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## **Citizenship Education and Embodied ways of Knowing: What can be learned from the voices of Ghanaian youth in schooling and education?**

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**ABSTRACT:** This article examines Ghanaian youth voices about issues of personal and moral character development through the teachings of local embodied ways of knowing. The purpose is with understanding how the role of discipline and the socialization of Ghanaian youth can help with informing what it means to be a responsible citizen. We briefly explore the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of researching moral character development, discipline and the relations to youth and citizenship responsibilities through youth voices. The paper is part of a longitudinal ethnographic project concerning Ghanaian youth, embodied ways of knowing and the implications for decolonization. We argue youth voices show complex understandings of embodied ways of knowing relating to questions of citizenship, discipline, character and belonging in the global context. The paper hence offers insights toward reforms needed in educational delivery (teaching, learning and instruction), as well as values of education to address the complexity of youth voice, decolonization, discipline, and embodied ways of knowing, so as to enhance the possibilities of coming to know citizenry, character, moral and community.

### **Citizenship Education and voices of Ghanaian youth**

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Citizenship education is a global concern for educators and many are working to ensure that schools are welcoming and safe spaces for all learners. Social harmony may be achieved by understanding the myriad issues and dimensions of what constitutes citizenship in diverse educational settings and how embodied learning in particular, when taken up critically, is relevant to enhancing the education of African youth. The bodies of African youth are a place of contiguous histories. Colonially augured by way of

enslavement, Diasporised movement, collective consciousness and cultural memory, the African body becomes epistemologically contoured through shared historical ways of knowing embedded within the body through space and time. While these shared historical ways of knowing embedded within the body of African youth are infrequently engaged in providing possibilities for decolonizing schooling and education, this can be an important tool in educational pedagogy for understanding contemporary questions of citizenship. This article is part of a longitudinal ethnographic project. The purpose is with knowing how Ghanaian youth voices – as articulated through embodied ways of knowing personal and moral character development – can help us understand current issues of discipline and what it means to be a responsible citizen in the contemporary global context. We briefly examine the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of researching moral character development, the question of discipline and the relation to youth and citizenship responsibilities through youth voices. We argue youth voices show complex understandings of embodied ways of knowing relating to questions of citizenry, discipline, character, moral, and respect.

We ask: How do we come to know and understand questions of discipline in the context of schooling, citizenship and pluralism? If we are talking about educational change, then schooling must include the voices from different communities. Parents, teachers and youth alike must find ways to engage with the local resources of youth. Questions of power and privilege, and the curriculum relevance of cultural knowledges as embodied, are important for community schooling. How youth come to understand their citizenry, material realities, concepts of character, questions of belonging, questions of values and self-worth, are all steeped within the domains of the body, language and culture.

Regarding decolonizing schooling and education and the link to citizenship and community, we discuss the production of a particular type of disciplined youth, the one well endowed with meeting the contemporary discursive/material needs of globalization. That is, youth as being a particular articulation of modernity through which colonial knowledging resides itself, colonial here meaning the imposition of particular values, beliefs and attitudes through the embodied domain of the text (Dei 2010; Simmons & Dei 2012). We recognize discipline as a non-hegemonic method of teaching all learners within the community of schooling. Smith (1999), reminds us that decolonization is “about centring our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes.” (p. 39).

Hence, in coming to dialogue with local African knowledges as legitimate ways of knowing, we centre the work of decolonization. If colonization is understood as the imposition of one particular way of doing things, by creating spaces for local African ways of knowing and understanding, we begin to undo the colonial knowledge regimes. Regarding the term African, we call for a theoretical framework that speaks to the multiplicity of differences, contradictions, ambivalences, and [un]freedoms, that constitute

the diversity of Ghanaian youth in the global context, that being African involves proteanism and at the same time immutability, fluid and actively involved with flux.

Hence in the effort to decolonize, we ought to remember that the work is not with dismissing Western ways of knowing, but rather to disentangle the imperial grip colonial schooling and education have on what is considered legitimate discourses of knowledge. In other words, the work of decolonization is less interested with placing another form of knowledge at the top of a knowledge pyramid through hierarchical relations, but rather finding ways for different knowledge systems to dialogue without the axis of a hegemonic center (Memmi, 1991; Fanon, 1963; wa Thiong'o, 1986; Cesaire, 1972).

We query the historical location of discipline by positioning the historical discourse of discipline as hegemonic. At the same time we recognize discipline as a non-hegemonic method of teaching all learners within the community of schooling. Our interests seek to understand what it means to *teach discipline* rather than *enforce discipline*. The discussion works to broach the voices of Ghanaian youth as they account for youth citizenry within contemporary schooling experiences. Educators' and learners' voices about schooling experiences are interpreted to understand the context for addressing youth citizenry in schools, and to find methods in which embodied ways of learning through local voices of Ghanaian youth in schooling can be integrated with curriculum, teaching practices, and classroom learning to necessitate the decolonization of schools. The paper hence offers insights toward reforms needed in educational delivery (teaching, learning and instruction), as well as values of education to address the question of youth voice, decolonization, discipline, and embodied ways of knowing, so as to enhance the possibilities of coming to know citizenry, character, moral and community.

### **Rethinking discipline and the relevance of embodied ways of knowing**

Historically, through a host of disciplinary discursive procedures, colonization produced a particular humanism, which avowed a certain form of moral citizenry (see also Giddens 1990; Foucault 2007; Appadurai 1996). Citizenship, as experienced through the West, promoted disciplinary forms of relations onto youth behaviour, in which the identities of youth were colonially deemed to be contiguous with historical scientific epistemes of rationality (see also Marcuse 2009; Horkheimer and Adorno 2002). Discussions of youth identity, about how identity comes to be shaped and formed through the conventional knowledge dissemination procedures of schooling and education, have been particularly employed through a linear, fixed, institutionalised way of knowing the self and the subject. The resulting effect is that we are historically provided with a universalized and disciplined way of coming to understand citizenry and citizenship rights through local embodied practices. These disciplinary forms of relations as residing within schooling and education come into being through the community of schooling, as imbued through our contemporary neo-liberal discourse (see also Rose 2007; Harvey 2007). Youth, citizenry, and societal relations all come to be governed in and through a collective

regime of accepted values and attitudes. Schooling and education are not devoid from these accepted standards. School curricula, pedagogies, and epistemologies of the conventional classroom all come to be historically embedded through Eurocentric paradigms (see also Scheurich & Young 1997). Displaced here are embodied ways of knowing through local histories. Instead, local epistemes come to be tangentially placed by the State, more so too, as abject to conventional curricula. Our social imagination is with thinking of education through all bodies alike, that knowledge resides within the experience of all peoples; we cannot continue to think of knowledge as being some commodified package (see also Giroux 2001; Apple 1995; McLaren & Farahmandpur 2005), purchased at the local supermarket, named as *education*, all in the pursuit of modernity and development.

Location of youth is central to understanding contemporary questions concerning embodied ways of learning, decolonization, spirituality and citizenship, in that embodied forms of knowledge about community, kinship and familyhood ought to be engaged by educators when talking about citizenship, youth and schooling. Often, citizenry and community, as being produced by way of schooling and education through various rituals of belonging, come to be engendered through ethnocentric curricula and pedagogies. Within the culture of schooling, the sense of community and the self come to be disciplined through these regulatory procedures of citizenship. The classroom then – in and of itself – comes to exert pedagogic forms of discipline onto students, thus addressing the needs concerning responsibility, the emotional, and the social, as framed within the context of the different local communities in a particular way that encumbers embodied ways of knowing (Smith 1999; Kincheloe and Steinberg 2008; Dei 2004).

If we are talking about educating youth through embodied ways of knowing, then questions of spirituality should be considered. Notably, spirituality is embedded in all geographies across Africa differently through intergenerational ways of knowing. Spirituality is about a particular relationship with the self through the embodiment of knowledge. With embodied ways of knowing we are thinking about innate, heuristic ways of coming to know the self, to know one's local socio-cultural environment by way of ontological primacy. It is about knowing through bodies of difference. African spirituality is variably interwoven through Indigenous oral histories; it speaks to the mind, body and soul interplay that engenders values, beliefs, attitudes, expressions and dispositions that shape and form one's embodied ways of knowing. It is constantly in flux and contoured through the myriad languages, cultures and difference immanent within African peoples. Epistemologically, African spirituality speaks to the uncertainty of innate, heuristic ways of knowing as imbued through the metaphysical immanent to African lifeworlds. Ghanaian systems of spirituality have historically diverged from Western systems of knowing. Spirituality, as spatio-temporally immanent to African geographies, speaks to the relationship to the land, oral histories and the community. Conventional schooling and education have historically disavowed this relationship, which have privileged particular forms of institutionalized epistemologies.

To think of schooling and education as they come to be legitimized through curricula and pedagogues, involves thinking of the many ways discipline becomes discursively produced and accepted through the principles and techniques of schooling and education. It involves thinking of the ways in which schooling and education come to be governed through theories that seek the interest of *development* (see also Tucker 1999; Sadar 1999; Abdi, Puplampu & Dei 2006; Tikly 2004), to theories of progress and modernization; through particular investments of the body, through coercion and subordination; through idealized knowledges, through time and space relations, and signifying practices, and how these particular institutionalized interests become partitioned forms of discipline, all operationalized through pedagogic forms of epistemological enclosure (Foucault 1995). Knowledge is always already circumscribed through the governing “Eurobody,” that is, the archetype European subject of Enlightenment. What we have then is the conventional classroom as endowed through a certain disciplinary pedagogic space, one that quantifies knowledge in a way that commodifies and simultaneously ranks the different bodies and the different geographies of residing knowledges. Discipline produces itself through compliance and control materializing into this conforming body. In fact, Foucault should be noted when he speaks of the *docile* body (Foucault 1995). It prompts the thinking of how the docile body comes to be reified in and through the curricula and as re/producing of the archetype knowledge of Euromodernity. Discipline, as (Foucault 1995) tells us, is spatio-temporal and capillary-like, that discipline is producing of the subject. We must think of the myriad loci of the subjects, to think of schooling and education as subject. To think of the pedagogue and student alike as subjects forming capillary-like relations through what Freire (1970) calls a *banking* form of knowledge. Discipline then, as Foucault (1995) argues, concerns the particular relations produced in and through bodies of knowledge which subjects classify themselves in relation to each other, and at the same time form governing relations to that which is subject. Our task then is to historically trace these constituting variants which subject themselves within the governing-installed apparatus of conventional schooling and education, that is, to bring to the surface the colonizing procedures, methods, attitudes and beliefs that have come to be an accepted practice by means of the colonial importation of Enlightenment forms of knowledge.

## Literature and context

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The growing literature of the interrelated subjects of character/moral and citizenship education suggest these concepts consist of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that can ensure effective learning outcomes for youth in terms of the acquisition and relevance of knowledge for social change (see Dewey, 1909/1975). Character education can be a form of discipline onto bodies. In his work, Ryan (1996) argues that the “morals, values and ethics we want students to learn should be identified by adults and taught by matching the topic and level of intensity to the students’ developmental level” (cited in Marshall, 2001). In pluralistic contexts, educators have to confront questions about whose and what values are to be taught in schools and the implications of this question for developing a *caring community of learners*. Gibbs (2007) and Althof and Berkowitz (2006) highlight issues of

respect, responsibility, honesty, trustworthiness, compassion, empathy, justice, fairness, civic participation, kindness, integrity and work ethic as central to the understanding of both character and moral education. These are “qualities” that educators can assist youth to locate, develop and take up within themselves. Kohlberg’s (1981, 1984) and McClellan’s (1999) studies show that the question of moral education is not simply about teaching “right and wrong,” but teaching youth to engage in critical thinking to make independent and informed decisions about their lives and worlds.

The importance of embodied ways of knowing as an approach to multi-centric education that speak to the imbrications within pedagogy, instruction, and cultural ways of knowing from different contexts and sites to meet the concrete needs of diverse learners, is increasingly gaining ground. Within the African context, for example, we know of local educational approaches that sought to instill values and virtues in youth to ensure discipline and respect for self, peers and community. The question is, how is such education, as embodied, relevant in helping confront some of the challenges of youth citizenship and belonging? The literary works of Chinua Achebe (1996), Ayi Kwei Armah (1969), and Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1965, 1986) point to how local African proverbs, parables, fables, myths, mythologies, and folklore contain instruction and knowledge about society, culture and nature. Bascom (1965), Kudadjie (1996), Yankah, (1989), Ogede (1993), Kalu (1991), Pachocinshi (1996), Abubakre and Reichmuth (1997) all show that proverbs and folktales (as embodied ways of knowing) have a long history dialoguing through cultures, traditions and histories, and offer understandings of the complex interactions of society, nature and culture (see also Abrahams, 1967, 1972, Dorson 1972, Taylor 1934, Wolfgang and Dundas, 1981, in other contexts).

A critical integrative prism for looking at how discipline, and respect for self and community are engaged within institutional settings, invites a scrutiny of the processes and structures through which education is delivered in school and off-school sites. This framework calls for understanding the contestations over knowledge, culture, values and understandings of social relationships, as well as an exploration of the interplay of school culture, social climate and environment that shape the construction of youth. We ask, what are the ways in which the contending issues of responsibility and accountability come to position youth and educators in asymmetrical power relations in the school system? This question is significant in the current push to make education more relevant to the needs, aspirations and experiences of youth, and to speak to questions about the embodiment of culture, history, politics, identity, local knowledge, citizenry and belonging in delivering the civic goals of schools.

## **Study method**

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This paper is part of a longitudinal study examining the understanding, teaching, education of discipline, and respect for community from the perspectives of youth, student-teachers, educators, parents and Elders in the African context. For this larger study, the

major learning objective is about suggesting ways to enhance embodied ways of knowing for youth by working with educators to develop: 1) learning and instructional materials; 2) different strategies to implement character education in schools as informed by local Ghanaian voices, and 3) to document past, current and long-term institutional approaches for dealing with the experiences of African youth regarding discipline and respect for community in educational settings. The larger study is particularly interested in the internalization of colonization by Ghanaian youth as produced by schooling experiences in the local and broader context of Africa.

The larger study has reviewed the available literature on youth [in] discipline, respect for oneself, and socio-cultural environment. Consultations were held with local educational theorists and practitioners in Ghana on the subject of inquiry. In the actual field research in Ghana, we focussed on in-depth individual and group interviews with youth, (including those who have been disciplined through expulsions, suspensions or other disciplinary actions for their behaviour in the school setting) educators, student-teachers, parents, and Elders concerning their views on the search for alternative ways to engage education with youth.

So far, field interviews in Ghana have included a minimum of twenty (20) educational theorists and practitioners who have some knowledge of and experience in the issue of teaching discipline and respect by way of thinking through local Indigenous philosophies and concepts. Also, at least a dozen (12) focus group discussions have been organized. They included workshop sessions with teacher candidates, field practitioners, and educationists. Furthermore, there has been a total of over eighty-five (85) individual interviews conducted involving twenty-five (25) educators, twenty (20) Elders/parents and twenty-five (25) students/youth drawn from the local universities, secondary schools and community colleges, as well local communities in Ghana.

### **Limitations and the Implications for Validity**

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Language presented a limiting factor on the study. Field interviews and focus group discussions were done in English, the official language of Ghana. However, of the participants interviewed, some of the local languages spoken were Ga, Akan, Ewe and Dagomba. Participants expressed difficulty in translating their thought as shaped through local languages into the medium of English. Incommensurable constructs embodied within local languages, that could not readily be interpreted or translated into some measurable quantity by English, were brought to the fore by language. Embodied meaning-making processes are contextual and embedded within language and cultural variants lending to specific character, moral and epistemological nuances. Another limiting factor was due to the temporal nature of the study, in that the study is augured through geo-specific trajectories of culture, which is context bound, fluid yet sometimes fixed, intergenerational and archived by way of oral narratives and memory. The embodied interpretations of discipline and variant character and moral practices by Ghanaian youth are then imbued

through historical context-specific readings about their lived socio-cultural environments. Given this changing context of interpreting through an embodiment of knowledge, it is difficult then to produce some absolute fixed template with static meaning of what constitutes citizenship. As a philosophical paradigm, the study engaged a socio-constructivist interpretive approach. Hence, we are less interested in producing some absolute template of citizenship. Instead, it allows the reader to think through their experiences of citizenship to understand the discursive ways of what it means to be human through the nomenclature of citizenship. This brings us to questions of validity and reliability in the cultural context.

In terms of validity, in particular cultural validity (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011), we were cognizant of linguistic difference among the participants and how different understandings could arise when particular words were used without providing temporal context. The study took into consideration the variant modes of cultural reference within each linguistic group and how values and meaning become linguistically embedded differently. Interview transcriptions were made available to participants to ensure the rendering of appropriate socio-cultural interpretations.

## Findings

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The paper reports on a section of our field research findings. It is based on subject responses from youth to such questions as: What is discipline? How do local voices of Ghanaian youth understand discipline and respect for self and community? How do these understandings and practices help build qualities of the self among students and youth? We have chosen to focus on youth narratives that help us to understand the relationship with discipline in the contexts of schooling and education, and also the relevance of these voices of Ghanaian youth in schooling about the civic goals of schools.

### *Character, morals, respect, and discipline: youth voices*

In one focus group discussion with Ghanaian youth of diverse backgrounds in a senior secondary school setting, the following responses were articulated when asked about what character means to the youth:

#### **Int: when we talk of character what do we mean? Anyone can respond.**

- When you talk of character then you are talking of a person's behaviour. How the person behaves.
- Character can equally mean an attitude, both good and bad attitude of the person.
- What I also understand is that your attitude sometimes determines your character.
- Your attitude. Character could be both positive and negative attitude.
- The person's character is what is accepted within the society.



- It means that the person’s attitude or behaviour of the person is in conformity with what is accepted in society.
- The behaviour or maybe the person’s character is in conformity with the norms of the society. **[File 29: Text Units 15–32]**

Youth associate character with a particular behaviour, in a sense being disciplined to act in an ‘acceptable manner.’ To have character is to be in tune with particular expectations as sanctioned by society. In effect, character is regulated by societal expectations and values; these values are taken as given and unquestionable.

**When the youth were also asked about morals, they explained:**

- When we talk of morals, we can have good or bad morals. Morals are also associated with the behaviour of the individual. So your behaviour can either be good—which is a good moral– or bad, which is bad morals or immorality. That is what I understand about morals.
- We can equally talk of values. Someone can have good values. The inner condition of that person is ...
- Morals are the general behaviour of an individual to the accepted norms of his society. **[File 29: Text Units 40–65]**

From these youth voices there is an axiological understanding and conception of morals. In a sense, morals are the accepted expectations of society that regulate social behaviour. Knowing or understanding societal morals is to learn about becoming “disciplined.” Thus, through their understandings of societal moral values, the youth recognised that discipline, then, can be taught and learned.

**In another focus group discussion with youth in a secondary school their take on values were:**

- Values are morals that are cherished in the society or where the person finds himself.
- Values are the laid-down rules within a society that society expects an individual to have.
- For example in Ghana, some of the values we cherish are ... hard work and respect. **[File 33: Text Units 113–142]**

In this context, youth understand social values as accepted expectations that come to be respected, in that society expects its members to have such social values because they serve the interest of the community. These values have been transmitted through oral histories by way of African Elders and ancestors. Adhering to these values comes to show respect for society, culture and history.

**On the question of respect, the youth also argued:**

- In Ghana here ... respect will vary in many places. For instance in Canada what somebody will do — you might not see anything wrong with it. [But...] in Ghana, when you do the same thing it will be wrong. Let's say you are in class and the teacher asks a question... you can't raise the left hand. Here in Ghana you have to answer the question by raising your right hand because when you do that (raise the left hand) you don't consider it as a sign of respect.
- There are certain good morals that are encouraged in the society. Just like she said there are certain behaviours that will make you either respectful or disrespectful. In Ghana, when an elderly person is talking to you, you will have to keep quiet and listen. When they want you to talk they will invite you to talk. You do not interrupt an elderly person when he or she is talking to you. That is another sign of respect.
- Respect can also be a teaching or standing objectives of a value that a teacher wants the children to acquire—within the society. **[File 32: Text Units 180–199]**

Put simply, respect emerges from complying with the different variants of what constitutes *preferred* morals, as explained by the youth. The youth also come to understand that respect is taught. To be respectful is to accept and follow a societal code of moral conduct and personal action. Respect is cultivated as ethical modes that guide and nurture everyday social interaction.

**On the specific question of discipline, the students in the earlier focus group discussion pointed to the relationship with discipline, respect and social moral conduct.**

- Discipline is partial of respect. When you are respectful, you are disciplined. You are found to be disciplined when you abide by the expectations of society in which you live. This is because you do not go contrary to expectations. You are disciplined.
- You can also say discipline is the principle guiding the values; the principles that whether or not you are disciplined depends on certain things that you decide to do in the community. For example you meet an elderly person carrying something, you try to help the person.
- I also think that when you go by rules of the society you are a disciplined person.
- I think that discipline in a generic sense includes what we mentioned earlier which are the good values: morality, respect and all that. When

you do [exhibit these values] you are considered to be disciplined.  
**[File 29: Text Units 70–101]**

If what the youth suggest—that discipline is in effect to ensure that one is respectful of, and adhering to the particular accepted practices of society—how then do we become cognizant about the way in which these said practices of society become hegemonic or colonial? Discipline is all-encompassing and embodies meaningful social values, morality and respect for culture and the different bodies of society.

**Other discussions with youth about discipline brought a nuanced understanding about how society teaches its youth to accept particular social codes of conduct and morality:**

- Discipline is a form of inflicting physical or mental pain on a person.
- It could even be emotional. ... There are different ways about discipline.
- Some also think discipline is the correction of bad behaviour. When a child is disciplined, they are correcting the child but then it also depends on the kind of discipline.
- Discipline can be a moral guide to [coerce] the teaching of minds and attitude. It is a guide that is put aside to strengthen the correct behaviour of people.
- It is meant to correct people but it depends on the kind of discipline that you give. If you do not take time and you give a discipline which does not tally with the kind of offence, then you must be doing the wrong thing. You may be thinking that...or let's say the child comes and the child took some money and then you go and dip the child's hand in fire... it doesn't even tally well. ... So for you to ... sometimes the discipline should merit the offence.
- In our Ghanaian society sometimes discipline is used to deter the person from misbehaving, but if the child knows that if he misbehaves he will be disciplined or...else the child will go contrary to what is accepted in society. So they used to such correct behaviour in society.
- It is not always that a child should be disciplined. Sometimes you have to call the child and instead you can talk to the child.... **[File 29: Text Units 125–157]**

As the youth suggest in the above discussion, discipline has various dimensions. It can be physical, emotional and psychological. Discipline serves as a moral compass instructing or working as a deterrent to problematic behaviour. Discipline ought to bring about reformation and restoration. But how then, do we theorize youth identity and discipline, and how can such a theorization speak to questions of social difference, embodied

belonging and citizenship? From the participants' narratives, we imagine that understanding questions of youth identity and discipline involves disembedding ontological ways of knowing historically archived through cultural memory as spatiotemporally embodied within Ghanaian communities. This entails *teaching discipline* rather than *enforcing discipline*.

In thinking about youth identity and discipline we suggest understanding this contentious relationship through embodied ways of knowing; this hermeneutic task involves youth questioning everyday assumptions about knowledge, as well as allowing youth to engage local ways of knowing to come to understand their everyday lifeworld. Hermeneutically, embodied ways of knowing work with interpreting historical Ghanaian social values, such as diverse community traditions, to make sense of contemporary questions of social responsibility for youth. For example, in our focus group discussions, youth noted that character, attitude or behaviour of a person is always already immanent within society; that “a person’s attitude or behaviour of the person is in conformity with what is accepted in society.” Understanding what values, attitudes or behavioural patterns Ghanaian youth come to accept in society, necessitates disembedding historical constellations of what constitute the social, the communal and the political as embodied through cultural memory. In our focus group discussions youth described values as “morals cherished within society.” There exist certain values within particular societies—such as when an elderly person is speaking... how you respond, as well as how youth answer teachers in the context of the classroom by the raising of a particular hand. Adherence to these community values of character, morals and respect can be interpreted as a sign of discipline by Ghanaian youth. As articulated in the focus group discussions, “discipline is the principle guiding the values.” With the narratives from the focus group discussions with youth, what is significant for teaching practices and curricula initiatives is the positioning of Ghanaian youth as subjects of their lived experiences and histories, and understanding that the ensuing cultural politics of representation within conventional schooling and education in the context of Ghana serves to reaffirm the existence of Ghanaian youth as knowing bodies.

To ensure civic education for local Ghanaian youth, we ought to be cognizant of the everyday politics within educational systems. We could also work to tease out the way in which pedagogues and students come into particular relations with their complex socio-cultural identities. We caution that there are some pedagogical limitations, challenges and possibilities for integrating respect and character education through particular disciplinary mechanisms for the socialization of local Ghanaian youth. We posit the need to understand the ways local Ghanaian youth come to know the embodied-self through the context of discipline. There is a moment of recognizing conventional ways of understanding “discipline” as “colonial and colonizing practices”, in that such practices regulate social behaviour and are imposed as foreign onto the acceptable meanings of an embodied-Ghanaian-self. Questions of citizenship are all embedded within local histories of what it means to belong; about how local Ghanaian youth come to understand their identities; and

how citizenship rights and responsibilities of the learner/self/subject come to be desired and performed through the schooling experience of the local Ghanaian subject.

In pointing to ways in which local Ghanaian youth's embodied understandings can be integrated with the curriculum, teaching practices and classroom learning to necessitate the civic goals of schools, we ground our ethical ideas concerning respect, character and morals in the sensibilities of Ghanaian youth. We suggest that such values are ontologically accepted in society through ancestral, cultural and social forms of memory, memories that have been moulded through time and revealed as the nature of Ghanaian reality. We engage in an educational praxis through pedagogies that speak to the inter- and intra-relations of cultural difference of local Ghanaian youth. In doing so, identity is dialectically placed within the political context so as to dialogue with the embodied self, the 'Other' and community through questions of schooling experiences, citizenry, character, the production of knowledge, and the disciplining of learners. Take for example the issue of language. The official language of instruction integrated within the Ghanaian curriculum is English. But in a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society such as Ghana, civic discord can surface among the *official* institutionalised language and the local provincial language. Yet language as embodied by Ghanaian youth is quite diverse, constituted through a range of culture, historical and socio-political variants. wa Thiong'o (1986) notes that language is a means of communication as well as a carrier of culture, being a product of each other in ways whereby culture embodies moral, ethical and aesthetic values of local peoples. Given then that Ghana is a multi-linguistic geography, how can different languages, such as Asante, Ga, Akuapem, Dagarte, Ewe, Fante, Boron, Dagomba and Akyem, be included within the classroom? What does it mean for local Ghanaian youth to have their embodied ways of knowing as embedded within language, renounced within the conventional classroom of learning and simultaneously English installed as the authentic language of instruction? From the narratives of the participants, we are left thinking of epistemes ontological to Ghanaian communities, that is, extricating cultural and social memory that have been crystallized through space and time and have come to be *accepted within the society*.

### **Possibilities for Critical Citizenship**

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We have written a particular dialogue from a social science theory that works *from, with, and through* the lived experiences of Ghanaian youth. At the same time, we are writing *against* the colonial encryption embedded within historical discursive practices of what it means to be a citizen in the context of the Western nation-state. We suggest then, citizenship ought to be imbued through critical consciousness. We posit citizenship should be about pedagogical praxis, about pedagogical personhood. If we are speaking about citizenship in the context of Ghanaian youth, given the historical colonial forays, then citizenship embodies resistance. Citizenship then, is political. In a sense then, what we are calling for is an articulation for a critical citizenship, in which all learners can come to think about how their lived social worlds come to be historically shaped, formed and

organized through particular ways of understanding the embodied-self. Critical citizenship then, becomes a particular historical space through time in which all bodies alike can come to individually and collectively avow their sense of identity about how they come to belong within particular geo-political terrains. Critical citizenship considers possibilities for a transformative self in ways that ground local Ghanaian youth in their own cultural ways of knowing, as well as their social environments and particular communities. Our locating of critical citizenship allows for a pedagogical reading of culture that speaks to the complex historic specificities of identity concerning what it means to belong within the contemporary epoch of modernity. The notion of critical citizenship comes out of entangled histories, lived experiences, cultural knowledge and the politics of identification. As pedagogical praxis, critical citizenship allows the 'Othered' body to be integrated within the multiple communities of the schooling experience. One of the civic goals of schools ought to be about including the histories of different bodies, i.e., history as broadly conceptualised to speak to the lived experiences of myriad peoples and their communities, rather than fixed, static events that come to be marked through particular celebratory events and performances of institutionalized state procedures. Critical citizenship calls for centering the student in ways in which curricula becomes principally organized through the student's cultural histories. Critical citizenship is about a particular identification with the social and the political. Critical citizenship can be protean and at the same time immutable, fluid actively involved with flux.

## Discussion

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Foregrounding the voices of Ghanaian youth is key for tracing the effectiveness of teaching respect, self worth and disciplinary methods. The discussion suggests ways to enhance learning for citizenship and belonging from the embodied voices of Ghanaian youth by dialoguing with epistemologies historically accepted in society about values, character, discipline and respect. We queried the location of discipline by positioning the discourse of discipline as hegemonic and at the same time, as self-asserting from within, as seeking the interest of youth, to understand what it means to *teach* discipline and not *enforce* discipline. We ought to be cognizant about how we come to know and understand citizenship and belonging through questions concerning discipline. What we are attempting to do is to find different methods to come to dialogue with the embodiment of citizenship and belonging to ascertain particular character, moral and civic responsibility, which aids in the harmonization and integration of youth within society. The discursive formation of citizenship is subject to a given/fixed interpretive framework, so we need a different reading to these historically enclosed ways of knowing, one that includes the voices of the youth as embodied through the myriad cultural understandings of our social world. Such ways of knowing speak about civic responsibility, and it moves the discussion concerning citizenship and belonging beyond the good-bad binary, to one that promotes accountability and respect for citizenry.

Historically, Ghanaian embodied ways of knowing have been classified as less than knowledge. We have Ghanaian youth then coming to know, or coming to experience, the Ghanaian-self through a disciplined organization of schooling where youth come to govern or regulate their experiences of citizenship, their sense of belonging within the broader community, through a particular surveillance as informed by these colonially-imbued methods and practices of schooling, constituting in a sense, a form of alienation from within (see also Foucault 1995; Fanon 1967, 1964). These immanent regulatory procedures of schooling come to instil a particular normalised form of discipline as presented through the everyday practices of schooling and learning. The question of how we come to make meaning of discipline or how one comes to understand the experience of discipline as it resides within the everyday experience of Ghanaian youth is important. Youth come into the process of learning through different forms of behavioural patterns wherein knowledge resides in a particular way and can only be reached through certain procedures. So like the truth of physics or like the truth of chemistry, knowledge is distributed into the governing social terrain in ways that work to stratify the classroom. But the classroom is not some unknown entity devoid of bodies waiting to be spatially theorised, the classroom represents the social; the classroom is community, the classroom is about belonging through embodiment. We invite a conceptualization of citizenship and schooling as constitutive variants, working together, engaging in mutual dialogue.

How then do we understand questions of discipline in the context of schooling and citizenship in the pluralistic context? Spivak (1988) speaks about *epistemic violence*, while Scheurich and Young (1997) also talk about *colouring epistemologies*. If we recognize the ethnocentric interests of the epistemologies embedded within the conventional curricula of schooling and education, and we claim social justice and equity for all, then citizenship ought to be embodied through liberating practices. In thinking through discipline in the context of schooling as experienced by Ghanaian youth, our starting points speak about the governing domain of the entrenched epistemological relations, in particular the way in which power and privilege come to be operationalised within particular bodies. Our intention has been with understanding how, within the classroom, youth come to regulate the self, i.e., how youth come to embody as one's own the conditions of belonging through a particular form of disciplined citizenship. If, and as Foucault encourages, we are thinking through the *insurrection of subjugated knowledges* (Foucault 1980: 81), then in the African context, dialoguing about the embodiment of knowledge or Indigeneity could offer transformative possibilities.

We know that Indigenous African ways of knowing have been with us even before the colonization of knowledge (Dei 2000a, 2008). So to 'insurrect' such knowledge, is, to say, transporting, or importing this embodied knowledge to the classroom text. It is about inclusivity. It is about accepting values, beliefs, customs and the culture of difference. It is about dialoguing with oral forms of knowledge (i.e., the ones colonially installed to the margins) to retrieve and bring to the classrooms for all bodies, different ways to come to learn what being socially responsible means, to nurture the sense of understanding of these

historic moral categories and character classifications in the context of citizenship education. So in coming to make sense of how discipline comes to be discursively operationalized in the context of schooling and citizenship, our sites of query concern youth and the particular relationships formed through these everyday embodied experiences of citizenship. We would like to bring attention to the way citizenship and the act of belonging are located, interpreted, commodified and consumed by all youth every day.

Yet, discipline for Ghanaian youth in the context of citizenship, schooling and education is about epistemological representation. Epistemological representation though, involves a different embodiment of knowledge; it involves equity, rather than some apolitical or ahistorical embodiment. Epistemological representation concerns itself with heterogeneous ways of knowing; citizenship should be inclusive and representative of the different embodied practices. Hence, citizenship ought to disentangle the historical conditions of knowledge, the colonial project and the enabling of standardized forms of knowledge to inform schooling and community. To think of discipline within the context of schooling and citizenship involves thinking dialectically through histories of colonization. It involves questioning the organization of knowledge, the material production of citizenry and the axiological codification of character within conventional schooling. It involves engaging the pedagogic relevance of *teaching discipline* rather than *enforcing discipline* in schooling communities.

## Conclusion

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In concluding, we ask: How do we come to know and understand citizenship and belonging through embodied values of moral and character education as deeply embedded within local cultural ways of knowing? Given the conditions of our contemporary globalized society, we suggest engaging questions of citizenship and belonging through the context of embodied difference and pluralism; we must be cognizant about the particular citizenship in which we promote and participate. The future belongs to the youth of today. School curriculum needs to reflect a civic responsibility for all youth and citizenry alike. Curriculum should dialogue with the voices of all bodies of youth, to value the embodied experiences of those historically marginalized bodies. Behavioural patterns cannot simply be dismissed through historic forms of pathologizing; these patterns are the starting points to extricate deeply embodied ways of knowing. We have turned to youth as a vantage point to help with disentangling these deeply buttressed roots of standardized colonial ways of knowing and understanding what it means to belong, what it means to be a particular citizen within a particular community. We hope by dialoguing with embodied voices of local Ghanaian youth, that all learners can come to articulate different subversive pedagogies to engage the governing colonial imbued spaces of citizenship.



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