a discussion of the problems of teen pregnancy, teen drug use, youth 'stealing' music over the Internet, bullying, and racism as freedom of speech (Ruypers & Ryall, 2005). With texts like this last one being used within the classroom and recommended by the Ministry of Education, it is not surprising that youth began to have slanted views of themselves or of their age group.

Simultaneously, both a product and a conception of the society and the adults within it, youth experience and are socialized to their social environment while at the same time being defined by the adults who have produced this experience. While young people create their own 'culture' with their own experiences, patterns, and 'maps of meaning' that make life understandable to

them as a group, they are still intimately tied to the dominant culture. From this understanding that youth is both a product *of* and an agent of change *for* the dominant culture, we can start to build an understanding of how moral panics come to be and how they are used both by the dominant culture and the youth cultures and subcultures to help define and redefine who they are (Epstein, 1998).

More specifically, as youth also jump onto this moral panic bandwagon of today's troubled youth which seems to be prevalent in both the media and academia, young people begin to see themselves as others do. The more they see themselves defined as either deviant or helpless, the more these socially damning labels begin to stick. Because cultural expectations shift over time, the expectations which youth then hold for themselves also shift. These negative labels can lead not only to negative self images, but also to a sense of alienation from society (Austin & Willard, 1998; Lesko, 2001; Epstein, 1998; Griffin, 1993; Evans & Poole, 1991; Cohen, 2002). It is also possible, of course, that youth are expressing a reality of some of their peers – experiences of 'troubled youth' which they can attest and relate to first hand.

The youth quotes above act as telling indicators of how society views youth as a double edged sword – simultaneously something to be protected, admired, or envied and something to be feared, controlled, and disciplined. For example, at the same time as the youth point out how children are susceptible to the negative images of drug users and law breakers (the image of youth as prey) the respondents also point to the reckless and criminal behaviour of youth which

they feel is only getting worse (the *predator* image of youth). Brooks reiterates the pervasiveness of this dichotomy within society stating that "...oppositional classifications of young people as either *dangerous* or *in danger* pathologize youth and youth culture and institutionalize a way of reading youth that is reflected in various popular cultural forms" (Brooks, 2003:1, italics in original; Arnett, 2002). I would argue it is this 'reflection' which is then mirrored in the discussions here.

The Bad Citizen and the Bad Person

The second most popular representation of a 'bad' citizen as listed by the online respondents is of someone who is 'uncaring, selfish, unhelpful, and unsupportive'. More than 1 in 5 youth (21%) listed one of the items in this cluster as a 'bad' quality. The presence of this cluster balances well with the understanding of a 'good' citizen as someone who is 'caring, nice, giving, and thoughtful' (the number one conception of 'good' citizenship) and in both cases, females were at least 10% more likely than males to see these qualities as representative of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship (see Appendix 8, Table 12 for a complete overview of the demographic breakdowns and their perspectives on 'bad' citizenship).⁵⁹ Again, this conception of 'bad' citizenship came to light in the Dean and Melrose and Lister et al. studies. The youth in the Lister et al. study found 'selfish and uncaring' behaviour to be the most common qualities of a 'bad' citizen. In contrast, Dean and Melrose found that men were more likely than women to use these terms.

⁵⁹ Forty-seven percent (47%) of females and 37% of males felt that being caring, nice and giving were qualities of a good citizen. Twenty-six percent (26%) of females and 12% of males felt that being uncaring, selfish and unhelpful resulted in bad citizenship.

Apathy

Within the focus groups, this cluster of negative personality traits did not play a large role; the third most popular understanding of a 'bad' citizen – 'being uninvolved, apathetic, doesn't volunteer' – did play a much larger role in their characterizations, however. Online, this cluster garnered 19% of the responses, but within the focus groups this was on par in popularity with 'breaking the law' as a quality of a 'bad' citizen. The importance of not giving back and not participating often contributed to children, aboriginals, and even the wealthy being placed in the non-citizen or 'bad' citizen pile as has been mentioned above.

***Vince:** It's not that they're doing anything negative; it's just that they're not doing anything positive.*

***Simon:** He's an infant. Infants can't really do anything to help until they're older.*

More importantly, (and contrary to Beth's argument on p.123) one young woman pointed out that regardless of a person's financial or social position in life, helping others and giving back is a possibility. Apathy and disengagement has no place in a community when there are ways to give that require little time or money.

***Ruth:** Maybe if you're poor you can't give people money or help people in that way, but you can help them say walk somewhere or give or do something in a different way. You can always help people whether you're poor or not – small or big, it doesn't matter.*

In another similarity to the 'good' citizenship discussion above, aboriginal youth were again the least likely to suggest that lack of contribution in the form of volunteering was a key aspect of 'bad' citizenship. They were also the least likely to suggest that being uncaring and selfish was an aspect of 'bad'

citizenship. In fact, only one online respondent of the 26 who cited aboriginal descent included being 'uninvolved' or 'selfish' in their list of qualities. Instead, being 'uneducated, ignorant and unwilling to learn' ranked much higher in the list of qualities of 'bad' citizenship for aboriginal youth.

Disrespect and Intolerance

The fourth and fifth most important aspects of 'bad' citizenship are being 'disrespectful' and being 'racist, intolerant, ageist, sexist, homophobic, discriminatory or hateful' with 19% and 18% of the votes respectively. Again, while these areas of discussion were not as persistent within the focus groups, there was a strong sense that within the youths' understandings of 'good' citizenship, respect and tolerance for others were considered to be important. The presence of these two clusters and the overarching centrality of open-mindedness and acceptance in both the 'good' and 'bad' traits as well as the mosaic perspective of citizenship provided by the youth demonstrate just how important a diverse and inclusive Canada is for today's youth. This being said, those of aboriginal descent, first generation Canadians, and new immigrants (although not visible minorities as a whole) were more likely than the average respondent to suggest that racism and intolerance was a key factor of 'bad' citizenship. In a similar vein, aboriginals also place 'being mean, unkind and cruel' much higher than other respondents as a quality of a 'bad' citizen (ranked 2nd with 23% versus ranked 7th with 14% respectively). This might suggest that while youth as a whole value these ideals, the reality is that we do not always live

up to these standards of inclusivity putting this cluster at the forefront of the minds of those who experience discrimination the most.

“Lacking respect” was an important aspect of ‘bad’ citizenship for the British youth within the Lister et al. study as well. Interestingly, they found that youth whom they had labeled as ‘outsiders’ commonly discussed this concept of respect⁶⁰. Perhaps this ties into the above discussion of how immigrants and aboriginals were more likely to identify with the importance of racism as they too may feel themselves to be ‘outsiders’ or have experienced racism first hand.

Most interestingly about the top ranking ‘bad’ citizenship clusters is the marked deficit in traditional citizenship qualities. For example, “not being politically involved and not voting” did not even break the top 10 items. It fell in 14th place just above being addicted to drugs or alcohol and just below someone who is “unpatriotic or not proud to be a Canadian”. “Unemployment” and “being a burden on society” ranked slightly higher as a quality of a ‘bad’ citizen as it came in at 11th place. “Not paying taxes” was practically at the bottom of the list ranking 23rd out of 25. The relatively low instance of these items on the youths’ list of qualities for ‘bad’ citizenship only seems to reinforce the importance of the day to day experiences of citizenship. Certainly, public order as achieved by abiding by the law is of importance to these youth, but following this, it is clear that the relationships we have with others around us holds the greatest level of

⁶⁰ Within the Lister et al. study, the labels of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ acted as a proxy for social class. ‘Insiders’ were defined as young people who did well in school, would most likely be attending top universities and conformed to the stereotypical model of a ‘successful’ youth. ‘Outsiders’ were the youth who fell outside of this stereotype, had few qualifications and had a long record of unemployment since leaving school (2003: 236).

importance. The evidence for this is in the presence of such negative social skills as being selfish, disrespectful, intolerant, mean, rude, or dishonest.

In general, both in terms of the youths' conceptions of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship, there is a clear favoritism towards the importance of the behaviour of the individual and involvement in the community. As demonstrated in the respondents' use of personality traits, their discussions of respect (or disrespect) for others, and the importance they give to tolerance and diversity, young people see the value of interpersonal relationships. Beyond this, the relative consensus among respondents in the importance of participation and community involvement suggest that behaving in a cohesive and helpful manner is of value to them. Each of these aspects connects well with some of the key aspects of citizenship including solidarity, belonging and participation as outlined by Beauvais et al. and Bosniak.

What appears to be less important to youth is being politically active. While it was mentioned, it received lesser attention than some of the other qualities. The importance of being involved in the community and activities around us versus the importance of being politically active demonstrates how youth see their own role in citizenship. More specifically, youth may feel excluded from many political forums of participation, but their citizenship is lived within the schools and communities where social ties and capital are built. A continuation of this discussion of how youth view their roles in their communities and within the political process at large will be expanded upon in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V **GETTING INVOLVED**

As is shown in the previous chapters, youth place a great deal of importance on being active and involved citizens. This comes through both in their discussions of citizenship 'being more than a piece of paper' and by placing "volunteering and community involvement" as the second most important trait of a 'good' citizen along with "voting and political involvement" in eighth place. Despite cries of youth apathy from some circles (Bauerlein, 2008; Twenge, 2006) it is evident that young people identify with the importance of being involved members of society. Does this mean then that labels of apathy are misguided? Or are youth simply identifying involvement as important but not taking action themselves?

To answer these questions, this chapter will discuss youth participation and political involvement. It will also identify what youth see as barriers to their participation and their opinions on current strategies. In addition, while there are many ways to define citizen 'involvement', this chapter will differentiate between the types of participation that youth value – such as school and community involvement – as compared with the types of participation which many adults value such as political participation.

CONTEMPORARY TEENS

To begin, if one is to discuss the *apathetic* teen it is critical to understand who we are speaking about. A look at the 340 online respondents along with the

89 focus group participants shows that these teenagers are anything but apathetic when it comes to their free time. In fact, 79% report spending time volunteering⁶¹, 58% have a part-time job, and 91% of online respondents (focus group respondents were not asked this question) say that they plan to attend university or college after high school suggesting that marks are also a top priority. In addition to all of this, many of these youth are heavily involved in activities at school and in the community. More specifically, 93% of all respondents participated in at least one extra-curricular activity at school or in the community.⁶² The most common activities for youth to participate in were sports activities (47% participated at school and 44% participated in the community). The second most common activity both at school and at home was related to music (taking music lessons or playing in a band). Thirty-two percent (32%) of teens participate in music at school and 29% participate at the community level⁶³ (See complete list of participation below in Table 5.1).

⁶¹ This volunteer time could be a school requirement or an activity of their own choosing.

⁶² It is possible that based on the primarily self-selected nature of the online survey, the youth who responded to the questionnaire may also be more involved and active than the average Canadian youth.

⁶³ Both these and the totals above regarding sports participation are not mutually exclusive suggesting that while some youth only play sports at school or in the community, some youth participate in similar activities both in and outside of school (i.e. play soccer at school and hockey for a local team).

Table 5.1
Types of Activities Youth Participated In at School and in the Community

School Activities		Activities in the Community/At Home	
1. Sports Teams	47%	1. Sports Teams	44%
2. Music (Play in a Band/Music Lessons)	32%	2. Music (Play in a Band/Music Lessons)	29%
3. Drama/Theatre Groups	24%	3. Church Groups	22%
4. Art	19%	4. Art	18%
5. Environmental Groups	11%	5. Dance Classes	17%
6. Political Groups	10%	6. Drama/Theatre Groups	11%
7. Dance Classes	5%	7. Environmental Groups	8%
8. Church Groups	4%	8. 4-H (Agricultural Club)	4%
9. 4-H (Agricultural Club)	1%	9. Political Groups	2%
10. Other ⁶⁴	24%	10. Other	34%

Many teens are involved in multiple activities with an average of four extra-curricular activities each. This is balanced by approximately two activities at school and two activities in the community per person, and just under a third of all respondents are involved in even more than that – 31% report participating in three or more activities either at school or in the community. Even those who say they only participate in one type of activity may in fact be very involved. For example, 'sports' was the most common response for those who participate in

⁶⁴ The 'Other' categories with this question were kept as closed-ended responses. Therefore, it is not possible to further analyze the information within this category.

only one activity either at school or at home (42%), but the formulation of the question does not allow respondents to list multiple activities under the same category. The reality is that many young people are involved in multiple sports teams throughout the year, and a student might be involved in basketball, soccer, hockey, track and field, and baseball (each of which requires time and dedication) while this question only captures that they are involved in sports generally.⁶⁵

While the levels of participation between the sexes are similar there is a general tendency for females to be involved in a higher number of activities. For example, it is the girls who are more likely to report being involved in five to twelve activities at school and in the community. Females are also much more likely to volunteer (85% of females, 68% of males).⁶⁶ Other small variations are present between those who say they plan on attending university after high school versus those who say they will attend college or enter the work force directly. While the differences are very small, university-bound youth participate in an average of 4 extracurricular activities whereas college- and employment-bound youth average approximately 3 extracurricular activities. Perhaps this is related to the interests of the youth themselves, but this could also be related to

⁶⁵ The next most popular response given by those youth who cite only one extra-curricular activity is music. Again, this is an activity which can often encompass multiple practice times during the week as well as various bands and instruments. For example, one youth may be involved in concert band, jazz band, and piano lessons each requiring its own additional time.

⁶⁶ The gender variations present in volunteer activity are significant at the 99% level based on Chi Square testing. The slightly larger numbers within Chapter 5 have made it possible to explore some of the statistical possibilities regarding significance which were not possible in previous chapters. This being said, any indication of statistical significance here should still be seen primarily as an indicator of directionality and not as a confirmation strategy. Due to the primarily self-selected nature of the online survey respondents and the small sample sizes of some demographic groups, this research remains exploratory in scope with an aim to contribute to future research.

the desire for university-bound youth to 'pad' their resumes so as to make their admissions applications stronger. Some of the youth touched on this idea as they spoke about the benefits of volunteering.

***Tara:** After 40 [hours of volunteering] I could have stopped, but I kept going just because, well if you look at it, the more hours you get, the more benefits you get out of it. You look at universities and they're like, yeah, community service. They look at things like if you have more than 40 hours then they know that you're doing more, and so they think you're really trying to get into university and all that. So by having more they look at that as a good thing.*

***Stewart:** [Volunteering is] great for scholarships and resumes. It also helps the individual grow and appreciate the little things.*

While the variations are again very small, when participation at school and in the community are looked at separately, some differentiation occurs. In school specifically, the total population cited participating in an average of 1.8 activities. Aboriginal youth in comparison only cite being involved in 1.1 activities⁶⁷ but immigrant youth (who moved to Canada after they were born) cite an average of 2.2. Community level participation is much more comparable across the board with the general population still showing an average of 1.8 activities. The lowest average score belongs to new Canadians at 1.6 activities and the highest average belongs to youth who have two parents born abroad (2.2). As a youth's socio-economic indicators increase, so too does the number of activities they participate in both at school and in the community.

Looking at participation overall (both in the community and at school) youth with two parents born abroad and those with the highest number of socio-

⁶⁷ The correlation between Aboriginal status and the average number of school activities one participates in is significant at the 99% level based on ANOVA testing.

economic indicators have the highest rates of participation (4.1 activities versus 3.6 for the total population). Aboriginal youth have the lowest levels of participation at 2.9 activities (versus 3.6 for the total population); however, this is primarily due to their lower than average school participation (1.1).

While these variations are extremely minor, it would be interesting to do further research with these demographic groups using larger sample sizes. Is it possible that aboriginal youth have fewer opportunities for involvement at school if they live on reserves or in other depressed regions? Is it also possible that youth with the highest socio-economic status can better afford to be involved in a multitude of activities both at school and at home? Why are new Canadians more likely to participate at school than in the community? Understanding these variations better might provide schools and communities alike with valuable information which can be used to better include marginalized populations of youth.

In addition to the extreme demands on the time of the youth who were surveyed, they also cite spending time socializing with friends. When online, youth were asked what are the top three ways they spend their time, almost half (48%) say hanging out with friends and a third (34%) say chatting online (see Appendix 8, Table 13 for a complete list of pastimes)⁶⁸.

⁶⁸ These items and those in Appendix 8, Table 13 were given as a list of options to the respondents from which they could choose their favorite pastimes.

MANDATORY VOLUNTEERISM: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE OXYMORON

Turning now to a more specific discussion of volunteering, it is impressive to see that more than three quarters of all youth surveyed (79%) say that they volunteer and almost one fifth of those who responded online (17%) say that it is one of the top three ways they spend their spare time each week. Statistics Canada suggests that people between the ages of 15 and 24 volunteer an average of 130 hours of their time each year (2005a) and are more likely than any other age group to have spent time volunteering (2009). Nevertheless, it is impossible to overlook the fact that many of these youth are required to complete between 30 and 40 hours of community service (depending on where they live) as a prerequisite for the completion of their high school diploma⁶⁹. Ontario, for example, labels this volunteering as “community involvement activities” and requires students to complete 40 hours of service over the course of their time in high school. These volunteer activities must be done outside of school hours and must not be something that normally would be considered paid work. The program has been designed with the intent of encouraging “...students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play in supporting and strengthening their communities...” with a primary purpose of “...contributing to students’ development” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999:1; Riedel, 2002). Regardless of the intended benefits for the

⁶⁹ Of 10 provinces, three have mandatory volunteer hours (BC requires 30 hrs., ON requires 40 hrs., and NFL requires 30 hrs.), and three (Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia) offer an elective or optional credit which students can take that is focused on volunteering in the community (which can require up to 110 hrs). Alberta, Quebec, PEI and New Brunswick do not require community service to graduate.

student, however, it is impossible to miss the obvious benefits for the community itself. Mandatory volunteerism in all its forms (through schools as is being discussed here, employers and non-profit organizations) provided a minimum of 119 million hours of support within Canada in 2007 alone (approximately 6% of the total hours donated). Individuals whose volunteer time is mandated tend to spend more time volunteering than those who did it completely by choice (141 hours per year versus 121 hours respectively) (Hall, Lasby, Ayer & Gibbons, 2009). Certainly it is possible to suggest that the 'forced' nature of the act somehow negates the quality of the act itself, but youth in the focus groups spoke about how they had spent many hours prior to high school volunteering (which is ineligible towards their total of mandatory hours), and many others spoke about how they continue to volunteer despite having completed their required time.

***Tara:** I have like 106 [hours] but, I don't know. In my school at least there's things that happen every year and I guess once I did it once, I felt familiar with doing it, and so I did it again and again and just got awarded for those hours, and then, after a while it doesn't really matter if it's 40 [hours]. You just do it because you're doing something good.*

***Gwen:** I got my 40 hours in the fall, and I guess when I first started volunteering, you know, it was all right, but then now I think about it, and I love volunteering, and I do any time I can.*

The continuation of these youths' volunteering activity suggests that the act can actually be habit-forming as they feel good doing it. This inclination will only benefit communities in the long run as pointed out in the Statistics Canada report on volunteering and participating which was completed in 2007 where they

suggest that individuals are more likely to donate their time and money later in life if they have spent time volunteering earlier in life (Hall et al., 2009; Riedel, 2002). Findings suggest, then, that it makes sense for society to encourage early volunteerism. When online youth were asked what *they* think about the required hours of volunteering in order to graduate, 73% feel that it was generally a good idea (22% feel that the program “has some bad points but is generally a good idea” and 50% “think it’s a good idea”⁷⁰).

Looking more closely at how young people rated this program, some interesting differences arise. For example, new Canadians are more likely than any other group to think that community service is a good idea with 69% giving the highest ranking (4 on a scale of 1 to 4). In comparison, only 45% of established Canadians gave it the highest ranking. Youth from mid and large sized cities were more likely than rural youth to give ‘required volunteerism’ the highest rating (64% versus 33% respectively).⁷¹ According to the comments of some youth, this may have something to do with the availability of fulfilling volunteer opportunities within the community.

Sophie: I feel [volunteering] is a good idea depending on where you live. In a large city, it’s simple or easier to be able to find ways to volunteer whereas in smaller communities there are less chances.

⁷⁰ Numbers do not equal total due to rounding.

⁷¹ The correlations between immigrant status and perceptions of mandatory volunteerism as well as community size and perceptions of mandatory volunteerism are significant at the 99% level based on Chi Square testing.

Eva: *I think in principle it's a great idea, but it would be difficult for youth in some communities. In many small towns there just isn't that much to get involved in, and not that many hours to go around. Some people would have a lot of trouble completing the time, and it would add a lot of extra stress on them in their graduating year.*

These sentiments seem to ring true as some youth in the focus groups would speak about the volunteering they did while working at a canteen, handing out flyers for the whole 40 hours, or selling raffle tickets in smoky bingo halls for hours on end. These types of comments bring into question what types of opportunities and experiences some youth are getting out of their mandatory volunteer hours. This being said, two young men in one focus group session spoke about the need for a broad range of volunteering opportunities because of the different skill sets which youth as a whole bring to the table.

George: *It's better that you can do anything, because maybe some people can't get the same opportunities. If you make it more specific, there's going to be fewer options.*

Kevin: *And people don't have the same skills too.*

Sixty-two percent (62%) of online youth reported also having people in their family whom they spend time with who volunteer. Eighty-five percent (85%) of youth who had family who volunteered also volunteered themselves (versus 73% of youth whose family did not volunteer). Having a family who volunteered also contributed to positive perceptions of mandatory volunteer hours as 79% of youth with volunteering family members gave the program a positive rating (3 or 4 on a scale of 1 to 4) while only 67% of respondents with non-volunteering

families gave the two highest ratings.⁷² Generally speaking, respondents – both online and in the focus groups – feel quite positively about the introduction of compulsory volunteer hours. Some youth felt that the positive aspects of personal growth and the sense of accomplishment make the hours worthwhile.

Nancy: *I do a lot of volunteer work and it makes me feel good and gives me a sense of accomplishment.*

Daphne: *[Volunteering is good] because it is part of being a 'Good Canadian Citizen'. It also makes you feel great, meet new people, and may lead you into becoming more involved with your community.*

Erin: *I feel [volunteering is good] because I think it's important to have students/youth actively involved in their communities and volunteering as much as possible because it makes us more well rounded and helps us to explore and learn. I also think that it's a great way to meet more people and become more successful in life.*

Danny: *The thing [about volunteering] is that you meet people so that you're not as nervous when you deal with them.*

Others felt positively about mandatory volunteer hours because of the overall importance the youth placed on community and 'giving back'.

Joe: *In my English courses that I took, we did this thing 'Pay it Forward' like the movie and the novel we read, and we had to Pay it Forward. Like if I help three people, they don't have to pay me back, they actually pay it forward to three other people. I felt good that I'm actually helping out my community not just sitting around watching everyone else do all the work. So I helped Canadians, other fellow Canadians, and it's good.*

Denis: *I think maybe one time in your life you've had volunteers help you out, so I think it's good to maybe give back because I know that I've had a lot of volunteers help me out like coaches and stuff like that. It's kind of good to return what is given to you.*

⁷² The correlations between having a family that volunteers and incidence of youth volunteerism as well as the correlations between family volunteerism and perceptions of mandatory volunteerism are significant at the 95% level based on Chi Square testing.

Bonnie: *It gets you involved. Like this youth center here, for the volunteer hours, us as a community are helping the community because everybody comes in here. Even throughout the week we go out, and we do little things for the community like that, and it's always explained that we're a small community helping the community. Like with anything. We've always done that, a smaller community helping the bigger... You learn so much more about the town in general.*

Olivia: *For all of the globalization, people are far too self-absorbed and preserved in their own little bubbles. I think that to some extent technology and globalization has caused this. I think that performing community service forces people to open their eyes and see the impact they can make on society, despite 'only' being a teenager or in high school.*

Another point worth discussing is the positive opportunities volunteering offers some disadvantaged youth specifically. In a focus group discussion at one youth centre, the youth spoke enthusiastically of how volunteering has helped them find employment and allows them to meet with important members of the community and beyond.

Danny: *For my community hours I helped out at the [factory] strike by delivering coffees and stuff. Basically like providing support. It's a good way to meet people. During the strike I met a whole bunch of people, then when I go there to get a job, they'd be like "Oh you have references; we know you're a hard worker".*

Fran: *[When you volunteer] you get involved a lot more. I found out a lot more about political stuff and things like that. Like I met the Child and Youth member in Toronto and she [points to another member of the group] got to meet the...*

Ellen: *...the Prime Minister, Paul Martin.*

Ian: *She was in the newspaper!*

Fran: *We also met Max Keeping; we have a picture of it! And we went to [nearby town] to accept an award.*

Hearing these disadvantaged youth who are often seen as outsiders and even trouble-makers in their community speak with pride about their experiences

shows just how valuable some volunteering opportunities can be. As shunned or abject youth within their communities, many of these young outsiders would never have had the opportunity to meet with community leaders or the press let alone the Prime Minister. Certainly, winning awards is also not part of their daily lives. The positive reinforcement, acceptance and recognition provided by their volunteering experiences encourages them to continue being involved and even provides them with much needed confidence and self-esteem which can be lacking in many of their daily interactions⁷³. It is as if volunteering gives these outsider or abject youth a chance to place themselves into the community at large in situations with others who often shun them suggesting that the act of volunteering itself can provide a shield of legitimacy for their intrusion on the insiders' space, putting outsiders and insiders on more equal footing as they work together for community betterment.

While the overall sentiment regarding mandatory volunteer hours is a positive one, youth sometimes spoke with mixed feelings about the program itself. Many youth also spoke about some perceived negative aspects of the program, and males and those with the more socio-economic indicators are most likely to think that compulsory volunteering is a bad idea. A quarter of all males (26%) and a fifth of those with the highest socio-economic status indicators (20%) gave the program the lowest rating (1 on a scale of 1 to 4). The primary concern of many youth dealt with the fact that if volunteering is mandatory then it is not truly volunteering.

⁷³ In fact, the young woman who spoke of meeting the Prime Minister also spoke of her new found interest in politics and is now working towards going to university and getting a law degree.

Carla: *I think how we're forced to do it if we want to graduate, I don't think that we should be forced because honestly that means that pretty much we don't really want to. You know we have to; we're being forced. I think we should do it of our own selves. Like a 'Paying it Forward' because of good will.*

Kevin: *It doesn't really give you a sense that you're... like a lot of good things get done, but when you're doing it, you don't really feel like...you feel like you're working a job because you're doing it for something. I mean you're not doing it out of the kindness of your heart; no matter how you look at it you're not really.*

George: *So it isn't volunteering.*

Kevin: *Exactly, I don't even know why they call it volunteer hours.*

Jane: *Yeah when you have to do it, it's not volunteering.*

Owen: *Mandatory not voluntary.*

Vince: *Well it's not much, but it's wrong that they're making you. Them telling me that I have to volunteer to graduate kind of makes me not want to volunteer. It's kind of like "you can't tell me what to do".*

It is evident from these comments that youth are tapping into one of the primary reasons why many of us do volunteer work either consciously or unconsciously – it makes us feel good about ourselves. Antoni (2009), for example, argues that intrinsic or internal reasons such as feeling useful to others rather than extrinsic reasons such as social recognition are the primary motivators for volunteering (see also Wilson & Musick, 1999). Others suggest that volunteering can extend our lives, improve our health, and make us feel happier (Putnam, 2000; Wilson & Musick, 1999). By stripping away the free will of the act, many of the youth, while still seeing the positives and even enjoying themselves, find that some of the intrinsic benefits of volunteering are also stripped away. At this point in the life cycle, youth's lives are still highly controlled by outside sources – school, parents, peer pressure. By making volunteering

mandatory and contingent on their receipt of a diploma, the education system takes away yet another aspect of choice for these youth. As can be seen in the quotes above, this removal of choice makes some youth feel as if society at large does not feel that young people are capable of making positive decisions if left to their own devices. Of course, the need for autonomy also contributes to young people feeling as if they might have enjoyed volunteering until they were told they *had* to do it!

Other youth take their concern over the mandatory nature of volunteering to the next level as they discuss the similarities of the program to community service given to criminals.

Carla: *But you know what? I realize how a criminal, if they do something bad but it's not that bad, they don't go to jail, but they give them community service. Yet you have to do that to graduate from here, so it's kind of degrading.*

Petra: *Personally I believe that if a young person wants to volunteer, they should be driven intrinsically to do so. After all, what is a volunteer that doesn't technically volunteer? Also I feel that this is something that is done to offenders (you commit a crime, and you are forced to do community service) and to force youth to volunteer seems to me like just another way that adult society is treating teenagers like criminals. I find we are discriminated and looked at suspiciously enough as it is! I have nothing against community service, but I think it is wrong to withhold a person's graduation because of it. . Everyone should contribute to the community but by their own terms.*

Martha: *It should be a person's own choice if they want to volunteer. This is a free country, and by having students needing to volunteer in order to finish school, it's pretty much the same as having child slavery.*

Making the connection here between mandatory volunteerism and community service only emphasizes how aware teens are of their representation as deviant

in the media and politics. In the same way that restorative justice helps delinquent youth be brought back into the folds of the community and society at large, community service in the schools can also be viewed as bringing youth into the fold of the community while being taught civic responsibility as well. In both forms of service, the youth is labelled as someone who needs to be educated/re-educated as to their role in society and the rules that govern them (Ministry of Education, 1999; Department of Justice Canada, 2009; Volunteer Canada, 2009). In a similar vein as juvenile delinquents and students, individuals on social assistance through the Ontario Works program have also been provided with the duty of community service hours⁷⁴ (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2009). In each of these circumstances, 'problem' citizens enter into a form of rehabilitation on their way to becoming more upstanding citizens.

Other youth made similar connections regarding their personal treatment while speaking of the lack of respect they often received from adults simply because of their age as well as the general perception of young people as trouble makers within their own communities. As discussed earlier in the Introduction and Chapter 4, it is clear that while definitions of youth have changed throughout history, young people have continued to be pathologized within Western culture. This trend of 'deviantization' in which youth are seen as 'social problems', 'troubled teens', or 'delinquents' through policy formation, social discussion, and media portrayals is a trend which still exists. Youth are not

⁷⁴ Interestingly, the commonly used term for Workfare in many French communities is "esclavage" or "slavery".

unaware of these 'moral panics' in which they have been included as language, policy and the media can be telling indicators of how society views youth as both victim and perpetrator..

The 'predator/prey' duality which is so often present in youth programs can likewise be seen within mandatory volunteerism. All at once, this program brings together understandings of youth as boundless sources of energy, hope for the future, and positivity along with understandings of youth as lazy, delinquent and in need of a moral compass and skills. More specifically, encouraging youth to volunteer provides many non-profit organizations with an unlimited and energetic work force of young people with new ideas and an eagerness to please. On the other hand, the existence of this program suggests that young people would not have begun volunteering of their own volition and, therefore, need to be forced. It also suggests that young people require further moral training (in the form of selfless giving of one's time and helping others) and that youth have a fair amount of spare time on their hands which could be better spent under the supervision of adults.

Within the 'predator/prey' duality, the mandatory volunteerism places youth both in a victim role where they must be protected and educated, as well as a predator role where they simply require protection against their own risky behaviours. Arguably, in seeing youth as both predator *and* prey, society is able to save young people from themselves while at the same time providing many community organizations with much needed assistance.

CIVICS IN EDUCATION

In addition to the use of mandatory volunteer hours to instill the importance of participation within the community, the education system has also implemented civics classes for students in most provinces to inform youth about politics and citizenship⁷⁵. Forty-six percent (46%) of online youth reported having taken or currently being enrolled in a civics class. Some of the most common topics which youth say they cover in their civics classes include 'government', 'rights that citizens have', 'voting', 'defining citizenship', 'political party platforms', and the 'duties and responsibilities of being a citizen'. When asked whether they found this class useful for students to take, 39% of those who had taken the class say that they feel it is 'pretty useful' and 30% feel that it is 'very useful'. Further, 41% of youth agree somewhat that taking a civics class gave them a better understanding of politics and 25% agree fully that it has improved their political knowledge.

Susan: I didn't know anything in Grade 9 and then Grade 10 came along and I had Civics and I knew 110% more [about politics and voting]!

The generally positive comments from students about mandatory volunteer hours and required civics educations suggest that the integration of citizenship education into the school system has been a good idea overall. What is difficult to confirm within this study, however, is whether these requirements will affect behaviour over the long term.

⁷⁵ Each province across Canada now includes mandatory citizenship education in the form of civics and social studies classes. Only British Columbia allows students to choose between either Social Studies or First Nations Studies. Some provinces begin to include citizenship education as early as the grade 3 (PEI and Nova Scotia for example), but most provinces wait until high school, often in grade 9 and 10.

KEEPING CURRENT WITH CURRENT EVENTS

Informing students about current events is yet another aspect of civics classes. When asked how informed they feel they are about current events, 61% of all online youth feel that they are 'somewhat' informed while only 17% feel that they are 'very' informed. Generally, this holds true for most of the demographic groups, however, males are the most likely to say that they are 'very' informed (27% versus 13% of females or 17% for the total population) as well as being most likely to place themselves in one of the top two categories of 'somewhat' or 'very' informed about current events (83% versus 73% for females and 79% for the total population). In contrast, those with the lowest number of socio-economic status indicators are the least likely to place themselves in the top two categories (73% felt 'somewhat' or 'very' informed while 80% of those with mid or high levels of socio-economic indicators felt 'somewhat' or 'very' informed). Certainly, there are numerous studies showing a limited knowledge of politics and world issues by young people today (Elections Canada, 2000; CRIC, 2001; Bauerlein, 2008; Bibby, 2001, 2009; Howe, 2003; O'Neil, 2007), so whether these perceived differences in the youth's knowledge of current events is actual or grounded more in self-esteem would require further exploration.

When these same youth are asked what their primary news source is, a third of all teens (33%) state that TV is their main source of information. Parents and friends were the least common responses with only 9% of youth citing them as a primary source (see Appendix 8, Table 14 for a complete list of news sources). Interestingly, of the respondents who listed 'other' as their main news

source, the most common response listed was school, teachers, or in class. Several of the youth within the focus groups spoke about how their civics and society classes got them involved and engaged with news and current events on a daily basis.

Bonnie: *I had a great [civics] class. We spent a half an hour talking about current events, and the more we did it, the more I got interested in it. Just because my teacher was the type of person who sat there and went through every article that had to do with Canada, and we'd sit there for half an hour and we'd talk about every current event that happened the day before, in the past week, it was all there on that one day and we talked about it every single day. We actually got more interested because it's something that you never knew before, and it was actually interesting.*

Danny: *You should have seen my civics class! Every day the teacher would bring in one article, and we'd argue the entire period over the article.*

Melanie: *I liked society class with Mr. X a lot because he loves to bring up topics and get you to debate, and if the class seems pretty one sided then he'll start to bring up the other side because he really loves arguing. I had it last semester, and I loved it. And he never makes it seem like one's right and one's wrong. At the end he'll kind of sum it up, so it's like here are the sides and the opinions and the facts without ever giving a definite answer.*

While school and teachers were not listed as an option for this question, it would be interesting to see how the responses change if they were included in the list.

PAYING ATTENTION TO POLITICS

In addition to their overall understanding of current events, online respondents were also questioned about their interest in politics specifically. Approximately half of all youth (51%) stated that they rarely or never pay

attention to politics. The most common response, with 38% of the votes, suggests that youth 'almost never' follow politics.

Responses	% of Online Respondents
Don't Pay Any Attention	13%
Almost Never Pay Attention	38%
Bottom 2 (Never/Almost Never)	51%
Sometimes Pay Attention	31%
Pay a Lot of Attention	18%
Top 2 (Sometimes/Always)	49%

In a study of data spanning over 40 years, Twenge found similarly low levels of interest in politics by American youth⁷⁶. In 1966, 60% of first year college students felt that “keeping up to date with political affairs” was important or essential. By 2004, this number had dropped to only 34%. Further, only 26% said they discussed politics frequently as compared to 33% in 1968 (2006:141). Mark Bauerlein extends this argument suggesting that if young people fail to pay attention to politics, then they are bound to feel more helpless when it comes time to vote. More specifically, if you do not know what the issues are, then it is difficult to see how you can effect change and are more likely not to bother voting (2008; Gidengil, Nevitte, Blais & Nadeau, 2003; Howe, 2003).

⁷⁶ These statistics may have improved during the most recent American election.

Within this study, demographically, youth who moved to Canada after they were born are the most likely to say that they never or almost never follow politics (64%) while youth whose parents were born abroad are the most likely to pay attention (62%). This variation between new Canadians and first generation Canadians is an interesting one. If a familiarity with the English language or Canadian culture were the only distinguishing factors, then it would stand to reason that youth who were born in Canada along with their parents should be even more likely to say that they pay attention to politics. This is not the case, however, as established Canadians are evenly split at 50/50 between those who say they pay attention to politics and those who say they do not. For many new immigrants, barriers such as language and the time needed for cultural acclimatization are restrictive factors in youth's interest in politics. Uprooting one's entire family to a new country can be both time-consuming and overwhelming, restricting interests and knowledge acquisition to a more survivalist level, at least in the early stages. As families become more settled, however, it is possible that other factors such as past experiences begin to play a role in political interest. For example, many families who immigrate to Canada come from countries where democracy and freedom of speech are limited and the political landscape is often rife with corruption. It is these experiences that parents have lived which then encourage youth to take advantage of the democratic systems in place within Canada by showing an interest in politics. More specifically, parents who have experienced what it is like to have their freedoms denied are thankful for the opportunities which Canada provides and

encourage their children to take interest in their country and how it works. Contrarily, established Canadians have never experienced harsher living conditions or limited freedoms so they may take for granted the lifestyle which they have been afforded by living in this country. Perhaps their jaded view results in a lessened interest in the country and its politics as compared to first generation Canadians.

Studies performed by Black (2001) and Chui, Curtis and Lambert (1991) support these findings as they show that immigrant status (rather than minority status) plays an important role in political participation. Chui et al.'s research also shows the lowest voter participation amongst those who immigrated to Canada less than 10 years prior and the highest participation among Canadians whose parents were born abroad. Interestingly, as in this study, participation decreased among 4th and 5th generation Canadians (1991). In addition to some of the explanations listed above, Black and Stasiulis also point to factors such as levels of political engagement prior to immigrating to Canada, contact with ethnic media and socio-economic status – all of which contribute to higher levels of political participation (2001; 1997).

Aboriginal youth are both most likely to say they never follow politics (15%) and to say they always follow politics (35%)⁷⁷.

When asked for the reasoning behind their responses, the most common reasons for not following politics are that it is difficult to understand (23%), it is boring (20%), and that they are too young to vote (17%). In contrast, the most

⁷⁷ Males are similar in that 15% say they never follow politics and 24% (the second highest score) say they always follow politics.

common reasons for paying attention to politics are that youth feel it is important to be informed (34%), they plan to vote or already do (31%), and they find it interesting (29%) (see Appendix 8, Table 15 for a complete list of all reasons).

Looking at how the family's actions towards politics affect the youths' perceptions, there are mixed results. Despite the fact that youth tend to feel that their family's level of interest in politics is not a large factor influencing the level of their own interest (only 8% of those who don't pay attention to politics and 20% of those who do pay attention cite it as a reason), when neither parent in a family votes, the child tends to be less likely to pay attention to politics.

Pam: I think that there are things that can be done to make people more interested [in politics], but a lot of it is personal opinions and how you're brought up to understand things. I feel very strongly about subjects and I know I'm going to vote as soon as I can, but I think that's just the way I was brought up...Like my family does vote and they watch the news everyday. I think that it definitely was my family and school too [that have made me interested in politics].

Certainly, the bulk of the parents in this study voted according to the youth respondents (88% of youth say they have two parents who vote and 93% say they have at least one parent who votes). Of the youth who cite that neither of their parents vote, 78% also say that they pay little or no attention to politics. Interestingly, this connection does not exist between the parent's political activity and the youths' self professed knowledge of current events.

TO VOTE OR NOT TO VOTE

Despite the fact that more than two thirds (78%) of all youth feel they are very or at least somewhat informed when it comes to current events and that

almost 1 in 2 youth show at least some interest in politics, these beliefs are not translating into a turnout at the voting stations during election time. As discussed in the introductory chapter, young people consistently have lower voting rates than older generations. In the 2004 Canadian federal election, it is estimated that only 34% of those aged 18-24 cast a ballot as compared to 67% of those aged 48-57 and approximately 73% of those aged 58 and older who voted that year (comparable data is not currently available for the 2008 federal election). Even as overall voter turnout in Canada declines year after year, youth are still among the least likely to cast a vote. In the last ten federal elections in Canada spanning approximately 20 years (from May 1979 to October 2008), the voter turnout rate has decreased from approximately 76% in 1979 to 59% in 2008⁷⁸. This suggests that in the last election, just a quarter of eligible voters (the approximately 6.4 million who voted for the winning party – Conservative) were left to decide Canada's political fate. This, despite academics such as Axworthy and Pammett suggesting that the act of voting is not only a responsibility but "the single most important act of citizenship" (Chianello, 2008:A1). This downward trend is evident in both federal and provincial politics and is not unique to Canada; many other western democracies are facing similar problems with decreasing voter turnout (Fitzpatrick, 2008). Considering the almost 20% drop in voters and the aging population (Statistics Canada, 2005), the youth vote becomes all the more important.

⁷⁸ The highest voter turnout on record is from March 1958 when 79% of Canadians came out to vote. It is important to note that Elections Canada points to improved voter lists which include greater numbers of potential voters as well as improved statistical processes which may also contribute to the appearance of declining Election Day turnouts (www.elections.ca).

Despite the fact that youth themselves do not place a strong emphasis on the importance of voting in relation to 'good' citizenship behaviour, it is still a useful area of discussion within this research. The act of voting and interest in the political management of our communities and our country are key aspects in the dynamics of a democratic society. Therefore, if democracy in its current form is to flourish, there needs to be a re-energizing of the process which, at this time, is failing to engage the majority of Canadians, let alone the youngest members of society. In both the focus group interviews and the online survey, youth were asked in an open-ended question format how they would improve the current situation to get more young people out voting. Interestingly, many of the concerns youth had for not being interested in electoral politics are echoed in their responses to this question. Based on a close reading of the online responses, about 26 different ideas have been suggested by the youth. As in the earlier discussion of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship, because respondents often use different terms or phrases to indicate similar ideas, like thoughts have been grouped in order to make the list of suggestions provided by the youth more manageable.⁷⁹ The five most popular of those are shown below (see Appendix 8, Table 16 for a full list of suggestions given by the youth).

⁷⁹ Again, it is important to note that words and phrases can often have broad meanings based on the intent, age, intellect, or mindset of the user. For this reason, it is possible for one person to feel that a response belongs with one idea while another individual would disagree wholeheartedly.

Table 5.3

Top 5 Ways Online Respondents Suggest Getting Youth to Care More About Politics and to Get Out and Vote

Responses	% of Online Respondents
1. Make Youth See How Important It Is	18%
2. Show Youth They Can Make a Difference	18%
3. Advertising	17%
4. Community/School Info Sessions/Fun Events	16%
5. Include Youth Issues in the Campaign	15%

With such a large number of suggestions provided by the youth, seeing patterns and drawing conclusions can be difficult. When their ideas are looked at more closely, five overarching themes come to light:

- *Giving Youth a Voice*
- *Getting Youth's Attention*
- *Providing Information*
- *Accessibility*
- *Rewards and Consequences*

Each suggestion provided by the respondents falls under one of these categories (see Appendix 8, Table 17 for a complete listing of ideas within each concept).

1. Giving Youth a Voice

Giving young people a voice is the most popular category of responses offered by online youth. Whether it be through making young people feel like their opinions actually matter, having youth wings or youth in parliament itself, or even lowering the voting age, many teens feel that having their opinions and ideas heard is the way to encourage more youth to get out and vote. Fifty-six percent (56%) of online youth felt that providing young people with an opportunity to be heard was part of the solution to low voter turnout.

These sentiments are echoed by the youth in the focus groups. Many spoke about how they feel that no one really cares about what they have to say making it seem pointless to go out and vote. Some speak about how they feel disillusioned as just one person being unable to make any real difference.

***Tara:** I couldn't care less. Like honestly, if you look at it this way, you're one person and one vote, and I don't think your one vote is really going to break the tie between two different political leaders. It doesn't really matter because your voice isn't heard anyways...no matter what you think, that it's a group consensus, it's not going to make a difference anyway because they [the politicians] choose what they want – basically what the older society wants.*

***Farah:** To me, I think it's because they [young people] think one person can't make a difference, so even if I just don't do it [vote], they'll feel like it doesn't matter – my vote doesn't really count. So when you think about it that way, I guess they just don't want to take the time to go out and vote if it's just not going to make a difference.*

For this group of youth, just making them feel like their vote can actually make a difference would be the strongest pull to the polls. Eighteen percent (18%) of online youth talked about how the idea of being made to feel like they can make

a difference is an important impetus for getting out and voting which they feel is currently lacking for many young people today. This rings true for academic writers such as Twenge (2006) who suggests that increasingly, youth feel that they are unable to effect change in their own lives, let alone in the world as a whole. This sense of cynicism and paralysis can keep youth from venturing to the polls. Andrew agrees as she points to these issues for Canada's voting population as a whole. More specifically, she argues that when people feel as if they can effect change in government they are more likely to go to the polls (Chianello, 2008). As the second most common response (just after making youth see how important voting is), this somewhat cynical view that 'their vote won't make a difference anyway, so why bother voting', does not seem to be limited to the young but is one that pervades society in general as is evidenced in recent voter turnout by Canadians as a whole.

In a similar vein as making young people feel like their vote can make a difference is the broader sentiment that their opinions matter too. Eleven percent (11%) of online respondents made reference to the importance of being heard and having their opinions matter to their political leaders. For example, one recent study showed that three out of five young people in Canada believe that the government does not care about the views of youth (Gidengil, Nevitte, Blais & Nadeau, 2003). Similarly, focus group respondents also spoke repeatedly about how they, as young people, are made to feel like second class citizens as their ideas and opinions are either avoided altogether or simply dismissed as inconsequential.

Carla: *I feel like they're [politicians] not hearing our opinions and what we want. You know, if they're doing this for us then they really have to listen to what we have to say.*

Gwen: *I was in the mall, and I think it was [local politician]; he's still in office now. He was going around the mall shaking people's hands, and he just looked at me and my boyfriend and walked by. We looked young I mean, but my boyfriend just turned 18, so he could have been a voter and he just walked by.*

Peter: *I mean they [politicians] just need to connect, if they want to get votes from the younger generation they need to actually talk to them and not just be like "Okay we have to do this for PR" kind of thing. Like if they have an opinion about something we need more of, for example skate parks or something. If they actually listened instead of trying to...I know the MP here actually tried to put a curfew for young people under the age of 19 and it was like 11pm so...*

By reiterating to youth through dismissive or condescending actions that their opinions don't matter, politicians help to secure a lack of voting interest by young people. In contrast, as this young woman points out below, small positive actions can speak volumes.

Bonnie: *They [local politicians at a school visit] actually talked to us like we were actual people and not just a bunch of kids.*

Not only is it critical for youth to feel that their opinions are being heard and acknowledged, but also they want to be welcomed in the political arena. The existence of youth wings or youth councils, the presence of youth (and diversity) within the political arena, and the importance of young people themselves speaking to youth about voting and politics were suggested by 17% of online youth. Feeling that they can connect and relate to those in power is something that many of the young people in this study suggest is a way to get more youth visiting the polls.

Peter: *Maybe get some younger blood in parliament because all the guys kind of look like your dad and they're speaking like "Oh we'll make a living as a young person in Canada better". You need someone you can relate to. Like if there was someone maybe late 20s running for Prime Minister, if he's saying the right things he might get my vote because I'd listen because he's more my age.*

Chloe: *I don't think they put attention to the younger crowd. They're all old foggy men that are too stuck in the past and too stuck on one-track mind. They're so, I don't know, what's the word?...So conservative and so old man.*

Beth: *Also I think that how we have student council, maybe if we had like a government council of students. Like people who are actually really interested in it [politics] they could go to meetings and then show the school. Maybe have them [politicians] come in but have students talk about it because I find that when we talk as students like right now I'm learning a lot more things with everybody else's discussion. That's the thing; we need other people that are on our level that can explain things to us.*

Murray: *To an extent, I think that you're going to attract younger voters more through other younger voters, you know. The candidates and other older people telling the younger people they should vote will get some but not as many as say a friend saying "Hey, you know, maybe you should go and vote".*

Chen (2004) agrees with this concept of greater youth involvement suggesting that youth visibility in politics is an excellent way of encouraging other youth to follow suit by showing young people it is a possibility. As discussed in the Introduction, however, this sense of exclusion by youth is not only in their heads as youth wings disappear or are integrated into the main party and websites exclude and distance youth partnerships. The average age among the five federal parties in 2004 was 55 years of age (Chen, 2004; Conway-Smith, 2004). A recent study by Young and Cross shows that youth (both those active

in traditional politics and those who are not) feel that young political party members do not wield as much influence over decisions as they should suggesting that the current top-down governing structure of political parties in Canada today may act as a barrier to the recruitment of new young members who wish to take on more important and active roles (2007).

This 'for youth, by youth' concept is a pervasive one which many organizations have taken to heart. By incorporating youth into the planning, development and application of a project, adults hope to be able to tap into the elusive younger generation. As more and more organizations begin to add this way of thinking into their operational tool box (youth ambassadors for non-profit organizations such as World Vision; marketing firms hiring youth testers; high-tech firms such as Apple and Google who employ a bright and youthful workforce), many political parties have gone the opposite direction (Van Buskirk, 2009).

A final point which was touched upon by youth which ties into the theme of 'giving youth a voice' is that of lowering the voting age. While this idea was suggested by approximately 4% of the online respondents, it was more thoroughly discussed by those in the focus groups because of the inclusion of this topic specifically. Certainly, the idea of lowering the voting age garnered mixed reviews from many youth as some felt that if 18 year olds aren't interested in politics, then how are we as a country going to encourage even younger teens to care, let alone make informed and responsible decisions.

Jane: *No, I don't think [they should lower the voting age] because right now I don't really care about it. It's just 18, and why would a 16 year old even be interested? They're not thinking about that; I don't think they'd be interested. It would be a waste of time. They're not mature enough to think, "Yeah this is going to be better for the future". Most of us think that it's a waste of time, so what makes a 16-year-old way better, really? They have even less experience.*

Peter: *It's a good age because it's hard enough to get 18 year-olds to vote let alone 16. They [16 year olds] might not grasp the concept of spending billions of dollars on fixing the highways because it has really no affect on the younger generations.*

Tina: *[Lowering the voting age is a bad idea] because when we're older we might regret some decisions that we made like "Oh I was stupid back then. I should have waited and researched or found out more about what I was talking about".*

Interestingly, and as is evident from the quotes above, the age of 16 seemed to be a focal point for discussion regardless of whether they felt lowering the voting age was reasonable or not. Some youth even put the contingency of having taken or being enrolled in a civics class as a deciding factor for being able to participate in an election. Most teens felt that younger than 16 was just too young to make an informed decision and not simply be voting as their parents would.

Despite some of the negative perspectives on lowering the voting age, many youth felt that including younger people would get people in the habit of voting sooner and, therefore, encourage getting youth to the polls in general.

Richard: *I think they should [lower the voting age] because especially in classes in high school, we have our history or geography or whatever and we touch on politics there and in Civics we touch a lot on the politics and political fields and everything involved with the government. I think it would be good that when it comes time for the voting as a class we can*

sit down and talk it out and maybe cast our votes or whatever and it could be used for the actual election.

Ewen: *I definitely think people underestimate how involved or how knowledgeable teenagers are about politics. I think they don't think that we understand. I mean I'm sure there is a lot that we don't understand and there are kids that don't really care. The kids who don't care, fine, don't vote! You know what I mean? But there are a lot of teenagers, I know a few friends of mine, they argue for hours on end about politics. I mean we live in this country. We're citizens. We belong to this community. I think we can, we should be able to decide on what goes on.*

Vicky: *Well I think they should bring it [the voting age] down to 16 because you learn about it in Grade 10. You learn what the parties want and what's going on in the world and stuff. But then they tell us, "Oh no you don't have an opinion until you're 18."*

Ellen: *I don't see how you have to be 18 in order to vote. I mean if you're a citizen of Canada we should have our say on how the money is supposed to be spent or who's in power.*

For these youth, taking advantage of the fact that younger people are actively taking classes which educate them about politics and political parties only makes sense when it comes to getting young people to vote. By involving youth in the political process earlier while it can be integrated into class time with discussion and debate, it encourages youth to not only talk about politics but to take an active role as well. Once the habit of voting and political involvement is created it will hopefully continue throughout their lives. With the lapse of time between the civics classes of grade 10 and the action of voting in grade 12 or later, for many youth the momentum has already dissipated.

2. Getting Youth's Attention

Another extremely popular category of responses which captured 53% of the online responses is that of getting youth's attention. This category encompasses ideas such as including youth issues in political debates, bringing youth media and celebrities on board and making politics and elections more interesting in general. To begin, many youth talk about how young people seem to be an invisible demographic as the politicians cater to the larger middle class, middle aged and boomer demographics which will certainly earn them more votes. In answer to this, respondents speak about how it would go a long way to getting young people to vote if politicians would speak to young voters directly with issues that matter to young people – or at very least relate existing issues to the younger demographic by showing how it applies to them. Just these three ideas garner a third of the online responses (34%), and focus group respondents feel similarly.

***Penny:** I remember [our local MP] came to my door and said "Hi my name is [Mr.X]. I'm running for the Conservatives in your little area. Here's my little pamphlet" and I was like "Thanks". And there was his picture and I thought, "Wow, that's really cool. He actually came to meet me! That's so cool!" You know me being like 12 at the time.*

***Ewen:** You'll hear the campaigns and they're trying to get the older groups because they know the young groups don't vote and the young groups don't vote because during the elections it seems like the points that the opposition or whatever are trying to make are almost irrelevant to the 18-24 group because they're not voting. So there's no interest from the start. There never will be unless you involve them [youth] and try to better their life. I mean what's his face, Harper, did the GST thing and then they'll talk about old age plans and stuff like that. It's just like what do we care? We're 18.*

Kevin: *I'm pretty politically involved, and I'll go with my friends to protests and things like that because I think it's really frustrating when you can't identify with any of the things they [politicians] are doing. When it's the reality that everything politicians are trying to do they're trying to do to help out the majority or the largest number of people then a lot of people get forgotten. Like most of whatever the Liberals and Conservatives do, they're both working to make middle class families as nice as possible right, which will get them a majority government and keep them in power, but I don't know. Stuff gets left behind.*

Gwen: *Even when politicians talk to the younger people they still talk about nonsense like taxes and health care. Like, ok, I get my health care free because my dad works, but I don't really know about that. And taxes, I don't know about that either, you know. Just come on and bring me something that I can be more interested in. I don't know about anybody else, but knowing that they're giving more to the school boards, that's important to me. And another thing I found funny was in the last campaign they had a lot of stuff on the Internet and I went and checked it out. It was mostly same thing. They talked mostly about topics that would go for the older age, and then I started to think that half of the people in their 50s probably don't even know how to use a computer. Like my aunt is like 40, and she has no clue how to use a computer you know so it's like why?*

It is evident from the above quotes that the youth in this study have a very clear understanding of the catch-22 which has been created by younger people not getting out to vote. Whether it was the youth who failed to vote causing the politicians to forsake their causes or whether it was the politicians' lack of commitment to the youth vote which caused disinterest in the young voters, this chicken and egg conundrum leaves youth wanting for more. What is clear is that young people see that it behooves the politicians to appeal to the largest group of voters and at this time, that remains the older, middle class Canadian.

While education is clearly the hot button issue for most of the respondents (money for schools, tuition, scholarships) other topics of importance for youth include such things as public transportation, gay marriage, abortion, finding jobs and minimum wage. It is not simply choosing youth friendly topics that matter, however, as other online youth speak of how relating current topics to youth specifically can be just as effective in getting young people out to vote.

Ben: *[If it was my job to get young people to vote] I would relate the matters that are occurring in politics to how they affect young people themselves. By showing how a certain bill would affect young people in ways they understand would allow them to take a more active role.*

In addition to the importance of relevant topics and direct contact with politicians themselves, another primary deterrent to youth getting out and voting is simply that politics is boring! A number of focus group respondents lament about the lack-luster nature of politics today.

Tina: *Like in Civics class they try to inform us, but I don't know. I'm not really interested. Like during the elections I kind of got into it, but usually what news I hear about politics is from someone else. I never find out by myself. It's always like "Did you hear what Steven Harper did, blah blah blah blah?" And I'm like "Oh really". People get into heated arguments about it, and I just sit there. I don't really participate because it doesn't interest me very much.*

Neil: *Yeah we [young people] don't have the interest because they don't make it interesting.*

In response to this, making politics more interesting is suggested by 11% of online respondents and youth have any number of suggestions on how to combat this problem. Whether it be through getting youth media involved (6%), developing catchy advertisements and slogans (20%), or getting celebrities

involved (2%), teens think that politics needs some shaking up if it wants to attract the interest of its youngest demographic.

Tania: *I think it would be good [for politicians] to go to Much Music or whatever because young people watching could learn early.*

Tina: *Also all the artists and musical people, they're always wearing shirts saying 'Vote' and I think a lot of people look at that.*

Tania: *And they influence people.*

Denis: *In the States it's a bit different than Canada because on American channels they have celebrities and stuff like that on channels that attract younger people. Like I know on BETV they had a whole bunch of celebrities and music. And every ten minutes there would be a celebrity saying 'go out and vote', 'go register to vote' and stuff like that. Maybe that would get more young people involved.*

Joe: *I just think it's kind of boring so that's why they [young people] are not going to vote. So they should do more stuff to interest people. I don't know, get a mascot or something.*

Ted: *Young Canadians more or less don't like to watch TV or read the newspaper. They want to have fun so make it more exciting to watch it or more enthusiastic entertainment wise towards politics. I mean sitting down and watching Harper's speech is kind of boring so make it more fun.*

Cindy: *Mostly it's all so monotone.*

Ted: *Give it some pizzazz or something with more entertainment to it.*

Phoebe: *I'd get out advertisements (in a cool/funny manner) during popular programming and find ways to point out the cool/funny aspects of politics – such as Peter Mackay calling Belinda Stronach a dog...things like that interest youth.*

Zoe: *I would generate excitement like American celebrities do by wearing cool t-shirts with slogans like 'rock the vote'.*

Certainly tactics like those suggested above have proven to be successful at getting younger people to vote. After an abysmal turnout during the 2000 American elections where only 28% of 18 to 24 year olds bothered to vote (as

compared to 48% in 1972) costly campaigns such as *Rock the Vote*, *Citizen Change* and MTV's *Choose or Lose* were created to encourage young people to register and vote. Music, logoed clothing, celebrities and youth focused media were used to bombard youth with messages about politics and voting. During the following election in 2004, 41% of Americans between 18 and 24 cast a vote (Twenge, 2006). Canada has made efforts to create movements like these with such organizations as *Rush the Vote* and *Vote Out Loud* which have garnered some success as well.

After the 2000 federal election in Canada saw only 25% of 18-24 year olds taking time to vote, youth were targeted more directly during the following election to ensure increased turnouts. Similar to the campaigns created in the United States, Canada began its own efforts (such as the above mentioned *Rush the Vote* campaign). The results were promising but still dismal as only 37% of 18-24 voted in the following 2004 federal election, and compared to similar American efforts, Canadian programs have been much less pervasive at election times (Chen, 2004). Because of the Americanization of Canadian media and the Internet, it is also possible to assume that some youth were influenced partially through ongoing American campaigns⁸⁰. Ilona Dougherty, founder of *Apathy is Boring*, addresses the relative failure of Canadian efforts by suggesting that getting young people to vote for many is nothing more than a 'hot-button issue' which drives organizations' interest in the problem for only short periods of time; however, "getting young people to vote, it's not something you can do 36 days

⁸⁰ In 2004, the Canadian federal election took place on June 28th and the American presidential election took place on November 2nd.

every four years” (Drake, 2008). Not surprisingly then, both *Rush the Vote* and *Vote Out Loud* no longer exist as anything but archived websites with out of date information.

It is impossible to have a discussion about ‘getting youth’s attention’ and ‘making politics more interesting’ without pausing to speak about the Barack Obama campaign during the most recent American presidential elections. This campaign more than many in recent history was able to not only improve declining voter turnouts as a whole, but also it got youth involved in large numbers. Boasting the highest voter turnout in American history, the 2008 election drew 130 million votes. Approximately 53% of voters under 30 years of age went to the polls – up 4% over the 2004 election and 9% over the 2000 election (Alberts, 2008; CIRCLE, 2008; Keeter, Horowitz & Tyson, 2008). While young voters alone did not supply the victory for the Democratic Party, they report attending campaign events more than any other age group and provided numerous volunteers (Keeter, Horowitz & Tyson, 2008).

To achieve its polished look which ultimately brought so many voters to the polls, the Obama campaign spent more than \$52 million on media, strategy consultants, image-building, marketing, research and telemarketing (Street, 2009). What ultimately mobilized many of its youngest supporters, however, was the use of less traditional means of communication for the dissemination of information, fundraising, and publicity allowing the Obama campaign to provide new ways for people to engage in politics.

One of the many tactics he used to mobilize huge numbers of supporters was by using a social networking platform called MyBo which included a presence on sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Digg, Scribd and YouTube as well as direct emails and texts to keep followers informed. Each site had its own content and feel to fit the individual site and its viewers. Even after the campaign officially ended in victory, the Obama camp continues to update supporters and request their input (Libert & Faulk, 2009; Van Buskirk, 2009). Obama even had a presence on the virtual reality site, SecondLife.com. Here, online supporters of 'Obama for President' held a virtual music festival to raise funds for the campaign. As for YouTube, staff members uploaded hundreds of videos to the site which were ultimately seen by approximately 77 million viewers on that site alone (Libert & Faulk, 2009). The continuous and changing access to information keeps interest piqued and through the use of social networking members are able to contribute and engage in their own unique ways (fundraising, creating their own viral videos in support, going out to vote, encouraging others to get involved).

In addition to these new avenues of contact, traditional avenues were used to target youth specifically as well. Almost twice as many 18-29 year olds report being contacted by the Obama campaign either in person or by phone than by the McCain campaign (25% and 13% respectively) and in certain key states more than half (54%) of young voters say they were contacted by the Obama campaign (Keeter, Horowitz & Tyson, 2008). Studies have shown that when a member of a political party (regardless of their affiliation) takes the time

to contact someone in person at their home, that individual is more likely to vote than someone who was not visited (Gidengil, Nevitte, Blais & Nadeau, 2003). Tapping into both the desire for youth to have a voice and their desire for an electoral process with some 'pizzazz' the Obama campaign used all of the tools available to them in order to obtain a successful result.

The desire for a more 'entertaining' and 'star-studded' form of politics (such as the aforementioned Obama/McCain election) is evident in the responses of many youth within this study, but they also see that a glitzy campaign is no substitute for good, clear information.

3. Providing Information

When thinking about how they would go about getting young people to vote, another strategy put forth by many of the respondents both online and within the focus groups is to provide youth with more information. More than a quarter (26%) of online youth feel that more information is the key. Beyond simply making the information available for the youth to access on their own time, however, youth feel that it would be useful to bring the information directly to the youth through various events, info sessions and online sources.

Norah: *In my opinion I believe that it would be a great idea to have youth friendly meetings to explain and show young citizens how politics work. If they are more informed and understand the concepts then they may become more interested and aware of what is going on in politics.*

Violet: *I would put up posters that clearly outlined each political party's opinion/stance on important issues that affect young people like gay marriage, education budgets, women's rights to abortion and things like that.*

Izzy: Schools should HAVE to tell students about politics, and make them learn what is currently going on. At election time students should be made to do a 'mock vote' where they vote for who they think should win the election and then explain why.

Mia: Have assemblies starting in elementary then secondary schools on the importance of voting and letting your voice be heard. I also think that the Civics course for grade 10's is a great idea

Jillian: I'd arrange for riding debates to be held at schools during an assembly where attendance would be mandatory. Maybe also try to reach youth through means such as the web, television or cell phones.

Interestingly, while many of the respondents speak about the importance of bringing information directly to the younger population, several youth within the focus groups also speak about how, if young people want to find it, the information is readily accessible to them. Contrary to those who feel it is a need for information that will bring youth to the polling stations, these youth suggest that young people just need to take the initiative and get informed. Ultimately, these two perspectives on the availability of information are complementary in that it is not that the youth who suggest ideas within this category feel that *more* information be made available. These youth are simply taking the potential for inertia or malaise out of the equation and bringing the facts directly to the interested (or uninterested) parties – the younger audience.

4. Accessibility

A fourth area for improvement which youth feel needs to be addressed in order to encourage more young people to become active voters is the issue of accessibility. Eight percent (8%) of online youth speak about the need to make politics more accessible to young people. For some, this concept is knowledge-

based as they speak about how politics can often seem inaccessible for young people due to its complexity. For them, being able to simply *understand* election issues and politics in general would be encouraging.

Tara: *I hate politics. I find it boring. The government in general, it's just so boring. You sit there and Legislative whatever...You know, I don't even know half the terms, so maybe that's why I don't like it because I can't understand it, and they drill it in your head in Civics like politics in general, I don't even know.*

Irene: *They show the debates on TV and stuff, but sometimes they're hard to understand for us so maybe make one targeted towards teens that explains things more because if we just watch it, we're like 'Wow, this is boring'.*

Denis: *It's hard to get excited over things no one understands.*

Wes: *It just seems boring, and it doesn't make sense when I try to watch it sometimes, and I'm just lost.*

Grace: *Take advantage of the education system and make sure youth know about politics and how it's done...Lack of knowledge about something is a turnoff. Promote understanding.*

While 4% discuss the importance of understanding, another 3% think about accessibility in a more literal sense in terms of transportation and the locations of polling stations. More specifically, some respondents feel that by providing the opportunity to vote in youth friendly locations such as malls and schools, young people may be more likely to stop and vote. Barring this, even just providing transportation in the form of shuttle buses or car pooling to existing location would help as well.

Victor: *I would put voting booths in schools and have teachers bring their students and force them to vote.*

Lilly: *I would bring the issues to the youth by setting up polls at the mall and at schools where young people would notice.*

Interestingly, none of the youth speak about the use of technology to make voting more accessible. With the growing popularity of texting votes for television shows and online access it is surprising that at least some of the youth did not speak about the ability to vote remotely. Youth see a larger role for technology in the dissemination of information and campaigning process but have not yet moved to thinking about this option with respect to voting itself.

5. Rewards and Consequences

A fifth category of ideas brought forth by 6% of the youth in this study is the use of rewards and the application of consequences to encourage youth to vote. Three percent (3%) of respondents feel that incentives are the answer to low voter turnout.

Irene: I think it's pretty cool if they try to give away stuff because it's always like a good feeling if you've won something. Do you know what I mean? I just won a car or I just won \$5,000 or something like that. You always have that feeling, and you can brag about it. It's like 'I voted and now you should vote too if you want to win' or something like that.

Joe: If they give something back to you instead of a couple of hours in the line [then that would make me want to vote]. I don't know, but I'm trying to, I'm starting to look for a scholarship program so... Or if they do something like President for a day!

While ideas like 'Prime Minister for a Day' or others such as supplying candy to voters might not be feasible, suggestions of draws for scholarships, money and cars seem like plausible means of encouraging not only youth but adults as well to make electoral voting a priority. Other respondents feel that it is a fear of negative consequences which will encourage youth to vote.

Lawrence: *I think they should emphasize the consequences of not voting, so if you don't vote [you'll see] how it's going to affect you in the long run. I think that would be the message to get across to people.*

Fred: *Put it [voting] as a mandate for some youth organizations that are funded federally.*

Geoff: *Create an Australian system of elections where voters must vote or be fined.*

Ross: *Make it [voting] mandatory like taxes. If you don't vote, you shouldn't be allowed to [have the right to vote].*

Some ideas listed above such as mandatory voting already exist in some countries such as Australia, Belgium and Argentina and failure to comply can result in sanctions such as fines, freezing of wages and ineligibility for some types of employment⁸¹ (IDEA, 2009). The effectiveness of using negative consequences as a catalyst to get more people to vote has been addressed in a recent study which looked at the potential role of social pressure on voter turnout. Researchers sent letters to 80,000 homes in the 2006 Michigan primary election. Some participants received a letter simply encouraging them to take action, others received a letter suggesting that their voting behaviour would be studied by means of public record. A third group's letter additionally included a recent voting record of each individual in the house, and a final letter told recipients that their updated voting record would be circulated to their neighbours after the election. The results showed that anyone who received a letter was more likely to

⁸¹ Many of the more serious sanctions are not commonly used and often a reasonable excuse given to explain a failure to vote is sufficient. Currently 30 countries around the world use mandatory voting (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance - IDEA, 2009).

vote than those who received nothing and those who received the letter suggesting that their neighbours would be informed as to their voting activity were the most likely to vote of all. More specifically, by using the negative consequence of social disapproval or embarrassment for disobeying civic norms, researchers found that voter turnout improved (Gerber, Green & Larimer, 2008).

WHO SAID WHAT

For the most part, youth, regardless of their demographic characteristics, feel similarly about how they would go about getting more young people to the polls during election time. Some variations are evident, however, such as with gender (for a full overview of demographic breakdowns see Appendix 8, Table 18). Males are much more likely than females to fall into the Rewards and Consequences category of suggestions (16% versus 2% respectively) whereas females are much more likely than males to feel that getting youth's attention (60% versus 38% respectively) and providing young people with the necessary information to make an informed decision are important (31% versus 15% respectively). Meanwhile, younger respondents are much more likely than older respondents to feel that difficulty in understanding politics is a deterrent to voting. In fact, 8% of 14 to 16 year olds spoke about how they find that politics can be difficult to follow while only 1% of 17 and 18 years olds refer to this problem. Interestingly, this discrepancy does not correspond with having taken a civics class or not, suggesting that formal acquisition of knowledge is not the defining

factor when younger respondents speak of 'feeling lost' when listening to debates during election time⁸².

Youth who describe themselves as a visible minority are more likely than the general population of respondents to feel that giving youth a voice is of critical importance (70% versus 56% respectively). For six of the nine ideas within this category, visible minorities have higher proportions than average. Similarly, youth who immigrated to Canada or whose parents immigrated to Canada are more likely than established Canadians to feel that having a voice will encourage young people to vote. Landed and first generation youth fall into the theme of 'giving youth a voice' 64% of the time while established Canadians and the general population of respondents fall into this category 53% and 56% respectively. New Canadians feel very strongly that by showing young people how important voting is specifically, they will be more likely to get out and vote. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of new Canadians suggested this versus 18% of the total population. It is possible that this variation in the results is due to those who have lived abroad in countries which may not be as free or democratic as Canada feeling that Canadian youth simply do not understand the gravity and privilege of being able to cast their vote and have their voice be heard.

A LOCAL VOICE

The youth within this study were not only asked about how they can encourage voting at the federal level, but also their impressions of opportunities

⁸² It is possible that while civics classes are designed to provide the bulk of knowledge surrounding the voting process, students may also be learning about the political process in other classes as well.

for youth to be heard at the community level. Certainly, as is shown above, youth are extremely engaged at the local level as they participate and volunteer their time in any number of ways. When it comes to being heard and acknowledged within their communities, however, youth seem to feel less connected. In fact, when asked whether they feel that their ideas and opinions are recognized within their own communities, half of all youth (49%) say that this is almost never the case. While approximately a third (35%) of the respondents say that sometimes they are heard, the majority of youth (62%) feel like forgotten citizens in their own towns and communities.

Table 5.4
“In Your Community, Do You Feel Like Young People’s Voices and Ideas Are Heard?”

Responses	% of Online Respondents
Never	13%
Almost Never	49%
Bottom 2 (Never/Almost Never)	62%
Sometimes	35%
Always	3%
Top 2 (Sometimes/Always)	38%

As with the issue of voting, online youth were asked to address this disconnect between themselves and their communities in the form of an open-ended question by suggesting actions that they might take in order to get young people's voices heard at the local level. Perhaps not surprisingly, many of the same types of responses which arise when thinking at the national level also prove relevant at the community level. First and foremost, many of the youth speak of the need to *Give Youth a Voice*. One of the most common ways that respondents feel like this can be achieved is through the use of Mayor's Youth Advisory Committees (MYAC). These committees usually include a small number of students from local high schools who work together with the Mayor and Council of their community to inform them of issues which affect area youth. These members often spend time volunteering and organizing events for local youth as well as encouraging other young people to become more actively involved within the community.

Lola: In my city we have a Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee that plays a strong part in helping youth have a say in our community. We have held two youth forums in the city in which a number of students from each of the high schools got together to brainstorm ideas for the city and also to raise any concerns within the city. Both youth forums have actually had a strong impact within the city with the building of a skate park as well as addressing the concerns regarding public transportation.

As is evident from the comment above, advisory boards such as these provide youth with a welcoming forum in which they can express their concerns and visions for their community. It also gives young people an opportunity to connect with important members of the community and work towards positive

change in their town. Further, these committees allow youth to speak directly with other youth as they plan events and encourage teen involvement.

In addition to MYACs as a means of giving youth a voice, many youth also touch upon the importance of local media as a way for young people to be heard. Whether it be local newspapers providing space for young people to write articles and promote events or whether it be designated times on local radio and television for youth generated shows, online respondents feel that media is a great way for youth to inform other youth, as well as adults, within the community on youth issues.

Theo: I'd talk to the local television station and ask them if maybe we could have about 5 minutes of their air time every week to promote youth's views and thoughts about current events. I'd also ask the newspaper for a column about youth's views on issues of importance.

Other respondents expand on this idea suggesting the creation of school newspapers, youth magazines or entire shows created by youth for youth. The creation of community websites and chat rooms specifically for youth which would act as forums for local information to be shared was also suggested.

Interestingly, one of the peripheral ideas which enter discussions of voicing youth opinions and creating youth media is the self-perceived need by these youth to dispel negative stereotypes about young people in general. A number of respondents touch on the importance of showing adult community members another side of youth – a side which is articulate, thoughtful and engaged. By breaking down the stereotypes which many adults hold of young people, respondents feel like they can create better working relationships with

community members where groundwork can be laid for future youth involvement. Some respondents went even further by suggesting that in order to gain respect in the community, youth as a *whole* should not be provided the opportunity to speak but that an elected youth representative be given the issues to present and then he or she alone would be responsible for bringing the information to the community at large.

Surveys, youth forums, benefit concerts, youth generated promotional materials, youth conferences – these are just some of the additional activities that youth suggest using in order to encourage youth involvement and promote youth ideas in the community. Perhaps the most striking aspect of these responses is the clear desire for results or project completion within many of their ideas. Youth tend to be result-driven in nature and crave action over discussion which can often be one of the main deterrents for political involvement at any level (Caputo, 2000). Knowledge of democratic practices alone cannot prepare students for civic action, however. Often, there is a gap left even after a civics course is taken by young people between seeing a problem and being aware of the ways it can be solved. More specifically, in a recent study of Ottawa high school students, respondents were often unable to list any skills they possessed for political action. Other than voting, many young people have not been taught *how* to go out and take action (Llewellyn, Cook, Westheimer, Giron & Suurtamm, 2007). When they do attempt to enter into the world of traditional politics, with the “red-tape”, fiscal restraints and political lobbying which often occur before any decision can be reached, many youth feel frustrated and disillusioned before any

action even occurs. Regardless of existing barriers, youth speak about their desire for results.

***Emma:** For me, I like it when I can see the progress of what I have done, and I love to see a final result.*

***Paige:** Use action instead of words. If graffiti was an issue, have a graffiti clean up day; if recycling is what makes you tick, organize a recycling club. As soon as other members of the community see youth taking action they will see they mean business and will be happy to listen to what they have to say.*

***Abigail:** [If it was my job to get youth voices heard] I would go to schools and ask the youth what they think about things and what they think should be done about situations. Then I would start clubs and groups of determined young people who could work together and make a difference with my help.*

Throughout this chapter is evidence of a majority of youth who desire the opportunity to be involved and active at multiple levels of government as well as within the community at large. Clearly, there are certain types of involvement which lend themselves more readily to youth such as volunteering, youth groups, school and community activities such as sports or theatre clubs. It is in these sites of participation where we find young people active in the greatest numbers. As we move into the 'adult world' of politics and government, however, barriers begin to appear, ultimately deterring many youth from getting involved. For some youth, however, these barriers simply shift their interests from involvement in the traditional political processes to less conventional forms of action such as rallies, protests, email and text bombs and blogging. The 2003 General Social Survey shows that 59% of 15 to 22 year olds have taken part in some form of 'non-voting political behaviour'. This could include an activity such as signing a petition, writing a letter to a newspaper, boycotting a product or company, or taking part in

a demonstration. More specifically, 12% of 15 to 22 year old respondents said they had taken part in a march or rally while less than 6% of those over 30 years of age had done the same (Milan, 2005), and just recently, Canada's capital witnessed over 4000 young people converging on Parliament Hill in a demonstration against rising tuition fees – a topic which has been shown above to be of interest and concern for many youth (Vaage, 2009).

Whether the 'roadblocks' to traditional political participation are self imposed by youth or whether they are constructed purposefully or unwittingly by adult society, the result is the same – adults begin to see young people as apathetic and shrouded in the negative stereotypes of laziness, delinquency, and ignorance. Youth are not unaware of these issues and speak here about the benefits in combating the misconceptions in order to create beneficial partnerships with community members and government leaders.

Beyond that, youth have provided numerous ways through which governments can harness a more youthful constituency and overcome low voter turnout. Interestingly, their suggestions may be useful for improving Election Day numbers for Canadians as a whole. Making people feel like their opinions matter, having more diversity in parliament, making politics more interesting for people to watch, providing clear and easily understandable information, having conveniently placed voting stations and providing rewards – these are all valuable insights which could improve democratic participation in the political system as a whole. Looking at youth within this study, it would seem that their busy extracurricular schedules and their desire for result-based activities only

serve to benefit society. The ability to harness the boundless energy of youth may be the key to a more engaged and active citizenship.

CITIZENSHIP REDEFINED

Throughout this thesis and within this chapter particularly, the many ways in which youth are involved in their communities and the world around them have been discussed. Whether it be political participation, volunteering or extra curricular activity, young Canadians are engaging and taking part. While some of these practices are clearly associated with the concept of citizenship (political activity), other means of participation have more nebulous connections (extra-curricular involvement). To envision these ties more clearly, current conceptions of citizenship and what it means to be an 'active citizen' must be revisited and types of participation must be further unpacked. Within this research, youth have discussed four different types of participation: Traditional Political Participation, Non-Traditional Political Participation, 'On The Ground' Involvement, and Extra-Curricular Activity. Each of these and their connection with citizenship will be explained below.

1. Traditional Political Participation

This category of participation includes such activities as voting, being part of a political party or running for office. While youth within this research consistently spoke of feeling distanced from or disillusioned with this form of participation, it is also the form of involvement most closely linked with what academics and government groups envision as the active citizen.

2. Non-Traditional Political Participation

This category includes such activities as taking part in rallies or protests, signing petitions, writing letters to the editor of a newspaper or speaking up at town hall meetings. Even boycotting products to effect change in the market place can be considered here. As has been previously discussed, these non-traditional forms of political participation are heavily populated by young people and often deal with issues not typically seen as central within traditional political discussions (points of debate at federal election time, for example). While traditional political activity usually garners more acknowledgment and acceptance with respect to citizenship behaviours, in actuality, non-traditional forms of participation are often more 'involved'. For example, signing a petition may be on equal ground with voting in an election as far as expended effort. It can be argued that taking part in a rally or protest, or even writing a letter to the editor, however, requires greater commitment and energy expended by the individual. By this logic then, are non-traditional political activists the true 'active citizens'? Further, in a neo-liberal climate of government, appealing directly to corporations to seek change (as through boycotts) and looking for courses of action beyond traditional political routes may be perceived as more effective.

3. 'On The Ground' Involvement

This form of participation includes all of the volunteer activities that young people take part in: giving and raising money, helping neighbours in need, and organizing events. As has been shown previously, youth place high value on helping others and community contribution and whether it be through mandatory

volunteer time or personal drive, young people also spend a large amount of time volunteering. This type of active citizenship is, for the most part, not political in nature but has strong civic value nonetheless. Again, as neo-liberal policies place greater pressure on community groups and NGO's to help those in need both locally and abroad, individuals with experience in volunteering, fundraising, and aid work will be an extremely valuable commodity.

4. Extra-Curricular Activity

These types of activities appear to be the most self-indulgent and, therefore, the least civic-minded of the forms of involvement. On some levels, perhaps this is true, but youth are extremely active both in and outside of school in sports teams, music, theatre and church groups. While not currently viewed as part of what it means to be an engaged citizen, I argue that it is precisely these forms of participation which add value to the term citizen.

With these four primary methods of participation in place, a new vision for citizenship can be outlined. To begin, it is impossible to overlook the importance of traditional political involvement as it pertains to current forms of democracy. Without the act of voting, the fate of many is left in the hands of few. Further, there is a sense from the comments of many of the youth within this study, that it is not that traditional politics is obsolete but that it requires some adjustments to make it more relevant and appealing to younger constituents (and perhaps older ones as well). Encouraging young people to care about news, politics and current events and to engage with that information in some form will only result in a stronger nation of informed citizens.

It is from this discussion of being informed and engaged that the second prong of participation comes into view. Engagement for some will result in the act of voting or joining a political party, but for others it will mean taking part in boycotts or marching in rallies. What broadened conceptions of citizenship allow is for citizens to be involved in both. One could argue that current conceptions already allow for multiple forms of political involvement, and on some levels this would be true. What does not currently exist, however, is an equal sense of acceptance or legitimacy for both types (Kennelly, 2009). While one form is often encouraged and even financially supported by current governments (commissioned studies on youth voting rates and programs designed to encourage young people to get out and vote – *Rock the Vote*), the other form is met with police intervention (RCMP presence at G8 summit protests). This new model of citizenship will be able to acknowledge the importance of political voice in many forms and through this acknowledgement perhaps a renewed interest in even traditional forms will arise.

Turning now to 'On The Ground' Involvement and Extra-Curricular Activity – the forms of engagement most revered by youth – it becomes less clear how these methods of participation connect with current concepts of citizenship and how volunteering or playing hockey as a teen can result in an engaged citizen in adulthood. As outlined earlier, volunteering at a young age can contribute to higher instances of volunteerism later in life (Hall et al., 2009; Riedel, 2002). Similarly, youth who are active in extra-curricular activities early in life may then encourage their children to do the same and even take part themselves in a

leadership role (as a coach or as a Brownie leader for example). What each of these involved youth are contributing now and in future endeavours is social capital and the potential for community cohesion. Returning to Beauvais et al.'s and Bosniak's definitions of citizenship and their inclusion of solidarity and belonging, the importance of feeling connected to one's country and one's community is highlighted. But what provides individuals with feelings of cohesion and belonging? The act of voting and political participation alone cannot connect individuals to one another and the state on anything more than a legal level. In fact, current neo-liberal forms of citizenship accentuate individualization (Kennelly, 2009), making it the responsibility of the members within a society to create an environment which makes them proud to be a part of where they live – from the local, to the provincial to the national level. More specifically, the youth who volunteer, the members of sports teams, the church group participants are the people who know people – and they in turn become the adults who know people. These are the 'joiners', the mobilizers, the one's who can encourage others to get involved, donate, come onboard with new projects and ideas. These are also the individuals who contribute to making a community more vibrant – one with events, activities, opportunities for engagement and involvement for others.

Expanding conceptions of citizenship allow for new and dynamic means of involvement to be acknowledged and valued both among youth and the adults they are to become. By drawing on each of these forms of participation, opportunities for a more engaged and connected citizenry become possible.

CHAPTER VI **CONCLUSION**

THE YOUTH VOICE

Within the introductory chapter of this dissertation, four points of issue with current citizenship theory as it pertains to youth were outlined.

1. Youth are often absent in discussions of citizenship.
2. The concept of the 'good' citizen is narrow and exclusive in nature.
3. Full-citizenship is a construct which is reserved for the economically advantaged and creates a socio-economic divide.
4. Youth participation is not adequately acknowledged or valued as a citizenship practice.

In an effort to begin to rectify some of these theoretical and practical deficits, this dissertation has drawn from the wisdom of youth directly. By focusing this research simply on the issue of youth and their understandings of citizenship as well as using methods such as focus groups and online surveys which provide opportunities to speak directly to youth, it helps to rectify the problem of youth absence in citizenship studies. Also, by including youth from diverse demographic groups, this research is able to present a varied picture of citizenship from a multitude of perspectives. Diversity aside, their words suggest that Canadian youth generally hold strong beliefs in participation, community cohesion and tolerance.

Additionally, by hearing youth's impressions of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship as well as the many ways in which they participate in school and the community,

broadened definitions are provided which can be used to inform future conceptions of citizenship practices. For example, by addressing both narrow conceptions of participation (voting and volunteering) and wider conceptions (extra-curricular activities) this research develops new means through which participation can be conceived. This leaves us as researchers with new ways to think about what it means to participate. As definitions of active citizenship expand to include the many ways in which youth are already involved locally and their perceived value of community participation, perhaps images of youth as problem citizens or partial citizens can also be changed and expanded.

With respect to citizenship practices, youth convey the existing and taught understandings of 'good' citizenship (law abiding, helping neighbours), but they also provide new understandings of what it can mean to be a 'good' citizen (kind, respectful). Specifically, by including personality traits such as honesty or being outgoing young people provide an interesting addition to current conceptions of 'good' citizenship. Their hesitance to label others with the titles of 'good' or 'bad' suggests that they understand the definitions but also see the importance of perspective and context (i.e. just because someone does x does not mean that they can be labeled as 'good' or 'bad').

This leads to the third and final deficit: that of full-citizenship status being so closely tied to economic status. As discussed above, perhaps as studies like this which include the perspectives of youth become more prevalent, the reality of youth as thoughtful and active citizens can replace existing negative depictions and moral panics. If the many suggestions which youth have provided here of

ways in which they could be brought into politics at both the national and local level are taken under advisement, the greater presence of youth at the policy and decision making levels of government will provide a multitude of opportunities for youth to improve their status as citizens.

YOUTH CITIZENSHIP – THE BIG PICTURE

When this research is looked at as a whole rather than as individual pieces of data, we are presented with a group of young people who feel strongly about diversity and the importance of contribution, kindness and working together to create change. Firstly, their commitment to multiculturalism presents itself in many ways; not only do young people see multiculturalism, respect for others and tolerance as defining factors in what makes Canada distinct, but also, respondents demonstrate the importance of diversity as they discuss their understandings of citizenship. With 'universal status' being the most common conception of Canadian citizenship followed by a 'mosaic' vision of citizenship, the young people within this study express their belief in a diverse culture. Instances of youth feeling uncomfortable as they labeled people in images as 'good' or 'bad' and their desire to see the images in a larger context demonstrates how ingrained inclusivity has become as a behaviour within Canadian society today.

Secondly, this research highlights the distinctions between micro and macro experiences of citizenship. While citizenship is often theorized at the macro level with discussions of voting, state membership, rights and

responsibilities, the youth within the study tended to focus more readily on the micro aspects or the lived experiences of citizenship. For example, in youth's conceptions of 'good' and 'bad' citizenship they place greater importance on possessing certain personality traits such as kindness, friendliness and honesty as well as behaviours such as community involvement and volunteering than actions such as voting and paying taxes. As is evidenced in the use of personality traits, youth connect being a 'good' *citizen* with being a 'good' *person* as well as prioritizing local involvement over larger political engagement. It is the everyday experiences of being kind and tolerant of one's neighbours, giving back to the community, and abiding by the law which resonate with young people in their discussions of citizenship. More importantly, it is not simply a matter of musing over the value of being involved for these youth; the majority of the young respondents in this study are actively involved in their schools and their communities as volunteers, part-time employees, and participants of extra-curricular activities.

In contrast to many of these micro notions, citizenship is often theorized at the macro level of federal politics, immigration and social programs. When youth are held up to this macro standard of understanding and integration with respect to citizenship then, it is no wonder that they fall short and are easily labeled as apathetic and ill-informed. The reality, however, is that young Canadians do have some clear understandings of citizenship and what can be labeled as 'good' citizenship practices, but, for them, they are often local and social and community oriented. While youth acknowledge the need to find ways to encourage other

young people to pay attention to politics and vote, they crave (among other things) issues which affect their daily lives and politicians who take the time to speak with them directly. It is possible by merging the national macro level of federal politics with the local micro level of lived citizenship we may find part of the solution towards creating a more traditionally politically engaged youth. Furthermore, there is also an opportunity to begin to conceive of different forms of active citizenship which encompass new methods of engagement and allow opportunity to motivate change through non-traditional means. Currently, there is a belief that as consumers we can incite change but this belief does not exist for many young people with reference to politics.

Finally, despite the fact that youth expressed their ideas about citizenship in different ways than are often present in scholarly literature, threads of existing theories of citizenship are present. For example, perceptions of universal citizenship are evident in those who define all of the images as citizens. As youth speak about equality and the access of rights and freedoms as dimensions of the Canadian identity, a universal standard of citizenship is underlying. The strongest conception of citizenship which is evident in the conversations of the youth in this study, however, is that of communitarian citizenship. While the individualistic nature of liberal rights-based citizenship does not seem to resonate in the words of the young respondents, the communitarian's belief in group cohesion and community participation seems much more in line with youth's perceptions. Specifically, in their discussions of volunteerism and extra curricular involvement as well as the value given to personality traits such as friendliness

and kindness both as indicators of 'good' citizenship and Canadian identity, youth demonstrate the importance of social cohesion and group attachment.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The exploratory nature of this study leaves future researchers with an abundance of opportunities for further study while at the same time allowing for a wide range of findings, data, trends, and potential variations to be presented here. As well, the opportunity to present and discuss data beyond that which was statistically significant allows those with already marginalized voices to be heard. Those who benefit the most from an exploratory method such as that used here, are the smaller demographic collectives within the respondent pool such as aboriginal youth, visible minorities, new immigrants and first generation Canadians – segments of youth who often find their voices silenced with ever greater frequency.

By creating future research projects which target specific populations such as new immigrants, first generation Canadians, those who plan to go directly into the work force following high school and Aboriginals, many of the trends and variations which emerged within this research could be explored further. For example, by doing further citizenship research with Aboriginal youth specifically, clarification could be provided as to why these youth place a much lower value on community involvement than other young people but feel very strongly about the necessity of respect when it comes to practices of 'good' citizenship (see Chapter 3). Broader understandings of aboriginal culture might help to clarify the

role of respect in the lives of these youth. As well, in light of the complexities (both theoretical and experienced) of First Nations citizenship and its relation to Canadian citizenship, more work regarding aboriginal perceptions of their citizenship identities would prove to be very informative. In this study for example, among Aboriginal youth, it was not unanimous that the image of Aboriginal youth were in fact Canadian citizens at all (29% did not feel that the image showed Canadian citizens).

Future research focusing on the differences between established Canadians, first generation Canadians and new immigrants with respect to their levels of political engagement could also be useful in explaining variations in their reported interest in politics which shows that first generation Canadians are most likely to say that they pay attention to politics while new Canadians are the least likely (see Chapter 5). Is it simply a matter of being sufficiently integrated into the Canadian culture while at the same time having access to experiences of countries without freedoms and democratic political systems? Or are there other variables affecting these outcomes?

As well, findings in Chapter 5 show that the majority of online respondents claim to have a working knowledge of current events while many other studies disagree suggesting that today's youth have only a very limited understanding of politics and world affairs. It would be interesting to extend this research in two ways; first, a clarification of how people of different ages define the term 'current events' would be helpful. For example, perhaps young people are including different forms of information in their definition of 'current events' than are the

researchers. Second, a knowledge based test of current events and politics would be useful in determining whether those who report being reasonably informed are actually more knowledgeable than those who report lower levels of being informed or whether it is actually a matter of *not knowing what you do not know*. More specifically, perhaps existing research which suggests that youth in general are not very knowledgeable about current events and politics are correct, but the youth themselves are not aware of the information they lack, resulting in perceptions of knowledge rather than ratings of actual knowledge.

Finally, because the most recent Obama/McCain election had not yet occurred at the time of this research it would be interesting to see if Canadian youth would refer more to the American tactics for drawing in youth or whether their comments would remain much the same. For example, many young Americans seem to be taken with the charisma portrayed in the party leaders as well as the promise of action and change. While some youth within this study spoke of the lack of dynamic candidates available to them during the voting process, it was by no means a leading concern. Further, the most recent American election (especially the Obama campaign) made strong use of youth-centred media and technologies including the Internet, social networking sites, video games, virtual reality sites, text messaging, and MTV (see Chapter 5). While some of these technologies are mentioned by some of the youth, many of these tactics for politicians to connect with a younger voting population are not mentioned by Canadian respondents. As another Canadian election looms ahead, it will not only be interesting to see if any of the Canadian party leaders

will take advantage of some of these youth-friendly strategies. Further, because American and Canadian media is so intertwined, it would be interesting to do follow up research to see how this most recent American election affects young Canadians' interest in politics and their expectations of this country's politicians and the campaign process.

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IMAGE WORKS CITED
(Appendix 4)

Image 1

----- (2004, November). Zellers Ad. *Chatelaine*, 77.

Image 2

Remorz, R. (photographer) & Blanchfield, M. (author). (2006, May 17). No Life Like It – But Canadians Don't Want It. *The Ottawa Citizen*, A4.

Image 3

Unknown source.

Image 4

----- (2006, April). Tampax Pearl Ad. *Chatelaine*, 127.

Image 5

----- (2004, April). CIBC Ad. *50Plus Magazine*, 2.

Image 6

Unknown source.

Image 7

----- (2006, April 1). AT&T Ad. *The Economist*, 279(8471), 8.

Image 8

----- (2004, April). AutoGo Scooter Ad. *50Plus Magazine*, 19.

Image 9

----- (2006). *Sears Catalogue*, Spring/Summer, 265.

Image 10

Unknown source.

Image 11

----- (2004). Team Players. *U of T Magazine*, 31(3), 81.

Image 12

Unknown source.

Image 13

----- (2006, May 6). Special Report: Outsourcing to China -- Watch Out India. *The Economist*, 379(8476), 69.

Image 14

----- (2004, January). United Way Ad. *Chatelaine*, 140.

Image 15
Unknown source.

Image 16
Unknown source.

Image 17
Slezic, L. (photographer) & Janjoura, K. (author). (2006, June). Kandahar's Feisty Cop. *Chatelaine*, 99.

Image 18
----- (2006, May 6). Now It's the People's Gas. *The Economist*, 379(8476), 37.

Image 19
Unknown source.

Image 20
----- (2004, May). State Farm Insurance Ad. *Chatelaine*, 53.

Image 21
----- (2004, May). Canadian Tire/ Realeigh Canada Ad. *Chatelaine*, 139.

Image 22
Unknown source.

Image 23
Unknown source.

Image 24
Penn, I. (photographer) & Kazanjian, D. (author). (2004, June). Out of Nowhere. *Vogue*, 535.

Image 25
----- (2004, May). Ultra Tide Ad. *Chatelaine*, 213.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Mosaic of Silence -- Hearing What Young People in Canada Have to Say About Citizenship

PhD Dissertation Research by Andrea Sharkey

Letter of Information (Focus Groups)

I am a PhD sociology student interested in what young people think and understand about the concepts of citizenship, community, and participation. To date there has not been a lot of research done in Canada on this topic of youth citizenship and even less of this research has given young people a chance to speak for themselves. Ideas about being a citizen and the concept of citizenship are often taught in the Canadian classrooms, but does this affect what young people think it means to be a citizen in Canada today, and how does all of this relate to their feelings about community and participation (political or otherwise)? **The aim of this study is to give young people a voice and to contribute to existing discussions about what it means to be a young citizen in Canada today.**

I would like to include you in this study because you are a young person under or at the voting age and living in Canada. This study offers you a chance to speak about your experiences and share your thoughts about what citizenship and community means to you. **I would like to ask you questions about what a citizen is and what it means to be a good or bad citizen; What does 'community' mean to you and who do you include when you talk about community? Are you involved and do you feel like you can create change in society?** Your opinions matter and I would like to know more about them.

This group discussion is completely voluntary and there is minimal risk involved in your participation. You may stop at any time, but the information provided until that point will be included within the study unless you request otherwise. Feel free to only offer comments for those questions which you feel comfortable with. While I cannot promise anonymity or confidentiality from others who participate in this group session, I will never use your name in any documents, publications, or presentations. I will alter all details so that you cannot be identified by any non-participants. The discussion will take approximately one hour and will be conducted during class time. The discussion will be recorded on a digital video recorder, and I will store these video files on CDs in a locked cabinet in a secure location. These files will be kept indefinitely for the sole purpose of academic research and publication. The findings of this research will be made available in the form of a summary report which will be provided to all participating schools upon the completion of this thesis. Copies of this report can also be obtained upon request directly from the researcher at this time.

To thank you for your time in taking part in this focus group you will automatically be entered into a draw for an Ipod Nano (1G hard drive, approximate value \$180.00 CAD). If you are the winner, I will contact you by email for delivery instructions.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

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This project has been reviewed and approved by the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact the ethics committee.

Research Ethics Committee Chair – Antonio Gualtieri
511A Tory, Carleton University
Phone: (613) 520-2517
E-mail: ethics@carleton.ca

Appendix 2

Mosaic of Silence -- Hearing What Young People in Canada Have to Say About Citizenship

Focus Group Consent Form

Voluntariness:

Your participation in this discussion is completely voluntary and there is minimal risk involved in your participation. You may also stop at any time, but the information provided until that point will be included within the study unless you request otherwise. Feel free to only offer comments for those questions with which you feel comfortable. While I cannot promise anonymity or confidentiality from other youth who participate in this focus group, I will never use your name in any documents, publications, or presentations. I will alter all details so that you cannot be identified by any non-participants. The discussion will take approximately one hour and will be conducted at the Michelle Heights Community Centre. The discussion will be recorded on a digital video recorder, and I will store these video files on CDs in a locked cabinet in a secure location. These files will be kept indefinitely for the sole purpose of academic research and publication. The findings of this research will be made available in the form of a summary report which will be provided to all participating schools upon the completion of this thesis. Copies of this report can also be obtained upon request directly from the researcher at that time.

Person to Contact:

If you want to talk to anyone about this research or have any questions or concerns please contact:

Researcher: Andrea Sharkey

Phn:

Email: asharkey@connect.carleton.ca

Supervisor: Janet Siltanen, PhD

Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University

Phone: (613) 520-2600 ext. 2611

E-mail: siltanen@ccs.carleton.ca

If you have read this consent form and you have been given the chance to ask any questions now or at a later time or if the consent form has been read and explained to you and you agree to proceed with this discussion, please sign or make your mark below.

Print Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant or Legally Authorized Representative Date

Parent or Guardian's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix 3

Pseudonym Reference Guide

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Grade	Educational Stream*	Community Size	Citizenship Status**	Economic Status***
Abdi	M	17	12	Disadvantaged	Urban	Landed Imm.	Mid
Abigail	F	17	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	Low
Adam	M	15	9	Applied	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Aden	M	16	10	Applied	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Ben	M	18	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid
Beth	F	18	12	Applied	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Bill	M	17	12	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Low
Bonnie	F	15	11	Disadvantaged	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Low
Carla	F	15	10	Applied	Urban	Landed Imm.	Low
Carrie	F	18	12	Applied	Urban	F.G. Canadian	High
Chloe	F	18	12	Applied	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Low
Cindy	F	14	10	Academic	Small Town	Landed Imm.	High
Danny	M	14	8	Disadvantaged	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Daphne	F	18	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	High
Deborah	F	15	10	Academic	Urban	Landed Imm.	Mid
Denis	M	19	12	Academic	Urban	Est. Canadian	High
Ellen	F	17	12	Disadvantaged	Small Town	F.G. Canadian	Mid
Emma	F	16	11	Online	Urban	Landed Imm.	Low
Erin	F	16	11	Online	Small Town	Est. Canadian	High
Eva	F	16	12	Online	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Low
Ewen	M	16	10	Academic	Urban	F.G. Canadian	High
Farah	F	18	Univ	Leader	Urban	Landed Imm.	Mid

Fran	F	16	12	Disadvantaged	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Low
Fred	M	18	12	Online	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Low
Geoff	M	17	12	Online	Urban	Landed Imm.	High
George	M	18	12	Applied	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid
Grace	F	15	11	Online	Urban	F.G. Canadian	Low
Gwen	F	16	11	Applied	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Low
Hakim	M	18	--	Disadvantaged	Urban	Landed Imm.	High
Hannah	F	17	12	Leader	Urban	Landed Imm.	Low
Ian	M	14	9	Disadvantaged	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Irene	F	16	11	Applied	Urban	Landed Imm.	Mid
Izzy	F	18	12	Applied	Urban	Est. Canadian	High
James	M	18	12	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Jane	F	18	12	Applied	Urban	Landed Imm.	Mid
Jasmin	F	18	Univ	Leader	Urban	Landed Imm.	High
Jenny	F	17	12	Applied	Urban	Landed Imm.	Low
Jill	F	16	12	Academic	Urban	F.G. Canadian	Mid
Jillian	F	17	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	High
Joe	M	24	12	Applied	Urban	Landed Imm.	High
Keith	M	15	10	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	High
Kevin	M	18	12	Academic	Urban	Est. Canadian	Low
Lawrence	M	18	12	Applied	Small Town	Est. Canadian	High
Lilly	F	16	11	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid
Logan	M	19	12	Applied	Urban	Est. Canadian	High
Lola	F	17	12	Online	Urban	Landed Imm.	Mid
Martha	F	18	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid
Melanie	F	18	12	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	High
Mia	F	15	10	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	Low
Murray	M	17	11	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Nancy	F	18	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid

Neil	M	16	10	Applied	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Norah	F	17	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid
Olivia	F	18	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	High
Oren	M	16	10	Applied	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Owen	M	19	12	Applied	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid
Paige	F	17	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	Low
Pam	F	17	11	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	High
Penny	F	16	11	Applied	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Peter	M	18	12	Applied	Urban	Est. Canadian	High
Petra	F	18	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid
Phoebe	F	18	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid
Phil	M	16	11	Applied	Small Town	Est. Canadian	High
Richard	M	16	10	Academic	Urban	Est. Canadian	High
Robyn	F	15	10	Academic	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid
Ross	M	17	12	Online	Urban	Est. Canadian	High
Ruth	F	14	9	Academic	Small Town	F.G. Canadian	High
Samir	M	16	11	Disadvantaged	Urban	Landed Imm.	Mid
Sarah	F	16	10	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Simon	M	18	11	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Low
Sophie	F	15	10	Online	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Low
Stewart	M	18	12	Online	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Susan	F	15	10	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	High
Tammy	F	14	9	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Tania	F	15	10	Academic	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid
Tara	F	17	12	Academic	Urban	Est. Canadian	Mid
Ted	M	14	9	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Theo	M	16	12	Online	Urban	F.G. Canadian	Low
Tina	F	15	10	Academic	Urban	F.G. Canadian	Low
Tom	M	17	11	Applied	Small Town	Est. Canadian	High

Vicky	F	16	11	Academic	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Mid
Victor	M	17	12	Online	Urban	F.G. Canadian	Low
Vince	M	16	10	Academic	Small Town	F.G. Canadian	Mid
Violet	F	17	12	Online	Small Town	Est. Canadian	Low
Wendy	F	17	12	Academic	Small Town	Landed Imm.	High
Wes	M	20	–	Disadvantaged	Urban	F.G. Canadian	Low
Zoe	F	16	11	Online	Urban	F.G. Canadian	Mid

*Educational Stream refers to the one of the origin of the respondent within the study. There were 4 focus group streams including “Academic” (or advanced) level students, “Applied” (or general) level students, “Leaders” who are members of a leadership group, “Disadvantaged” who are members of a youth center. Online respondents were not asked for their level of academic achievement (applied or academic) only their grade, so they are simply designated as “Online”.

**Youth placed themselves into one of three groups. Established Canadian (Est. Canadian) – at least the respondent and his or her parents were born in Canada; First Generation Canadian (F.G. Canadian) – the respondent was born in Canada but his or her parents were not; or Landed Immigrant (Landed Imm.) – the respondent and his or her parents were born outside of Canada.

***The high, mid and low rankings for Economic Status are based on the same criterion as those in the online survey. For a further discussion of this criterion see the Methodology Chapter.

Appendix 4

CITIZEN PHOTOS



1.



2.



3.



4.



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6.



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17.



18.



19.



20.



21.



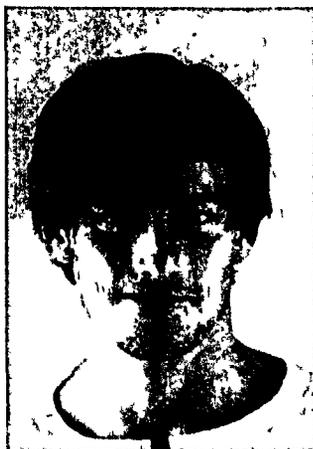
22.



23.



24.



25.

Appendix 5

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Who I am...

- high school
- my connection with this school
- university

Why I'm doing...

- working on my thesis
- what I want to study
 - researching young people and the idea of citizenship or 'being a citizen' and what that means to you.
 - I want to know about what you think you're part of a community and what community that is.
 - I want to know how you're involved at school, politically, in your home town, on line or if you're not involved why that is.
 - I want to know if you care about your nationality or what it means to be Canadian; do you even define yourself as Canadian?

Why I'm here today...

- want your help in designing the questionnaire that I'll be giving to the students across Canada.
- I want to make sure that I'm asking the right types of questions and that I'm asking about things that actually matter to you guys.
- Something that I might think is important, you may be able to tell me doesn't matter to you at all but that something else is more important instead.
- you know your peers better than I do so you'll know what types of things are important to them and what kinds of questions they might want to answer.

Would you be interested in helping me out with this?

- No right or wrong answers
- You are the experts so I'm hoping you can help me to create a survey that works

Citizenship... (with photos)

- When you think about the word citizenship or being a citizen, what does that mean to you?
- Who do you think is a citizen?
- Are there people who aren't citizens?
- Do you consider yourselves to be citizens?
- How would you describe a 'good' citizen? A bad citizen?
- What about global citizenship?
- Is citizenship something that you and your friends ever talk about or something you ever think about?
- Is this the kind of thing that you talk about in school? When?

Community...

-You often hear people talk about this idea of 'community'. What types of communities are there? What types of communities do you feel like you most belong to?

(prompt: like the community on your street or in your town, communities of friends who are close by or far away, national communities, global communities, or even on line communities)

-Is nationality something that's important to you? How would you define yourself? As Canadian or something else?

-Do you feel included in Canadian society?

-Who do you feel isn't included in Canadian society?

Politics & Making Change...

-Do you volunteer or take part in community groups, or community activities? What about school activities?

-What do you think about the mandatory volunteer hours in order to graduate?

-Does volunteering make someone a good citizen? A better community member?

What about participating in other ways (community groups, activities, at school)?

-Have you ever taken part in protests, campaigns, petition signings, demonstrations?

-Do you pay attention to politics? Why or why not? How so?

-Do you think that it's important for young people to vote or pay attention to politics?

-Why do you think that young people can't vote until they're 18?

-How much do you believe that people like you can make a difference in society?

-Between volunteering; demonstrations, petitions, protests; and politics – what is the most effective way to make things change?

Room to Improve...

-Of everything we've talked about today, what do you think are the most important things I should talk to young people about and ask them about? What parts were most interesting to you?

-Am I missing something that I should have asked about?

Appendix 6

Name: _____

Email or Phone #: _____

Personal Info Sheet**1. Sex:**

Male

Female

2. Age: _____**3. Grade:** 9 10 11 12**4. What is the name of the town/city where you live?**

5. What is the approximate population of your town/city?

6. Were you born in that town/city?

Yes

No

7. If you answered 'No' to question 6, where were you born? (Please provide the town/city, province – and country if not in Canada).

8. Place a check mark next to each of the ways that you participate in school and in your community.

Type of Activity	In School (✓)	At Home/In the Community (✓)
Music Lessons/Play in a Band		
Sports Teams		
Drama/Theatre Groups		
Volunteer (List: _____)	(for community service hours)	(In addition to community service hours)
Environmental Groups		
Political Groups		
Part-Time Job		
Church Groups		
Art		
4-H (agricultural club)		
Dance Classes		
Other (List: _____)		

9. What best describes your citizenship status?

- a) Landed immigrant
- b) Canadian born first generation Canadian
- c) Established Canadian (at least you and your parents were born in Canada)

10. What language did you learn to speak first at home?

Finally, I would like to ask some personal background information which will help in understanding if some groups of young people experience citizenship, community, and participation differently from other groups. It is important to the research to collect this information but please remember that you do not have to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with.

10. Place a check mark (✓) next to each of the following possessions you have personally. If you do not have one yourself but if someone in your household does, then put a check mark in that column.

Possession	Have Personally (✓)	Have in My Household (✓)
A computer		
A portable MP3 player		
A television		
A DVD player		
Access to the internet		
A cell phone		
An encyclopedia (print or electronic)		
An English dictionary		
A French dictionary		
A public library card		
A car		
An electronic game station		

11. What work do your parents (or step-parents/guardians) do?

- Describe their jobs as specifically as you can.
- If a parent is unemployed say that and then describe the last main job s/he had.
- If a parent's job is to stay at home and care for the family, say that.

Father/Step-father/Guardian's job:

Mother/Step-mother/Guardian's job:

Appendix 7**Online Questionnaire****Mosaic of Silence -- Hearing What Young People in Canada Have to Say
About Citizenship, Community, and Participation****PhD Dissertation Research by Andrea Sharkey**

I am a PhD sociology student interested in what young people think and understand about the concepts of citizenship, community, and participation. To date there has not been a lot of research done in Canada on this topic of youth citizenship. Even less of this research has given young people a chance to speak for themselves. Ideas about being a citizen and the concept of citizenship are often taught in the Canadian classrooms, but does this affect what young people think it means to be a citizen in Canada today? How does all of this relate to your feelings about community and participation (political or otherwise)?

The aim of this study is to give young people a voice and to contribute to existing discussions about what it means to be a young citizen in Canada today.

I would like to include you in this study because you are a young person between the ages of 14 and 18 and living in Canada. This study offers you a chance to speak about your experiences and share your thoughts about what citizenship and community means to you. Your opinions matter, and I would like to know more about them.

This online survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and is completely voluntary, and you may stop at anytime. You may also skip any question(s) that you are not comfortable answering. Please be assured that I will protect your anonymity and confidentiality. I will never use your name in any documents, publications, or presentations. I will alter all details so that you cannot be identified. Your answers will be kept in a secure database that only I have password access to. This data will be kept indefinitely for the sole purpose of academic research and publication. The findings of this research will be made available in the form of a summary report which can be obtained upon request directly from the researcher upon the completion of this thesis.

To thank you for your time, by completing this survey you will automatically be entered into a draw for an **iPod Nano** (1G hard drive, approximate value \$180.00 CAD). If you are the winner, I will contact you by email for delivery instructions.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Andrea Sharkey
PhD Candidate
Carleton University
E-mail: asharkey@connect.carleton.ca

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact the ethics committee. Research Ethics Committee Chair – Antonio Gualtieri; 511A Tory, Carleton University; Phone: (613) 520-2517; e-mail: ethics@carleton.ca

1. If you have read this information and agree to participate, please mark YES below to get started with the survey.

Yes No

2. Sex

Male Female

3. Age (Please circle one)

14 15 16 17 18

4. Do you consider yourself to be a visible minority*

***According to StatsCan, people who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour can consider themselves as visible minorities. **Aboriginal people are not considered visible minorities.**

Yes No

5. Are you of Aboriginal descent?

Yes No

6. What language did you first learn to speak at home?

7. What is that last grade you completed in school? (Please circle one)

7 8 9 10 11 12

8. Are you currently still a student (or returning to school in the fall)?

Yes No

9. What best describes your plans after you finish high school?

- University
 College
 Work
 Other _____

10. What province do you live in?

- British Columbia
 Alberta
 Saskatchewan
 Manitoba
 Ontario
 Quebec
 Nova Scotia
 New Brunswick
 Prince Edward Island
 Newfoundland
 Yukon
 Nunavut
 Northwest Territories

11. What is the name of the town/city you live in?

12. Were you born in that town/city?

Yes No

13. If you answered NO to question 10, where were you born? (Please provide the name of the town, province, and country if not in Canada)

14. Were your parents born in Canada?

- Yes
 No
 Just my mother was born in Canada
 Just my father was born in Canada

15. If you answered NO to question 12, where were they born (please include the country and city)?

16. If you answered "Just my mother", where was your father born (please give the country and the city)?

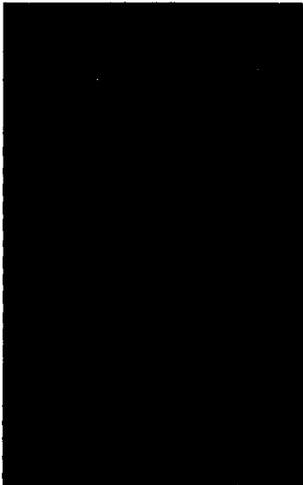
17. If you answered "Just my father", where was your mother born (please give the country and the city)?

18. Place a check mark next to each of the ways that you participate in school and in your community (you can mark both columns if you participate in both).

Type of Activity	In School (✓)	At Home/In the Community (✓)
Music Lessons/Play in a Band		
Sports Teams		
Drama/Theatre Groups		
Volunteer		
Environmental Groups		
Political Groups		
Part-Time Job		
Church Groups		
Art		
4-H (agricultural club)		
Dance Classes		
Other (List: _____)		

19. Mark the TOP 3 ways you usually spend your time in an average week outside of school).

- Talk on your cellphone
- Hang out with friends
- Chat online
- Watch TV
- Read



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No



Yes No

37. If you had to give 5 characteristics of what would make someone a 'good citizen', what would they be?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

38. If you had to give 5 characteristics of what would make someone a 'bad citizen', what would they be?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

☆☆☆ YOU'RE OVER HALF WAY DONE!! KEEP GOING! ☆☆☆

39. What, if any, are some duties or responsibilities that citizens have in Canada?

40. What, if any, are some rights that people have as citizens of Canada?

41. Would you define yourself at this moment as a full citizen*?

*Full citizen: someone who has all the rights and duties a citizen

Yes

No

Don't know

Other (please specify) _____

42. Do you think that there is something distinctive (different/special/unique) about being a Canadian citizen?

Yes

No

Not sure

48. If you answer with a 1 or 2 to question number 45, why do you not pay attention or only sometimes pay attention to politics? Please mark all that apply.

- My friends don't pay attention to politics
- My family doesn't pay attention to politics
- It's boring
- I don't understand it
- The issues they talk about don't matter to me
- Politics is for old people
- I can't make a difference anyways
- I'm too young to vote
- Politicians don't care about my opinions so why should I care about what I have to say
- Other (please specify) _____

49. If you answered with a 3 or 4 to question number 45, why do you pay attention or often pay attention to politics? Please mark all that apply.

- My friends pay attention to politics
- My family pays attention to politics
- It's interesting
- I plan to go into politics in the future
- It's important to be informed
- I plan to vote (or already do)
- My vote matters
- Other (please specify) _____

50. Did your parents/step-parents/guardians* vote in the last election?

***If you have more than one mother or father, answer for the one you spend the most time with**

Father/Step-father/Guardian

Mother/Step-mother/Guardian

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- NA

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- NA

51. Sometimes people say that young people don't care about or pay attention to politics. If it was your job to get more young people to care about politics and to go out and vote what would you do?

52. On a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 is 'think it's a bad idea' and 4 is 'think it's a great idea') circle the answer that best describes what you think.

Some high schools in Canada now require students to complete up to 40 hours of community service to graduate. How do you feel about that?

1	2	3	4
Think it's a bad idea			Think it's a good idea

53. Why do you feel that way?

54. Do other people in your family whom you spend time with volunteer?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

55. Have you taken a civics class yet in school?

Yes No

56. If you answered YES to question 53, what types of things did you learn? Please mark all that apply.

- Aboriginal issues
 Bad citizenship practices
 Community
 Conflict resolution
 Defining citizenship
 Duties and responsibilities of being a citizen
 Globalization
 Good citizenship practices
 Government
 History of Canadian government
 Multiculturalism and diversity
 National identity
 Political party platforms
 Rights that citizens have
 Volunteering
 Voting
 Other (please specify) _____

60. What work do your parents (or step-parents/guardians) do?

***If you have both a parent and a step-parent/guardian describe the job of the person with whom you have the closest relationship. If you have only one parent/guardian then just answer for that person.**

***Describe their jobs as specifically as you can.**

Father/Step-father/Guardian: _____

Mother/Step-mother/Guardian: _____

Thanks for taking the time to fill out this survey! If you would like to be put in the draw for the iPod Nano© please write your email address or contact phone number below. You will receive no other material from me or anyone else except to hear if you won the iPod©. Your contact information will be kept completely confidential and it will never be provided to anyone else for soliciting purposes.

Email: _____

Phone: _____

APPENDIX 8
SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

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- Table 2 – Age of Focus Group Participants
- Table 3 – Grade Level of Focus Group Participants
- Table 4 – Demographic Characteristics of Online Participants
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- Table 6 – Grade Level of Online Participants
- Table 7 – Provincial Breakdown of Online Participants
- Table 8 – Overview of Online Demographic Groups and the Percentage Who Accepted Each Image as a Citizen of Canada
- Table 9 – Qualities of a ‘Good’ Citizen as Listed by Online Respondents
- Table 10 – Demographic Breakdown of the Top 10 Most Common Qualities of ‘Good’ Citizenship as Listed by Online Respondents
- Table 11 – Qualities of a ‘Bad’ Citizen as Listed by Online Respondents
- Table 12 – Demographic Breakdown of the Top 10 Most Common Qualities of ‘Bad’ Citizenship as Listed by Online Respondents
- Table 13 – Top Ways Online Youth Spend Their Time Outside of School in an Average Week
- Table 14 – Primary News Source for Online Youth
- Table 15 – Reasons for Following or Not Following Politics Given by Online Respondents
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Table 17 – 5 Main Concept Clusters Regarding Ways of Getting Youth More Interested and Active in Politics

Table 18 – Overview of Online Demographic Groups and the Percentage Who Suggested Each Idea Getting Young People to Vote

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Participants

Demographic Group	Population Size n=89
Male	43
Female	46
Academic Education Level	47
Applied Education Level	42
Urban Dwelling	44
Rural/Small Town Dwelling	45

Table 2
Age of Focus Group Participants

13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
1	7	12	21	16	20	5	4

Table 3
Grade Level of Focus Group Participants

8	9	10	11	12	College	University	Unknown
1	9	19	19	36	1	2	2

Table 4
Demographic Characteristics of Online Participants

Demographic Group	Population Size n=340
Male	112
Female	228
Visible Minority	96
Aboriginal	26
English Speaking	263
French Speaking	9
Other Language	64
Community of <50,000	138
Community of >50,000	200

Table 5
Age of Online Participants

14	15	16	17	18
34	80	61	70	94

Table 6
Grade Level of Online Participants

7	8	9	10	11	12	Unknown
3	12	96	53	76	94	6

Table 7
Provincial Breakdown of Online Participants

British Columbia	36
Alberta	49
Saskatchewan	4
Manitoba	14
Ontario	169
Quebec	8
New Brunswick	5
Nova Scotia	4
P.E.I.	1
Newfoundland	49
Unknown	1

Table 8

Overview of Online Demographic Groups and the Percentage Who Accept Each Image as a Citizen of Canada

Photo	Total Online Population	Sex		Age		Visible Minority Labels Self as Visible Minority	Socio-Economic Indicator			Citizenship Status			Community Size	
		Male	Female	14-16	17-18		Low	Moderate	High	Family/Child & 1 Parent Born in Canada	Neither Parent Born in Canada	Moved to Canada After Birth	<50,000	>50,000
1. Lady	81%	83%	79%	82%	79%	81%	86%	83%	73%	81%	81%	79%	78%	82%
2. Soldier	80%	76%	82%	80%	80%	77%	90%	77%	73%	81%	76%	76%	81%	79%
3. Football Players	89%	88%	88%	88%	88%	87%	86%	92%	85%	87%	92%	91%	81%	92%
4. Professer	74%	67%	77%	77%	71%	79%	78%	77%	67%	73%	81%	74%	73%	74%
5. Tatood Man	70%	71%	69%	71%	69%	69%	75%	73%	71%	71%	57%	79%	74%	68%
6. Dancing Teens	85%	83%	85%	84%	85%	82%	86%	92%	72%	84%	95%	76%	81%	87%
7. Office Worker	84%	79%	86%	84%	83%	81%	85%	88%	77%	84%	84%	79%	82%	84%
8. Elderly Woman	83%	81%	84%	81%	85%	86%	85%	83%	81%	82%	87%	88%	81%	85%
9. Black Nurse	86%	85%	87%	86%	86%	86%	86%	92%	81%	87%	87%	83%	84%	87%
10. Rich Man	52%	52%	52%	51%	53%	53%	63%	50%	48%	54%	51%	45%	58%	48%
11. Basketball Player	88%	86%	88%	86%	89%	86%	89%	93%	83%	88%	81%	91%	82%	91%
12. Baby	90%	87%	92%	88%	92%	86%	89%	94%	88%	91%	87%	88%	86%	93%
13. Asian Workers	64%	59%	66%	64%	63%	66%	68%	66%	55%	66%	60%	57%	69%	60%
14. Guys on Street	75%	69%	77%	75%	75%	77%	78%	80%	63%	73%	84%	74%	73%	76%
15. Aboriginal Youth	88%	85%	89%	88%	88%	89%	89%	94%	82%	87%	89%	93%	86%	89%

Table 9
Qualities of a 'Good' Citizen as Listed by
Online Respondents

Rank	Quality	% of Respondents Who Cited as Top 5
1	Caring; Nice; Giving; Thoughtful; Helpful; Help in Emergencies	43.3%
2	Involved in the Community; Volunteers	36.5%
3	Respect Others; Respect Those Who are Different	26.5%
4	Politically Aware; Informed; Informed of Canada	21.8%
5	Law Abiding	21.1%
6	Honest; Truthful	14.7%
7	Patriotic; Proud	13.8%
8	Politically Active; Vote	10.3%
8	Friendly; Outgoing; Good Natured	10.3%
9	Hardworking; Drive; Motivated; Passion; Initiative	10%
9	Loyal; Trustworthy	10%
10	Responsible; Reliable; Dependable; Committed	9.7%
11	Polite; Courteous	8.5%
11	Educated; Smart	8.5%
11	Take Care of Environment	8.5%
12	Working; Financially Independent	6.2%
13	Stands up for Their Beliefs, Makes Change; Opinionated	5.6%
14	Happy; Joyful	5%
14	Honourable; Integrity; Moral	5%
15	Open Minded; Vision; Free Thinker	4.1%
16	Fun; Light Hearted	3.5%
17	Clean	2.4%
17	Pays Taxes; Pays Bills	2.4%
18	Leader	1.5%
19	Positive; Optimistic	1.5%
19	Speak One or Both Official Languages	1.5%
19	Peace Keeping; Believes in Peace	1.5%
20	Church Goer; Religious	1.2%
21	Will Go to War if Needed	0.9%
----	Other	14.5%

Table 10
Demographic Breakdown of the Top 10 Most Common Qualities of 'Good' Citizenship as Listed by Online Respondents*

#	Quality	F	M	14-16	17-18	Rural	Urban	C & 1P	C Only	All New	Civic	L SES	M SES	H SES	Vis Min	Abo rig
N	-----	228	112	175	164	138	200	256	40	44	115	74	95	83	96	26
1	Caring; Nice; Giving; Thoughtful; Helpful; Help in Emergency	46.5	36.6	49.1	37.2	44.2	43.0	41.8	50.0	45.5	47.0	48.6	53.7	48.2	49.0	42.3
2	Involved in the Comm.; Volunteers	39.9	29.5	34.9	38.4	29.7	41.5	34.0	37.5	50.0	44.3	45.9	37.9	43.4	38.5	0.8
3	Respect Others; Respect Those Who are Different	30.3	18.8	24.0	29.3	25.4	27.5	25.8	32.5	25.0	31.1	27.0	40.0	26.5	27.1	30.8
4	Politically Aware; Informed; Informed of Canada	23.7	17.9	21.7	22.0	13.0	28.0	21.5	25.0	20.5	34.8	32.4	29.5	15.7	17.7	7.7
5	Law Abiding	20.6	22.3	20.6	22.0	18.1	23.5	20.7	22.5	22.7	26.1	28.4	21.1	24.1	19.8	30.8

6	Honest; Truthful	14.9	14.3	18.9	10.4	15.9	14.0	14.8	15.0	13.6	18.3	13.5	20.0	16.9	17.7	11.5
7	Patriotic; Proud	15.4	10.7	10.3	17.7	10.9	16.0	13.3	12.5	18.2	14.8	14.9	15.8	16.9	12.5	7.7
8	Politically Active; Vote	9.6	11.6	6.9	14.0	7.2	12.5	10.2	10.0	11.4	15.7	8.1	13.7	15.7	6.3	11.5
8	Friendly; Outgoing; Good Natured	9.2	12.5	10.3	10.4	10.1	10.5	11.3	10.0	4.2	8.7	12.2	16.8	6.0	6.3	7.7
9	Hardworking; Drive; Motivated; Passion; Initiative	10.3	7.7	9.7	10.4	10.9	9.5	11.3	0	11.4	15.7	10.8	12.6	12.0	9.4	7.7
9	Loyal; Trustworthy	11.0	8.0	10.9	9.1	12.3	8.5	9.8	7.5	13.6	12.2	6.8	11.6	18.1	8.3	11.5
10	Responsible; Reliable; Dependable; Committed	9.6	9.8	13.7	5.5	8.7	10.5	7.8	10.0	20.5	14.8	12.2	13.7	10.8	11.5	0

***Legend**

#: Ranked number

Quality: Quality cluster

F: Female

M: Male

14-16: Younger age group

17-18: Older age group

Rural: Community size of less than 50,000

Urban: Community size of more than 50,000

Red: Highest ranked item by select demographic group

C&1P: Child and at least 1 parent born in Canada

C Only: Only child born in Canada, parents born elsewhere

All New: No one in immediate family born in Canada

Civic: Has taken or is currently taking a civics class at school

LSES: Low socioeconomic status

MSES: Medium socioeconomic status

HSES: High socioeconomic status

Vis Min: Self described visible minority (not including aboriginals)

Aborig: Of aboriginal descent

Green: Lowest ranked item by select demographic group

Table 11
Qualities of a 'Bad' Citizen as Listed by
Online Respondents

Rank	Quality	% of Respondents Who Cited as Top 5
1	Breaks Laws	32.9%
2	Uncaring; Selfish, Unhelpful; Unsupportive	21.2%
3	Uninvolved; Doesn't Volunteer; Apathetic	18.8%
4	Disrespectful	17.9%
5	Racist; Intolerant; Discrimination; Sexist, Ageist; Homophobic; Hateful	15.6%
6	Rude; Ill Mannered; Impolite	15.3%
7	Mean; Unkind; Cruel; Malicious; Evil	14.4%
8	Uneducated; Ignorant; Unwilling to Learn	13.2%
9	Unaware; Uninformed; Uninterested	12.6%
10	Dishonest; Liar	10.9%
10	Doesn't Take Care of the Environment; Litter	10.9%
11	Violent; Abusive; Aggressive; Hostile; Bully	9.1%
11	Unemployed; Welfare; Burden on Society; Someone who Takes Advantage	9.1%
12	Lazy; Slacker; Unmotivated; No Initiative	7.9%
13	Unpatriotic; Not Proud to be Canadian	7.4%
14	Not Politically Involved; Doesn't Vote	6.2%
15	Drugs & Alcohol; Addict	5.9%
15	Irresponsible; Unreliable	5.9%
16	Negative; Pessimistic; Bad Attitude	5.6%
17	Narrow-Minded; Unwilling to Change; Closed-Minded; Uncooperative	5.3%
18	Disloyal; Untrustworthy	4.7%
19	Vandalize; Disrespect Property; Graffiti; Destructive	4.4%
19	Unfriendly; Unpleasant	4.4%
20	Careless; Reckless; Dangerous	4.1%
21	Arrogant; Conceited; Stuck Up; Snobby	3.5%
22	Angry	2.6%
22	Dishonourable; Unethical	2.6%
23	Doesn't Pay Taxes	2.1%
23	Terrorism	2.1%
24	Greedy	1.8%
24	Hopeless; Unhappy; Not Fun	1.8%

25	Dirty; Poor Home Maintenance	1.5%
25	Pro-War; Unpeaceful	1.5%
---	Other	17%

Table 12

Demographic Breakdown of the Top 10 Most Common Qualities of 'Bad' Citizenship as Listed by Online Respondents*

#	Quality	F	M	14-16	17-18	Rural	Urban	C & 1P	C Only	All New	Civic	L SES	M SES	H SES	Vis Min	Abo rig
N	-----	228	112	175	164	138	200	256	40	44	115	74	95	83	96	26
1	Breaks Laws	32.0	34.8	32.6	33.5	33.3	33.0	32.8	27.5	38.6	38.3	43.2	35.8	37.3	26.0	38.5
2	Uncaring; Selfish; Unhelpful; Unsupportive	25.9	11.6	24.0	18.3	18.1	23.5	18.8	30.0	27.3	22.6	31.1	28.4	20.5	27.1	3.8
3	Uninvolved; Doesn't Volunteer; Apathetic	18.9	18.8	17.7	20.1	14.5	22.0	18.0	17.5	25.0	22.6	24.3	22.1	21.7	17.7	3.8
4	Disrespectful	21.9	9.8	21.1	14.6	20.3	16.5	18.4	17.5	15.9	22.6	23.0	23.2	20.5	20.8	15.4
5	Racist; Intolerant; Discrimination; Sexist; Ageist; Homophobic; Hateful	16.7	13.4	14.9	16.5	13.8	17.0	14.1	20.0	20.5	19.1	14.9	24.2	18.1	15.6	23.1
6	Rude; Ill Mannered; Impolite	15.4	15.2	19.4	11.0	15.2	15.5	14.1	17.5	20.5	17.4	21.6	15.8	16.9	17.7	15.4

7	Mean; Unkind; Cruel; Malicious; Evil	14.5	14.3	19.4	9.1	18.1	12.0	16.4	15.0	2.3	12.2	16.2	16.8	15.7	15.6	23.1
8	Uneducated; Ignorant; Unwilling to Learn	12.3	15.2	14.9	11.6	13.0	13.5	14.1	7.5	13.6	20.0	12.2	16.8	15.7	10.4	23.1
9	Unaware; Uninformed; Uninterested	13.2	11.6	12.0	13.4	5.1	18.0	10.9	20.0	15.9	17.4	20.3	13.7	10.8	12.5	0
10	Dishonest; Liar	12.7	7.1	13.1	8.5	11.6	10.5	10.5	7.5	15.9	9.6	9.5	14.7	10.8	11.5	7.7
10	Doesn't Take Care of the Environment; Litter	14.5	3.6	10.9	11.0	5.1	15.0	8.2	10.0	27.3	18.3	12.2	14.7	14.5	13.5	0

***Legend**

#: Ranked number

Quality: Quality cluster

F: Female

M: Male

14-16: Younger age group

17-18: Older age group

Rural: Community size of less than 50,000

Urban: Community size of more than 50,000

Red: Highest ranked item by select demographic group

Green: Lowest ranked item by select demographic group

C&1P: Child and at least 1 parent born in Canada

C Only: Only child born in Canada, parents born elsewhere

All New: No one in immediate family born in Canada

Civic: Has taken or is currently taking a civics class at school

LSES: Low socioeconomic status

MSES: Medium socioeconomic status

HSES: High socioeconomic status

Vis Min: Self described visible minority (not including aboriginals)

Aborig: Of aboriginal descent

Table 13
Top Ways Online Youth Spend Their Time
Outside of School in an Average Week

Rank	Activity	% of Respondents Who Cited as Top 3
1	Hang Out With Friends	48%
2	Chat Online	34%
3	Watch TV	32%
4	Listen to CD's or Digital Music Files	31%
5	Play Sports	30%
6	Read	28%
7	Work	27%
8	Surf the Web	24%
9	Play Music (on an instrument, singing, etc)	19%
10	Volunteer	17%
11	Talk on Your Cellphone	12%
12	Go Shopping	11%
13	Other	18%

Table 14
Primary News Source for Online Youth

Rank	News Source	% of Respondents
1	Television	33%
2	Internet	17%
3	Newspapers	14%
4	Radio	11%
5	Parents	9%
6	Friends	9%
7	Other	4%

Table 15
Reasons for Following or Not Following
Politics Given by Online Respondents*

Reasons for Not Paying Attention		Reasons for Paying Attention	
1. I Don't Understand It	23%	1. It's Important to Be Informed	34%
2. It's Boring	20%	2. I Plan to Vote or Already Do	31%
3. I'm Too Young to Vote	17%	3. It's Interesting	29%
4. Politicians Don't Care About My Opinions So Why Should I Care What They Have to Say	13%	4. My Vote Matters	24%
5. I Can't Make a Difference Anyways	11%	5. My Family Pays Attention to Politics	20%
6. The Issues They Talk About Don't Matter to Me	9%	6. My Friends Pay Attention to Politics	8%
7. My Friends Don't Pay Attention	8%	7. I Plan to Go Into Politics in the Future	8%
8. My Family Doesn't Pay Attention	5%	8. Other	6%
9. Politics is For Old People	5%		
10. Other	9%		

*Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Table 16

Ways Online Respondents Suggest Getting Youth to Care More About Politics & to Get Out and Vote

Responses	% of Online Respondents
1. Make Youth See How Important it Is	18%
2. Show Youth They Can Make a Difference	18%
3. Advertising	17%
4. Community/School Info Sessions/Fun Events	16%
5. Include Youth Issues in the Campaign	15%
6. Get Politicians to Speak Directly to Youth	14%
7. Youth Wings/Youth Councils/Giving Youth a Voice	12%
8. Make it More Interesting	11%
9. Required Courses at School	11%
10. Make Youth Feel Like Their Opinion Matters	11%
11. Target Youth Specifically	8%
12. Relate Current Issues to Youth	6%
13. Get Youth Media Involved	6%
14. Make it Easier to Understand	4%
15. Lower the Voting Age	4%
16. Have Youth Talking to Youth	4%
17. Slogans For Youth	3%
18. Put Polling Station in Youth Friendly Locations	3%

19. Offer Rewards or Incentives	3%
20. Have Fines/Forced Voting	3%
21. Get Celebrities Involved	2%
22. Hold Mock Votes in Schools	2%
23. Emails, Blogs, MSN	2%
24. Youth/Diversity in Parliament	2%
25. Proportional Representation	1%
26. Provide Transportation	1%

Table 17
5 Main Concept Clusters Regarding Ways of Getting Youth More Interested and Active in Politics

Concept Clusters	% of Online Respondents
Giving Youth a Voice	56%
Make Youth See How Important it Is	18%
Show Youth They Can Make a Difference	18%
Youth Wings/Youth Councils/Giving Youth a Voice	12%
Make Youth Feel Like Their Opinion Matters	11%
Target Youth Specifically	8%
Lower the Voting Age	4%
Get Youth Talking to Youth	4%
Youth/Diversity in Parliament	2%
Proportional Representation	1%
Getting Youth's Attention	53%
Advertising	17%
Include Youth Issues in Campaign	15%
Have Politicians Speak Directly to Youth	14%
Make it More Interesting	11%
Relate Current Issues to Youth	6%
Get Youth Media Involved	6%
Slogans for Youth	3%

Get Celebrities Involved	2%
Hold Mock Votes in Schools	2%
Providing Information	26%
Community/School Information Session/Fun Events	16%
Required Courses in School	11%
Emails/Blogs/MSN/Twitter	2%
Accessibility	8%
Make it Easier to Understand	4%
Put Polling Stations in Youth Friendly Locations	3%
Provide Transportation	2%
Rewards & Consequences	6%
Offer Rewards & Incentives	3%
Have Fines/Forced Voting	3%

Table 18

Overview of Online Demographic Groups and the Percentage Who Suggested Each Idea for Getting Young People to Vote

Idea	Total Online Population	Sex		Age		Visible Minority	Socio-Economic Indicator			Citizenship Status			Community Size	
		Male	Female	14-16	17-18	Labels Self as Visible Minority	Low	Moderate	High	Family/Child & 1 Parent Born in Canada	Neither Parent Born in Canada	Moved to Canada After Birth	<50,000	>50,000
Giving Youth a Voice	56%	55%	57%	61%	51%	70.0%	54%	61%	53%	53%	64%	64%	56%	56%
Make Youth See How Important It Is	18%	18%	18%	20%	16%	26%	21%	17%	16%	17%	16%	29%	13%	22%
Show Youth They Can Make a Difference	18%	16%	18%	20%	15%	23%	20%	22%	11%	18%	20%	14%	23%	15%
Youth Wings/Youth Council/Giving Youth a Voice	12%	7%	14%	14%	9%	11%	11%	13%	11%	11%	16%	12%	14%	10%
Make Youth Feel Like Their Opinion Matters	11%	9%	11%	13%	8%	15%	7%	12%	13%	9%	8%	18%	13%	10%
Target Youth Specifically	8%	6%	10%	8%	9%	13%	7%	10%	7%	6%	12%	14%	8%	9%
Lower the Voting Age	4%	6%	3%	5%	2%	0%	4%	4%	4%	5%	0%	4%	5%	3%
Get Youth Talking to Youth	4%	0%	6%	5%	2%	4%	7%	3%	2%	3%	4%	7%	5%	3%
Youth/Diversity in Parliament	2%	4%	1%	1%	2%	4%	0%	1%	4%	2%	0%	0%	3%	1%
Proportional Representation	1%	4%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	4%	0%	0%	2%
Getting Youth's Attention	53%	38%	60%	51%	56%	47%	46%	57%	56%	54%	52%	54%	52%	54%
Advertising	17%	11%	19%	17%	16%	13%	16%	17%	16%	14%	28%	17%	13%	19%
Include Youth Issues in Campaign	15%	15%	15%	12%	18%	8%	13%	17%	15%	17%	12%	11%	16%	15%
Have Politicians Speak Directly to Youth	14%	9%	16%	10%	18%	11%	11%	13%	18%	14%	16%	11%	13%	15%
Make it More Interesting	11%	7%	12%	12%	10%	13%	7%	15%	11%	12%	0%	18%	13%	10%
Relate Current Issues to Youth	6%	2%	7%	4%	7%	8%	7%	4%	6%	5%	12%	4%	8%	4%
Get Youth Media Involved	6%	2%	7%	5%	6%	4%	2%	7%	7%	6%	4%	4%	6%	5%
Slogans for Youth	3%	4%	3%	5%	1%	6%	0%	4%	6%	2%	4%	11%	0%	6%
Get Celebrities Involved	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	0%	1%	6%	2%	8%	0%	2%	3%
Hold Mock Votes in Schools	2%	0%	3%	0%	5%	0%	2%	1%	4%	3%	0%	0%	2%	3%
Providing Information	26%	15%	31%	25%	28%	25%	32%	25%	22%	26%	24%	29%	25%	27%
Community/School Info Sessions/Fun Events	16%	9%	18%	14%	17%	15%	14%	15%	18%	15%	12%	21%	17%	15%
Required Courses in School	11%	4%	14%	11%	12%	13%	18%	10%	6%	11%	12%	11%	6%	14%
Email, Blogs, MSN, Twitter	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%	1%	4%	2%	4%	0%	2%	3%
Accessibility	8%	9%	7%	10%	6%	9%	7%	9%	7%	8%	12%	8%	8%	8%
Make it Easier to Understand	4%	2%	6%	8%	1%	6%	4%	7%	2%	5%	4%	4%	8%	3%
Put Polling Stations in Youth Friendly Locations	3%	7%	2%	2%	5%	4%	4%	1%	6%	3%	8%	0%	0%	5%
Provide Transportation	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%	4%	0%	0%	1%
Rewards & Consequences	6%	16%	2%	2%	10%	6%	5%	4%	9%	6%	12%	4%	3%	7%
Offer Rewards & Incentives	3%	7%	2%	2%	5%	2%	2%	3%	6%	4%	4%	0%	2%	4%
Have Fines/Forced Voting	3%	2%	0%	0%	6%	4%	4%	1%	4%	2%	8%	4%	2%	3%