

Civic Education for a Global World

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"...civic education is essential to sustain our constitutional democracy. The habits of the mind, as well as 'habits of the heart,' the dispositions that inform the democratic ethos, are not inherited. As Alexis de Toqueville pointed out, each new generation is a new people that must acquire the knowledge, learn the skills, and develop the dispositions or traits of private and public character that undergird a constitutional democracy. Those dispositions must be fostered and nurtured by word and study and by the power of example. Democracy is not a 'machine that would go of itself,' but must be consciously reproduced, one generation after another." (Branson, 1998)

In a world of increasing economic and political tensions for greater stakes in power, wealth, and modern standards of living, democracy is being tested to limits never before so exposed and so contested on the global stage. Political unrest, economic inequalities, ethnic and cultural assertiveness, and polarization of socio-political perspectives signal a world that is becoming increasingly volatile and segmented. Among many sectors of the United States, as in other modern democracies, widespread distrust of government and governmental institutions has resulted in decreasing levels of compromise, cooperation, and civility. The unstable geo-political tensions and marketplace adjustments to a global economy are shaping the world into an ever changing landscape that requires on-going attention and adjustments. This is the new reality.

In spite of the challenges of global interdependence and evolving democracies, and perhaps in response, there is a growing movement of educators, political leaders, and civic groups around the world in recognizing the need for increased high quality civic education for the purpose of building and strengthening viable systems of governance in the long-term. Many have recognized and accepted the responsibility of preparing students and successive generations for self-governance and leadership. To this end, civic educators are coming together in a variety of venues and formats to address common needs, specific questions, and strategies for effective democratic governance, meaningful participation, ethical compassion, and preparation of each generation for future leadership and intellectual contribution to civil societies.

In April of 2013, numerous countries were represented at the international conference on civic education, the *Tutzing Forum: Political Didactics International*, sponsored by the Academy for Civic Education Tutzing (Germany), the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bonn, Germany), and the Center for Civic Education (USA) in Tutzing, Germany. The conference focused on the topic of minority rights as outlined in the Council of Europe committees, documents, and frameworks on the protection of national minorities¹ and the relationship to civic education. Discussion and presentation of research analyzed the implications of international politics on the role of citizenship, global trends, and geo-political issues that bleed over the borders of 21st century nation-states. International issues such as terrorism attacks, economic crises, and clashes between secular and religious social mores have highlighted the need to understand global issues, global politics, and global collaboration. This conference represented the latest gathering of civic education scholars in a series of conferences held over the last decade and this particular topic of minority rights allowed participants to apply some of the basic tenets of civic education to the reality of the world today.

Participants examined how various societies that function under constitutional democracies are adjusting to the political and economic conditions of today. Interestingly for all social scientists, this is a case study of how the politics of today are interrelated through history, geography, economics, and civic education in the quest for working solutions to cross-border issues, rising nationalism, and economic security. The topic itself is a significant issue in how nation states determine and codify citizenship but a closer examination of the question of minorities within the borders of major nation states raises additional questions that are fundamental to civic education in general. This paper will report on some of the universal questions that have been raised and how civic education can address those issues with both a global perspective and a nationalistic focus. Those universal questions can be explored within the following inquiries:

- What is a citizen?
- What are the issues for civic education in today's world?
- Why are minority rights issues a global concern?
- What is the role of civic education in a global world?
- How can the international civic education community support democracy education and promote global understanding in a rapidly changing world?

What is a citizen?

It is no surprise that social scientists and civic education specialists begin the conversation of democracy education with a fundamental question that goes to the heart of all discussion, "What is a citizen?" The Center for Civic Education defines citizen in the draft version of *Res Publica: An International Framework for Education in Democracy* (2006) as "...a full and equal member of the body politic or the civically united, sovereign people...an essential idea of democracy is that there are no classes of citizenship, no 'second class' citizens." The paper further elaborates that "Citizenship in a democracy is more than a legal status, it is a character or spirit, an ethos that guides relationships among persons and animates individual commitment to fundamental principles of democracy" (Center for Civic Education, 2006). In a democracy, citizens have the right "to participate in the political process and thus to 'own' the body politic. For example, they must have the right to vote in free, fair, regular elections; to examine the conduct of public officials; to hold office; to equal membership in the body politic; to petition; and to exercise freedom of political speech, press, political association, and assembly; and a right to an education that prepares them to participate in the democratic process" (Center for Civic Education, 2006). Most importantly, self-government requires the active participation of the individual while respecting the collective rights of the larger body.

Foremost among the rights of citizenship are those outlined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* from the General Assembly of the United Nations that include equality before the law, the right to fair hearings, freedom of religion, the right to movement or residence within each nation-state, the right to nationality, the right to own property, peaceful assembly, the right to participate in government, adequate standards of living to maintain health, a right to education, and others related to human dignity (General Assembly of the United Nations, 1948). Nation-states maintain the right to make and enforce laws that provide security and protection for the people such as taxes to maintain a national defense, national standards of health and disease control, terrorism defense, and prosecution under criminal law but the balance between collective needs and individual rights is always under scrutiny. The statutes for the protection of economic interests may include consumer protections as well as banking regulations, monetary policy, and initiatives that promote job growth that, again, are collective rights. Laws that accommodate socio-cultural norms of both minority and majority groups include preservation of religious, historical and morally significant issues such as religious holidays, historical commemorations, the right to privacy, gun control, and drug abuse controls.

Just as individuals have multiple roles in a social system (e.g., mother, sister, volunteer, professional) so, too, do individuals hold multiple roles in the political system (e.g., citizen, party or committee member, advocate, legislator, voter). These multiple roles result in a government that is configured in various levels that include not only the local, state or provincial, and federal levels but also the public institutions that provide input and structure to the system. Furthermore, within each of the jurisdictions, there are levels of authority that oversee government policies, law, and execution of governmental directives. These multiple and, at times, competing roles of government, institutions, and individuals create an endless array of configurations of authority, power, individual rights, collective rights, and interpretations of the role of government. To further complicate the issues, individuals and groups of people come to the process steeped in historical, geographical, socio-cultural, religious, and ethnic beliefs and values. If "political membership cannot be conceived of apart from its context in a polity; it is also the case that the characterization of the person as a potential political subject and/or actor will vary according to the type of political system" (Center for Civic Education, 2006, p. 40). It then follows that without clarity of the various levels of authority and respect for the socio-cultural values of the individuals, it will be difficult to overcome the barriers to progress in a political system of diverse interests and identities. This framework holds true for most governing structures throughout the world and it will be the tools of compromise, negotiation, and diplomacy that allow for competing interests to reach working solutions. This very process has produced a strategy in addressing minority rights in the European Union today although the question of who might be granted the status of legitimate citizenship is still evolving.

Systems of democracy legitimize power from the people themselves and that requires a system of participation in the development of the law, the enforcement of the law, and the accountability of the system as a whole. The Center for Civic Education clarifies that popular sovereignty provides for people an "...inherent liberty to give and withhold their consent to government. In effect, they have inalienable ownership of their government. Even in a representative democracy, where the people authorize others to act on their behalf, they do not in fact surrender their power; the people merely delegate it to others who serve as their trustees. According to the principle of popular sovereignty, authority flows from people to those in positions of political power, not from rulers to the people" (Center for Civic Education, 2006, p. 9). Because self-governance is necessary to guarantee the freedoms that are constitutionalized in a democracy, the very concept of a citizen in a democracy requires an understanding and acceptance of the citizen role as a vigilant protector of those very freedoms.

Criteria used to define citizenship can vary greatly from country to country and one cannot assume citizenship is accorded based on multi-national agreements. Citizenship might be determined by birth, residence, ethnicity, decree, or naturalization. In Germany, the large immigrant Turkish population has not been granted full citizenship status in spite of multi-generational residence within the country. In Hungary, citizenship is extended to all Hungarians inside and outside of the Hungarian borders, regardless of birth or residence. The naturalization process in the United States remains a lengthy process that includes a rigorous test of historical and political knowledge. Citizenship criteria remains an evolving issue in the United States for many living within the borders.

Geography or the location of where a person resides is not necessarily a determinant of citizenship. The historical establishment of nation-states through treaties, international agreements, wars, colonialism, geography, or cultural heritage remains fluid to this day, particularly in Europe and the middle east as evidenced by an examination of the maps over the last century. While the establishment of the United States of America was founded upon philosophical ideals, it was geography that ultimately defined the boundaries. The heritage of *E Pluribus Unum* as a key principle of the constitutional democracy of the United States allows for the respect of diversity within the national borders but other countries define citizens through nationality, ethnicity, language, political affiliation, or religious heritage.

Minorities may or may not be accorded citizenship nor may they necessarily have a significant role in the governing body. Geo-political disputes have often displaced minority groups either inside or outside of historical boundaries resulting in pockets of communities that may or may not align themselves with the governing majority. Numerous countries, particularly in Europe, are struggling to find acceptable strategies for political inclusion and effective participation of minorities through devolution² and other means of self-determination and self-governance. Throughout the world, constitutional democracies continue to evolve in an ever-changing mix of governance structures and yet, in spite of the number of nation-states today, it is remarkable that we find acceptance of a set of universal democratic values to be held by the vast majority of countries. Equally important, it is generally recognized that citizens have rights as well as responsibilities and both require important attention in educating for democracy.

Citizen responsibilities include application of the skills of reasoning and logic to become informed voters and advocates. In this way, high quality decision-making skills would include recognition of bias as well as differentiation of fact from opinion. Teaching students the skills of thoughtful deliberation, fact-finding, and understanding of multiple perspectives is essential in avoiding narrow argumentation. Classroom activities to support these skills should include meaningful and informed debate that incorporates civil discourse, compromise, and collaboration. Research-based studies on effective teaching of civic education principles are based on the following profile of actively involved and engaged citizens who are:

- Informed and thoughtful...with the capacity to think critically and a willingness to enter into dialogue with others about different points of view and to understand diverse perspectives....and resist simplistic answers to complex questions;
- Participate in their communities...and contribute to groups in civil society that....work together to overcome problems;
- Act politically...for instance, by organizing people to address social issues, solving problems in groups, speaking in public, petitioning and protesting to influence public policy, and voting;
- Possess moral and civic virtues. (Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2012)

A government of the people, by the people, and for the people is attainable only if the skills for self-government are intentionally taught with consistent alignment of democratic goals and ideals to young citizens beginning with the formative years. Beyond the teaching of skills, responsibility lies in the maintenance of shared goals and the perpetuation of democratic principles. "The most significant additional responsibilities are to preserve one's own rights, protect the rights of others, and to secure these rights for future generations" (Center for Civic Education, 2006). Mutual benefits such as defense, personal and property protections, due process, a healthy economic system, and the rule of law are not only goals for individual nations but for global cooperation as a whole and function as the best defense against the forces of aggression, violence, and the suppression of freedoms and human rights. Constitutional guarantees and assignment of powers together with the administration of a system of government through the various levels of rights and laws provides the structure for determination of individual rights as weighed against the collective rights of the body of nation-state as a whole.

What are the issues for civic education in today's world?

The list of issues that nations face in today's world is an ever-expanding inventory of threats and challenges to democracy and political stability. Established democratic systems in countries throughout the world are facing complications and threats to the traditional

constitutional democracies as a result of the changing demographics and influx of large immigrant populations, environmental issues such as drought and flooding, religious fanaticism, divisive political orientations, economic disparities of growing gaps between the wealthy and poor, and human rights violations. Unrest in the middle east following the "Arab Spring" of 2011, economic instability in western Europe, and increasing violence as a means of gaining attention and power are direct responses to rising nationalism, terrorism, jingoism, religious fanaticism, and capitalist market expansion. This, again, emphasizes the need for democratic governments to embrace the essential task of educating each new generation with the tools and knowledge for developing and maintaining a government that is responsive to the citizens, provides participatory mechanisms for all citizens, and is inclusive of both majority or and minority rights.

Constitutional democracies hold the greatest promise for the establishment of mechanisms that will guarantee individual and collective freedoms, rights, and a voice in government. Kevin Ryan of the Vermont Bar Association explains that "Constitutions seek to establish 'good government' through 'reflection and choice,' laying down the institutional patterns and structures that will govern the political realm. But constitutions do more than establish a government. As the very word suggests, constitutions fashion a 'makeup' of a people; indeed, a constitution creates a people, what Will Harris has called a 'constitutional people' (William F. Harris II, *The Interpretable Constitution*, 1993) that inhabits a particular territory, shares a way of life, and has chosen to govern itself within the constitutional terms and limits." Ryan also cautions that "Constitutionalism involves the search for mechanisms to cope with the narrowness of vision that characterizes the people, to enliven and cultivate the politics of interest and identity so that the body politic thrives and maintains itself through time." This emphasizes the need for a people to commit to self-governance and to understand the responsibilities of citizenship. On the global stage, Ryan concludes that "Constitutions confront an already existing world of unequal powers and find themselves partially determined by the features of that world. But constitutions also engage the world into which they are inserted, making it move, forcing it to change, providing ways in which difference can express itself in the ongoing enterprise of building a nation, fashioning unity by cultivating plurality" (Ryan, 2013).

The rule of law and human rights is most often codified within a national constitution but the federal and state or provincial laws are frequently the determining factors in how justice is administered. Professor William Harris has suggested that levels of laws might help in adjudicating authority in civil and ethno-conflicts through federal, state or provincial, and local or regional (Harris, 2013). An example of this might be that a Tier I set of laws would be based on a pre-determined set of basic human rights and freedoms; Tier II laws might relate to the security of the nation and protection of property; Tier III laws would be classified as socio-cultural accommodations, including religious and cultural mores. The types of laws that accommodate socio-cultural issues might be under the jurisdiction of autonomous regions or locales within countries while basic human rights and national security would be federal jurisdictions.

The interdependent world of today is evidenced by the volatile issues that are present on a global scale and every nation is affected by the individual response of any given country. Poverty and inequality are fueling anger and resentment in countries on every continent and the spread of discontent is rapid. Terrorist attacks in one locale will often result in subsequent attacks in other population centers and retribution in others. When the economic crisis became overwhelming in Spain and Italy in 2012, Germany experienced a large-scale influx of immigrants looking for work leading to adjustments that affected all economic sectors.

High poverty levels among sub-populations is a glaring contrast to a media-exposed world of excess and conspicuous consumption. Among the increasing economic inequalities of today, one need look no further than the United States where many of the low-skilled and even higher-skilled jobs have been out-sourced to countries that allow for less output expenditures and can realize greater profits. Suzanne Soule reports that

...the U.S. scores 40.8 on the Gini index, a measure of inequality in income and expenditures, putting it on par with Sri Lanka, Georgia, Ghana, Mali, and just ahead of Thailand and Turkey. By contrast, income inequality in Germany is much less, 28.3. and Sweden is 25 (2007-08 UNDP Report). In the U.S., the top one-fifth of the population takes home over 50% of all income. This share has been increasing steadily since 1968 (http://www.leftbusinessobserver.com/Gini_supplement.html). Even more startling is that the top 1% percent of households received 21.8% of all pre-tax income in 2005, more than double what that figure was in the 1970s, which is the greatest concentration of income since 1928, when 23.9 percent of all income went to the richest one percent. (Soule, 2008)

Income disparities continue to grow in the industrialized countries. In the developing economies of Asia and Latin America, wealth distribution is a major cause of demonstrations, riots, strikes, and protests. This is particularly true in regions where options for social mobility are limited as we have seen in recent years in Pakistan, France, and the middle east. The rise in gang violence in Mexico, manifested in drug trafficking and other criminal activity, has taken a large toll on communities and is due, in large part, to endemic poverty and class warfare.

Hyper-mobility throughout the world remains both a right and a problem as residents compete for scarce resources including the sources of wealth and political power. Regardless of the causes of immigration and movement within borders, this cultural mosaic continues to exert pressure on the government and the status quo of the existing communities. The "cultural pluralism"³ of Europe indicates a diversity of cultures that co-exist within the countries of Europe and now many ethnic or linguistic minority groups are seeking regional self-government or autonomy as in devolution, a transfer of certain governing rights from large nation-states to minority regions within the country. The European Union has attempted to address this issue through the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities with guidelines on how countries can accommodate minority rights and freedoms.

" Many national minorities are lacking substantial power, political unity and effective organisation [sic], and thus are distant from the decision-making centres [sic], without any chance to ever play a significant role in the national political arenas. This imbalance influences all juridical developments in this field, where often the expectations of the population concerned and the interests of the lawmaking institutions simply do not coincide. Although some legal developments have shown a high degree of validity, in most cases the real solution depends on political circumstances, whether a national minority can actively intervene to shape political concepts and succeed in getting respected its fundamental rights, the preservation of its cultural identity and the state's cultural diversity." (Benedikter, 2008, p. 136)

Europe today is an amalgamation of historical events that have drawn borders and shifted political power for not just centuries but millennia through wars, political alliances, treaties, and international agreements. Although many sub-cultures within the nation states have maintained unique identities, languages, and customs, there is a growing threat that those ethnicities may be unable to protect their identities and their rights as minority groups within the borders of the prevailing political powers. While majority rule parliaments and legislative bodies are functioning under structures such as single assemblies based on geographic regions, minorities may or may not be represented. Even in governing bodies of representatives that are

based on local elections throughout a nation state, minority populations would often be defeated in the popular vote and find themselves in a position of having an irrelevant voice.

There exists a number of cultural and ethnic groups that aspire to gain autonomy within the borders of the nation-state and many minority groups have seen the creation of autonomous regions such as South Tyrol in Italy, Kosovo of the former Yugoslavia, and Wales in the United Kingdom. Other regions that have partial or full autonomous regions include the Basque of the Pyrenees, the Inuit of Greenland, sections of Estonia and Hungary, the Cypriot Turks, Quebec in Canada, the South Ossetians, the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh, the Scots of the British Isles, and the Kurds of Turkey. The United States, as well, has comparable issues as accommodations for the native American Indian experience in semi-autonomous regions have been evolving over time. To varying degrees, certain freedoms have been accorded to autonomous regions from the host nation or bordering countries. This begs the question of how minority rights can be protected within the political systems of the more powerful nation states. When are minority rights permissible and to what extent does autonomy for minorities extend under national law?

This is the issue before the nation-states of the European Union today. Various commissions and documents have been created to address this process even as they are documenting a complex turning point in history. In the larger picture, immigration has created a society in which parallel cultures exist yet citizenship rights are not always equal and not always extended to the more recent arrivals. In many cases, these "newer" arrivals have been residing in the country for generations. This is true of many immigrants from Turkey that arrived in Germany decades ago and it is also true for Mexicans that have resided in the United States over the past 60 years or more. These situations return us to the question that is as much philosophical as it is a legal question of "Who is a citizen?" Equally important is the question, "What constitutes a nation?"

The Council of Europe is a joint body of advisory and policy development for the 47 member countries of Europe. The purpose is to develop common democratic principles based on human rights and the protection of national minorities. The 1995 Framework Commission on National Minorities outlined the human rights issue of minorities and the need for inclusion policies as well as recommendations for minority right within the countries of which they reside.⁴ Both individual and collective rights were reaffirmed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 2001 that recognized "...the importance of effectively protecting the rights of minorities in Europe..." followed by a recommendation in 2006 that "...the modern European state founded their legitimacy either on the civic meaning of the concept of 'nation' or on the cultural meaning of the concept..." (Council of Europe, 2013). Dr. Lauri Hannikainen, Professor of International Law and a member of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance under the auspices of the Council of Europe, identifies four types of minorities: 1) those dispersed throughout Europe (e.g., Jews, Muslims, Roma); 2) Those existing in one geographic area (e.g., Basque, Welsh, Catalan) with no kin (national) state; 3) immigrants from neighboring or other countries; 4) indigenous groups (e.g., Inuit, Nenets); (Hannikainen, 2013). Examples of countries that are working with minority groups under the human rights framework of the Council of Europe include Hungary and Slovakia. The Roma are a cultural group that is dispersed throughout Europe. South Tyrol in northern Italy is a region that hosts a native culture that is significantly different from the host nation-state.

The Hungarian Diaspora following the re-drawn national boundaries after World War I and subsequent mass movements of the 20th century found many native Hungarians in neighboring countries including Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, and Serbia. Currently, Hungary has addressed the situation by declaring dual citizenship for those Hungarian nationals that reside outside of the national borders, even if they were born in another country. In Estonia, a legal framework guarantees participation at the level of cultural autonomy but the largest minority, the Russians, are not a part of the agreement. In Slovakia, divisions based on

language and on the historical political elite remain. In Kosovo, both the constitutional and legislative arrangements are very sophisticated and aim at a guarantee of minority rights but the regimes suffers from implementation shortfalls and it seems that minority participation is less than optimal (Pakozdi, 2013). In several cases, Dr. Zora Popova of the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) has indicated that the greatest threat to inclusion efforts lies in ambivalent attitudes and a lack of ownership of the minority rights by the groups themselves (Popova, 2013).

The Roma population, dispersed throughout Europe in all countries, remain stigmatized and discrimination is a problem. The Roma are most often at the low end of the poverty scale, often in extreme poverty, and have frequently maintained an isolationist stance that excludes children from public schooling and denies women's rights. Programs in Hungary and other countries have been implemented to combat poverty through early childhood education, employment, and public housing but citizenship is still elusive for the 10-12 million Roma that are estimated to be living in Europe. Currently, the Hungarian government "...aims at fostering a dual Roma and Hungarian [citizenship] among Roma" (Soros, 2013) in an attempt to develop a more inclusive social network.

South Tyrol, a region in northern Italy, is populated with a residents of Austrian heritage and German is the lingua franca. This region represents a "special region" in Italy and is one of 5 special regions and 15 regions. This region was assigned to Italy following World War I and has not been returned; however, the South Tyroleans have been accorded broad autonomy by the Italian government and this solution is regarded as a model for resolution of minority conflicts (Steininger, 2013).

Clearly, problems remain with minority rights and autonomous regionalization. In some cases, documents that outline minority rights and certain autonomous governance have been developed but little or no implementation has followed. In some cases, administrative changes have resulted in a lack of continuity in maintaining the protections and safeguards. There remains some lack of awareness of the legal and social implications of the charters and agreements. More importantly, not all minority groups are recognized in any given country.

James Hill of California State University San Bernardino speculated on how Europe may be experiencing a "weakening of the nation state and the emergence of a civic state concept. Even since the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia ended the wars of religion, the nation state idea has been the basis for borders and sovereignty but also since 1648, the neat clear lines of national (linguistic) division are not there...and cutting across all these lines are the divisions of social class as well" (Hill J. , 2013). Terrance Mason observed that "the rise of supra-national entities such as the European Union have decoupled the traditional link between the citizen and the nation-state such that individuals may hold multiple civic identities simultaneously (e.g. a citizen of Latvia and the European Union). Conflicts between cultural and civic identities may force individuals to choose between a cultural identity (e.g. Albanian) and a political identity defined by the nation-state (e.g. Macedonian)" (Mason, 2009).

Kevin Ryan of the Vermont Bar Association has commented on "the *complexity of the diversity* confronted by European nations" which is evidenced in the linking of the historical, geographic, linguistic, and political variables that come to play in global issues. Ryan explains further.

In the United States, we are used to thinking of diversity in a "liberal" sense, meaning that we think of plurality in primarily political terms – difference reducible to political positions that can be taken in elections and congressional debates (or sometimes court cases). We think of diversity in terms of generally congenial ethnic and gender groupings – and perhaps some religious or other ideological differences. But many European nations confront something different and deeper and more complex: vastly different

cultural traditions, replete with different languages and a wide variety of customs and practices, all nested into a single political system. Some of these traditions do not acknowledge constitutional values; some of them prevent those within them from seeing themselves as, e.g., Hungarian or Italian nationals. The presence of the Roma in many of these nations adds an additional element of complexity: a group of people with divergent customs and habits and values, a group that moves around within and across boundaries, complicating any attempts to define their "citizenship." Fascinating issues of constitutional design are posed as a result, and far more complicated mechanisms must be developed than we have in our system. There are so many ways in which the American situation is simple compared with that in Europe. And the picture is only confused further when you add to the complexity within borders the extra layer of the European Union. As someone who studies constitutions and citizenship, the European picture is endlessly fascinating. (Ryan, 2013)

Most importantly, we are approaching a critical epoch of history in which adjustments today will determine the viability of democratic functioning in the near future. Gary Marx, consultant and President of the Center for Public Outreach, reports that "Demographic realities are stoking that sense of urgency. Consider this. The population of the planet will grow from about 6 billion in 2000 to a projected 9 billion in 2050. That's a 50 percent increase in 50 years. Divisions of the past now seem almost petty compared to the planet-wide need to deal with life or death issues posed by the environment, energy, and the availability of adequate fresh water and nutritious food—all coupled with the moral and ethical imperative of fairness" (Marx, 2013).

Why are minority rights issues a global concern?

In a world of hyper-mobility and growing social and political unrest, it is important to recognize the human need for belonging. The need for association is manifested around the globe as we can see in the expansion of religious groups and affiliations, political activism, segmented professional lives, and enclaves of ethnic communities. The search for like-minded groups who share philosophical beliefs such as gun rights supporters in the United States and minority rights advocates in various European countries has been rewarded with a sense of purpose and, very often, with accommodations by the larger political body. The problem for minority groups lies in the inaccessibility to the system when majorities consistently overrule.

"There have been various initiatives at different international forums in order to clarify the concept of a minority. The importance of a definition, however, lies at a practical and theoretical level: namely in its capacity to delimit the subjects who should benefit from protection and for the fundamental requirement of clarity and foreseeability of law" (Benedikter, 2008, p. 8). Furthermore, the codification of minority rights, in many cases synonymous with human rights, is recognized internationally when it becomes a part of a nation's constitution. "Translation of human rights into constitutional rights occurs when the sovereign power of a country authorizes a right that is conceived of as a human right. The sovereign power may also incorporate or ratify some or all of those rights contained in international enunciations of rights such as the Universal Declaration of Rights. In this fashion human rights are incorporated into a country's constitution" (Center for Civic Education, 2006, p. 29).

Minority rights are inherent in human rights and European history plays a large role in how minority rights are understood and addressed. The larger Economic Union, based on political concerns as supportive to economic aims, has taken the lead on determining the establishment and implementation of basic human rights. Minority group autonomy is one pre-emptive strategy in maintaining peaceful co-existence with respect for collective group identity through language accommodations (e.g., street signs, schools, legal documents), religious

freedom, cultural appreciation, and political self-determination. Protection of these rights are still evolving and how these rights may manifest in the future is yet to be determined. The larger question remains, do the minorities in Europe need greater protections than they now have under European laws and regulations and how are those rights guaranteed within constitutional democracies?⁵ In addition, questions continue to arise on the feasibility of some of the autonomous regions. Is there a risk in according autonomy to minorities without clear delineation of what authorities or levels of government might prevail in the event of conflict? How detailed will that chain of authoritative power need to be? What type of codification would need to be created and documented? What limitations, if any, will be placed on majority rule or minority autonomy?

Dr. Zora Popova of the ECMI has warned that "The ownership of minority rights is essential for a successful attainment of democratic participation" and yet the risk of too much autonomy may perpetuate segregation or isolationism (Popova, 2013). Dr. Marcie Taylor-Thoma, civic education scholar, was not surprised to see that citizenship and dual citizenship remains an issue within the European Union but understands that Americans can learn from their struggles. "More guidance for the newer nation states such as Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia is needed" and, in Germany, there are many concerns with the Turkish minority that has been living in that country for three generations or more without citizenship. In eastern Europe, there is the potential of "trouble ahead for countries who are extending citizenship rights and offering dual citizenship" as conflicts will inevitably arise. Taylor-Thoma also feels that "the Economic Union needs to establish firmer guidelines in dealing with the Roma.... [as] citizenship and resources should not be given without some responsibilities... and minority ethnic groups still should be expected to live within the norms of society including fulfilling their own children's basic rights of education" and well-being (Taylor-Thoma, 2013). All of these examples clearly are lessons for the world as countries watch how conflicts can be addressed with pre-emptive strategies, collaborative problem-solving, and compromise.

Gary Marx sees potential problems with the divisiveness of an "us and them" approach, particularly when "... what we see as today's majorities may one day become less than fifty percent of the population. It's possible that one of the current minority groups could become the majority. In an *us and them world*, would we want *them* to say the same thing, or would we want them to invest in civic education that helps us consider the needs, rights, and responsibilities of everyone? The shoe could very well be on the other foot" (Marx, 2013). We live in a world that does not host static populations, perpetual governments, or infallible governing bodies as history has clearly shown.

It would be remiss to not mention the issues behind the issues that drive the competing interests including the idea of threat that minorities bring to established cultures. The increase in ethnic assertiveness and clashing nationalism is highlighted in the media and technology has broadened the scope of conflict and violence and the role of religion has yet to be settled in many emerging democracies. The social cohesion and sense of community, as the Germans label "gemeinschaft," is in direct conflict with "gesellschaft" or the assertions of individual concerns or associations for individual interests. Closer analysis reveals the practical implications of how toleration differs from respect. Jack Jennings, retired principal education counsel in the US House of Representatives and founder and President/CEO of the Center on Education Policy, reinforced this idea when he observed that "The large influx of immigrants, including many from countries that are not fully or even partly democratic, creates a special urgency for civic education. The terrorist attack at the Boston Marathon by two immigrant youths reminds us of the challenges involved in instilling democratic values and tolerance among immigrants from every part of the globe" (Jennings, 2013). In reality, there is no country that is exempt from the need for increased understanding of what it means to live in the global village of today. John Hale, Associate Director of the Center for Civic Education and Conference Organizer, noted that although the conference topic focused principally on European minorities,

"...it reflected light on minorities in the US as well. Many American minorities are immigrants who moved to the US because of discrimination against them as minorities in their home countries. America is the richer for their immigration" (Hale, 2013).

Dr. Margaret Hill summed up the theme of the international conference as she "...appreciated the discussion of multiple models for dealing with minority populations that was the focus of this conference. It helped to explicate the concept of minority as embedded in historical experience as much as culture both in Europe and America. But it also showed that focusing on past wrongs may deflect attention from creating the multicultural understandings that the current global generation needs to thrive" (Hill M. , 2013). The value lies in transferrable lessons for all countries.

Finally, it would be a mistake if we failed "to appreciate the naturalness of difference. Heterogeneity permeates human society; diversity is not deviant but essential, ever there, a fact of the way we constitute social life, tied deeply into the process of persistent, multidimensional change...Social structures of all kinds create a layer of socially constructed difference created by processes of inclusion and exclusion. What emerges is a complex web of difference and change" (Ryan, 2013). Indeed, we are experiencing a period of excruciating change, difficult adjustment, and necessary accommodations for a diverse, and often divided, populace. This is the enormous backdrop for all the related issues.

What is the role of civic education in a global world?

The implications of global issues for civic education are immense and it is imperative that we get this right. Education for students of the 21st century must include critical thinking skills, participatory skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, and the imagination to embrace a world that functions on the fundamental principles of democracy, respectful of human rights. Beyond the skills of cognition and participation, expansion of awareness of the foundations of democracy and the universal nature of those principles require direct instruction of how the world of today functions. Recognition of the essential democratic values that are universal in nature would be the first element in this type of powerful civic education.

Important principles of democracy for global understanding include examination of the guarantees of secure existence,⁶ self-determination, shared decision-making, dignity of person, and freedom from oppression. Democratic values and principles need to be explicitly taught, discussed, analyzed, applied, and evaluated in a way that engages students in using reasoning skills and knowledge of the world around them.⁷ To these ends, "democratic values promote a peaceable society. Democracy may achieve a harmony among disparate interests and ideas within a society through its accommodation and moderation of conflict and discord. This domestic tranquility is essential for the flourishing of individual and community well-being" (Center for Civic Education, 2006).

Charles N. Quigley, Executive Director of the Center for Civic Education, has identified promising trends in civic education that support a more global approach to the subject and highlight instructional themes for curricula design. Some of the trends Quigley has articulated include:

- Conceptualization of civic education in terms of three interrelated components. Many educators throughout the world focus their programs upon the development of civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic virtues.
- Systematic teaching of fundamental ideas or core concepts. Civic educators are systematically teaching concepts of democratic governance and citizenship such as popular sovereignty, individual rights, the common good, authority, justice, freedom, constitutionalism and rule of law, and representative democracy

- Analysis of case studies...The use of case studies brings the drama and vitality of authentic civic life into the classroom and requires the practical application of fundamental ideas or concepts to make sense of the data of civic reality.
- Development of decision-making skills. Teachers use case studies of political and legal issues to help students develop decision-making skills. Students are taught to identify issues, to examine the alternative choices and the likely consequences of each choice, and to defend one choice as better than the others.
- Comparative and international analysis of government and citizenship. The global resurgence of constitutional democracy has aroused interest in the comparative method of teaching and learning about government and citizenship. Teachers are requiring students to compare institutions of constitutional democracy in their own country with institutions in other democracies of the contemporary world.
- Development of participatory skills and civic virtues through cooperative learning activities. Teachers are emphasizing cooperative learning in small groups, which requires students to work together to achieve a common objective.
- The use of literature to teach civic virtues.
- Active learning of civic knowledge, skills, and virtues. Civic educators are involving students actively in their acquisition of knowledge, skills, and virtues. Examples of active learning include systematic concept learning, analysis of case studies, development of decision-making skills, cooperative learning tasks, and the interactive group discussions that are associated with teaching civic virtues through literary study. Intellectually active learning, in contrast to passive learning, appears to be associated with higher levels of achievement. Furthermore, it enables students to develop skills and processes needed for independent inquiry and civic decision making throughout a lifetime. These are capacities of citizenship needed to make a constitutional democracy work.
- The conjoining of content and process in teaching and learning of civic knowledge, skills, and virtues. In their development of curricula and classroom lessons, teachers are recognizing that civic virtues and skills, intellectual and participatory, are inseparable from a body of civic knowledge or content (Quigley, 2000).

The teaching of human rights goes hand-in-hand with high quality civic education. "The idea of human rights is best taught within a conceptual context that enables the learner to understand how it is connected to other core concepts in the theory and practice of representative democracy, such as democratic elections, constitutional government and the rule of law, citizenship, and civil society" (Patrick, 2006). There is no better strategy to engage the students of civic education than using discussion, debate, higher-order thinking, and active problem-solving strategies. The trends as well as the research support the need for more intentional educational goals in civic education and greater active involvement of the students.

The research-based "proven practices" as reported in the *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* includes the practice of "Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Issues: Schools should incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives" (Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2012). Understanding the

implications of changes in government, the implementation process for inclusion of minority and human rights, and development of policies that pre-emptively defuse potential conflicts are important discussion topics for today's students.

The use of current events such as the European minority rights issue to clarify citizenship issues, the role of government, authority and law, democratic principles, and creative problem-solving is the type of citizenship responsibility that is critically needed for the 21st century. James Hill reports that "Civic education in Europe can help with the transition....by having students experience efficacy in solving real problems and issues, and learning that in a civic state everybody needs to contribute as well as receive... in the United States that is also a huge issue; possibly more so as in the United States the emphasis is on rights of individuals and not needs of communities" (Hill J. , 2013). Civic education is the vehicle and the end goal to re-focus education today and one in which real-life issues are a part of the curriculum.⁸

The United States Department of Education concurs with the need for greater attention to civic education, particularly in the face of evidence of the low standing of United States students on civic education assessments. "Now is a propitious time to advance civic learning and democratic engagement in American education. The moment is ripe for reform because the state of civic knowledge and engagement among Americans is poor, even as the interest in civic learning and engagement among students, teachers, and faculty remains high. The 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Civics found that only 27 percent, 22 percent, and 24 percent of fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth grade students, respectively, performed at proficiency, and a significant civic achievement gap persists between racial and ethnic groups (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

In a landmark study on voting and civic education conducted by Dr. Diana Owen, she reported the following conclusions:

- Civic education matters for voting and participation in election campaigns. The greater the amount and quality of civic education, the more likely people were to turn out to vote and to participate in campaign activity.
- Taking a course in social studies or civics in junior high or high school significantly increases the probability that a citizen will vote and engage in campaign-related activities.
- People whose civic education experience goes beyond a standard course and includes an innovative program, such as *We the People*, Kids Voting, or Close Up, are the most likely to participate in elections.
- Students whose civic education incorporates active and innovative forms of civics instruction that facilitate the development of relevant skills are inclined to participate in politics as adults.
- Classroom civics instruction is more important than extracurricular activities in promoting voting and electoral engagement. (Owen, 2011)

How can we begin the education process? Powerful civic education goals that reach all students at all grade levels must be intentionally taught and strategically designed. The goals need to teach the foundations of democracy including the historical, political, and cultural aspects; engage students in higher-order thinking skills that include logic and reasoning, evaluation of information, multiple perspectives, and creative problem-solving, among others; develop participatory skills that emphasize civil discourse, intellectually-charged debate, respect for diverse peoples, compromise, and consensus-building; and dispositions that encourage active participation in the community, the government, and the global village. High quality civic education should encourage students to engage in the world and support the inevitable systems of change and adjustments in making the world a better place. This is supported by the United

States Department of Education in their recent publication, *Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy*.

In contrast to traditional civic education, civic learning and democratic engagement today are more ambitious and participatory than in the past. Secretary Arne Duncan and retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor have pointed out that if civic education is to become more engaging, it must seek to move beyond your "grandmother's civics" to what has been labeled "action civics" (O'Connor and Duncan 2011). The goals of traditional civic education, such as increasing civic knowledge, voter participation, or volunteerism, remain worth pursuing. However, the new generation of civic learning puts students at the center and includes both learning and practice—not just rote memorization of names, dates, and processes. (U.S. Department of Education, 2012)

Further goals include the following:

- Clear and specific civic education learning goals, standards, assessments, and curricula to develop a program of scaffolded learning from one grade to the next from kindergarten through high school and into higher education.
- Development of empathy and compassion as well as collective problem-solving and identification of common needs.
- Communication of educational models that provide direct instruction in decision-making skills that are steeped in knowledge, questioning strategies, healthy skepticism, and analysis of multiple perspectives.
- Opportunities for students to engage in introspection and visionary solutions to the issues of the world today.
- Allotment of time and resources for students to comprehensively build knowledge and understanding of ethical, political, religion, ethnicity, language, social mores or traditions, culture, and economic differences and commonalities.
- Engagement of students through civil discourse, structured debate, informed discussions, deliberation, collaborative work, consensus-building, and real-life projects for community and social enhancement.
- Requirements for teacher preparation programs that include civic education.
- Establishment of standards of conduct in schools and governing institutions that emphasize civility, fairness, respect, human dignity, diplomacy, and moral fortitude.

The role of civic education in the world today is not only essential but it is the only promising strategy that makes reasonable sense in how to build a world of peaceful co-existence and stability based on decent standards of living, respectful of human rights.

How can the international civic education community promote global understanding and education for democracy?

[We must] make a concerted effort to transform civic learning and democratic engagement in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education. All students—regardless of race or income, religion or political affiliation—must be prepared for informed, engaged participation in civic and democratic life. The challenges to reaching that ambitious goal are many but so are the rewards for our nation. Now is the crucible moment. Now is the time to

advance civic learning and democratic engagement throughout American education (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

The fine balance of government and human rights advocacy that negotiates the tensions between military action and diplomacy, individual rights and collective rights, privacy and the security of a nation, integration and segregation, ethnic autonomy and adaptation, and human rights and blind conformity, is dependent upon how prepared citizens might be in the skills, knowledge, and dispositions of civic understanding. The key to maintaining the balance of a civil society lies in the development and implementation of high-quality civic education across an interdependent world. How can we develop the tools and strategies to support an effective civic education program across grade levels, across schools and districts, and as part of the international agenda to safeguard democracy?

This is the central question for educators at all levels of the educational system to examine in preparing our future citizens, leaders, and members of a free and democratic society. This places civic education at the heart of the school curriculum for all students across the globe. Germany has an outstanding record of supporting civic education programs at all grade levels through the Federal Center for Civic Education. Many countries of the European Union have begun to embrace the need for high quality civic education as constitutional democracies expand their franchise to embrace minorities and human rights issues. Other countries are now beginning to examine their social science curricula to find ways of infusing civic education principles. Emerging democracies around the world are in need of a sound and effective system of educating for citizenship.

Dr. Wolfgang Sander of the University of Giessen (Germany) supports this. "We may suppose that it will be a long way to a real globalization of civic education. But we may well make steps towards a kind of internationalization with a global prospect. One first step toward this might be a stepwise and case-related *extension and linking of already existing networks*... Furthermore, we need sufficiently marked and globally oriented *publication networks* on civic education. This is one of our subject's weak spots in comparison to other disciplines...Finally, on the medium run a *formal framework* of international co-operation in our discipline would be worth striving for" (Sander, 2008).

Dr. Michael Wehner of the University of Freiberg (Germany) outlined many of the challenges facing civic education in Germany that demonstrate the shared issues across nations. Wehner has reported on some important challenges that face civic education implementation:

- A huge number of adolescents but also adults show a considerable, glaring and alarming deficit of political knowledge.
- Confidence-building measures and information about the problem solving capacities of the political system will stay the main tasks of future civic education.
- We should set more realistic goals and nevertheless enlarge our objectives.
- Civic education should start earlier with democratic education in kindergartens and elementary schools.
- Learning about political institutions will remain an indispensable part of civic education.
- We need more empirical research on teaching and learning to find out exactly how political learning works inside the "black box", which ways of learning and teaching are successful, and why.
- In order to attain a more universal concept of civic education, common standards and curricula need to be defined.
- If we want to take civic education seriously, we have to broaden the scope for design and participation.
- Civic education in the 21st century always means media education, too.

- Inamorata: We have to prove civic education's capacity for innovation (Wehner, 2008).

The United States Department of Education has published recommendations for the development of high quality civic education:

1. Convene and catalyze schools and postsecondary institutions to increase and enhance high-quality civic learning and engagement.
2. Identify additional civic indicators.
Identify promising practices in civic learning and democratic engagement - and encourage further research to learn what works.
4. Leverage federal investments and public-private partnerships.
5. Encourage community-based work-study placements.
6. Encourage public service careers among college students and graduates.
7. Support civic learning for a well-rounded K–12 curriculum.
8. Engage Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Minority-Serving Institutions—including Hispanic Serving Institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities—in a national dialogue to identify best practices.
9. Highlight and promote student and family participation in education programs and policies at the federal and local levels. (U.S. Department of Education, 2012)

Recommendations from the publication, *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* from the National Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools include suggestions for the federal government of the United States in promoting high quality civic education. Highlighted among their many recommendations are the following:

- Ensure that the civic mission of our nation's schools is enhanced and strengthened by any education reform efforts (including the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) promulgated at the federal level.
- Support the development of common state standards in civic learning (civics, history, geography, and economics). Support the states in the development of common assessments tied to the standards. Encourage assessments that go beyond measurement of student attainment of factual knowledge (group projects or portfolio assessments that can assess students' civic skills attainment). Common state standards and assessments should be developed by the states, for the states, with a portion reserved for state specific content.
- Add promoting civic literacy to the U.S. Department of Education's mission statement and act upon it.
- Hold a national summit on the civic mission of our nation's schools to bring needed attention to civic learning and to allow the sharing of successful, research-backed programs and teaching strategies and policies. (Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2012)

Gary Marx understands the global nature of civic education when he explains, "The mechanics of engagement are important. However, civic educators know that the spirit of that engagement also counts. Truly eloquent speakers [have]... called for power sharing, intercultural dialog, human and minority rights, just laws, legitimate authority, and ethical behavior--all among the many foundation stones of civic education. Their messages need to be heard and heeded by everyone, worldwide" (Marx, 2013).

Global issues notwithstanding, the recognition of threats to a stable democratic society and peaceful co-existence are shared across the international community. The principles of self-government are an acquired set of skills and knowledge that gains credibility and effectiveness when constitutional democracies are able to collaborate and jointly problem-solve. The issues of the world may be examined in case studies such as minority rights, autonomous regions, gun rights, immigration issues, political violence, or free elections but the final lessons of all struggles will be the lesson on how to live together in a civil society. In order to preserve democracy and teach self-governance, we must intentionally bring the issues to the table for educators and policy-makers to use in making sure that our students are the recipients of high quality education that teaches skills, knowledge, and the dispositions of a conscientious and socially aware people. In this way, we might create a world in which all people will share with respect and with human dignity.

Conclusion

Civic education today is more important than ever. The issues that face nations today have enormous global effects and recognition of the need to develop teaching methods and educational strategies that effectively address these challenges has been growing steadily. The fundamentals of civic education that include knowledge, higher-order thinking skills, participatory skills, and dispositions remain the same but the inquiry model that emphasizes questioning strategies, research, deliberation, creative thinking, healthy skepticism, multiple perspectives, and activism is gaining national attention in many countries. The inquiry model that poses reflective questions and encourages creative thinking helps to frame fundamental questions for immediate and long-term solutions and provide transferrable lessons for an increasingly interdependent world. In this way, the challenges facing the world can become shared victories.

John Hale concluded the international conference proceedings with the question, "Where are the resources on which countries can rely to promote a competent, engaged citizenry where people of all backgrounds can live?" He references Henry Adams who has said that a teacher affects eternity and he never knows where his influence stops. John Hale states that "It is optimistic and idealistic to think that more effective education for democracy will increase important political attitudes like political tolerance. But what is the alternative? If we don't try to reach young people on matters of principles and values to try to make the civic culture a more peaceful place, we have not performed our mission as educators" (Hale, 2013). What begins with individual teachers can and must become a collective voice of all educators, policy-makers, and citizens to show how civic education can ensure viable socio-political systems of self-government for the future.

The real-life issues of today are global in nature and must be addressed as such. As many civic educators around the world are reaching out to the international community to find common and shared strategies and curricula, this is an opportune time to develop greater networks of scholars, teachers, policy-makers, administrators, and educational leaders in finding and implementing effective democracy education in all spheres of communities. We cannot afford the luxury of isolationism in the world today and global solutions require global thinking. We are all a part of the solution.

End Notes

¹ Minority rights in Europe are under protection of the European Union through the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance as well as the Human Rights Committee through the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Peace and

Security in Europe, and the European Court of Human Rights. Several documents originating from the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities can be found at http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/default_en.asp

² Devolution is a movement that is sanctioned by the European Union as a means of transferring power or authority to regional governing bodies with varying degrees of autonomy from the host nation. Many regions in various countries are experimenting with this process including Wales, Scotland, South Tyrol, Kosovo, and the Basque county, among others.

³ Mosaic, p. 5

⁴ Related documents available on-line include: The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: The Human Rights Committee (Article 27); The Framework Convention: Advisory Committee and Committee of Ministers; The High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Peace and Security in Europe; The European Court of Human Rights; and the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance.

⁵ This was a primary focus question for the Conference, particularly among the European participants, and continues to be an unsettled issue between minority groups and established governing bodies within the European Union (Jennings, 2013). Because so many of the issues associated with minority rights are country-specific, both inside and outside of Europe, the value in developing deeper understandings of the cross-cultural issues (e.g., human rights, self-determination, and philosophical foundations of democracy) are seen as key to finding common solutions for problems such as political violence, ethnic clashes, global resource consumption, corruption, oppressive regimes, etc.

⁶ This includes not only the documents that outline the freedoms and responsibilities of both individual and collective rights but also the delivery systems (i.e. judicial, legislative, and executive functions) of a fair and effective constitutional democracy.

⁷ Examples of democratic values include the expectation to be treated fairly, to have a voice in decisions of governance, to work with others to achieve common purposes, freedom of expression, respectful treatment, political equality, and freedom from fear. Democratic principles might include freedom of speech, distributive justice, due process, free and open elections, the freedom to assemble, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and viable channels of input to governing bodies. International agreements on war crimes, suppression of slavery, genocide, human rights, rights of women, and rights of the child set the standards for democracy in the world today (Center for Civic Education, 2006).

⁸ Examples of focus questions for students might include: What does it mean to be both a minority and a part of the whole? How can we ensure equal representation to all persons and all groups? What inherent rights must be protected? How can these rights be guaranteed? How can we use a collective approach to resolve minority-majority relations?

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