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Civic Thinking and Public Policy Analysis: A Comparative Approach to Political Decision-Making

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Abstract:

In an effort to increase students' preparation for and participation in civic life, teachers and schools across the United States have incorporated action civics programs into their social studies courses. These programs resemble many of the key characteristics of the public policy analysis process. However, there is little evidence suggesting that civic leaders use this process when engaging a civic issue. This study explores the processes that civic leaders in one community use when thinking aloud about two hypothetical civic action scenarios, comparing their processes with the public policy analysis process. Qualitative analysis demonstrates that civic leaders engage in the public policy analysis process but also include the crucial initial step of seeking *community deliberation*. This initial step makes the whole process community-based, especially in the research, planning, and action phases. These findings indicate that action civics programs should consider incorporating more community awareness and involvement into the early parts of their curricula, enabling youth to work with community members rather than isolating action civics work to K-12 classrooms.

Key words: action civics, civics education, community deliberation, public policy analysis, social studies

Introduction

Although *citizenship education* is a contested term with regards to pedagogic aims and implementation, there "is widespread agreement that the proper aim of the social studies is 'citizenship'" (Thornton, 2004, p. 223), building students' capacities to make informed decisions in a pluralist society (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994). Unfortunately, there is little

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evidence that students are given equal opportunities to develop their civic capacities, even if teachers value this purpose (Levinson, 2012; Pearson & Waterson, 2013).

Indeed, while "the goal of citizenship is widely shared… teachers' understanding of its meaning is sometimes simple and unelaborated" (Levstik & Barton, 2001, p. 40), providing few opportunities for teachers to engage students in "doing civics," especially in low-SES, high-minority student contexts. To compound the issue, many of the participatory civic practices are conducted within the classroom, not in authentic community-based settings (Maker et al., 2015). Mainstream social studies education does not often focus on "doing civics" (Campbell et al., 2012).

Recently, action civics programs have begun partnering with schools across the United States to engage K-12 students in the process of civic engagement. Using a variety of models, these programs routinely employ the public policy analysis model of civic action, whereby students engage in research, planning, and action steps. There is little empirical evidence that this model is authentically used by community civic leaders, the population that such action civics programs attempt to emulate. From a study of civic leaders' civic problem-solving abilities, this study explores the ways that community civic leaders' engagement activities mirror the public policy analysis model of engagement.

Literature Review

In reaction to traditional, content-heavy civics instruction, education-focused not-for-profit organizations have been developing civic education programs to promote *action civics*, where students take collective civic action to address personally relevant civic issues within a context that promotes reflection and skills development (Bass, 2012; Pope et al., 2011). Initially, such programs were paired with more traditional civics knowledge. For example, the action civics program Project Citizen, a program that mentors secondary and post-secondary students to engage in local and state government (Center for Civic Education, 2011), was often paired with the *We the People* curriculum so that students could develop their understanding of Constitutional principles in class while they practiced engaging in public policy (Center for Civic Education, 2014), following Larry Gerston's (2002) model (Haas, 2001). The result of these pairings was action civics work that enabled students to focus on school-based issues connected to state and local policies. Such curricular models develop students' participatory citizenship capacities (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). However, they may inhibit the development of social justice-oriented paradigms because they reify the "hidden curriculum" (Apple, 2000), which

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imbue "codes of power" (Delpit, 1995) that limit the transformative effects of civic engagement (Marri, 2008).

More recently, action civics programs such as Generation Citizen and Mikva Challenge have been developed without a specific "knowledge base" component without necessarily engaging governmental structures or in-school issues. Generation Citizen offers students the opportunity to learn and practice civic skills by taking collective action as a class on a local issue chosen by students; this community engagement is modeled by "democracy coaches," trained college facilitators from local colleges and universities (Generation Citizen, 2011). Similarly, Mikva Challenge engages students in a community engagement and civic change-making curriculum; they rely more heavily than Generation Citizen on teacher-led instructional support (National Action Civics Collaborative, 2012). To be sure, these action civics programs explore fundamental civics concepts with students (e.g., the workings of the federalist system); however, such concepts are at the service of civic action rather than the primary focus of instruction. Unlike the Project Citizen curriculum, Generation Citizen and Mikva Challenge focus more on engaging students in civic action within the community than on producing a whole-scale social studies curriculum with an action civics component.

These three example programs illustrate a range of approaches to teaching action civics. Project Citizen is a bit more prescriptive than the others, offering a supplemental social studies curriculum. Mikva Challenge uses practicing social studies teachers to teach action civics, enabling the teachers to weave the experience together with their traditional curriculum. Generation Citizen uses outside democracy coaches, engaging students in the least prescriptive practice as it pertains to curriculum integration.

While these programs differ in their approaches, they share a model for "doing civics." As Table 1 illustrates, each of these action civics programs are comprised of six steps, culled from their online program descriptions: (1) community analysis, (2) issue selection, (3) issue research, (4) planning for action, (5) taking action, and (6) reflection. In these cases, the "knowledge base" is contextually bound to the issue selected by the class, providing a more authentic role for research, action, and civics education.

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Table 1: Summary of Sample Civic Action Model Components (Fitzgerald, 2017)

Action Civics Program Heuristics	Project Citizen (taught by teacher using provided materials)	Mikva Challenge (taught by teacher after training in action civics)	Generation Citizen (taught by democracy coaches in coordination with teacher)
Community Analysis		Profile community Community mapping	Community analysis
Issue Selection	Select issue	Select an issue	Select focus issue
Research	Gather data Examine solutions	Consult experts ID root causes Traditional research Survey research	Analyze evidence ID root causes
Planning	Develop a public policy Develop action plan	ID decision makers/forces Create plan Think about media Get money	ID decision makers/forces Analyze best tactics Create plan
Take Action	Implement plan Assess action	Implement plan Evaluate results	Lobby Mobilize influencers
Reflection	Present work Reflect on next steps	Reflect Showcase work	Present work Reflect on next steps

Although Table 1 illustrates some differences in language and practices, all three action civics programs teach students to engage in civic action in the same way. For example, all three programs guide students through a research component before they begin planning a civic action. Project Citizen encourages students to "gather data" and "examine possible solutions" to their selected issue. Generation Citizen, on the other hand, encourages students to "analyze evidence" and "identify root causes" of the selected issue. It can be assumed that Project Citizen expects students to analyze the data they collect, since they will be examining possible solutions. Similarly, Generation Citizen students most likely gather data prior to examining it.

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To be sure, such differences may have varying impacts on students' action civics experiences depending on the instructor guiding the group. While students in these programs learn how to do some research, the emphasis on the type of data collected, the depth of analysis, and/or the purpose of the research (e.g., "solution to a problem" versus "identifying root causes" that would impact the way that plans and goals are formed) might vary greatly. Mikva Challenge seems to be the most prescriptive in its implementation of the model, indicating the types of research that will be conducted and the purpose of the research. However, such prescription could come at a cost, limiting the types of action civics work students might try. At times, each program's curricular outline illustrates the balance between direct and indirect guidance as well as the particular goals and orientations of the program. Despite these differences, each program's curriculum follows a familiar six-step approach to action civics.

Importantly, the six-step approach employed by these programs is also the model by which public policy analysts make decisions, a model used in political science. Professional public policy analysts (1) identify the problem, (2) map stakeholders, (3) formulate policy goals and weigh options, (4) develop policy options, (5) evaluate tradeoffs assumed, (6) select a policy option, and (7) implement their analysis (Parker & Zumeta, 1999). Mapping the public policy analysis model to the action civics model is illustrated in Table 2.

The clear relationship between public policy analysis and action civics illustrates how action civics is modeled on the political science practice, where action is implemented through policies as part of the political (in the case of the United States, federalist) system. In this model, a group forms around a single issue, plans to resolve or act on it in some manner, and assesses the outcomes of those actions. Often, these activities are focused on engaging existing power structures, as noted in the Generation Citizen model.

This model is powerful; both public policy analysts and action civic instructors use it to guide decision-making. Indeed, even when action civics is applied to literacy instruction, the process remains the same (c.f., Epstein, 2014). However, there has been little discussion about whether or not this model approximates the approach that community civic leaders take to address civic issues. Since any model makes assumptions about the problem space (Voss & Post, 1988), it is important that the civic problem solving approach that students use in school approximates the best approaches taken by community civic leaders, an approach upon which they can draw in various real-world contexts.

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Table 2: Mapping Public Policy Analysis Process to Action Civics Model

Action Civics Program Heuristics	Public Policy Analysis Process
Community Analysis	Map stakeholders[1]
Choosing an Issue	ID problem
Research	Formulate policy goals and weigh options
Planning	Develop policy options Evaluate tradeoffs assumed Select policy option
Take Action	Implement analysis
Reflection	

Using qualitative think-aloud and oral explanation data, this study explores the decision-making processes of community civic leaders as they think aloud about two hypothetical civic engagement scenarios. By identifying their decision-making processes, a model of civic engagement is formed to compare with the public policy analysis model used commonly in action civics instruction. This comparison enables a discussion of the authenticity of action civics curriculum assumptions about the process of community-based civic action.

Between Political Experts and Civic Experts

Politically-oriented occupations (e.g., public policy analysts and politicians) make a general distinction between what those on the political Left think is emblematic of a "good" citizen and what those on the political Right think of the same. The former argue for changes to the political, economic, and social systems, creating a more equitable society that rejects defining "citizen" by legal status (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1992). The latter emphasize the importance of good character in good citizenship, implying affirmative legal status (Bennett, 1998); if everyone acts rightly, society will function well. An implication of this latter view is that "the system" is fine and does not need

[1] In public policy analysis, the problem is identified first and then stakeholders are identified. For ease of comparison, I moved "Map stakeholder" to pair with "Community Analysis."

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fixing. Public policy analysts and politicians analyze these polarities, ideally crafting policy that works toward the good of the most people.

Most people, however, are citizens who are concerned in a wide array of personal, professional, and community interests that impact their own lives and families; they may not often think of these interests in politically partisan ways. Rather than explicitly promoting partisan politics, schools are charged with preparing individuals to successfully live democratic lives within their communities not specifically from politically oriented work (Dewey, 1916; Parker, 2002, 2003). As part of an exploration into how schools and teachers aim to meet this civic mission, Hochschild and Scovronick (2002) identified five collective outcomes toward which teachers aim:

- providing a common core of knowledge, enabling students to understand the basic rules of politics;
- adhering to a common set of values, teaching students the value of accepting the proper functioning of our pluralistic democracy;
- fostering students' abilities to deal with, if not warm to, diverse others, fostering students' appreciation of others' races, cultures, and backgrounds;
- teaching democratic practices, illustrating for students how to use appropriate procedural and interpersonal acts to address common issues; and
- providing equal opportunity for all students, enabling students to strive towards the American Dream (pp. 7-8).

Many of these outcomes satisfy the Right's concept of *citizen* and satisfy the Left's concept of collective action. Unfortunately, many of these outcomes are difficult to quantify, making them difficult to use in an evaluation of "civic expert."

While these outcomes illustrate the common ground that educators have found between and among competing civil and political interests, there are still important variations in the instruction outcomes that come from day-to-day instruction. Through a two-year study of educational programs, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) found that educators apply the above principles in ways that develop three kinds of citizens. *Personally responsible citizens* act responsibly within their communities, obeying laws and volunteering their time to help in crises. *Participatory citizens*, rather, are active members in community organizations, organizing community efforts and interacting with governmental agencies to support their local interests. Finally, *justice-oriented citizens* focus their attention on changing the systemic issues in society-at-large, fighting injustice

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throughout their spheres of influence. These three types of citizens provide a foundation for what one might look for in a "civic expert" because they enable a classification of citizens by their goals, experience, and spheres of influence. Here, *political ideology* is less of a factor than *form of engagement*.

In order to identify the type of expert citizen that would fulfill the needs and recognize the limitations of the school structure as well as enable teachers to support students "doing civics," identifying participatory citizens is a reasonable goal. This is a goal affirmed by Hochschild and Scovronick's (2002) outcomes. Indeed, in their longitudinal, national study of intergenerational citizen engagement, Zukin and colleagues (2006) mirror this conclusion as well, providing a measure by which to identify "civically engaged" individuals, "politically engaged" individuals, and those who do both, "dual activists[2]" (pp. 63-64).

The foundation for Zukin et al.'s (2006) measure is what they call the "civic-political divide" (p. 5), the fault line between a citizen's activities involving government actions (political) and those involving "organized voluntary activities focused on problem solving and helping others" (p. 7). They argue that an individual can engage in one type of citizen participation and not the other or engage in both. Used to analyze national survey data, they argue that people can be considered "civically engaged" if they take part in at least two of a predetermined set of four civic activities, including regularly volunteering and actively participating in a group or association. Similarly, individuals are considered "politically engaged" if they take part in at least two of a pre-determined set of five political activities, such as volunteering for a political organization and trying to persuade someone to vote. Using their metric, 78 percent of the adult population in the United States is engaged in one or both of these dimensions. Participation is the driving measure of civic engagement.

This measure is useful for an exploration into the ways in which "civic experts" problem solve civic issues because it is practical and it recognizes the division between political and civic activities. It is practical in as much as it enables researchers to label individuals as "civically engaged," "politically engaged," "dual activist," or "neither." While there may be instances in

[2] Although "dual activist" is the term that Zukin et al. (2006) use, it does not seem that they intend for "activist" to be used in the polarized political sense. Rather, they seem to intend it to be related to "those engaged in activities." Thus, "dual activist" should be thought to stand as a more neutral term than it might be used colloquially, aligned with Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) "participatory citizen."

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which someone's civic or political work goes unrepresented per this measure, the clarity in the decision points enables researchers to discuss differences on common terms.

Furthermore, this measure's ability to differentiate between civic and political activities enables researchers to identify individuals who are at least somewhat balanced in their civic and political activities. Those with a balance of civic and political activities might be called "civic experts."

To be sure, this is a purely instrumental designation; those who are both politically and civically engaged per this measure are most likely to also be strong examples of the types of citizens that teachers want to develop, per Hochschild and Scovronick's (2002) work. For example, those who work in both the political sphere as well as within their communities to problem solve probably know how to work with diverse others, know the basic rules, procedures, and structures of law and governance, and also foster the values of pluralistic democracy. While it is certainly possible (and hopefully expected) that individuals who are "simply" civically engaged, politically engaged, or not engaged at all share some or all of these characteristics, it is most likely that "civic experts" demonstrate them more often. Thus, to explore the ways in which civic experts problem solve civic issues, it is useful to study the processes by which civic experts navigate civic issues. The extent to which the processes used by civic experts mirror the political policy analysis process illustrates the authenticity of the latter process for developing effective community-based citizens.

Method

Participants

Five civic experts (three men and two women) from a New York City neighborhood agreed to participate in this study. Each participant's engagement in *political activities* such as voting, volunteering for political organizations, persuading others to vote, etc., as well as engagement in *civic activities* such as regularly volunteering, working with others to solve community issues, raising money for non-profit organizations, etc., were confirmed by the participants before selection for the study was finalized. Ranging from 10 to 32 years of service, these individuals have strong connections and commitment to the community; they have honed their skills as "civic experts." (See Table 3 for participant details.)

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Table 3: Participant Backgrounds

Participant	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Field of work	# of years in service to community	Political Engagement Criteria[3]	Civic Engagement Criteria[4]
1	Female	White	Healthcare	32	1, 4	b, d
2	Male	White	Healthcare	28	1, 3	b, d
3	Female	White	Education	10	1, 3	b, d
4	Male	Hispanic	Education	11	1, 3	b, d
5	Male	White	Education	16	1, 2	b, d

Participant Profiles

Two of the five participants worked in the healthcare industry. P1 is the medical director of a community clinic that helps underserved populations access primary medical care. P2 is the CEO of an eldercare organization, helping older individuals access community resources and meet nutritional and psychosocial needs.

Participants 3-5 work across various educational settings. P3 directs after-school programming in coordination with the public schools; she provides extra-curricular and tutoring support for K-12 youth. P4 directs a community educational center for marginalized populations, serving both youth and adults with educational programming across multiple languages. P5 is a K-12 public school administrator who works closely with community organizations to support low-socioeconomic status youths and their families.

[3] The following codes represent the types of political activities each participant indicated he/she engaged in at the time of the study. Each was asked to select two items from the list: (1) "always" voting, (2) volunteering for a political organization or a candidate, (3) trying to persuade someone to vote, (4) displaying a button, bumper sticker, or sign on behalf of a candidate, (5) contributing money to a party or candidate in the past 12 months (Zukin et al., 2006, p. 64).

[4] The following codes represent the types of civic activities each participant indicated he/she engaged in at the time of the study. Each was asked to select two items from the list: (a) regularly volunteering for an organization other than a candidate or political party, (b) working with others to solve a community problem in the past year, (c) raising money for charity, through a run/walk or any other means in the past year, (d) actively participating in a group or association (Zukin et al., 2006, p. 63).

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Materials

Two scenarios and associated newspaper articles were assembled for this study, based on Fitzgerald's (2016) study of civic thinking heuristics. (See Appendix A for scenario prompts.) The first scenario asked participants to imagine that a hydraulic fracturing company was interested in creating jobs in town by extracting gas, using the controversial "fracking" technique. To help participants who may not be familiar with the various arguments around this issue, three articles were selected from the internet. The first article provided a brief overview of the issue, the second was in favor of fracking, and the third presented arguments against the practice.

The second scenario was related to a history curriculum revision. Participants were asked to imagine that the local school board had decided that Judeo-Christian values be more explicitly stated in the history of the founding of the United States. Again, three articles were given to participants. The first article outlined the debate, the second article supported the revisions, and the third article claimed that the revisions were not in keeping with historical analysis.

These two scenarios were selected for both the recurrent themes of industry versus health safety (hydraulic fracturing scenario) and historicism versus nationalism (history curriculum scenario) throughout United States history. In addition, these scenarios aligned with the participants content expertise—health and education—enabling cross-comparisons between participant groupings. In this way, the data can illustrate the ways in which civic experts problem solve within their field and outside of their field, providing both a specific and a general civic engagement think-aloud for each participant.

Procedure

Participants were told that they would think aloud about two scenarios related to civic issues. They then practiced thinking aloud by engaging in a three-digit multiplication exercise, per Ericsson and Simon (1993, pp. 376-377). Then, each participant was given the hydraulic fracturing scenario and associated articles. Participants were asked to read the scenario aloud, thinking aloud about their reactions to the scenario; they were also asked to read the associated internet articles, thinking about that information. Following the Think Aloud protocol, participants were asked to provide an oral explanation as to what position they would take on this issue and how they would take action on the issue. After the hydraulic fracturing scenario, the Think Aloud and explanation protocol was used for the history curriculum revision scenario and associated readings.

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Data Analysis

Audio-recordings were transcribed and text was parsed by proposition. Macro-level themes were identified within each text by two researchers, using the public policy analysis process steps as a priori themes. Themes were labeled in chronological order within the transcript. For example, if a participant discussed "Issue Identification" at the beginning of the transcript, that theme was labeled with a number one. The identified themes were compared to the action civics/public policy analysis process described above. Finally, the researcher explored any qualitative dispositions that guided the participants' problem-solving strategies.

Findings

In addition to the public policy analysis process themes, a common theme found across the transcripts was "Community Analysis/Deliberation." As Table 4 illustrates, four of the five participants discussed this emergent theme. Of the a priori themes, only "Reflection" was not discussed. This finding was expected; since the participants were not asked to actually act on their plans, no reflection was necessary.

Table 4: Order of Themes per Participant Discussion

Components	P1		P2		P3		P4		P5	
	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H
Community Analysis/ Deliberation	2	7	2, 6	1, 2			2	3		1
Issue ID	1	1	1					1		
Research	3, 6	6			1		1, 3	2		
Planning	4, 5		3	3			4			2
Action	7	2, 3, 4, 5	4, 5		2	1	5		1, 2	3, 4, 5
Reflection										

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Table 4 illustrates which themes were discussed per participant (e.g., P1 refers to Participant 1), per scenario ("F" refers to the "Fracking" scenario and "H" refers to the "History" scenario), and in reference to the order in which the theme appeared in that discussion (numbers are in ascending order). Although there is no immediately clear order by which participants engaged in these steps, there are some trends that suggest civic experts may approach civic issues in similar ways.

Inside Each Theme

Within each of these themes, participants' reasoning illustrates the ways in which they think about each step. As Table 4 illustrates, some participants returned to various steps throughout a given scenario, demonstrating the linkages between these steps and the ways in which they can be used and reused in the process. Below, participants' discussions are analyzed within each theme.

Issue Identification

Even though the issues were identified for the participants, some of them thought aloud about the root causes for each issue before they began thinking aloud about their plans. Forty percent of participants' scenario responses began with identifying the issues within each scenario. For example, P2 discussed the issue of hydraulic fracturing as one between "domestic energy" and "healthcare concerns." He struggled to weigh the initial options of a personal position on fracking, arguing, "So, there's an environmental concern… a health concern… but there is, um, also the potential for economic development. I mean, um, I suppose being the naïve, trusting person that I am, I would probably, uh, I would probably say I would believe in the safety of it." To P2, the fracking scenario was not just about the practice but about its potential impact on the community. It was this decision that drove his next step; as described in "Community Deliberation," P2 next offered information about his membership in the Chamber of Commerce, suggesting that his view on the economic development potential guided at least his next process.

Interestingly, these same two sides of this issue were the catalyst for P1 to return to the economic development argument, even though she said that she would be against allowing fracking in the fictitious town. In her sixth move, P1 said that any opposition to the fracking plans needed to include a plan to increase economic development in the town; increasing economic development by alternate means would enable people to more easily vote "no" to the fracking plans because jobs were the biggest draw to the proposal. P1 argued, "You can't just be against something. You need to also research alternative options for economic development and energy, like yogurt

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production… or green energy." After she had determined her course of action and before "taking action," P1 returned to what she had identified as the root causes to strengthen her position by countering others' claims for economic development.

Similarly, some participants suggested that the history curriculum revision scenario was about "truth in history" (P1) and religion (P4). P1, for instance, began by inferring that the core issue behind the curriculum was that history was used in politically partisan ways; "But, the fact is, if you don't teach the truth, and the truth is what transpired, and it's not Left or Right or Center, it's what happened, and you shouldn't be selectively choosing what goes into a history curriculum based on your political beliefs." Here, the participant recognizes the problem not as a matter of opinion for one side of the issue or the other; the issue is about not using "what transpired" for selective political gain. P4 went even further in this line of reasoning, saying that this is an issue of religion that will mean he has "gotta deal with, you know, I'm going to call them the Christian Right." In both cases, P1 and P4 indicated that their roles as civic actors were, in part, to influence people's beliefs, either ideological or religious.

Much like P1 and P2 in the Fracking Scenario, these two participants in the History Curriculum scenario did not take the issue at face value, thinking that the issue is a simple matter of opinion; their identification of the issue was focused on finding the "core issue," as Generation Citizen and Mikva Challenge call it. Indeed, in their action plans, both of these participants were the strongest advocates for researching objective ways in which the curriculum could be more historically accurate, as described below in "Research," relating the type categories.

Community Deliberation

While *Issue Identification* was the most common first step for participants in their civic action plan processing, some participants also started with the networks to which they belonged. Twenty percent of the participant responses began with *Community Deliberations*, not *Issue Identification*; another 40 percent of participants discussed their networks as a second step. Interestingly, *Community Deliberations* was a heuristic that is not explicitly mentioned in the public policy analysis model of civic thinking; it was one that was drawn from the interviews.

Indeed, the language that participants used when explaining *Community Deliberation* illustrated that such work was part of a process that they follow often. After talking about the root issues around fracking, P1 explicitly stated, "The first step is to call all the representatives of larger constituencies, like elected officials. Get their positions… the president of the Rotary, Linda, the green gardening groups—you want diversity." Importantly, P1's comment about her "first step"

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illustrates that this heuristic is linked directly to this process of tackling civic issues. In addition, her ability to name at least one person that she would contact indicates that she already has these contacts; the way that she would attempt to address this issue would not be by forging new relationships. Rather, she draws on existing relationships that enable her to get a diversity of opinions, resources, and ideas.

Themes from P1's response are echoed in other participants' responses. Four of the five participants openly offered the names of those with whom they would directly speak, calling them by first name (P2 would call Carol from his Inter-Agency Council, and P4 would call Terry from a local not-for-profit with whom he has a close, personal relationship). Interestingly, P5 said that he would call the same Terry, indicating that there is a network of civic leaders in and around the community to which the participants have access.

Participants' abilities to name specific people they would contact was related to the scenarios they had the most ability to influence. P1 and P2 both work in healthcare and they were also the only two that provided specific names in response to the fracking scenario. P4 and P5 both named Terry as they responded to the history curriculum scenario, and they were two of the three participants who work in education. Participants who work in healthcare did not name individuals with whom they would speak regarding the history curriculum scenario; the participants who work in education did not name people with whom to speak regarding the fracking scenario.

Participants' abilities to name specific individuals indicates that they have already formed relationship with those people. P2, P4, and P5's responses provide a clue as to how those relationships are formed. All three of these participants spoke about organizations of which they are members at the same time that they named specific people. P2, for example, stated, "I am a member of the Chamber of Commerce. Issues come up and, actually… the Chamber had a thing last year like this." It is evident here that P2 not only is a member of this community organization but understands the issue of environmental effects on health through this lens. Both P4 and P5 shared similar comments, expressing that they would discuss these issues with groups to which they already belonged. Interestingly, no participant explained that they would discuss these issues within their own organization.

Research

As expected from the public policy analysis model of civic thinking, *Research* was a heuristic that many participants accessed. Two of the participants in particular (P1 and P4) discussed research at length. Specifically, they both focused on research via experts. With regards to the fracking

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scenario, P1 suggested that she would need to "collect info on the impact of fracking. You want to know the impact on the environment, the water, the soil, on health in general," suggesting that these measures of impact would come from scientific sources. Similarly, P4 said that he would ask experts at the local colleges and universities for support. Interestingly, none of the participants suggested that they would do library research on their own. Each one was more interested in talking to experts and others who may have expertise.

It is also important to note that two of the five participants did not address research at all in their think-alouds. Instead, these participants transitioned from discussions about deliberating with other community leaders to planning their eventual action. For example, P2 transitioned from his thoughts on reaching out to the Chamber of Commerce to how that organization might help to rally local support in favor of fracking. P5, on the other hand, suggested that grassroots organizing was the most effective way to act against fracking, melding *Community Deliberation* and *Planning*: "Action should take place on the grassroots and political levels. Start with the civic… I would just do a lot of education… I think that one of the biggest issues is that a lot of people do make uninformed decisions." In order to accomplish the grassroots education campaign that he would plan, P5 suggested that he might already have networking connections with those who could support this plan, although he did not explicitly state those connections.

Planning

All five instances of planning involved the concept of *education*. P1, P2, and P5 all explained that they would focus first on educating the public about the issues at hand. Interestingly, these comments were equally divided between the fracking and the history curriculum scenarios. P1 summarized the participants' comments when she said, "Whatever the plan, you need to make the information accessible to regular Joes and make sure it is connected to local and national groups." Indeed, when both P2 and P4 were talking aloud about the history curriculum review, they specifically mentioned the need to link the issue to interfaith groups at both local and national levels, engaging in a nationwide dialogue about the role of faith in history education.

Two of the participants, P2 and P4, made specific mention of educating politicians as well. Interestingly, P2 suggested that the Chamber of Commerce educate politicians about the issue, saying, "I suppose if the topic came up and I had the opportunity to express my opinion of it, given what I said I would be in support of this… maybe encourage other people to feel more comfortable… talk to our legislators to make sure they put together comprehensive or accurate ways to monitor its safety." Similarly, P4 suggested that he use community influence to educate

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politicians about the negative impacts of fracking on the community. In both cases, lobbying (although not called that by any of the participants) and educating occupy a place in the planning phases of civic action. To be sure, both participants had specific actions that they would take separately from this education, and both participants spoke of this step as a way to better understand the minds of the politicians. As P4 said, "the politicians have to take a stand one way or the other, so I… I think you educate first and then after that you determine, you know, the course of action." Neither participant seemed to suggest a "hard sell," using the financial and political resources of their supporters. Still, this merging of what might be considered "lobbying" and the participants' use of the term "educating" is an interesting dimension to this heuristic.

Action

Given that the participants were selected for this study because they are dual activists (Zukin et al., 2006), it is no surprise that the participants were split in the ways they would act with regards to the scenarios. P1, P2, and P5 both explicitly stated that they would take both a political and grassroots approach. P3 only suggested using a grassroots approach.

P1 and P5 both stated that grassroots and political approaches to the scenarios, specifically the fracking issue, were important. Both participants suggested that the grassroots approach, done correctly, would drive the political approach. For example, P1 stated, "Action should take place on the grassroots and political levels. Start with the civic organizations and community-based… get your message together. Then, you can call, write, meet with politicians." Similarly, P5 said, "Start with the civic…," suggesting, like P1, that the leverage gained through grassroots organizing could be used in the political aspect of the plan.

P2 suggested that he would use the power of his connections with other civic organizations to leverage political support. After stating that there are two ways to address the issue, he acknowledged that "you have to get legislators to do something to control [the fracking enterprise] and put those controls in place." He went on to suggest that he would use the grassroots arm of his plan to populate local forums held by politicians, "which are very poorly attended." In this way, he would use the political structures in place to impact politicians' views on the issues. P2 was the only participant to explain his plan to impact the political process.

Discussion

This study's findings suggest that civic leaders engage in something that looks like the public policy analysis process model, a common model used in action civics curricula. Participants

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routinely (1) defined the civic issue, (2) researched the issue, (3) planned for action, and (4) could verbalize the ways in which they would act. Interestingly, many of the civic leader participants focused these activities through *Community Deliberation* via networked relationships that they had already established outside of their own organizations. The participants engaged the public policy analysis model as a communal act, not as an individual act or one that only occurred within a specific organization.

To be sure, the limitations of this study prohibit any generalizations from these findings to the broader roles and processes of civic leaders/dual activists (Zukin et al., 2006). This study was conducted with only five participants, all located in one community. It is possible that these findings reflect a particular civic culture in the community rather than what "the average" dual activist might do. Still, this study does illustrate the potential for dual activists to engage a community emphasis within the public policy analysis model. As such, these findings enable us to explore, at least preliminarily, the ways might these findings influence action civics curricula that are based on the public policy analysis model, specifically in the *Community Deliberation*, *Research*, and *Action* aspects of the model.

Deliberation: Integrating Community

Whereas action civics curricula ask students to examine an issue that is important to the class (whether the issue lies within the school or within the community), the dual activists in this study did not assume that issues they found important were important to their colleagues. Fitzgerald and Andes (2012) note that when students engage in action civics, they are sometimes rebuffed by the community, which finds the issue the students have select to be unimportant to the community. Surely, sometimes student select issues important to the community-at-large (c.f., Schultz, 2008), but there are often mixed results.

As the participants in this study illustrate, civic engagement happens in diverse communities, where issues are approached as a community problem. Asking students to think about issues with their immediate classmates could create an issue of epistemic isolation; individual classes may think and act alike, even if those thoughts and actions are not representative of the community-at-large.

These findings do not suggest that action civics students survey the larger community; none of the participants said that they would conduct any particular form of research to identify community sentiments. Rather, study participants suggested that they would meet with potentially interested colleagues to discuss the issues. Even in these discussions, the participants

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rarely thought that the issues they found personally important (e.g., the study scenarios) were ones that the community would care to address.

In order for these participants to have such discussions, though, they had to already be involved in the community, often as a member of an organization, as P2 repeatedly stated. Knowing people by name was an important theme within *Community Deliberation*; these dual activists' actions depended on these relationships. Thus, it might be important to action civics students to first be a part of their community. Instead of measuring students' civic engagement by the number of civic action projects they have undertaken, it might be worth asking how many community members they know (by some metric) and/or in how many community organizations they participate. Such information seems to be of paramount importance to these dual activists, something that could be emulated within the action civics model.

Research

Another notable difference between action civics students and these participants was their approach to research. Often, action civics students are encouraged to read newspaper articles, books, and internet sources about the selected issues and identify root causes of those issues (see Table 1 as well as Fitzgerald et al., 2014; Schultz, 2008). Dual activists, on the other hand, identified the root causes of the scenario issues as they were identifying the issue. From there, they quickly sought experts in their organizations (e.g., P2) and within the community (e.g., P1 and P4), finding religious leaders, medical experts, and professors that might be more knowledgeable than they felt they were about these particular scenarios. As highly educated people, these dual activists certainly had some knowledge about these particular scenarios. They also knew that others might know more. Thus, research on selected issues should not just include in-class materials but bring community experts to the conversation, making sure that those who know the most about the root issues are engaged in the community discussions.

Action

Much like the participants' comments in the *Community Deliberation* and *Research* steps, the process by which many of the participants engaged *Action* were with regards to educating the community rather than the discrete advocacy skills that many action civics programs promote (e.g., writing letters to elected officials, petitioning, rallying, etc.). Certainly, these advocacy skills are important for direct political action (c.f., Kush, 2004). However, these dual activists suggested that community-level and representative-level education was more important than engaging in these skills from the beginning. The participants seemed to view themselves as leading others

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toward grassroots involvement rather than directing others to complete "civic activities." In this way, action civics programs might include direct training for how to represent issues to community members and elected officials in ways that facilitate grassroots decisions to engage in more direct political activities.

Conclusion

As social studies teachers look for ways to engage students' exposure to 21st century skills and citizenship, they are increasingly looking to action civics programs. While these programs certainly increase youth civic participation, this study suggests that they may not prepare youth to engage in civic life in the ways that civic leaders do. Indeed, while the process of civic action and public policy analysis may be similar, the tenors of the processes are somewhat different. Civic action is more communal and deliberative than public policy analysis. If teachers and action civics instructors want to encourage youth to be civic leaders in the ways that mirror the work of dual activists, the above findings suggest that they should focus on the ways that youth interact with the community, making such interaction pre-requisite to direct action.

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Appendix

Study Materials

Hydraulic Fracturing Scenario

As the early morning sun rises, you look out your kitchen window at the wildlife preserve and see the color of the leaves changing. You've lived in Dimock all your life and have grown to love the place. Your neighbors are pleasant and you had a great childhood. Unfortunately, there aren't a lot of job opportunities here. About 13% of the community lives in poverty and the median income is only $35,000. Most people can't afford to leave the community, even if they wanted to.

As you sit, thinking about your town and watching the ducks on the pond, you hear the woman on the news talking about "fracking." She explains that fracking is short for "hydraulic fracturing." That is when energy companies drill down into the ground and force water and other chemicals into the shale below to release natural gas. These companies can then sell this gas to customers for energy.

Energy companies say that this type of energy extraction will help our country to reduce its dependence on foreign oil because we can get it right from our own ground. They also say that it will help local economies because they will pay landowners for the rights to drill on their land. If they find that they can get gas out of the ground on that land, the companies will pay the landowners even more money.

Some people say that this is a dangerous way to get energy, though. Some have reported that the chemicals used during fracking have contaminated their water, making it dangerous to drink. There are even YouTube videos of people being able to light their drinking water on fire because of the gas that has leaked into it when the fracking occurred. In addition, some worry about the by-products of fracking; something has to be done with all of the chemical water used during the process.

As the news report finishes, the woman on the television says that a major energy company would like to begin fracking in Dimock.

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History Curriculum Review Scenario

It seems like the State Board of Education is always looking at ways to revise the curriculum. As you open the morning paper, this year doesn't seem to be any different. The school board just announced that they will be revising the history curriculum this time, looking specifically at what is being taught in United States and World History. You've always liked history, so you are interested to see what they want to revise. Isn't history what happened in the past? What is there to revise? As you look more closely at the newspaper article, you read that the former head of the school board and one of the proponents of the review has said, "History has already been skewed. Academia is skewed too far to the left." He proposes changes that include, but are not limited to, removing a discussion about Thomas Jefferson being interested in the Enlightenment because it did not show that the Founding Fathers were true Christians, and deleting a discussion about the famous Hispanic Archbishop Romero's fight for equal rights related to the United States' intervention in El Salvador.

A lot of your neighbors agree that United States history should teach students about how great America is and how it was founded on Christian beliefs. Others, specifically college and university historians, are arguing against these changes. They say that the changes skew history and hide the problems and issues that our country has had in the past. They say that the changes will teach students a false history.

A school board meeting has been scheduled so that community members might respond to the proposed changes.

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