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Does Citizenship Education Work? Evidence from a Decade of Citizenship Education in Secondary Schools in England

Paul Whiteley*

Department of Government, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3 SQ, UK

**Correspondence: whitely@essex.ac.uk*

In 2002 compulsory lessons on citizenship were introduced into secondary schools in England following the recommendations of an advisory group chaired by the late Bernard Crick. This study examines if this initiative has been successful in affecting the civic engagement of young people who were exposed to the citizenship curriculum over the decade since it was introduced. It utilises a survey of 18–26 year olds conducted in 2011 and compares respondents who were exposed to the curriculum with those who were not in what is a natural experiment. The findings are that citizenship education had a positive impact on three key components of civic engagement: efficacy, political participation and political knowledge. This suggests that the reform is likely to help offset some of the trends in civic participation among young people which have shown a sharp decline in key activities like voting and voluntary activities over time. The study concludes by speculating on the likely effects of the coalition government's decision to drop citizenship education as a compulsory subject in the national curriculum in schools in 2014.

> We unanimously recommend that citizenship education be a statutory entitlement in the curriculum and that all schools should be required to show they are fulfilling the obligation that this places upon them. (Advisory Group on Citizenship, Final Report, 1998, p. 22)

1. Introduction

In 2002 the Department of Education launched a new educational initiative in England by introducing compulsory lessons in citizenship into the core curriculum in secondary schools. This initiative originated with a report from a

government appointed Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship quoted above, which was set up in 1997 and chaired by the late Bernard Crick (Crick, 2000; Kerr, 2005; Print, 2007; Crick and Lockyer, 2011). This became known as the Crick Report and made a strong and detailed case for the inclusion of citizenship education as a compulsory subject in schools. The background to this initiative was the growing evidence of a decline in civic engagement[1] in Britain. One recent study shows that political activities like citizens working in a political party, taking part in a demonstration, contacting elected officials and volunteering all declined between 1984 and 2002 (Whiteley, 2012, pp. 337–340).

This trend in declining civic engagement has been explained by a number of different factors. They include declining community cohesion and solidarity (Bellah *et al.*, 1985; Etzioni, 1995; Power to the People, 2006), a growing mistrust of government and politicians (Knight and Stokes, 1996; Nye *et al.*, 1997), a detachment of ordinary people, particularly youth, from politics in general (Mulgan and Wilkinson, 1995; Park, 2004) and a decline in the key political organisations of civil society such as political parties (Mair and Van Biezen, 2001; Whiteley and Seyd, 2002; Van Biezen *et al.*, 2012).

The decline is most evident in relation to electoral participation. The high-point of turnout in post-war Britain occurred in 1950 when 84 per cent of the electorate voted in the general election of that year (Butler and Butler, 1994, p. 216). By the time of the 2001 election turnout had fallen to a post-war low of 59 per cent (Clarke *et al.*, 2004). It recovered a little in the subsequent general elections of 2005 and 2010, but was still well below levels achieved in the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, this trend disproportionately affected the young, with British Election Study survey data showing that 73 per cent of the 18–24-year-old age cohort voted in the general election of 1983, but this had declined to 42 per cent by the general election of 2010 (Clarke *et al.*, 2013).

The citizenship education initiative can be seen as a response to these developments and the hope is that by exposing students to citizenship classes these trends might be halted or reversed. The Crick report was rapidly accepted by the newly elected Labour government and the policy of establishing citizenship classes in secondary schools implemented by David Blunkett who was Minister of Education at the time. He was a former student of Bernard Crick and was very sympathetic to the initiative. As a result in 2002 schools in England were given the legal responsibility for delivering education in citizenship for all 11–16 year olds. Now that the tenth anniversary of the introduction of the citizenship education curriculum has been reached, a number of researchers have begun to

[1]A distinction is made in the literature between civil engagement and civic engagement where the former relates to voluntary activities in the community and the latter to political activities. We are focusing on the latter in this study.

examine its genesis, development and implementation (Kisby and Sloam, 2012; Mycock and Tonge, 2012; Tonge *et al*., 2012).

The purpose of this study is to determine if this initiative has been successful in stimulating the civic engagement of youth in England over the ten years of its implementation. It uses data from the Citizens in Transition (CIT) survey of young adults conducted in 2011, which is described in more detail in the appendix.[2] The survey consisted of just under 3500 respondents between the ages of 18 and 26 from England, Wales and Scotland. All of the respondents educated in England were exposed to the citizenship curriculum, since they were all in secondary education when it was introduced. However, students attending schools in the rest of the UK or abroad were not exposed in the same way, and this fact provides a natural experiment for estimating its impact on the civic engagement of young adults.[3]

The study is divided into three sections. In the first section the goals of the citizen education curriculum are discussed in light of the original Crick report and this is followed by an examination of how civic engagement and the impact of the reforms were measured in the survey. A third section presents the results of an analysis of the effects of the initiative on civic activity among the young. Finally we examine the implications of these findings for the future of citizenship education in Britain.

2. What is citizenship education?

The Crick report posed the question: *What do we mean by effective education for citizenship?* (1998, p. 11). It went on to answer this by suggesting that citizenship education comprises three separate but interrelated strands of learning. Firstly, it argued that the starting point of effective learning about citizenship is a sense of efficacy on the part of students, that is, a feeling that they can change things by political action. It then went on to suggest that this should be underpinned by a sense of morality or an awareness of what good citizenship means in terms of the behaviour of individuals. It describes these ideas in the following terms:

> (C)hildren learning from the very beginning self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour both in and beyond the classroom, both towards those in authority and towards each other'. (1998, p. 11).

[2]The research was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council grant RES-062-23-2427.

[3]It should be noted that citizenship education does take place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland but it is not designated in the same way as in England. This fact makes it necessary to measure the impact carefully as the discussion below indicates.

It then suggested that effective learning in these areas would promote two other key objectives of the initiative, namely, stimulating community involvement and improving political literacy. It defined the former as:

> learning about and becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their communities, including learning through community involvement and service to the community'. (1998, p. 12).

> It defined political literacy as '. . .pupils learning about, and how to make themselves effective in, public life through knowledge, skills and values' (1998, p. 13).

Thus, the Crick report had fairly clear ideas about how citizenship education might improve civic engagement. These ideas involved a number of aspects including improving efficacy and morality, stimulating participation and voluntary activity, increasing political knowledge and fostering positive political values. The analysis is supported by an extensive literature on the effectiveness of school-based civic education which has emerged over the years (Ichilov, 1990; Morduchowicz *et al.*, 1996; Nie *et al.*, 1996; Niemi and Junn, 1998; Torney-Purta *et al.*, 2001; Campbell, 2009). This literature looks at the influence of education on political participation, political knowledge, civic values and volunteering.

The early research findings on civic education were rather pessimistic and suggested that citizenship classes had very little influence on adult participation or civic values. For example, Litt (1963) found that citizenship education increased support for democratic processes, but it did not influence political participation. Equally Torney *et al.* (1975) showed that the effects of education programmes on learning about citizenship were quite limited. But more extensive surveys which provided richer data tended to contradict these early conclusions. Niemi and Junn (1998) used data from the US National Assessment of Educational Progress and showed that civic education had a highly significant impact on political knowledge among American students. Similarly, longitudinal data showed that student participation in High School activities in the USA acted as a 'pathway' to participation in politics for up to a decade later (Beck and Jennings, 1982). This research implies that the effects of citizenship education are likely to endure for some time.

Torney-Purta *et al.* (2001) conducted a very comprehensive cross-national study in a diverse set of countries with the aim of providing insights into the effects of citizenship education on adult participation. The study showed that civic education programmes influenced democratic norms, political participation and political values, although the influences varied considerably across countries. In Britain a Department of Education funded study which began in 2002 was designed to evaluate the impact of the citizenship education curriculum

(Whiteley, 2005; Keating *et al*., 2010). It showed that the curriculum did have a positive effect on student participation and the norms and values associated with political engagement. These findings are encouraging to the advocates of the initiative, but in Britain the evidence that citizenship education has a permanent influence on the behaviour and attitudes of young adults is lacking. In the next section we examine indicators in the CIT survey which addresses this key issue.

3. Measuring the impact of citizenship education

The CIT survey was conducted by computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) and also by computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI).[4] The latter included respondents from Scotland and Wales and the sample was selected to produce a representative picture of young people in Britain. It contained a large number of indicators of attitudes to civic engagement and participation, with the aim of providing measures of the key concepts examined in the Crick report. Thus, the survey looks at measures of efficacy, morality, participation, voluntary activity, political knowledge and political values among other things. If political education has been effective then it should have influenced these measures. We examine the indicators of these various concepts next.

The first aspect of citizenship mentioned in the Crick report relates to the individual's political efficacy or self-confidence. Table 1 contains four different variables which are used to measure this attribute. These are Likert scale statements and they show that young people by and large believe that their political views are taken seriously by their families and also that local people can solve community problems. On the other hand, they are more sceptical about whether individuals can influence things if they get involved, and they express a good deal of concern about how complicated and difficult politics can be. To construct a political efficacy scale these items were aggregated together so that a high score denotes a strong sense of political efficacy.[5]

The Crick report referred to a sense of morality as an important prerequisite for the good citizen and this was measured with a set of indicators which appear in Table 2. In each case respondents were asked if various activities, such as keeping money found in the street or telling lies for one's own benefit, could be justified or not. The table shows that most respondents thought that these

[4]The unweighted file consisted of 1510 CAPI respondents and 1968 CAWI respondents, giving a total of 3478 respondents altogether.

[5]Strongly agree scores 5, agree scores 4, neither agree nor disagree scores 3, disagree scores 2 and strongly disagree scores 1. The exception is the last item in Table 1 where the codings were reversed. With four items the efficacy scale varies from 4 to 20.

Table 1 Indicators of efficacy

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
People like me can have real influence if they get involved	5	29	28	23	8
My views and opinions are taken seriously by my family	15	52	18	9	2
When local people campaign together they can solve community problems	8	61	21	8	2
Politics is so complicated I sometimes cannot understand it	16	44	19	17	4

Source: CIT data.

Table 2 Indicators of morality

	Always justified	Sometimes justified	Rarely justified	Never justified	Don't know
Keep money you have found	7	52	20	19	3
Drop litter in a public place	0.1	5	15	80	0.5
Tell lies when it suits you	1	21	32	46	1
Cheat in tests or examinations	0.1	2	8	90	0.3
Draw graffiti on a wall	0.5	6	11	83	0.4
Push in a queue	0.5	12	21	66	0.6
Break the speed limit	1.3	18	30	50	1.3
Buy alcohol under age	1.4	13	18	66	1

Source: CIT data.

activities were never justified, but there were some dissenters. In the cases of keeping money, telling lies or breaking the speed limit there was evidence of a fair bit of tolerance of bad behaviour. The strongest prohibitions applied to cheating in examinations and dropping litter in the street, with drawing graffiti close to these two. A cumulative 'morality scale' was constructed from the items with a high score denoting disapproval of these activities.[6]

Turning next to political participation, Figure 1 contains indicators of various forms of political action, with respondents being asked if they had done any of

[6]With eight items and 'Always Justified' scoring 1, 'Sometimes Justified' scoring 2, 'Rarely Justified' scoring 3 and 'Never Justified' scoring 4, the cumulative scale varies from 8 to 32.

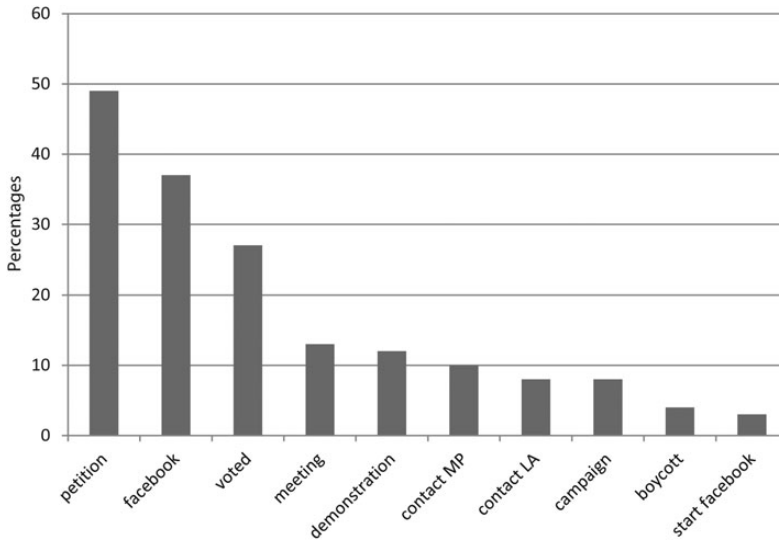

Figure 1. Indicators of youth participation: *petition*, signed a petition online or in person; *Facebook*, joined a Facebook group about a political or social issue; *voted*, voted in the 2010 general election; *meeting*, attended a public meeting or rally; *demonstration*, taken part in a public demonstration or protest; *contact MP*, contacted a local councillor or Member of Parliament; *contact LA*, contacted your local council about a neighbourhood issue; *campaign*, got together with others to campaign about an issue; *boycott*, stopped buying a product because of an email chain letter; *start Facebook*, started a Facebook group about a political or social issue. *Source*: CIT data.

these within the previous year. Some of these indicators have been used for years to measure political participation (see Barnes and Kaase, 1979) and traditionally voting has been the most popular activity when these questions are asked of the general population. Clearly, this is not true for young people whose participation is heavily reliant on the internet. The two most popular activities were signing an internet petition and participating in a Facebook campaign. To be fair, some of the respondents would not have been eligible to vote in the 2010 general election, but as the earlier discussion indicates only a minority of young people actually vote in elections. The items were cumulated with a score of one given for each activity, so that a high score indicates high levels of participation.

Another aspect of participation is voluntary activity which commonly involves working in voluntary organisations of various kinds. This aspect of participation was measured in the survey with a set of questions asking respondents if they had got involved in various types of clubs, groups or voluntary organisations in the previous year. The responses appear in Figure 2, which shows that participating in sports clubs or teams was the most popular type of activity, with some 28 per cent of respondents indicating that they had done this. About 13 per cent

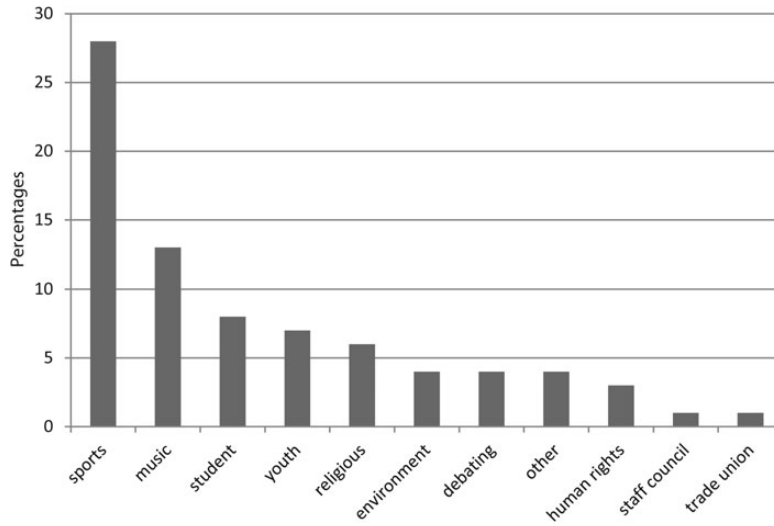

Figure 2. Indicators of activities in clubs and groups: *sports*, sports clubs/teams; *music*, art, drama, dance or music clubs/groups; *student*, Student Union or Council; *youth*, youth clubs or organisations; *religious*, religious groups or organisations; *environment*, environmental clubs/groups; *debating*, debating clubs/groups; *other*, other groups; *human rights*, human rights groups or organisations; *staff council*, staff association council in a workplace; *trade union*, trade union meetings in a workplace. *Source*: CIT data.

reported participating in arts, cultural or music groups, followed by 8 per cent reporting that they were active in student unions. More traditional organisations such as trade unions or staff associations in the work place were well down the list. Once again the responses were aggregated into an overall scale reflecting the number of organisations they participated in.

The third dimension of civic engagement highlighted in the Crick report was political literacy and Figure 3 contains the distribution of responses to a political knowledge quiz included in the survey to capture this dimension. The quiz consisted of nine different statements, five of which were true and four of which were false.[7] The chart shows the distribution of the correct minus the incorrect answers to the set of statements for each respondent. The figure shows that political knowledge among young people is not particularly high, when it is recalled

[7]The true statements were 'Polling stations close at 10 p.m. on election day'; 'Any registered voter can obtain a postal vote'; 'The Chancellor of the Exchequer is George Osborne'; Your name has to be on the electoral register to vote'; 'There are 650 MPs in the House of Commons'. The false statements were 'The minimum voting age is 16'; 'The standard rate of income tax is 26p in the pound'; 'The Chancellor of the Exchequer is responsible for setting interest rates'; 'Members of the House of Lords are elected'.

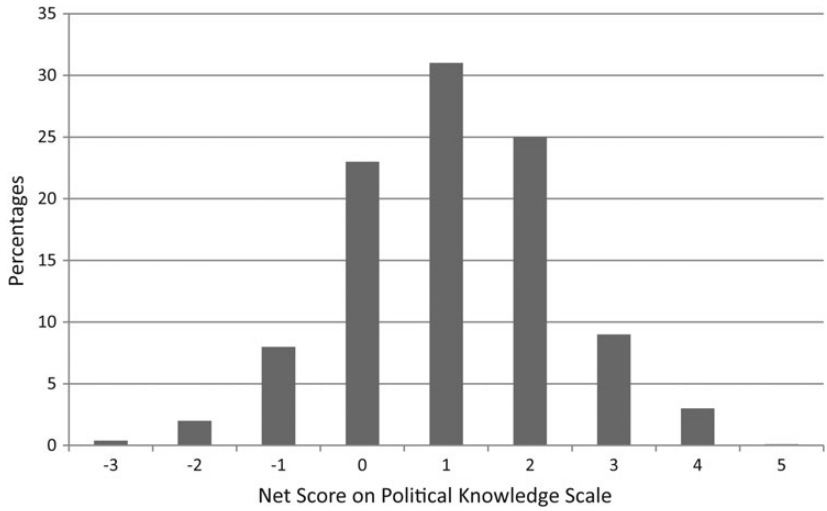

Figure 3. The distribution of scores on the political knowledge scale. (*Note*: the chart records the number of correct answers minus the number of incorrect answers). *Source*: CIT data.

Table 3 Indicators of political values

A good citizen	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Obeys the law	34	57	7	3	0.3
Joins a political party	0.6	14	41	39	6
Follows political issues in the media	2	36	40	20	2
Participates in the community	5	61	27	6	1
Writes to their MP if they feel strongly about an issue	4	48	31	15	2
Takes an interest in the community	4	64	25	7	0.5

Source: CIT data.

that there is a reasonable chance of getting four or five of these items correct just by guessing.

Table 3 contains the indicators of political values which are mentioned alongside political knowledge as the third important aspects of citizenship in the report. To measure this, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they thought that 'a good citizen' would do various things, such as participating in the community and joining a political party. These items are indicative of a set of values which support and strengthen civic engagement. Table 3 reveals that individuals were strongly in agreement that obeying the law was an

important imperative for the good citizen. They also felt that community participation and taking an interest in community affairs were very important. The feeling that a good citizen should follow political issues in the media and be willing to write to their MP if they felt strongly about something were also evident. But respondents were less persuaded that joining a political party mattered to the average person. Once again responses were cumulated into an overall scale with a high score indicating that the individual felt that the good citizen should do these things.[8]

To evaluate the extent to which respondents were exposed to the citizen education curriculum we use two measures. The first was based on the following question: *Were you taught about 'Citizenship' in school or college (up to the age of 18)?*. Responses were the following 'A lot'; 'A little'; 'Not at all' and 'Don't know'. This might be described as the *subjective* dimension of citizenship education and is one way of estimating its impact. The second measure derives from the following question: *In which country did you attend secondary school/college (up to age 18)?* Respondents educated in England were exposed to the curriculum, whereas respondents educated in Scotland, Wales or other countries were not. This might be described as the *objective* measure of the impact of citizenship education.

The objective and subjective variables can be used to evaluate the impact of citizenship education by comparing scores on the engagement indicators with these measures. However, both variables face difficulties of interpretation. In the case of the subjective variable we have to assume that respondents accurately record their experiences and also that there is no reverse causation. The latter refers to the fact that individuals who are currently quite active citizens might well rationalise their experiences in the past and feel that they received a lot of citizenship education in school or college when in fact they did not. In this situation their current activism would influence their recollections of being exposed to citizenship education. If this reverse causation is present then it means that the impact of exposure to the core curriculum will be exaggerated.

In contrast the objective measure does not face this problem, since current levels of engagement cannot influence which school or college they attended in the past. But the objective measure also has a weakness, namely that students taught in countries other than England may well have been exposed to topics appearing in the citizenship education curriculum but delivered in other lessons such as history or social studies. In this case the assumption that students educated outside England had no exposure would clearly be wrong. If this is a widespread phenomenon then the contrast between students educated in

[8]The scale runs from a minimum score of 6 to a maximum of 30.

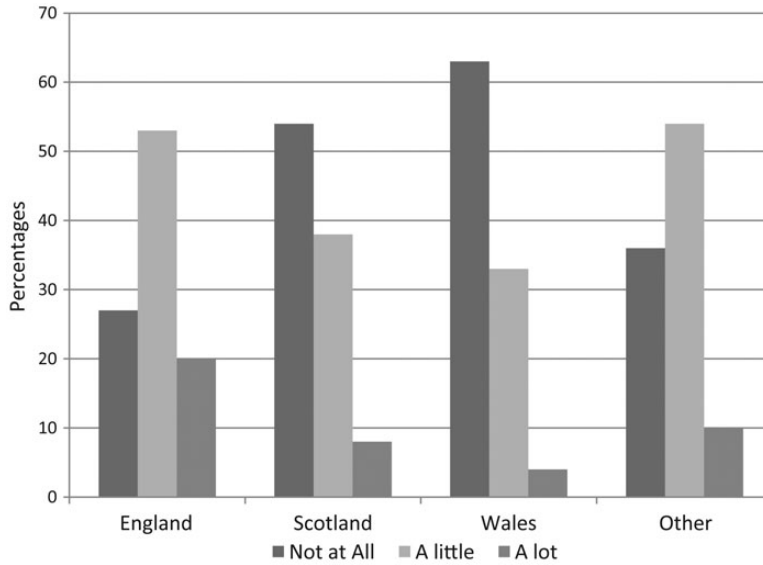

Figure 4. The relationship between perceptions of being exposed to citizenship education and the country in which a respondent attended secondary education. *Source*: CIT data.

England and other countries will be small, and the impact of citizenship education will tend to be underestimated.

Figure 4 compares the relationship between the subjective and objective indicators of exposure to citizenship education. There is a significant positive relationship between the two measures, with students educated in England being much more likely to perceive that they had received citizenship education than students educated in Scotland, Wales or other countries. Specifically, 27 per cent of respondents educated in England thought that they received no citizenship education at all, or did not remember it, compared with 54 per cent thinking this in Scotland and 63 per cent in Wales. At the other end of the scale 20 per cent of respondents educated in England perceived that they received a lot of citizenship education while only 8 per cent of the Scottish educated and 4 per cent of the Welsh educated perceived this.

To help deal with the problems highlighted in the subjective and objective measures they can be combined into a new 'impact' variable which represents an interaction between the two. Thus, if an individual was educated outside England and reported receiving no citizenship education they would score zero on the new variable, denoting no subjective or objective exposure. On the other hand, if they were educated in England and reported receiving no civic education, or alternatively were educated outside England and reported receiving some they would score 1. In this case scores on the two variables are inconsistent

but at the same time the ambivalence suggests that some exposure had taken place. Finally, if an individual reports receiving some citizenship education and went to school in England they would score 2 since they are consistent on both measures.

The impact variable helps to reduce rationalisations after the event or reverse causation since people educated in England who at the same time remember receiving citizenship classes are less likely to be subject to false memories than people who reported receiving such education but were not exposed because they were educated in another country. Thus, the objective measure is being used to validate the subjective measure, and the underestimate of the effects associated with the former should help to compensate for the overestimation of the effect associated with the latter. The same point can be made in reverse, since if people do not remember receiving any citizenship education and they went to school in Wales this is more likely to be accurate than if they reported no such education when they went to school in England. So the impact measure should provide a more accurate picture even if it does not completely remove the problems discussed earlier.

4. Results: does citizenship education work?

Turning next to the results, the starting point of the analysis is to compare average scores on the six different scales for the different categories of the impact measure. This is done in Table 4 where the average scores for each variable are recorded for the categories of the impact variable in the first three columns. The differences in scores between the first and third categories provide a summary measure of the impact of citizenship education on civic engagement, and these appear in the fourth column. The fifth column reports an *F*-test which indicates if these differences are statistically significant.

The results show that the impact variable had a significant and positive influence on political efficacy, political participation, group involvement and political knowledge. It did not appear to have an impact on the morality scale or on political values. Thus, citizenship education did influence key measures of engagement, and so as a first cut these results indicate that the core curriculum in citizenship did make a difference. Moreover, the results have face validity in the sense that knowledge and efficacy are both easier to influence in the classroom situation than morality or political values. This is because the latter are broader and more complex concepts than the former, and as such are arguably more difficult to influence by lessons in school.

The magnitudes of the effects in Table 4 can be illustrated by expressing the differences between the first and third categories as a percentage of the first or 'no-effect' category scores. When this is done the largest change was associated

Table 4 Civic engagement measures by the impact of citizenship education

	(1) No exposure	(2) Inconsistent exposure	(3) Consistent exposure	Difference (3)–(1)	*F*-test of difference
Efficacy scale	11.86	11.84	12.69	0.83***	35.1
Morality scale	27.49	27.47	27.34	−0.15	1.5
Participation scale	1.32	1.42	1.90	0.58***	39.0
Group engagement	0.64	0.67	0.84	0.20***	11.0
Political knowledge	0.88	0.94	1.13	0.25***	10.3
Political values	20.65	20.59	20.68	0.03	0.8

Source: CIT data.
***$P < 0.01$.

with the political participation scale, which increased by 44 per cent between the two categories. The second largest effect is associated with the group action measure which increased by 31 per cent. The political knowledge scale was fairly close to the latter and increased by 28 per cent; finally, political efficacy increased by 7 per cent.

These results are interesting but it would be premature to conclude that citizenship education has been effective, since there are no controls applied to the comparisons. It is well known, for example, that the socio-economic status of an individual has an important influence on their levels of political participation (Verba *et al.*, 1995; Pattie *et al.*, 2004). If, as seems likely, there are differences in socio-economic status between 'no effects' and 'consistent effects' respondents on the impact scale, this could easily explain the findings in Table 4. So it is important to control for confounding factors before reaching conclusions about the effectiveness of political education. With this point in mind we draw on two well-known models of political participation to provide control variables. These are the civic voluntarism and social capital models.

The civic voluntarism model is perhaps the best-known model of political participation in the empirical literature, and it arises from the work of Sydney Verba and his various collaborators (Verba and Nie, 1972; Parry *et al.*, 1992; Verba *et al.*, 1995). The central idea of the model is that individuals who possess resources develop a series of civic attitudes which promote their participation, enhance their sense of personal efficacy and improve their psychological feelings of involvement in the political process. They are also more easily mobilised to participate by other people. The emphasis is on the social backgrounds of participants, which in the case of students refer to their parent's socio-economic status as well as their own.

It is easy to see how status can influence civic engagement. High status households will tend to socialise their offspring into attitudes and beliefs which are conducive to participation and so civic education in school will reinforce these attitudes and produce relatively engaged students. The psychological and attitudinal variables are important in the theory, but they originate from the resources which individuals and their families bring to the task of participating. The theory predicts that students who come from professional households whose parents are graduates and who are relatively affluent are more likely to be engaged than students from other backgrounds.

Social capital theory also focuses on resources, but in this case the emphasis is on the community rather than the individual. James Coleman (1990) suggested that social capital is as a set of obligations and expectations that bind individuals together in society. In this interpretation social interactions can generate 'credit slips' of obligations and norms of reciprocation, and in an environment in which individuals trust each other, these credit slips can be utilised by third

parties to solve collective action problems. The core idea of social capital theory is that networks of voluntary relationships between individuals foster mutual trust and encourage people to work together to solve common problems. In a similar way Robert Putnam defined social capital as 'features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions' (1993, p. 167). From this perspective social capital is like other types of capital which can be used to make society work more efficiently.

Applied to the task of explaining civic engagement, the theory suggests that students brought up in cohesive and active communities will tend to trust others and will also tend to volunteer more. The literature on social capital suggests that individuals from these types of communities are more likely to vote and generally get involved in voluntary activities (Putnam, 1993, 2000). Thus, their community backgrounds should make them more open to the influence of civic education than their peers from communities lacking in social capital. For many researchers trust is the key indicator of social capital (Fukuyam, 1995; Linn and Erickson, 2008). Trust is important because it allows individuals to move beyond their own immediate family or communities and engage in cooperative activities with strangers. If civic education enhances trust among students, this should provide an important stimulus to their future civic engagement.

Indicators from the civic voluntarism and social capital models are incorporated into the analysis of the civic engagement measures to see what effects they have on the impact variable. If the latter remains a robust predictor in a particular model then it implies that resources either at the individual or community levels are not responsible for the effects. In other words the classroom is having an influence on the civic engagement of students over and above any influences which derive from their social backgrounds.

The indicators from the civic voluntarism model include the occupational and educational status of the respondent's mother and father. In addition, the economic status of the respondent is also included as an additional control. This is captured by four variables: the first records if the respondent was a university student; the second if they were in job training; the third if they were in full-time employment, and finally, if they were unemployed and looking for work. The expectation is that young people with higher status, for example university students, are more likely to be politically engaged than someone who is in job training or is unemployed.

In the case of the social capital model the focus is on measures which capture the extent to which individuals trust institutions and other people, and also come from cohesive, active communities. A battery of items were included in the survey

to measure interpersonal trust,[9] another measured institutional trust which in this case largely focused on the media.[10] Finally, there were items which captured the extent to which individual's felt attached to their neighbourhoods.[11] These types of measure are all closely associated with the social capital model. Additional controls for age, gender and ethnicity were also included in the models.

Table 5 contains multiple regression models of the civic engagement measures with the additional controls incorporated into the analysis. Looking at the results as a whole the goodness of fit statistics are relatively modest, since social background characteristics generally have a weak impact on political participation (Pattie *et al.*, 2004). However, the impact variable remains a significant predictor of civic engagement in the efficacy, participation and political knowledge models. The exception is the group activity model, where the additional controls have eliminated the influence of the impact measure.

To examine the efficacy model first, parental occupational status and the respondent's own status both have a positive impact on efficacy. University students have a greater sense of efficacy and the unemployed a lower sense than young people in general. It is also clear that the indicators of social capital have an important influence on efficacy, since the trust measures and the attachment to community index all have positive effects. Finally, males have a greater sense of efficacy than females, although there are no effects associated with ethnicity or age.

In contrast to the efficacy model, the morality model is only weakly influenced by parental and respondent status and by social capital. In this case ethnic minorities score significantly higher on the scale than the white ethnic majority and females have a stronger sense of morality than males. However, the picture does not change from Table 4 in that exposure to the citizenship curriculum had no influence on the morality scale.

The same point cannot be made about political participation. In this case, the resource variables are quite influential in affecting civic engagement with

[9]Respondents were asked if they trusted 'people of your own age', 'your neighbours' and 'your family'. The response categories were 'not at all' which scores 1; 'a little' scores 2; 'quite a lot' scores 3; 'completely' scores 4 and the items were cumulated into an overall scale.

[10]Respondents were asked if they trusted 'The police', 'newspapers', 'radio', 'television' and 'the internet'. The response categories were 'not at all' which scores 1; 'a little' scores 2; 'quite a lot' scores 3; 'completely' scores 4 and the items were cumulated into an overall scale.

[11]The community attachment scale is constructed from three Likert scaled items: 'My neighbourhood is a place where neighbours look out for each other'; 'There are lots of clubs and groups in my local neighbourhood that my friends and I could join'; 'I have lots of friends in my neighbourhood'. A high score denotes close community attachment.

Table 5 Regression models of the impact of citizenship education on civic engagement

	Efficacy	Morality	Participation	Group activity	Political knowledge	Political values
Impact	0.10***	−0.03	0.10***	0.02	0.04**	0.00
Mother's occupation	0.04**	0.01	0.06***	0.00	0.01	−0.01
Father's occupation	0.02	−0.03	0.09***	0.09***	0.01	−0.02
Mother's education	0.09***	−0.04*	0.08***	0.12***	0.00	0.07***
Father's education	0.00	−0.04	0.03	0.03	−0.06**	−0.01
University student	0.10***	−0.04*	0.23***	0.21***	0.05**	−0.03
In training	−0.01	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.02
Full-time working	−0.02	−0.03	0.01	−0.00	−0.01	−0.05**
Unemployed	−0.04**	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.03	−0.06**
Interpersonal trust	0.12***	0.05**	0.04*	0.03	0.02	−0.01
Institutional trust	0.04**	0.04*	−0.02	0.05**	0.05**	0.10***
Attachment to community	0.04*	0.03	−0.03	0.04**	0.00	0.12***
Male	0.14***	−0.19***	0.04*	0.12***	−0.03	−0.02
Ethnically white	−0.02	−0.10***	0.02	−0.08***	0.03	−0.06***
Age	0.03	−0.02	0.04**	−0.03	−0.01	−0.00
R^2	0.12	0.05	0.13	0.13	0.01	0.04

Source: CIT data.
Standardised coefficients: ***$P < 0.01$; **$P < 0.05$; *$P < 0.10$.

the social capital measures being rather less so. What particularly stands out is the higher rates of participation of university students, who score highly on the participation scale in comparison with their peers. Apart from this, being in training, full-time employment or being unemployed appear to have no influence on participation. On the other hand, males are more active than females and older respondents more likely to participate than younger respondents. It is noteworthy that the impact variable continues to be a highly significant predictor of participation in this model.

In the case of the group activity model, university students are again much more likely to participate than other people of their age. In this case, the social capital indicators are particularly influential with interpersonal trust, institutional trust and attachment to community all being important positive predictors of group activity. This is consistent with the idea that social capital is associated with communities and with voluntary activity. When the community variables are incorporated into the model, the impact variable no longer has an influence on group participation. This suggests that group activities are much more about where people live than about citizenship education.

Political knowledge is not very well predicted by the various socio-economic background variables. Not surprisingly, university students are more knowledgeable than other respondents and institutional trust does influence knowledge. The point was made earlier that institutional trust is very much about trusting the media, and so not surprisingly individuals who do this are more likely to be knowledgeable about politics since they are more likely to be media users. The important point is that the impact variable remains a highly significant predictor in the political knowledge model. It is clear that the citizenship education influenced political knowledge.

Finally, political values are not influenced by exposure to the citizenship curriculum, something evident in Table 4, but they are influenced by individual and community resources. In this case attachment to community and institutional trust both positively influence values alongside mother's education. Interestingly enough in contrast with some of the other models, attending university appears to have little or no effect on political values, although full-time work and unemployment do influence them. Full-time workers or the unemployed are less likely to have political values supportive of civic engagement than their peers.

Overall, these results indicate that citizenship education had a significant impact on three key indicators of civic engagement, namely, efficacy, participation and knowledge. This remained true in the presence of a variety of controls designed to measure the social backgrounds and status of the individuals and that of their communities. The implications of these findings for the future of citizenship education in Britain are examined in the final section.

5. Discussion and conclusions

In January 2011 the coalition government commissioned a report by an expert panel of academic educationalists designed to review the National Curriculum in secondary schools, and this was published in December 2011 (Department for Education, 2011). It was commissioned in part as a response to concerns that the National Curriculum had become overloaded and needed to be slimmed down in order to focus on what were seen as essential subjects. In the report, the panel drew a distinction between the 'National Curriculum' which refers to subjects that are thought important enough to be compulsory, and the 'Basic Curriculum' or subjects which schools can teach at their own discretion. One important recommendation was to move a number of subjects from the National to the Basic curriculum, and one of these was Citizenship studies. This move was justified in the following terms:

> Citizenship is of enormous importance in a contemporary and future-oriented education. However, we are not persuaded that study of the issues and topics included in citizenship education constitutes a distinct 'subject' as such. We therefore recommend that it be reclassified as part of the Basic Curriculum' (Department of Education, 2011. p. 24).

The education Minister, Michael Gove, replied to this report in a letter published in June of 2012 (Department of Education, 2012). He accepted the idea of slimming down the National Curriculum emphasising the importance of Science, Mathematics, English and Languages in his letter. He did not refer to citizenship studies directly but implicitly accepted the recommendation that it should no longer be a compulsory subject. The government's aim is to introduce the new slimmed down curriculum in 2014.

This development is undoubtedly a set-back for citizenship education in Britain, and in the light of the findings from the survey, a set-back to civic engagement in the future. It is curious that the justification for the changes to the curriculum were framed in terms of the panel recognising citizenship as a subject, as opposed to examining if it has made a difference to the civic engagement. Arguably, its recognition as a subject has little to do with its importance for stimulating civic engagement.

Moreover, this change is distinctly at odds with government proposals for the 'Big Society' which were set out by David Cameron in a speech in 2010. In this speech he argued that voluntary groups 'should be able to run post offices, libraries, transport services and shape housing projects' (Cameron, 2010). Clearly, if this is to happen then the individuals involved need to feel a sense of efficacy, be willing to participate and also to be knowledgeable enough about society

and politics to know how to make a difference. As the above findings show, these measures were all stimulated by citizenship education.

An end to compulsory citizenship classes will not of course mean an end to citizenship education in Britain, since some schools will continue to deliver it as part of their mission to educate the next generation. But the large differences observed in Figure 4 between England, where citizenship education has been compulsory, and the other UK countries where it has not been is bound to raise questions about the long-term consequences of this change of policy on civil society in general.

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Appendix: The Surveys

The CIT survey consisted of 1510 respondents interviewed by CAPI from England and 1968 respondents interviewed by CAWI from England, Wales and Scotland. The majority of the CAPI interviewees were young people aged 19–20 who had taken part in a previous project, the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study

(CELS), either at school or in their sixth form college (see Keating *et al*., 2010). The CELS project was funded by the Department of Education and conducted by researchers at the National Foundation for Educational Research and the University of Essex. The CELS sample was topped up with 300 respondents randomly selected to compensate for panel attrition and to make it representative of the 18–25-year-age cohort in England. The longitudinal sample was supplied by NFER and contained contact details given by respondents at the time of their last CELS interview.

The CAWI survey aimed to capture the views of respondents aged between 18 and 25 living in England, Scotland and Wales, regardless of where they attended school. Participants had no previous connection to CELS and were selected to participate through an online panel. All interviews were online self-completion and lasted approximately 20 min. The CAWI sample contained 1697 respondents from England, 96 from Wales, 167 from Scotland and 8 from Northern Ireland.