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THE GOOD CITIZEN:
CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND YOUTH IN
SINGAPORE

by
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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN THE FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
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Abstract

This research project is situated in broader debates about youth-citizenship and youth participation which emerged around concerns that young people are not sufficiently engaged with politics and are not well informed about their role as citizens. The assumption is that young people as individuals lack the proper knowledge and skills, the right values and the appropriate dispositions to be active and contributing citizens. Citizenship education is seen as an important political instrument through which such future citizens-to-be are constructed and their aspirations can be moulded towards certain ends. Consequently, citizenship education often is understood as the preparation of youths to participate in society as future adult citizens.

The aim of this study is to examine how citizenship education affects everyday meanings of good citizenship among Singapore's youth with a particular focus on processes of subjection and resistance to official discourses of good citizenship. Qualitative methods are the main instruments utilised in this project. Both the analysis of semi-structured interviews and the discourse analysis of texts are deployed to understand the interconnected motivations, instruments, and processes of modern citizenship education.

In theoretical terms this thesis is situated across the fields of national identity, citizenship, and youth studies. This research investigates (good) citizenship and citizenship education by engaging in the theoretical debates of habitus and performativity, neoliberalism, governance, and education. The thesis illustrates that the good citizen subject is performed rather than always internalised by Singapore's youth. Common displays of good citizenship resemble pragmatic compliance with societal norms and expectations rather than necessarily illustrating individuals' submission to official discourses. Young people are citizens here and now, however their expressions of citizenship remain contained within adult-defined notions of acceptable action. This thesis concludes by arguing that seeing good citizenship as performed rather than an internalised set of discourses helps to obtain a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted character of (youth-) citizenship.

For Mum
(Für Meine Mutter)

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“By prevailing over all obstacles and distractions, one may unflinchingly arrive at his chosen goal or destination.” (Christopher Columbus)

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List of Acronyms

CCA	Co-Curricular Activity
CME	Civics and Moral Education
CMIO	Chinese, Malay, Indian, Other
CPDD	Curriculum Planning and Development Division
FASS	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GEP	Gifted Education Programme
MOE	Ministry of Education
NE	National Education
NIE	National Institute of Education
NUS	National University of Singapore
OB	Out-Of-Bounds
PAP	People's Action Party
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination
SEAB	Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board
SEP	Special Education Program
TSLN	Thinking Schools Learning Nation

1. Introduction

A key factor behind the rise of the idea of globalization is its frequent linkage to particular (neoliberal) social and economic policies. By constructing a particular vision of global space and the 'place' of individuals, national economies and so on within it, (...) the idea of globalization forms part of a rhetoric to legitimize certain [particularly neoliberal] political strategies.

(Kelly, 1999, p.380)

This research project is positioned in broader debates on the geographical concepts of space and place and how these influence and are influenced by the ideological concept of globalisation as a discourse (Yeoh, Huang, & Willis, 2000). The politics of globalisation not only offer new conceptual lenses through which to view the world but also construct a new geography of the (neoliberal) world (Kelly, 1999). As will become clear throughout this thesis, the production of the global (space) cannot be decoupled from the local (place) and vice versa (Yeoh & Willis, 1998). More specifically, the global-local nexus inherent in the discourse of neoliberal globalisation (Mittelmann, 1996) and its spatial impact on the construction of citizenship and citizenship education in Singapore will be illustrated in this project. Citizenship is contextualised in this study within the concept of identity to argue that individuals possess multiple identities with citizenship being one identity facet. Modern approaches to citizenship emphasise individuals' belonging to a community with a shared democratic culture in which they participate and contribute to a deeper integration of society (Barbalet, 1999; Hill & Lian, 1995; Kerr, 1999a; 2003; McLaughlin, 1992). Traditional approaches, however, conceptualise citizenship as the position or status of being a citizen (Simpson & Weiner, 1989) with individuals living in a nation-state having certain rights and privileges, but at the same time also duties and responsibilities to the state (Gordon-Zolov & Rogers, 2010; Lagassé, 2000). Although official rhetoric of citizenship emphasises national belonging and the community I argue it is primarily the traditional aspects of citizenship as a neoliberal (subject) position that are communicated through citizenship education in Singapore. In particular, the intertwined processes of subjection and resistance to official discourses of good citizenship constituted in

citizenship education are the focus of this project. It is argued that good citizenship is not always internalised but can be expressed as reworking disguised as pragmatic compliance: the *performed* subjection to discourse. This research, consequently, aims to uncover what citizenship means to individuals in everyday life and how citizenship education affects these meanings with “very little known about the realities of how different people understand themselves as citizens” (E. Jones & Gaventa, 2002, p.28).

1.1 Aims and Objectives of the Study

This thesis draws together four research fields encompassing theories of habitus and performativity, neoliberalism, governance, and education to untangle the complex and ‘messy’ web of interconnected motivations, instruments, and processes of modern citizenship education. The interactions between resistance and subjection to official discourses of good citizenship will be the focus of this research endeavour to suggest that, rather than constructing a false dichotomy of subjection and resistance both processes take place at the same time. It will be argued that the good citizen subject is performed rather than always internalised by Singapore’s youth. Common displays of good citizenship resemble pragmatic compliance with societal norms and expectations rather than necessarily demonstrating individuals’ submission to discourse since young peoples’ *expressions* of citizenship fundamentally remain contained within adult-defined and -regulated notions of acceptable action.

The overall research question of this thesis is:

- *How does citizenship education affect everyday meanings of good citizenship among Singapore’s youth?*

The research aims to contribute to the growing interest in understanding youths as citizens here and now (Nicoll et al., 2013) and not as future citizens in training (Splitter, 2011). The particular situation of youths between childhood and adulthood is investigated in this research within the context of Social Studies which is the main vehicle of citizenship education in Singapore. This approach enables a better understanding of how youth-

citizenship might be imagined, portrayed, and represented within the cultural sphere, and what influence this has on young people themselves.

To address the overall research question the thesis has the following aims and objectives:

1. to examine the complex and multifaceted character of youth citizenship and explore processes of subjection and resistance to official discourses of good citizenship;
2. to investigate the underlying economic rationale of good citizenship discourses and explore the interaction between responsibilities/duties towards the state and affective belonging to society;
3. to investigate how emotions of fear and insecurity affect efforts to inculcate behaviour and conduct into Singapore's youth; and,
4. to explore resentments and prejudices among Singapore's youth towards foreigners and identify the degree of consideration for social and cultural differences;

1.2 Background of the Study

This research project is situated in broader debates about youth-citizenship and youth participation. These debates have emerged because young people are not sufficiently engaged with politics and are not well informed about their role as citizens (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; A. Harris, 2009; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). These discussions have been fuelled by concerns about the erosion of the moral and social fabric of society (McLaughlin, 2000; Pattie et al., 2004). The assumption is that young people as individuals lack the proper knowledge and skills, and the right values and the appropriate dispositions—citizenship dimensions (Kerr, 2005)—to be active and contributing citizens. In the classical political interpretation of citizenship, young people are primarily conceptualised as future citizens (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003). Education is seen as one political instrument through which such future citizens can be constructed and their aspirations moulded towards certain (neoliberal) ends (Pimlott-Wilson, 2011). Aspirations are complex understandings of the future pathways available to people, which are influenced by individual experiences that emerge within particular social, economic and cultural circumstances

(Ball et al., 2002). As a consequence, citizenship education is often understood as the preparation of youths to participate in society as future adult citizens by enhancing their civic knowledge required for political participation and voting, and by fostering their democratic attitudes (Lawy & Biesta, 2006).

A considerable body of literature exists that attempts to address questions of young people's emotions and relationship to the nation-state, and how the state attempts to shape this relationship through, for example, citizenship education (Arthur & Cremin, 2012; Geboers et al., 2012; Ho, 2012; McCowan & Gomez, 2012; Niens et al., 2012; Staeheli & Hammett, 2013; Tupper & Cappello, 2012). One key issue in this literature is the *problem* of youth engagement in the polity (Nicoll et al., 2013; Print & Milner, 2009). Youths often find themselves paradoxically encouraged to become active citizens while being in a 'temporary state of citizenry' at the same time feeling the burden of expectations and responsibilities of being a good citizen (S. Mills, 2013). Starting from the premise that youths are fundamentally lacking in citizenship skills, this body of literature focuses on strategies for remedying this civic deficit (Chamberlin, 2003; Criddle, Vidovich, & O'Neill, 2004; Levinson, 2003; Osborne, 2000; Osler & Starkey, 2003).

Formal education plays a major role in the conceptualisation of citizenship (Meyer et al., 1997). While there have been a range of appeals for different forms of citizenship education, from moral education (I. Davies, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005) to global education (Osler & Starkey, 2003), much of the literature has been marked by a troubling lack of reflection on the historical and contemporary meanings of the term. A small body of literature exists that addresses the relationship between youth and citizenship in more critical ways. Such literature is concerned with how conceptualisations of youth-citizenship often overlook the structured ways in which some young people are able to participate (Carroll & Jones, 2000; Leighton, 2004) to indicate that youth participation and involvement is changing rather than decreasing (Hilton et al., 2010; Schmeets & Coumans, 2013). This literature is also concerned with how an apolitical, individualistic conception of citizenship can become inscribed onto young people (A. Harris, 2004; Mitchell, 2003). In

addition, this work recognises how citizenship has come to be conflated with duties and responsibilities rather than rights and entitlements (Best, 2003; France, 1998; T. Hall, Coffey, & Williamson, 1999). Consequently, youth-citizenship can be seen as an inherently complex concept illustrated by, for example, the ambiguity and conflicting status of when childhood stops and adulthood begins (James, 1986; Valentine, 2003).

1.3 Singaporean Case-Study

Singapore was chosen as a case-study principally for two reasons. First, the city-state, constituting both a space of flows and a space of place (Yeoh et al., 2000), exemplifies in a demonstrative way how a 'global city' both utilises and is challenged by the effects of the global-local nexus (see Chang, 2000). In particular, the configurations of identity politics emerging as a response to the challenges of globalisation through citizenship education are of interest for this study. Identity politics in Singapore are blurring the perceived borders between 'home' and 'away' and encompass a multiplicity of seemingly contradictory markers that range

from bidding for global capital and plugging into the global informational network to a reassertion of local cultures, nostalgic excavations of roots, the strengthening of the bonds of the 'family' and 'community', [and] a reconfiguration of the spatial markers of national consciousness.

(Yeoh & Willis, 1999, p.359)

This strategic development of 'heart' (the nation) and 'wing' (the diaspora) politics (Yeoh & Willis, 1999) is what makes the Singaporean case illustrative of the challenges to create a nation of 'one people' belonging to 'one place' in a globalised world of flows (Yeoh & Willis, 1998). Singapore's regionalisation strategy 'go regional', for example, illustrates the intertwined character of the local and the global. On the one hand, Singapore's (direct) investments and joint ventures in multiple countries of the region effectively expand the city-state's "economic space beyond the nation's geographical boundaries" (Yeoh & Willis, 1997, p.185), thereby creating an economic hinterland (Wee, 1995). On the other hand, Singapore's regionalisation strategy envisions the city-state's innovative and risk-taking entrepreneurs as 'thinking globally' and venturing in transnational spaces to open up international markets but

ultimately being deeply rooted in and contributing to their 'home-nation' (cf. Yeoh & Willis, 2005). Singapore's citizenship education forms part of a larger nation-building project that aims to "exert a homeward 'pull' on Singaporeans without blunting their outward orientation towards global space" (Yeoh & Willis, 1999, p.361).

Second, the case-study of Singapore was chosen because of its authoritarian government and its highly centralised education system in which the Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD) of the Ministry of Education (MOE) creates the national curriculum framework and produces the detailed syllabus for the use in secondary schools, and also authors the Social Studies textbooks used by all students in Singapore. Since Singapore's independence in 1965, education has played a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and nation building with citizenship education emphasising moral and communitarian values as well as national identity (W. Lee et al., 2004).

Social Studies provides a way to investigate Singapore's strong governance approach in relation to its competitive and restrictive education system. Since independence, Singapore's politics have been dominated by one party and have been focused mainly on the pragmatic goal of economic development, which has led to a prosperous and affluent city-state (Fee, 1999). Little awareness remained among Singaporeans of the struggles and turmoil during the early days of self-rule and independence (Hill & Lian, 1995). Social Studies classes, therefore, focus on Singapore's developments within the past at the same time emphasising the fragility of the city-state's progress. The issue of racial harmony is stressed both in school and official rhetoric to be crucial for the wellbeing and survival of Singapore, but with a very limited focus on the critical analysis of racial differences and tensions (Nichol & Sim, 2007).

Singapore is not an ordinary nation-state because of its tight system of political control to maintain social order, which allows only few opportunities for dissent (George, 2000; Tamney, 1996). Similarly, Castells (1988) asserts: "Although clearly authoritarian, Singapore is not a dictatorship but a hegemonic state, in the Gramscian sense. It is based not simply on coercion

but also on consensus" (p.78). Hegemony is commonly understood to mean leadership based on the consent of the governed, which is secured through ideological means (Bates, 1975; Femia, 1981; Martin, 1998; Kong & Yeoh, 2003; Yao, 2007). Ideological hegemony involves persuading those who are governed to adopt the ruling group's set of ideas and values as their own. Clammer (1993) argues attempts to harmonise reality and the ruling group's perspective so that they appear identical, gives rise to the common perception of the ruling group's ideas and values as natural and inevitable. Once accepted, the ideological order is sustained through the production and reproduction of common-sense, which provides the ruling group with the power to shape the political and social system (Chua, 1995; Kong & Yeoh, 2003). More importantly, the ruling group's ability to improve the material life of the governed is seen as crucial for maintaining the status quo (Chua, 1995). The creation of Singapore as a new nation-state meant developing a new image that could assert independence, unity and common values. Shaping citizenship education to promote an inclusive society as well as national unity, however, has been a significant challenge (Kennedy & Fairbrother, 2004). With Social Studies regarded as the main instrument of citizenship education in Singapore, Sim and Print (2005) argue:

Social studies was conceived as a major vehicle for NE [National Education] at the secondary school level, with a focus on the nation, common culture and shared values. Consequently it seeks to develop in students what the government deems to be the essential areas of knowledge, skills and values of an informed, responsible and participative Singapore citizen. (p.9)

This means Social Studies allows the scrutinisation of the subject position of the good citizen constituted and communicated through citizenship education. Social Studies textbooks in Singapore follow the syllabus developed by the Ministry of Education. Until recently, all textbooks were produced by the Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD) of the Ministry. Notwithstanding the opening for other textbook publishers to offer alternative textbooks, the choices of textbooks are limited. Textbooks are often seen as cultural artefacts, as the products of contestation and consensus and, therefore, as "public representations of national collectivities and identities"

(Soysal, Bertilotti & Mannitz, 2005, p.14). In Singapore, however, this is not the case. The content and pedagogy of Social Studies textbooks reflect the ideology of the political leaders to a high degree, with the curriculum and texts being highly responsive to important political speeches and opinions (Han, 2007). Singapore as a case-study, therefore, offers valuable perspectives on how citizenship is imagined and represented in formal education as well as how it is perceived and lived by youths.

1.4 Research Contribution

This research investigates citizenship and citizenship education by engaging in theoretical approaches to habitus and performativity, neoliberalism, governance, and education. All these theories have generated debate across the disciplines interested in the study of citizenship and citizenship education; however, most of the studies have been confined by the narrow thought patterns of their own discipline (e.g. Arthur & Cremin, 2012; Baildon & Sim, 2010; Banks, 2004; Bottery, 2003; Brooks, 2009; Doppen, 2010; Grossman, 2010; Han, 2000; Ho, 2012; Kennelly & Llewellyn, 2011; Kerr, 2005; McCowan & Gomez, 2012; Osborne, 2000; Osler, 2011; Print & Coleman, 2003; Pykett, 2009; Sears, 2010; Sim, 2010; Sim & Print, 2005; Singh, 2001; Tan & Chew, 2004). This provides an opening for human geography to re-engage in debates about citizenship due to its interest in holistic trans-disciplinary approaches. While other disciplines have undeniably added significantly to the scholarship of citizenship—in scrutinising subjection and resistance to official discourses—their research foci are limited by stressing only specific aspects rather than examining citizenship from multiple perspectives at the same time. I argue that the intersection of the four theoretical streams provides new insights and better understandings of the complex and 'messy' web of interconnected motivations, instruments, and processes of modern citizenship education as well as the individual meanings of youth-citizenship.

There are growing efforts in human geography to emphasise the role of practices in the constitution of social and spatial life (Dewsbury, 2000; Gregson & Rose, 2000; Harrison, 2000; Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000) which have led to the increasing adoption of performativity concepts to account for social

coherence through everyday dynamics of interpretive acts (Bell, Binnie, Cream, & Valentine, 1994; Dewsbury, 2000; Gregson & Rose, 2000; Harrison, 2000; Kaiser & Nikiforova, 2008; McCormack, 2005; Nash, 2000; Nelson, 1999; Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000). Theories of performativity suggest that resistance to discourse can take place through both deliberate and accidentally changed discourse citations (Butler, 2004b). It is argued further, that resistance and subordination are inseparable and always come together (Butler, 1997b). Performativity theories, however, possibly contribute too much agency to the individual and underestimate the effects of constitutive constraints (Butler, 1997b) on processes of resistance. In contrast, the theory of habitus deprives individuals of agency almost entirely. Habitus has been applied across a wide range of disciplines, for example geography and sociologies of education (Bridge, 2006; Waters, 2006a; Holt, 2008; Reay, 2004). Scholars such as Bourdieu (1990b) argue that the field of education delimits individuals' habitus; however, such an approach falls into an ontological trap because it reifies the field. It is argued in this thesis that neither theory satisfactorily explains if nor why official discourses of good citizenship are internalised relatively uncritically by youths in the Singaporean context. This project, thereby, contributes to performativity and habitus research by suggesting that it is the structural and structuring *effects* of education which obstruct unrestricted resistance to official discourses communicated through citizenship education.

In addition, the research project contributes to the literature in human geography exploring (spatial) impacts of neoliberalism on the socio-political arena (Bailey & Maresh, 2009; Breathnach, 2010; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Castree, 2006; Fitzsimons, 2011; Gibson-Graham, 2008; Goldfrank & Schrank, 2009; Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2012; Isopahkala-Bouret et al., 2012; Larner, 2003; J. Peck, 2004; J. Peck & Tickell, 2002; J. Peck et al., 2009; Peters, 2011) and the production of neoliberal subjects (Bondi, 2005; Colls & Evans, 2008; B. Davies et al., 2005; B. Evans, 2008; Galt, 2013; Keil, 2002; Lawrence, 2005; McDowell, 2007; Mitchell, 2003; Ruddick, 2006, 2007; Skeggs, 2004; Walkerdine, 2003). The research project discusses the relationship between the local and the global and concurs that neoliberal discourses of globalisation are frequently deployed in educational settings

and have powerful effects on society. Politics of globalisation impact on everyday life at the local scale and, at the same time, are also shaped by these local activities. In addition it is suggested that, within the neoliberal agenda, subjects have choice that is framed by the specific neoliberal repertoire. The neoliberal subject is conceptualised in this literature as a highly competitive and self-responsible individual who is deprived of its abilities of resistance through the mechanism of self-governance (Chen, 2013; Gordon, 1991). The discourse of inevitability inherent in neoliberal thought prevents resistance at the systemic level by creating the impression of an inescapable neoliberal world order. This project builds upon these general arguments and addresses the inability of neoliberal theory to theorise the gap between what is expressed verbally, and (relatively) consciously, and what the body says: the performed.

Foucault's theories of governmentality have been widely drawn upon in human geographic research (Barry, Osborne, & Rose, 1996; Bigo, 2002; Burchell, Gordon & Miller, 1991; Dean, 2010; Dillon & Reid, 2000; Dupont & Pearce, 2001; Fejes, 2008b, 2010; Fejes & Nicoll, 2008; Larner & Walters, 2002; N. Rose, 1999). Concepts such as the conduct of conduct and approaches of governance through subject positioning have been utilised by this thriving scholarship. Risk theories, however, which draw from Foucault's concepts of governmentality, among others, have not found their way into this literature to the same extent. Risk theories identify the presence of an omnipresent language of fear in society (Furedi, 2002). At the same time, it is argued that a fearful population is easier to govern as their conduct is based on anxieties and fear (Inglehart, 2008). This line of research emphasises emotional aspects of governance which do not simply manipulate the subject but govern it as a free subject by encouraging, inculcating, and suggesting (aspired) ways of conduct (O'Malley, 1992, 1996, 1999; Petersen, 1996; N. Rose, 1996a; B. Turner, 1997b; Parton, 1998; Bennett, 1999). It is argued further that governments govern *through* risks rather than aiming to eliminate them. Contrary to the views of Isin (2004), this project suggests that governing through risk means exploiting the fears subjects may have and to some extent deceiving them to distort their sense of balance between perceived and real dangers. This leaves them in a condition of insecurity and

not as active citizens who mobilise affects and emotions and govern themselves through them.

Theories of education argue that citizenship education offers subject positions of good citizenship which aim at both the socialisation to norms and expectations, and also to create an active citizenry (M. Davis, 2003; I. Davies, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005; Duus, 2011; Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004; Gilbert, 1996; Han, 2009; W. Lee, 2012b; Mason, 2012; Meredyth & Thomas, 1999; Ochoa-Becker & Engle, 2007; Pascoe, 1996; Stanley, 2005; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). In this thesis it is suggested that, despite an active and engaged citizenry is aspired for in citizenship education, the extent to which pupils can criticise is highly regulated and allows only for resistance which does not challenge the current structures: the status quo. It will be demonstrated that citizenship education in Singapore focuses on knowledge transmission rather than critical reflection on knowledge (Pykett et al., 2010; R. Jones et al., 2011). It has been argued, however, that resistance to common-sense truths which are communicated through education can only be resisted with such critical reflection (Fejes, 2008b; Lawy & Biesta, 2006; Sim, 2010; Westheimer, 2008). Moreover, educational tactics of seduction, inducement and coercion aim implicitly as well as explicitly at individuals' compliance with the official knowledge of citizenship education (Allen, 2003; Mathews, 2011). Potential resistance, thus, is limited by the structural effects of the educational system as it demands compliance with the syllabus to obtain recognition in the form of good marks (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010). This form recognition is a crucial element in how individuals become constituted as socially viable beings (Butler, 2004b). In this thesis it is argued that individuals' subjection to the system is not always lived, but also performed as pragmatic compliance and can cover deep resentments which cannot openly be expressed, as this would lead to punishment and blame of the subject.

Overall, the thesis contributes to the extensive range of work on the ways in which young people appropriate, use, contest, construct and perform identities. Previous research on youth identity encompasses different spaces as diverse as schools (B. Evans, 2006; Gordon, 1996; Hyams, 2000;

Valentine, 2000), the home environment (Skelton & Valentine, 2005; Valentine, 1999), child play centres (McKendrick et al., 2000), youth centres (Skelton, 2000b, 2001), online spaces (Holloway et al., 2000) and public spaces (Gough & Franch, 2005; Hyams, 2003; M. Thomas, 2005b). This project adds to this body of research by crossing confined spatial containers and emphasising the interconnectedness of spaces, such as schools and universities, in relation to the construction of good citizenship as one facet of youth-identity.

This thesis also contributes to post-materialism studies, which have been predominantly based on public opinion relying on quantitative data (Abramson, 1997; Abramson & Inglehart, 1994; Bean & Papadakis, 1994; Braithwaite, Makkai & Pittelkow, 1996; Brooks & Manza, 1994; Davis, 2000; Davis & Davenport, 1999; de Graaf & Evans, 1996; Duch & Taylor, 1994; Flanagan, 1987; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2004; Ikeda & Kobayashi, 2006; Inglehart & Abramson, 1994, 1999; Kidd & Lee, 1997; Layman & Carmines, 1997; MacIntosh, 1998; Marks, 1997; Moors, 2007; Roales-Nieto & Segura, 2010; Tranter & Western, 2010; Trump, 1991; Warwick, 1998; Wong & Wan, 2009). Notwithstanding the fact that this vast literature has increased the knowledge and understanding of how value and norm priorities influence the views and behaviour of the general public (Cámara Fuertes, 2009) *qualitative* studies of post-materialism have been almost completely ignored. This thesis offers a nascent impression of youths' subjective sense of security and gives first indications about the relationship between socio-economic development and the prevalence of certain values in society, thereby extending the prevalent focus in post-materialism studies on objective socio-economic data (Inglehart, 2008; Delhey, 2010).

Citizenship education is an integral project of schooling around the world, and the proliferation of research and writing on citizenship education in the last two decades is indicative of its continuing theoretical and practical importance (Arnot & Dillabough, 2000; Chareka & Sears, 2005; Cooks & Epstein, 2000; Crick, 2000; Hebert, 1997, 2002; Hickey, 2002; Osborne, 1999, 2004; Osler, 2011; Osler & Starkey, 2002, 2003; C. Peck, 2009; Richardson & Blades, 2006; Sears, 1996, 2010; Sears & Hughes, 1996;

Singh, 2001; Torney-Purta, 2001, 2002; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Moreover, the growing body of academic debate and critical analysis of citizenship education in non-Western (Asian) contexts (Cogan & Derricott, 2000; Cogan, Morris & Print, 2002; Grossman, Lee, & Kennedy, 2008; W. Lee, Grossman, Kennedy, & Fairbrother, 2004; W. Lee & Fouts, 2005; Sim, 2008, 2010) illustrate the continuous significance of this line of research. The thesis contributes to this vibrant and exciting research field through a human geographic lens, which emphasises the valuable contributions geographies of citizenship, as a sub-discipline of human geography, can make.

1.5 Study Design

The first step of the research process was a critical analysis of Social Studies curricula and secondary textbooks, which aimed to illustrate how the ideal of a national identity—the good citizen—is conceptualised and communicated through citizenship education in Singapore. Following the initial research phase of analysing Social Studies curricula and textbook, 31 semi-structured interviews with university students were conducted in Singapore. Through the analysis of perceptions of youth participants, the real and lived citizen identifications will be unveiled to show how these contradict the officially communicated ideals of the good citizen: the Singaporean identity. However, the interview cohort is not meant to be taken as representative of Singapore's nation as a whole, but their views are seen as important for this study in two ways. Firstly, they represent a segment of the next generation of middle-class professionals and entrepreneurs and secondly, they were systematically selected among the most successful *products* of Singapore's national education system. As such their views reflect broader national-level influences and not just an atypical perspective of university students.

Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters organised into three sections. The first section comprises Chapters One to Three, which present the contextual, conceptual, and methodological backdrop of this thesis. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two explicates the theoretical framework of the thesis. It comprises the discussion of four interrelated research fields concerned with citizenship: namely, theories of habitus and performativity;

neoliberalism; governance; and education. Hence, Chapter Two lays the conceptual foundations for the succeeding chapters. Chapter Three explains the methodological approach taken in this project to clarify the central issues involved in adopting a qualitative approach to the study of citizenship and identity.

The second section of this thesis shifts the focus to the empirical data collection and analysis. Chapters Four to Six constitute the primary research and analysis of this thesis. Chapter Four provides the contextual framework within which to understand citizenship and citizenship education and illustrates the political and social context of Singapore. Moreover, the role and character of the good citizenship subject position, framed by Social Studies curricula as the main vehicle of citizenship education, is explored. Chapter Five consists of a critical discourse analysis of Social Studies textbooks to investigate the multiple facets of good citizenship communicated through the teaching materials. The contradictions *between* curricula and textbooks as well as *within* the textbooks themselves are scrutinised in this chapter. The last empirical chapter, Chapter Six, reveals how good citizenship 'plays out' among youth in Singapore. The focus of the chapter is on notions of subjection and resistance to official discourses of good citizenship identified in the previous chapters, and how young people understand themselves as (good) citizens.

The last section comprises Chapter Seven, which synthesises the key findings of the thesis and illustrates a number of integrated themes of good citizenship. The chapter, then, draws out the main conclusions of the thesis and concludes by identifying the implications and significance of this research to the geographies of citizenship and citizenship studies in general, thereby offering new insights on youth-citizenship and citizenship education.

2. The Multifaceted Character of Youth-Citizenship

2.1 Introduction

The primary concern of this chapter is to investigate (good) citizenship and citizenship education by engaging in the theoretical debates of habitus and performativity, neoliberalism, governance, and education, thereby framing the specific concerns of this thesis. It is argued that by bringing together these four theoretical streams new insights and a better understanding of the complex and messy web of interconnected motivations, instruments, and processes of modern citizenship education will be achieved and the multiple individual meanings of youth-citizenship (identity) revealed.

Firstly, the chapter illustrates a number of key patterns of understanding regarding the concepts of identity and (youth-) citizenship that are crucial for the everyday meanings of good citizenship analysed in this thesis. Secondly, it will be shown how citizenship education as a tool of statecraft is geared towards the constitution of the good citizen in today's neoliberal setting to allow for an investigation of the economic rationale of citizenship discourses. Thirdly, the concepts of governmentality and risk theory will be discussed before elaborating briefly on discourse formations and issues of power related to good citizenship to address the objective of investigating the impact of emotions on individuals' conduct. Fourthly, the interplay of resistance and subjection to citizenship discourses is at focus when theories of performativity and habitus will be debated and criticised to propose that neither approach is sufficient to satisfactorily explain why official discourses of good citizenship are seemingly internalised, relatively uncritically, by youths in the Singaporean context. Finally, the concept of resistance itself will be discussed in both general terms and in the specific setting of formal education.

Based on the critical evaluation of the theoretical debates above, this chapter addresses the overall research question of this thesis to offer a nuanced understanding of how citizenship education affects everyday meanings of citizenship among youth and proposes the notion of pragmatic compliance as

an attempt to account for simultaneous acts of resistance and subjection embedded in performances of the good citizen. It is claimed that displays of conformity to official discourses of good citizenship may not be as affirmative of their successful internalisation as (officially) expected.

2.2 Concept of Identity

Everyone belongs: it is impossible not to belong to social groups, social relations or cultures. However, some people belong to particular groups or places with more intensity than others, and there is often less choice than we might imagine as to whom and where we belong.

(Wood & Waite, 2011, p.201)

This section introduces the concept of identity in general and that of national identity in particular. Citizenship, in this thesis, is conceptualised as an identity facet embedded in the multiplicity of identities an individual can possess. Identity, thus, constitutes the foundation for the overall research question of this project and the subsequent examination of citizenship. Identity is a rich and fascinating concept, which plays an important role in a seemingly infinite number of academic disciplines (Splitter, 2007). Suggested by Erikson (1968), identity helps individuals to make sense of, and to find their place in, an almost limitless world with an immense set of possibilities. Identity is the multiplicity of affiliations with particular cultures, ethnicities, or nations that is usually drawn on to clarify the question of 'Who am I'. Identities are always "placed, positioned, in a culture, a language, a history" (S. Hall, 1987, p.46). The notion of identity has been used in many different situations where individuals can be categorised in multiple ways as "children/adults; males/females; professionals/managers/artists; (...) as well as citizens, members of ethnic, religious, cultural and family groupings" (Splitter, 2011, pp.486-487); and, many more. Education, it has been argued (Parmenter et al., 2000), has a significant impact on how to locate the self in the world.

The academic interest in the concept of identity emerged in the 1950s and 1960s primarily within the fields of sociology and psychoanalysis (Kohli, 2000). Since that time, the concept underwent significant developments

encompassing early treatments of identity as a self-fashioning, agentive, internal project of the self (Taylor, 1989) as well as more recent postmodern understandings of social and collective identities as fluid, multi-faceted, contingent and, crucially for this project, constituted in discourse (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston & McDermott, 2009). The word identity itself stems from the Latin notion of sameness, indicating an emphasis on commonalities. In social sciences, scholars have linked the concept of identity to an immanent political meaning, arguing that if identity equates sameness, then there is automatically a distinction from the other, the dissimilar, and therefore an inherent categorisation of inclusion and exclusion (Spencer & Wollman, 2002). In addition to the widely accepted view on identities as constantly negotiated, Dwyer (2000) quotes continuity over time and the politics of memory as important criteria of identity and argues further that the nation, perceived as a historically developed entity that shares a common past (Smith, 1996, 2004, 2009; Vickers, 2005), gives its members a reference point and an identification basis—a national identity—to act in distinctive ways. Hence, the coexistence of both fluid processes and continuity over time can be assumed.

Identities are always deconstructed and reconstructed. The concept of a constructed identity as opposed to an inherent permanent state of mind dominates current theoretical assumptions (Splitter, 2011; Wodak, 2012). Identities are not concretised projects or conditions; they are always becoming, in process, and unfixed (S. Hall, 1996; L. Harris & Alatout, 2010). Identities are “the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence, but a positioning” (T. Hall & Williamson, 1999, p.226). This is an important point, which emphasises the *constructedness* of identity through discourse. Similarly, Gregson and Rose (2000) state: “Identities are in some sense constructed in and through social action, rather than existing anterior to social processes” (p.434). Sociologists and psychologists call this identity construction the dialectical process of negotiating identities in social interaction (Swann, 1987), independent of whether this interaction occurs on an individual or societal level. Hence, it is through socialisation forces that identities are shaped and derived in a social context (Osler & Starkey, 2003).

Identity as an object of inquiry has received much attention in recent years (Wetherell, 2010). Brubaker (2004) defines identification as an active process of seeking to achieve an identity. Such ascribing processes can be executed either by oneself or by other socialisation agents, both in a relational or a categorical sphere (language, religion, or nationality) (Ochoa-Becker & Engle, 2007). Agents range according to their impact, from the family to larger collectives such as schools and socio-economic backgrounds, up to the nation and even beyond (S. Turner & Manderson, 2007). While relational aspects are important, processes of identification can also be accomplished by discourses without the necessity for an external agent (Bloom, 1990). To include such identification processes by oneself is one aspect Brubaker and Cooper (2000) stress regarding the conceptualisation of an object as complex and diverse as identity.

As stated above, people unavoidably belong to multiple groups and classes: *large* affiliations of race, culture, religion, nationality, gender, sexuality, and so on (Splitter, 2007). It is argued that, besides a common range of shared ideas, values, and expectations, social groups need to distinguish themselves from other collectives to develop a collective identity (Guibernau, 2007; A. Jones, 2005; Levine, 2007; Massey, 2007). Social groups assemble and hold multiple individual identities and act according to the needs of the group or the specific situation (A. Jones, 2005). However, not all social groups develop through the reciprocal acceptance of shared norms and values. Such shared characteristics can also be the *outcome* of social groups (Appiah, 2005). These shared elements are, thus, co-constitutive and can reinforce each other (Splitter, 2007). As a collective transforms over time, its common identity undergoes continuous processes of (re)construction. Aspects constituting identities, such as history, geography, language, conditions of life, and other particularities, then, are not objectively assigned to the collective but have to be negotiated as common factors by the group itself (Münch, 2001; Kriesi, Armingeon, Siegrist & Wimmer, 2004). When referring to this changing character of identities and its repercussions for politics, scholars like Renwick (1996), have stated that "it also means that identity and the process of identification are fundamentally political in character" (p.155). Traces of such identity politics (Coate & Thiel, 2010; Chinn, 2010;

Ho, 2011) can also be found in Melucci's (1996) argument that a collective identity is "an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientations of their actions as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their actions take place" (p.75). Issues of equality and fairness in society come to mind here. Taifel (1982) argues that collectives regularly privilege in-group members over group outsiders. Collectives possess, what he calls, an in-group bias. This does not mean, however, that, for example, national identities are only transmitted and constructed by agents of the dominant in-group. Most contemporary Western societies, with their relative political transparency and observation through mass media and non-state actors, offer a variety of messages concerning their collective identity to respective public spheres. In non-Western societies like Singapore, however, this might not always be the case.

National Identities

Collective national identities only became important with the emergence of the territorial-sovereign state after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 (Vollaard, 2009). Prior to this time, individuals were the subjects of power holding, in most cases of transnational authorities such as royal or clerical dynasties (Bottery, 2003). Belonging to a national body was irrelevant because no such institutionalised collective identity structure existed (Agnew, 2005). The evolving territorial-sovereign state system in nineteenth-century Europe enabled modes of control and protection that eventually led to the development of national identities (Tilly & Ardant, 1975). Henry (2001) defines collective national identities as the sum of relations between citizens and institutions, the values and symbols on which collective narration and latent consensus have been built, and the reflexive combination of these two components. Her conception of national identity comprises behavioural, attitudinal, instrumental, civic, and, to some extent, cultural-historic aspects. Similarly, Preston (1997) argues that collective national identities are grounded in place (where people live), networks (with whom people interact), and memory (historic understandings). Here, again, the coexistence of both fluid processes and continuity over time is apparent in the conceptualisation of (national) identity acquisition.

National identities are powerful and emotionally charged (cf. Barr & Skrbiš, 2008; Brubaker, 2004; Kornprobst, 2005; Loveman & Stamatov, 2004; Malešević, 2006; Staeheli & Hammett, 2013). As stated above, the “creation of a common national identity revolves around the development of shared beliefs, norms and values, [to give] different communities in a country a sense of collective worth, social solidarity, and common destiny” (Hussin, 2004, p.58). The cultural and geographical inclusiveness/exclusiveness of national identity impacts significantly on the potential support for such identifications (Amin, 2004; Citrin & Sides, 2004; Delgado-Moreira, 2000; Dell’Olio, 2005; Hettlage, 2004; Osler & Starkey, 2001; E. Thomas, 2002; Woodward & Kohli, 2001), where the shared distinctiveness of an inclusive society is seen to result in a stronger group identification (Brewer & Silver, 1992; Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1992). At the same time, some (Browning, 2003; Haldrup, Koefoed, & Simonsen, 2006) caution that, although inclusive categories fulfil individuals’ desire for inclusion, they simultaneously stimulate differentiation, the othering of group outsiders. Similarly, other scholars (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Licata & Klein, 2002; Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) predict potentially negative interrelations between in-group identification and tolerance towards out-group members. Thus, official and public imaginations of foreigners in a nation-state, for example, help to explore resentments and prejudices among Singapore’s youth towards foreigners (see objectives) and can hold valuable evidence about society’s tolerance at large towards out-group members (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005; Gijssberts, Hagendoorn, & Scheepers, 2004; Licata & Klein, 2002; Luchtenberg, 1998; Soysal, 1994; Van Peer, 2006; Wells & Watson, 2005).

Contemporary perspectives on national identity emphasise the strong impact of mass-based instruments such as formal education, army conscription, or the media on the formation of collective identities (Osler, 2011; Sim & Print, 2005). School curricula are one instrument which is considered to influence the development of national identities in future citizens (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003). Here, active processes of social learning, mobilisation, and forms of manipulation can shape collective identification (Bruland & Horowitz, 2003). Moreover, the concept of multiple identity *facets* is advocated in modern

scholarship, in which it is argued that people possess multiple identities depending on their needs and situations (Conversi, 2002). By taking into account a specific context as well as the identity pool an individual possesses, multiple identities can be seen as a means of adaptation (Brewer, 1999). Heater (1992) argues that a sense of identity, or a feeling of community with other group members, is a crucial element of citizenship. Similarly, Conover et al. (1991) state citizenship constitutes “a fundamental identity that helps situate the individual in society” (p.805). However, being a citizen is only one form of belonging; only one identity facet (Levinson, 1999; Sim & Low, 2012). Despite Fulbrook and Cesarani’s (1996) alert of the risk to conflate national identity with citizenship, the interconnectedness of identity and citizenship has been widely acknowledged in research (Isin & Wood, 1999; K. Jones, 1994; E. Jones & Gaventa, 2002; Stevenson, 2001; B. Turner, 1997a).

2.3 Citizenship

To address the overall research question of the thesis, this section introduces the concept of citizenship and illustrates its multiple character. Citizenship is a very controversial concept in human geography and the social sciences more broadly (Desforges et al., 2005; K. Evans, 1998; Isin, 2002; Lister, 2003; Osler & Starkey, 2003; Tupper, 2010; van Gunsteren, 1998). The contested nature of citizenship means defining it is not a straightforward exercise and there is considerable disagreement and debate around its definition. Traditionally, citizens were seen as individuals having both specific rights and duties (Gordon-Zolov & Rogers, 2010; Lagassé, 2000). Citizenship was seen as “the position or status of being a citizen” (Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p.250). In the light of the welfare state Turner (1993) and Best (2003) stressed the caring and protecting character of citizenship rights. Such basic definitions, however, do not reveal the complexity of citizenship in modern times postulated in this research (cf. objective 1) and fail to include diverging citizenship experiences among individuals (Weber, 2008), particularly among youths. Consequently, new classifications of citizenship have been conceptualised to embrace different forms of lived citizenship. These new concepts classified citizens as accidental (Nyers, 2006), bionic (Isin, 2004), cosmopolitan (Linklater, 1998), denationalised (Sassen, 2002), flexible (Ong, 1999), neoliberal (Hindess, 2002), neurotic (Isin, 2004), post-cosmopolitan

(Dobson, 2003), racial (Gilroy, 1991), and sexual (D. Evans, 1993). Nevertheless, many scholars still rely on the traditional view of citizenship developed by T. Marshall (1973):

[Citizenship is] *a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspirations can be directed.*

(T. Marshall, 1973, p.28-29)

This quote emphasises citizenship as oriented towards an image of an ideal implying a goal against which the progress of *becoming* a citizen can be measured and efforts directed (Lesko, 2012). Assuming that the status of citizenship can only be achieved after completing citizenship training (T. Hall et al., 2000) leads to the difficult concept of citizenship as an outcome. This perspective on citizenship is crucial for the overall research question in this thesis as it illustrates the rationale behind the instrument of citizenship education seen as affecting the meaning of (good) citizenship among youths. Nicoll et al. (2013) argue further that such practices of citizenship learning situate youths in a “transitional stage between ‘childhood’ and ‘adulthood’” (France, 1998, p.99). Not surprisingly then, youths are seen often as future citizens (Arnot & Dillabough, 2000) with an emphasis put on duties, responsibilities, and ideal forms of citizenship that they need to achieve. However, one line of argument in contemporary citizenship theory emphasises that citizenship cannot be treated as such a fixed and unchallengeable goal (see Barnes et al., 2004; Staeheli & Hammett, 2013). Kerr (1999a, 2003) and McLaughlin (1992) conceptualised citizenship along a continuum based on individuals’ differing interpretations—their everyday meanings—of democracy and their multiple political beliefs. At one end of the continuum citizenship is seen as formal status in legal terms, primarily focused on ‘who qualifies to be a citizen’ (Hill & Lian, 1995; Kerr, 1999a, 2003; McLaughlin, 1992). At the other end, citizenship is defined more broadly. Here, citizenship extends beyond formal rights and includes peoples’

belonging to the community and their participation and contribution to a deeper integration of the society (Barbalet, 1999; Hill & Lian, 1995; Kerr, 1999a, 1999b; 2003; McLaughlin, 1992). By stressing the relationship between citizenship norms, behaviours and virtues (Conover, Crewe, & Searing, 1991; Theiss-Morse, 1993) citizenship can be defined as a “set of rights, duties, and identities linking citizens to the nation-state” (Koopmans, Statham, Giugni and Passey, 2005, p.7).

Citizenship is understood as a quintessentially Universalist concept (Kiwani, 2005). In other words, all citizens are deemed to be of equal status and should be treated the same, enjoying the same rights with the same obligations (Lister, 2010). Citizens have traditionally been conceived as abstract, disembodied individuals, rising above the claims of the body, of the private domestic sphere and able to apply rationality and reason in a dispassionate way (Lister, 2010). Feminist scholars have demonstrated, however, that this false universalism embedded in citizenship has facilitated the exclusion of marginalised groups such as women or young people from full citizenship (Pateman, 1989; Pearce & Hallgarten, 2000; Robertson, 2005; Siim, 2000; Tupper, 2008, 2009; Young, 2000). The failure of citizenship education to adequately incorporate social and cultural differences in society reinforces these prevalent inequalities among citizens (Cogan, 2000; Gordon, Holland, & Lahelma, 1999; Lister, 2003, 2007a).

The meanings given to the concept of citizenship are historically constructed and vary according to social, political and cultural contexts (Harinen, 2000; Lister, 2003). In other words, the modern economic and political climate shapes the ways in which desirable citizenship is understood (Skeggs, 2004). Citizenship is a contextualised or momentum concept (Hoffmann, 2004). It represents an abstract, universal concept, but at the same time it is also “interpreted and articulated in specific national social and political contexts, reflecting historical traditions and institutional and cultural complexes” (Lister et al., 2007, p.1). The recognition of citizenship as contextualised is crucial to this study (overall research question) understanding it as a *lived* experience (cf. Print & Coleman 2003; Kennedy, Hahn, & Lee 2007). Citizenship as a lived social relation helps to address the overall research question of this

thesis because it refers to “the meaning that citizenship actually has in people’s lives and the ways in which people’s social and cultural backgrounds and material circumstances affect their lives as citizens” (T. Hall & Williamson, 1999, p.2).

Affective Citizenship

As stated above, both the status (entitlements to rights) and practice (set of responsibilities) of citizenship have regularly been acknowledged (Isin, 2008). Osler and Starkey (2005) suggest further that citizenship is a feeling of social affiliation. Such affective dimensions of citizenship have only recently been recognised within citizenship studies to be as important as the legal–political character of citizenship (Fortier, 2010; Isin, 2004; Johnson, 2010). Affective citizenship refers to citizens’ feelings of affection and loyalty towards the nation (Fortier, 2008; R. Jones, 2001) and how these emotional aspects are integrated into governmental strategies to define citizenship (Johnson, 2010). Citizens’ feelings and performances of particular emotions are involved in the construction of citizen identities: the effect of emotions of fear and anxiety (Isin, 2004; Johnson, 2010) on behaviour and conduct inculcation into youth (cf. objective 3). Berlant (2005) argues that the “mobilisation of [the] fearful affective public has become particularly prominent during the twenty-first century” (p.46). This emotionalisation of citizenship illustrates that governing strategies are designed around an affective insecure citizen subject in need of safety (Fortier, 2010; Isin, 2004; Weber, 2008).

Another emotional approach in the multiple conceptualisations of citizenship refers to the concept of civil society and the togetherness of citizens in terms shared norms and values (Alexander, 2006). Unlike traditional concepts of citizenship (see above), this civil society framing stresses social cohesion and the development of common shared norms and values (Oser & Veugelers, 2008). When conceptualising youth-citizenship and citizenship education the social domain of citizenship is particularly important for this thesis (overall research question). It offers a better understanding of youths’ everyday citizenship practices (Biesta, 2007; Goodwin et al., 2013), which constitute the social tasks that are deemed to be accomplished by them (Rychen & Salganik, 2003; ten Dam & Volman, 2007). The adequate fulfilment of social

tasks or acts of citizenship (Isin & Nielsen, 2008) is considered to characterise everyday citizenship in society (ten Dam, Geijsel, Reumerman, & Ledoux, 2011). However, the dominant approaches used in research on young people's civic engagement have tended to focus on mainstream or citizen-orientated activities (Norris, 2003) such as voting, joining groups and voluntary work rather than taking into account less formal and everyday ways of civic engagement.

2.4 Children, Youths or Adults?

As this study focuses on analysing *youth* citizenship perceptions and their everyday meanings (overall research question) it is important to clarify how youth is conceptualised in this thesis. In recent years, scholars working on children's and young people's politics have brought together multiple lines of research (Abebe, 2007; Bartos, 2012; Beale, 2006; Benwell, 2009; Bosco, 2010; Bragg, 2007; Brocklehurst, 2006; Gallacher, 2005; Gallagher, 2008; Habashi, 2008; Holloway & Valentine, 2000a; Horton & Kraftl, 2005; Kallio, 2007; Kallio & Häkli, 2010, 2011b, 2013; Katz, 2004; Kjørholt, 2007; Kulynych, 2001; Mayall, 2006; McNeish & Gill, 2006; Mitchell & Elwood, 2012, 2013; Ruddick, 2007; Skelton, 2002, 2010, 2013; Staeheli, Attoh & Mitchell, 2013; Strandell, 2010; M. Thomas, 2009; Valentine, 2003; Wood, 2012a). Based on its relational reading of the political, this line of work conceptualises children and young people as both policy objects or political becomings whose matters are largely managed by their adult societies, and, at the same time, as political subjects who actively participate in society (Lesko, 2012). However, the terms children and youth are often used in an undifferentiated way, seen as mutually exchangeable, and research on both groups is often blended into the subject of children's geographies (Holloway & Valentine, 2000b). Such conceptual amalgamation bears the risk of prioritising children over young people (B. Evans, 2008) although young people arguably can shape and experience their (political) lives very differently from children (Weller, 2006). Therefore, it is important to differentiate between children and youths (Prout, 2000).

Prevalent academic representations continue to constitute young people as 'becoming adults' (Worth, 2009), who require containment within institutional

sites (e.g. schools) dedicated to teaching the skills and requirements of adulthood (James et al., 1998; Prout & James, 1997). Similarly, Robinson (2011) emphasises that education systems operate on the manufacturing principle of linearity; in that there are distinct sequential stages to the process. Each stage is meant to build logically on the one preceding it. Embedded in this principle of linearity is the idea that education is essentially a preparation for something which happens later on: a *real* life as an adult. In other words, the development of schools effectively removed young people from adult society (Ariès, 1962). Young people are conceptualised as adults in becoming, which demonstrates a narrow perspective on adolescence by its focus on duties and self-responsibilities as main characteristics of adulthood. Moreover, young people are seen as future citizens requiring socialisation through education and training (Skelton, 2002) and not as individuals here and now. Rather than being objects of socialisation, however, young people construct their own socio-cultural perspectives that can both reproduce or transform differences as they encounter new experiences (Holt, 2007; Pimplott-Wilson, 2011). Nevertheless, public debates frequently characterise young people as uninterested, egoistic, politically disengaged, and improperly acting individuals (Forbrig, 2005; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Harris, Wyn, & Younes, 2010; Twenge, 2006).

Although this viewpoint holds some truth, it is important to recognise that youths are not political in the same way as adults, nor do they communicate their political engagements and standpoints through adult means of communication. This does not signify, however, that youths are apolitical or their engagement should be viewed as less than that of adults (Cele, 2013). On the contrary, youths are social actors capable of political action, but they engage in different ways than adults. The impression of a disengaged youth is based on the unawareness of adult-centred thinking that youths' political engagement is restricted by various *adult-imposed* and structural constraints (Aitken, 2001; Bosco, 2010; Holt, 2011; Katz, 1993, 2007; Skelton & Valentine, 2003; M. Thomas, 2011; Vanderbeck, 2008). Such structural factors can limit opportunities and experiences of young people in everyday life (cf. Nicoll et al., 2013; Tolonen, 2008; Valentine & Skelton, 2003b). Citizenship is presented as a delayed act of participation "as the time of

youth is about a future (real) life of adulthood" (Wyn & White, 1997, p.12-13). Young people are dominated by institutions that subject and direct them through distinct techniques (e.g. conduct of conduct) and practices of power (e.g. symbolic violence) (Kallio & Häkli, 2011a). As a result, young people's adequate actions remain controlled by adult-imposed and institutionally regulated norms of behaviour. Consequently, the context of formal schooling is particularly important when investigating forms of resistance and subjection to official discourses of good citizenship (cf. objective 1).

2.5 Formal Education

Schools have been recognised as important spaces of citizenship education to foster an active and engaged citizenry (Annette, 2009; Brooks & Holford, 2009; O'Toole, 2003). Education represents a powerful tool to instil particular perspectives of democracy, politics, and citizenship into youths (Benton et al., 2008; M. Evans, 2006; Ireland et al., 2006; Staeheli, 2010; Weller, 2003, 2009). Its main purpose is arguably to (re)create an appropriate citizenry that has to some extent internalised certain desired values and behaviours (cf. objective 1) to stabilise the political status in the country (Apple, 2003; W. Lee, 2012a).

In his seminal work *Republic*, Plato presented some stimulating ideas on the role of (citizenship) education. In his view, at the age of ten, children should begin their 'intellectual and aesthetic education' (Rowe, 2012), before being taught higher mathematics and philosophy. The latter two subjects, however, should be reserved only for a small elite designated to rule the state. Clearly, such an approach to education is highly problematic. It is deeply meritocratic and elitist and also profoundly communitarian and pro-government. It seems the main goal of formal education is to (re)create appropriate citizen subjects according to the political status quo (Melling, 1987). Moreover, citizenship, according to Plato, assumes that individual citizens subordinate themselves to a 'common good' of government and nation (Rowe, 2012). Undoubtedly, Plato represents a very extreme, although relevant, illustration of the fundamental connection between government and citizenship education; a connection that reflects some of the central issues at stake in this research project, for example processes of subjection and resistance to official discourses.

In his conceptualisation of education, Plato dismisses any existing or potential tensions between citizens' commitment to the state and their other identities and forms of membership. For him, education should focus only on socialising citizens into the former (Rowe, 2012). Such competing affiliations, however, are existing and continuously changing in modern societies (Mitchell, 2003). Compared to authoritarian regimes, liberal societies promote and support citizens' freedom for individuality and diversity (Kymlicka, 1990). Thus, liberal societies are characterised by a strong resistance to political indoctrination, with schools respecting and recognising the individuality of students (Galston, 1991). Hence, one crucial question of citizenship education today is how schools should inculcate the common norms and values of good citizenship without overlooking the individual (cultural) identities of the young.

The strong link between national identity formation and formal education has been increasingly recognised by numerous scholars (e.g. Callan, 2004; Hill & Lian, 1995; Vickers, 2009; Wong, 2002). The (re)making of citizen subjects and their common identities has been one focus of this research area (Zajda, 2009). Formal education encompasses not only efforts to create a literate and well-trained population, but also involves the constitution of a particular kind of subject: the national citizen (cf. Mitchell, 2003; Staeheli & Hammett, 2010). In the context of globalisation, national governments have been under considerable pressure maintaining their influence on individuals' identification with national identity and good citizenship (B. Davies, 2000; Gordon, 1980; B. Turner, 2001; see Chapter One) and recognised the potential impact of citizenship education on youths' forms of belonging to the nation (T. Hall et al., 1998; Ichilov, 1998). Spaces of citizenship education are seen today as arenas of highly politicised and complex processes that constitute the state subject of a good citizen (Hanson-Thiem, 2009; Holloway & Jöns, 2012; Mitchell, 2003; Pykett, 2009).

The Good Citizen

When defining good citizens, as opposed to bad citizens (Christ, 2006), scholars frequently associate good citizenship with the concepts of value and behaviour, which draw on traditional images of citizenry in ancient Greece

(van Deth, 2007). The concept of good citizenship is focused on acts of citizenship—what people do and should do (Isin, 2008)—to emphasise the “constitutive relationship between elite representations and ordinary acts of citizenship and their specific contexts” (Pykett et al., 2010, p.523). More importantly, acts of good citizenship are shaped by individuals’ knowledge, their personal skills and the citizen subject positions that are available to them and, crucially, accepted in society (Kennedy, 2010). The invocation of good citizens, therefore, is twofold: First, the framing (content and domains) of good citizenship is produced through elite actions. Second, this frame in turn provides “the repertoires of possible acts and social roles that are deemed to be good, as performed by ordinary would-be citizens themselves” (Pykett et al., 2010, p.524). Such behaviourist or moral approaches to citizenship are highly correlated with the facilitation of character education and citizens’ responsibilities (Dagger, 1997; Sabl, 2005; White, 2005). In his recent work on Asian citizenship, W.O. Lee (2012a, 2012b) emphasises particularly citizens’ rights and responsibilities. He perceives citizenship as a relational concept, where “being a good person is seen as a prerequisite for good citizenship, thus, civics and morals always come together” (W.O. Lee, 2012a, p.369).

There are conflicting views on the nature of knowledge and skills necessary for being a good citizen (Gilbert, 1996; Meredyth & Thomas, 1999; Pascoe, 1996). Concepts range from being socialised to the norms and expectations of society to the development of skills, dispositions, and knowledge to question even these norms and expectations (Han, 2009; Mason, 2012; Stanley, 2005; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Competing discourses of good citizenship centre on a problematic dichotomy between concepts, which focus on inactive knowledge consumption of pupils, and citizenship education that fosters engaged and critical citizens (MacNaughton et al., 2008). According to Criddle et al. (2004), however, these two concepts to good citizenship can be seen as different points on a continuum of good citizenship conceptualisation. Thus, good citizenship requires “people to behave socially but also [to] be willing and able to reflect upon political and social issues and contribute critically to society” (Westheimer, 2008, p.18). This suggests that individuals need to be able to reflect on different perspectives of good citizenship and

assess questions of (in)equality and democratic participation in society (Sim, 2010; Westheimer, 2008). At the same time, it is also deemed necessary that good citizens are acting socially responsible in a community (W. Lee & Fouts, 2005) through conformity and subjection to societal norms and conduct (cf. objective 1).

Citizenship Education

Citizenship education is not easy to define (Kerr, 2003). Very broadly speaking, citizenship education places a strong emphasis on civic education, which involves pupils learning about political, legal and economic systems, their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and how their government works (Butts, 1980; Callan, 2004; Heater, 2004; T. Marshall, 1950; Osborne, 2001). Citizenship education is also concerned with morality; mainly how morality emerges from particular social and political frameworks (I. Davies, Gorard & McGuinn, 2005). Although families and the media are important settings of citizenship education, formal schooling arguably is regarded as one of the most effective instruments of youth socialisation today (Pimlott-Wilson, 2011; Sim & Low, 2012).

The topic of citizenship education is attracting increased attention worldwide as a state-sponsored feature of the schooling curriculum (see Faulks, 2000; Starkey, 2000; Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999). According to Grossman (2010), schools propagate citizenship through what they teach (the curriculum), how they teach (pedagogy), and through the interaction between the two (the hidden curriculum). In addition, Doppen (2010) argues that the role of schools is to control a society's educational system, hence its official knowledge (Apple, 2000; Freire, 2000; Giroux, 2006; J. Moore, 2007). Cultivating good citizens is the fundamental goal and the basic educational requirement of the state (Yang & Chung, 2009). The dominant approach of citizenship education is education for national citizenship (Parmenter et al., 2000). National governments use schools and the curriculum to convey ideal images of good citizens and citizenship to students (Kennedy & Fairbrother, 2004). National education is one of the most successful administrative systems to instil national forms of belonging (Osler, 2011), which are deemed crucial for young people to perceive the nation as an imagined community

(Anderson, 2006). The strong impact of schooling on the development of a national identity among youth is illustrated by multiple studies of policy and curriculum documents, among others, in the fields of language education (e.g. Bamgbose, 2000; Mansoor, Meraj & Tahir, 2004; Spolsky, 2004), social studies or civics education (e.g. Barnard, 2003; Cogan et al., 2002; Ichilov, 1998), and moral or religious education (e.g. J. Beck, 1998; Cheng, 2004; Lo & Man, 1996; Tan & Chew, 2004).

This line of work revealed a considerable overlap of citizenship education concepts and that of character or moral education (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). Citizenship and moral education are often used interchangeably with similar meanings (Sears & Hughes, 1996, 2006). Osborne (2004) even states that the very nature of citizenship has been misunderstood. He argued that “the good citizen [is equated] with the good person, the man or woman who helps others, respects other people’s rights, obeys the law, is suitably patriotic and the like” (p.13). Concepts of citizenship and moral education, however, vary significantly. Character education focuses on individuals’ actions and morality, aims at youth’s internalisation of a shared one-dimensional perspective on the world, and envisages young people as rather uncritical receivers of the communicated facts (Lovatt et al., 2010; Sears & Hughes, 2006). Citizenship education, however, is usually assigned to a certain academic discipline, is commonly taught as an individual subject at school, is directed towards the inculcation of common morals, encourages a critical engagement with formal education, and imagines youths as critical and (pro)active citizens (M. Davis, 2003; I. Davies, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005; Duus, 2011; Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004).

As stated above, one important shortcoming of the citizenship literature is that youths’ political activity is conceptualised only within the very limiting scope of young peoples’ involvement in formal democratic processes, for example voting (Cooks & Epstein, 2000; Hickey, 2002; Torney-Purta, 2001, 2002) and does not embrace the multifaceted character of youth citizenship (overall research question). Citizenship education is imagined as the transformation of pupils into engaged and active political citizens (P. Collins, 2010; Kennelly & Llewellyn, 2011), regardless of their potentially different

gender, race, class, or culture (Schuitema, ten Dam, & Veugelers, 2008). Citizenship programmes are part of a broad set of efforts to responsabilise citizens such that they regulate their own behaviour and reduce the need for state interventions (R. Jones et al., 2011; J. Davies, 2012). In promoting active citizenship, then, optimism regarding youth is coupled with an instrumental logic that imagines youth who can be moulded into agents capable of engaging with social problems without challenging the structures and relationships underlying them (Staeheli, Attoh & Mitchell, 2013). Formal education, it is argued, communicates concepts of democratic structures and political systems, which form youths' perceptions of, and attitudes to, the 'necessary' participation of young people in everyday civic life (Tupper, 2010). However, less attention has been paid to "how students themselves define and understand civic life [apart from static and de-contextualised definitions offered by researchers who deploy] traditional measures of civic achievement" (Rubin, 2007, p.453). These traditional measures take not into account the broader social forces that may influence students' perceptions of good citizenship (Kennelly & Dillabough, 2008; Rippberger & Staudt, 2003), which are at stake in this thesis (cf. objective 1).

As young people develop, they generate a sense of their own identity—how to understand themselves—by using a broad variety of sources, which include established identity aspects of, for example, gender, race, or class (Shields & Requa, 2010). The impact of cultural practices and structural inequalities affecting youths' daily experiences with educational institutions and their teachers are, however, often overlooked (Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2010; Pykett, 2009; Rubin, 2007; Sim, 2008). Through banal situations in everyday life youths can create an understanding of themselves as citizens (Haste, 2004). In addition to experiences gained elsewhere, formal education is seen as an important locale for the accumulation of democratic knowledge and the critical reflection upon these (Daniels, 2001). Such reflections are required for youth to develop a sense of identity and, at the same time, enhance their meaningful involvement in civil society (Han, 2000). At the same time, however, they might enable youths to resist and challenge discourses of good citizenship. Similarly, Banks (2004) emphasises the importance of youths' recognition of multiple perspectives on moral and social issues in society to

develop their own individual viewpoint. Ideally, then, improving individuals' reflection by enhancing their critical competencies (critical thinking) should be the focus of citizenship education (Lawy & Biesta, 2006).

Citizenship education infused into social studies' and other subjects' syllabi communicate both explicit and implicit common expectations, restrictions, and norms to youths (cf. objective 1), and enunciate the ideal of the good citizen (Cornbleth, 2002). Pupils' societal views and their different social and economic subject positions are, at least partly, constituted by these societal messages (Ho, 2012). The underlying assumption that formal education contributes to the development of good citizenship is crucial to the introduction of citizenship objectives into the school curriculum (Geboers et al., 2012). According to Ichilov (2002), socialisation and allocation effects of schools can lead to pupils' differentiated educational experiences and, as a consequence, impact on their development as citizens. However, as stated above, there are controversies about how much the state should socialise citizens, and how much these socialisation processes allow for pupils' counter-socialisation (W. Lee, 2012b). Some contend that citizens should critically and also rationally consider their position towards the state rather than acting loyal by default or as a result of socialisation processes (Brighouse, 1998, 2006; Barry, 2001). Schools, can equip youths with different forms of social capital and influence their access to capabilities and knowledge (Apple, 2004; Bowles & Gintis, 2011). Knowledge, however, is never apolitical or exclusive of affective and embodied influences. It is always saturated with ideology and political views (Rouse, 1996; Schwandt, 2000; Sturm & Bauch, 2010), which regularly results in the ingestion of specific bodies of knowledge, values and norms by all educated citizens (Apple, 2000). It follows further that individuals are not autonomous beings that can freely resist or challenge values and norms (see objectives) but are *subjects* constructed by their daily experiences (Kennedy, 2004).

Subjectivity in a Poststructuralist View

Scholars in the area of education increasingly deploy poststructural theories to investigate issues of subjectivity and subject positioning (Green & Reid, 2008). Poststructural theories, however, involve a broad variety of different

perspectives and approaches (Langley, 2009). Poststructuralists can be seen as largely Foucauldian, when “tracing how discourses shift, and how, different kinds of subjecthood become possible – or impossible” (B. Davies, 2006, p.425). Arguably, the most important concept within poststructuralist theory is subjectivity (Green & Reid, 2008). Subjectivity is understood as both “an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows” (Foucault, 1971, p.323). The constitution of particular subjects (e.g. the good citizen) is a fundamental aspect of formal education (Curtis, 1988; B. Davies, 2000; Youdell, 2006a, 2006b). In schools and through schooling, pupils learn consciously and unconsciously about the sanctioned modes of subjectivity (Althusser, 1971; H. Moore, 1994) and the lessons of self-control and external control of possible subject positions (Sim & Print, 2009). Therefore, in positioning themselves and others, and being positioned by others, students (re)produce certain limitations to subjectivity (Hyams, 2000).

Subjectivity can be theorised as “the process of becoming (and coming to be known as) this or that identity” (Sumara & Davis, 1999, p.195). Subjectivity involves an individual’s “sense and experience of herself; as well as her audiences’ understanding of ‘who’ she is and can be” (Youdell, 2006b, p.48)¹. Moreover, persons “come to ‘be’ ‘who’ they are by being intelligible within discourses, the bodies of meaning that frame social contexts” (Youdell, 2006b, p.2). It is important to note, however, that discourses are “locked in an intricate web of practices, bearing in mind that every practice is by definition both discursive and material” (Henriques et al., 1984, p.106). Conceptualising discourse in a Foucauldian sense, then, emphasises the true and intelligible status of certain ideas and identities and also recognises the strong link between discourse and its practices (Foucault, 2007a). Therefore, multiple different factors in formal education, including curricula, classroom practices, and pedagogies, shape students’ subjectivities (Tupper, 2010). Schools as discursive sites are spaces of pupils’ becoming (of subjects) by taking up individual subject positions “from which discourses make sense” (Barker & Galasinski, 2001, p.13). The processes of subject formation and identity construction cannot be considered politically neutral since each way

¹ The thesis uses the pronoun *she* in situations where the gender of the subject is unclear or variable to emphasise the relationship between language use and social reality. This is not to erase men from language, but to call the reader’s attention to the common use of male-based generics and grounded in my belief that women and men deserve social equality—not only in academic writing.

of being and becoming is inter-subjectively constituted and oriented in one or another way (Häkli & Kallio, 2013). The conceptualisation of pupils 'choosing' from various subject positions offers a better understanding of the complex and diverse social interactions in society (van Dijk, 1997). It emphasises the multiple ways in which these structures can affect students' behaviours (cf. objective 1) by stressing the (limited) positions available to them within a particular context (Reynolds et al., 2007). Compared to traditional fixed concepts of the self, subject positioning allows for the individual to resist, to be "(re)constituted through the various discursive practices in which [students] participate" (B. Davies, 2000, p.1385).

Indoctrination

One debated issue in citizenship studies is the criticism of indoctrination and the imposition of socialisation (W. Lee, 2012b). Consequently, some scholars perceive citizenship education to be more akin to indoctrination than education (Sears & Hughes, 2006). Arthur (2003) defines indoctrination as "to teach something that is true or universally accepted regardless of evidence to the contrary or in the absence of evidence at all" (p.37). The uncritical acceptance of official knowledge and the omission of evidence contradicting these ideas are both encompassed by this definition. Sears and Hughes (2006) argue citizenship education is often focused on creating true believers rather than critical individuals. To them, discourses of citizenship education often over-simplify problematic situations, and conceal alternative solutions to current issues. In a more moderate way, it could be argued that citizenship education today revolves around both practices of education and indoctrination. Smagorinsky and Taxel (2005, p.116) claim that there are no "citizenship education discourses, policies or programmes [that] match the dominant attributes of either indoctrination or education entirely", but many of them can be seen as hybrids at some point along a continuum.

2.6 Neoliberalism in Education

Understandings of neoliberalism are highly complex and can vary significantly (see Bailey & Maresh, 2009; Breathnach, 2010; Fitzsimons, 2011; Goldfrank & Schrank, 2009; Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2012; Isopahkala-Bouret et al., 2012; Peters, 2011). Hence, "there is no pure or paradigmatic version of

neoliberalism, but rather a series of geopolitically distinct hybrids" (Springer, 2010, p.1031). Neoliberalism can be seen as an economic and political theory that emphasises the active role of the state in creating and preserving the functioning of a free market economy (Olssen, 2003). Neoliberalism can also be seen as fundamentally cultural and symbolic because of its impact on the everyday, for example on young people growing up in such an environment (Kennelly, 2008). The multitude of different perspectives on neoliberalism has stimulated some to synthesise perspectives on neoliberalism into categories. Mudge (2008) stresses intellectual, democratic, and political fields as the "three faces of neoliberalism" (p.707). Similarly, Larner (2000) associates the neoliberal concept with that of ideology, policy, and governmentality. A 'false dichotomy' between conceptualisations of neoliberalism influenced by either ideology or governmentality has dominated contemporary theorisations for a long time (Springer, 2012). J. Peck and Tickell (2002) suggest this produces

on the one hand, overgeneralized accounts of a monolithic and omnipresent neoliberalism, which tend to be insufficiently sensitive to its local variability and complex internal constitution, and on the other hand, excessively concrete and contingent analyses of (local) neoliberal strategies, which are inadequately attentive to the substantial connections and necessary characteristics of neoliberalism as an extralocal project.

(pp.381-382)

Therefore, some interpretations of neoliberalism are risking the re-inscription of the grand hegemony of neoliberalism, concealing an actually existing neoliberalism, and its different becomings, effects, and shapes in multiple contexts (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Clarke, 2004; Gibson-Graham, 2008; Larner, 2003; J. Peck et al., 2009). In contrast, an engagement with neoliberalism as hybrid and contingent and how it develops in practice was criticised by scholars calling for informed statements regarding its generic features which go beyond the mere account of its situated emergence (Castree, 2006; J. Peck, 2004; J. Peck & Tickell, 2002). Ong (2007) illustrates this dichotomy by distinguishing the 'big N' Neoliberalism that is "a fixed set of attributes with predetermined outcomes" from the 'small n' neoliberalism, which serves "as a logic of governing that mitigates and is selectively taken up in diverse political contexts" (p.3). Recent works,

however, demonstrate an emerging convergence between the opposed perspectives (see Larner, 2005, 2006, 2012; J. Peck, 2004, 2010, 2012, 2013), which emphasises a necessary attentiveness to both the particularities and the general aspects of neoliberalism. Ong (2007) suggests neoliberalism, as a mobile technology of governing, is an ever-changing 'global assemblage' (Collier & Ong, 2005) or the reflexive interaction of global and local logics. Accordingly, J. Peck (2012) emphasises "neoliberalism exists in the world not as a fixed ideology or singular form of practice, but as a series of particular, context-specific, and contradiction-laden enactments" (p.279): as multiple neoliberalisms (Larner, 2005).

It is the different spatio-temporalities of neoliberalism (J. Peck, 2010, 2013), the 'geohistoricity' (J. Peck, 2012) of neoliberal processes that are reflected in Ong's (2006b) concept of neoliberalism as exception. As mentioned above, understanding neoliberal practices in Asia as exceptions to traditional political activity, which brings about a reconfiguration of political logics and spaces (Ong, 2007), is crucial for this thesis. The global assemblage of neoliberalism is visible not only in Western liberal democracies but also 'as exception' in authoritarian or postcolonial societies in Southeast Asia, where neoliberalism is not always the dominant governing technology. At the same time, however, exceptions to neoliberalism can be mobilised to constrain some society groups from participating meaningfully in society. In Southeast Asia, for example, migrant workers are deprived from better living standards created through neoliberal policies (Ong, 2006b). The perseverative utilisation of neoliberalism as exception is illustrated, for example, by neoliberal policies aimed at the production of free, independent, and self-responsible citizen subjects (Ong, 2006a) that are implemented in authoritarian systems with frequently ambivalent or restricted conditions of freedom. The global assemblage of neoliberalism (as exception) generates an environment of coexistence where free individuals co-exist with the not free, where non-constrained flows of knowledge meet with the difficulties of some to gain even basic knowledge, and where good citizens are expected to be self-serving but patriotic beings. Consequently, neoliberalism leads to the fragmentation of societies rather than the harmonisation of living conditions within a nation (Ong, 2007).

One example of neoliberal practices is the recent shift towards a more individualistic, highly mobile and skills-based education compared to a former focus on the creation of the 'tolerant citizen' (Graham, 2007). The *strategic cosmopolitans* (Mitchell, 2003) are the product of the neoliberal agenda in education, which stresses fierce global competition, inevitable cost reductions in public education, and the desire for individual choice and responsibility (Hanson-Thiem, 2009; Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2012). At the same time, Turner (2001) argues that personal identities are no longer defined by work in the same way as they used to be. However, it cannot conceal the fact that certain formulations of citizenship continue to depend on employment and market rules (Pixley, 1993) and evince an underlying economic rationale (cf. objective 2). Obtaining a multifaceted set of skills crucial for individuals to succeed in the neoliberal market economy, then, is the main focus of citizenship education (Roberts, 2009). Norms and practices for many fragments of society, for example education, are aligned with the rules of the market; a process termed by Fairclough (2010) as marketization.

As mentioned in Chapter One, there is a large body of literature in human geography which is concerned with the production of the neoliberal subject (Bondi, 2005; B. Davies et al., 2005; Keil, 2002; Lawrence, 2005; Mitchell, 2003; Skeggs, 2004; Walkerdine, 2003). However, critique has been voiced towards notions of the individual based on neoliberal subjecthood (Galt, 2013). Neoliberal concepts of subject positions, predominantly when dealing with youths, have been objected (Colls & Evans, 2008; B. Evans, 2008; McDowell, 2007; Ruddick, 2006, 2007). The neoliberal concept of self-responsibility adjusts the relation between duties and responsibilities (cf. objective 2), thus, necessitates individuals to accept their own liabilities but to refuse taking this responsibility for others (B. Davies et al., 2005). Neoliberal subjecthood, therefore, shapes youths as citizen subjects by emphasising the role of the competitive self-responsible individual in the market economy (Brown, 2005; B. Davies & Bansel, 2005; N. Rose, 1999). "Neoliberalism as a form of governmentality works by convincing students that there is no choice at a systemic level" (Walkerdine & Bansel, 2010, p.497), but their individual power encompasses the ability to make (right) choices to become successful and desired subjects within the inevitability of

the neoliberal economic system. Similarly, Davies (2006) states the neoliberal system successfully dismantles opposition to itself by preventing individuals to critically reflect on the 'inevitable' system.

According to feminist critique, there has been a shift towards a more individual, responsibility-based idea of citizenship in citizenship education as a consequence of neoliberal reasoning (Aapola, Gonick, & Harris, 2005). Neoliberal reasoning moves away from traditional rights-based models of citizenship towards consumer-oriented, entrepreneurial and economic subjects (Brown, 2003; Coffey, 2004; Peters, 2011). The dominant feature in neoliberal reasoning is that the state is entrusted, through education, to produce particular forms of subjectivity which align well with the presumed needs of the economy (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2010; Komulainen, 2006). The task of education, then, is to encourage students to become flexible and self-inventive entrepreneurs (Cohen, 2006); or as Fejes (2008a) states: "The educable subject is a lifelong learner created through a neoliberal governmentality that governs through the choices of each citizen" (p.97).

Choice in a neoliberal sense can be seen as the capability of the individual to constitute herself through material maximising choices and decisions (Read, 2009). The neoliberal individual, thus, has the freedom to make decisions informed and dominated by a strong utilitarian rationale (Tikly, 2003). This form of neoliberal governance seems to suspend traditional moral and ethical norms of the collective and imposes a new individual responsibility on each member of the society (Chen, 2013; Gordon, 1991). Self-centredness and material accumulation become new guidelines of neoliberal self-governance, which reassure the individual that the right path to follow—the one paved by the state—is the one most beneficial for her own self-interest (Tikly, 2003). Neoliberalism constitutes the background that makes certain decisions seem desirable and others to avoid (Read, 2009). Consequently, it is the state that creates a specific environment conducive for active and voluntary self-governance rather than the individual making actual free choices (cf. objective 1). Traditional conceptions of power and resistance require a certain opposition or friction between the state and the individual. In a neoliberal setting, however, such opposition is not existent or at least weakened.

Subsequently, it is in the best interest of the neoliberal citizen subject to make the right choices: to be a patriotic citizen and follow, not challenge, the normative line of (economic) self-governance (Rose, 1999).

2.7 Governmentality

A connected and frequently deployed concept to neoliberalism in human geography and the social sciences in general is Foucault's (1979, 1991, 2003, 2007c) notion of governmentality (e.g. Barry, Osborne, & Rose, 1996; Bigo, 2002; Burchell, Gordon & Miller, 1991; Dean, 2010; Dillon & Reid, 2000; Dupont & Pearce, 2001; Fejes, 2008b, 2010; Fejes & Nicoll, 2008; Larner & Walters, 2002; N. Rose, 1999). Governmentality highlights power relations in everyday life that constitute human beings into subjects (Foucault, 1979, 1991). Discourses construct identity positions and norms for acting and it is in part through these that power is exercised in practices of governing (Foucault, 1988, 1991). Acts of self-governance, the governing of others, and the governing of the state, are all interconnected as practices of governing and constitute the conduct of conduct (Foucault, 2007c).

Governmentality is based on the idea that governing involves the deliberate effort to shape opinions and conducts of individuals towards a particular end (Cashmore et al., 2013). To govern is to "structure the possible field of action of others" (Foucault, 2002, p.341) as per a specific rationality. Certain choices and actions seem attractive according to specific discourses while other paths are impossible to follow (Dunn, 2010). Governmentality pays attention to the multiple power-plays inherent in practices of governance, and particularly to acts of making certain subject positions possible. It is through these acts that individuals are produced who, then, are the subjects of governance (Dean, 2010; Ettliger, 2011; N. Rose & Miller, 2010). Moreover, governmentality considers the constitution of subjects in relation to different locations; for example, the school (Gillies, 2008). In each of these sites the application of particular governing modes—conduct of conduct—can be identified to aim at the creation of official knowledge (Apple, 2000; Dupont & Pearce, 2001). Mitchell (2003) states education is the central site of both the constitution and sustainment of subject positions. In governmentality theory the incompleteness of youths' autonomy is seen to justify educational

interventions by the state to encourage (and perhaps enforce) self-limitation and self-governance on the part of individuals, such that they perform the state's goals without questioning or reflecting on their role (Pykett et al., 2010; R. Jones et al., 2011). The development of the self-governing subject, however, involves also the development of creativity and self-reflection, which holds the potential to act in ways that may challenge, rather than reinforce, the state and social order (cf. objective 1).

Foucault's (1991) concept of governmentality postulates that all actors have certain choices (Kalpagam, 2000; Nordgren, 2010; N. Rose, 1999). Choice suggests that both the potential rejection of norms and everyday practices of normalisation (cf. objective 1) as well as the conduct of conduct are affected by (acts of) governmentality (Foucault 1997, 2007a, 2007b). Foucault (2000d) insists "there is no power without potential refusal or revolt" (p.324). The concept of the free subject (see above) must, however, be seen as flawed since "individual dispositions to choose are not the expressions of natural dispositions, but are worked up, governed and regulated by an array of actors who make possible [only] certain forms of individualised conduct" (Barnett et al., 2005, p.29). Traditional arguments of empowerment, which argue for removing repressive power relations or handing over power to less powerful groups (e.g. youth) are, thus, challenged by the concept of governmentality (Bragg, 2007; Triantafillou & Nielsen, 2001). Consequently, governmentality as a lens allows for a better understanding of how (youth) citizen subjects are positioned through discourses in particular ways (Popkewitz, 2008).

Weber (2008) argues the safest and most successful way to control citizens is to make them believe they would control themselves. Citizens are the object of governance: the individuals of interest (Tikly, 2003). The state encloses its citizenry in a system of security, which is justified with a general concern for security as an essential element of (economic) prosperity and performance (Gordon, 1991; P. Harris, 1999; Loader & Walker, 2007; N. Rose, 1996b). Such governance through emotions is of particular interest for this project when investigating the impacts of fear and insecurity on youths' behaviour (cf. objective 3). According to authors such as N. Rose (1996b), P. Harris

(1999) and Dean (2010), the globalised world economic system has stimulated such a form of neoliberal governance, which gave rise to an adapted relationship between nation and state. At the same time, the conception of social risk was also modified by neoliberalism. A shift away from a welfarian concept of collective accountability towards an individual risk-taking responsibility took place. O'Malley (1992), for example, has illustrated several such *responsibilisations* for risk from an individual to a community level. With the emergence of neoliberalism the governmental approach towards security was undergoing a significant modification (see Dean, 2010; Dudley, 1999; P. Harris, 1999). At this stage, the security of external processes to the state were no longer the only concern, but the security of mechanisms of governance themselves were under scrutiny in the new global economic system (P. Harris, 1999). The term of world-wide competitiveness emerged on the agenda and forced national governments not only to engage in domestic economic development, but also to secure economic advantages on a global scale. Through this new market discipline (Hoogvelt, 2000) national governments were urged to transform citizens' conduct towards a more competitive, risk-taking and self-responsible behaviour (Ball, 2007) leaving only little room for affective forms of belonging to society.

2.8 Risk Theories

When investigating the ways how emotions of fear and insecurity might affect citizens' behaviour and conduct, modern societies can be conceptualised as risk societies (Beck, 1992; Douglas, 1992; Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982). Risk is the means of self-governance of the individual while the main duty of the state is seen in the protection of the individual from these risks (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1990; Luhmann, 1993). While the work on risk society is very broad, there seems to exist a common notion of risk as unescapable. Regardless of how risks came into being in the first place, it is impossible to govern societies without managing those risks in one way or another (Tulloch & Lupton, 2003). Three main theoretical strands can be identified in the broader risk theory literature: the risk society thesis (Beck, 1992), the culture of fear approach (Furedi, 2002), and a Foucauldian (1990) approach to risk, which draws on the concept of governmentality.

Beck's Risk Society

The effects of risk on everyday life are the main focus of Beck's (1992, 1995, 1999, 2009) important contribution *Risk Society*. Beck's risk society thesis is grounded in the assumption that risks that affect certain social epochs are constantly changing (Beck, 1995). The vital argument of his approach is that it is impossible for anyone to (completely) escape risk due to its social and political force and presence as well as its high profile in the media (Mythen, 2004).

Culture of Fear Approach

The culture of fear approach suggests that risk has become omnipresent in everyday language and determines how people react in and make sense of their everyday life (Furedi, 2002). Proponents of this approach perceive risk as largely socially constructed through its promulgation and manipulation by the state and the media (Furedi, 2013). Fearful individuals, it is argued, are easier to govern. The emergence of anxiety or fear is seen as connected to social structures and cultural elements of society and (re)produced through interactions of individuals with society (Furedi, 2007). This approach opens up a meaningful investigation of the potential effects of emotions on youths' internalisation processes of societal (good) behaviour (cf. objective 3).

Governmentality Perspective

As stated above, the concept of discourse (formation) is essential to the theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1990, 1991). Through the dissemination of discourses governmental institutions can determine which concepts of risk are communicated and perpetuated, while excluding alternative perspectives (Gordon, 1980). Human agency is constituted by discourses which generate truths about society. Through the internalisation of these truths individuals adopt particular subject positions (Foucault, 1990; Mackey, 1999). Similarly, Hacking (1990, 1999) contends that discourses of risk direct individuals' reflexivity towards specific directions where only socially acceptable subject positions are to be assumed and (officially) unacceptable have to be rejected (Dean, 2010; Kemshall, 2006). Risk discourses, therefore, provide individuals with a framework of adequate action that regulates their social practices to (re)produce docile bodies of conformity (Mythen & Walklate, 2006): the good

citizen. One example of a docile body is illustrated by Isin's (2004) concept of the neurotic citizen.

The Neurotic Citizen

Isin (2004) claims that neurotic citizens govern themselves through their responses to fears and anxieties. The governance through neurosis means the individual subject is encouraged to make certain changes to her conduct to become a good citizen. Hence, neurotic citizens are prompted to reduce several dangers by adjusting their conduct based on their anxieties and fears rather than rationalities as proposed by Beck's risk society theorem (Walklate & Mythen, 2010). Foucault's (1995, 2001) main interest was the formation of active subjects who are not merely the objects of, or subjects to, governance but are governed through their own freedom (N. Rose, 1999). This means the subject embedded in a specific context governs her conduct by deliberating about whether one course of action is beneficial or not. These acts of self-governance illustrates how the individual is governed as a free subject that is encouraged to follow a certain (aspired) way of conduct, rather than being directly manipulated by the state (O'Malley, 1992, 1996, 1999; Petersen, 1996; N. Rose, 1996a; B. Turner, 1997b; Parton, 1998; Bennett, 1999). Isin (2004) contends the neurotic citizen is not a passive individual but an *active* subject who governs herself through affect and emotion.

Many people, however, conduct their lives on anxieties that are grounded in potential or subjective fears rather than objective or real existing dangers (Isin, 2004). Affects and emotions, thus, are important elements of peoples' conduct in everyday life. It is argued in this thesis that the Singaporean government is utilising fears and anxieties exactly because emotions cannot neatly be organised into rational categories of calculation and assessment. Governmental agencies govern *through* risks rather than eliminating them. Contrary to Isin (2004) this thesis suggests that the governance through risk means to some extent exploiting citizens' fears and anxieties to influence their perception of real dangers and imagined threats, leaving them in a condition of insecurity: a mental state of subjection.

2.9 Post-Materialism and Conditions of Insecurity

According to Maslow's (1954) hierarchies of needs theory peoples' unfulfilled functional desires tend to predominate cultural, social, and intellectual needs, particularly under conditions of insecurity. Maslow proposes further that the individual does not strive for higher level needs before her basic desires are met. The rank ordering of human needs changes, however, when individuals move beyond those deficiency needs: needs directly related to their survival (Maslow, 1954). Inglehart (1997) by drawing on Maslow (1954) argues that a shift towards post-materialist values has been occurred in more advanced industrial societies, which is part of a broader process of cultural change in modern societies (Inglehart, 1990, 1997, 2008; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Such post-materialist values refer to higher-order, non-economic concerns (Davis, 2000), which include self-expression, social equality, participation in decision makings affecting one's life, greater personal freedom, and political tolerance (Davis, 2000; Inglehart, 1995). Post-materialist values tend to arise in societies as these achieve relative economic security and political stability (de Graaf & Evans, 1996; Inglehart, 1977, 1997). Individuals who are socialised into these more secure and affluent societies tend to be more likely to hold post-materialist values (Davis, 2000). When lower-order, physiological needs are met, people's goals and values are able to shift from economic and survival concerns to those placing an emphasis on quality of life issues (Inglehart, 1995).

Most scholars conceptualise materialism as a value (Richins & Dawson, 1992; Kasser & Ryan, 1993; Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002), while others define it as a philosophic notion (Lange, 1974), a cultural system (Sahlins, 1976), a specific mind-set (Rassuli & Hollander 1986), or a personal trait (Belk, 1985). Rokeach (1973, p.5) defines values as "enduring beliefs that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence". Studies indicate further that individuals' fundamental values are essentially developed before reaching adulthood with little change afterwards (Rokeach, 1973; Inglehart, 1977, 1997). It is claimed that early life experiences influence significantly the formation of individual value and norm priorities; hence, childhood socialisation is perceived as one crucial focus in understanding

social preferences and behaviour (Inglehart, 1977). Post-materialism has been developed in a Western context, which potentially leads to analytical errors regarding non-Western societies that might differ in cultural, political, and societal norms and values (Cleveland, Laroche & Papadopolous, 2009; Kilbourne et al., 2009). However, other research (Ger & Belk, 1996; Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003) insists that the post-materialism theorem is applicable to Asian societies as well (Wong & Wan, 2009).

However, there is no clear evidence for a direct relationship between the prevalence of post-materialist values and the socio-economic development of societies. Inglehart (2008) argued post-materialist values are grounded in peoples' subjective *sense* of security and not an objective measurement of socio-economic data. Thus, it is crucial to focus on individuals' perceptions of fear and insecurity and not on standardised indicators since, even in societies of economic security and political stability individuals could feel insecure and anxious (Delhey, 2010). Concurring with the culture of fear approach (Furedi, 2013) stated above, it has been argued that under conditions of perceived danger subjects are eager to subordinate to external authorities (Inglehart, 2008). In the case of internal disorder or an economic breakdown, people are in search of a strong government that protects them against the (perceived) threats and insecurities (Huysmans, 2006). It is in the best interest of an authoritarian government, then, to maintain, in people's cognition, conditions of insecurity to preserve the materialistic orientation of its society, whilst at the same time preventing the rise of a post-materialist and less deferential citizenry. This is of particular importance for this study (cf. objective 3), as these instilled emotions of insecurity prevent a challenge of official discourses and an elite-challenging public in Singapore (Nevitte, 1996).

2.10 Discourse Formations of Common-Sense

Discourses are the "relational totality of signifying sequences that together constitute a more or less coherent framework for what can be said and done" (Dunn, 2010, p.82). Authorised accounts of phrasing and narration, which are constituted by statements, are the fundamental elements of such discourses (Foucault, 1972). These statements frequently reiterate specific concepts of a particular knowledge field (Foucault, 1971). Such discursive formations clarify

when and why certain individuals are authorised to speak and how some of their statements become perceived as legitimate facts (Foucault, 1988). The concept of discourse is, therefore, linked to the exercise of power. Who has a voice within a discourse and whose statements are perceived as true within a particular context both is affected by power. Those individuals and statements without power might be unheard (Foucault, 1971). Hence, what constitutes common-sense is determined, in large measure, by those who exercise power and domination over public institutions and society at large (Fairclough, 2001).

The common-sense—or regimes of truth (Foucault, 1980)—right or wrong, usually make sense (MacLeavy, 2008). They represent the social stock of knowledge in a society, which informs, for example, curricular content in citizenship education (Tupper & Cappello, 2008, Tupper et al., 2010). Originating in the works of sociologist Antonio Gramsci (1971), the common-sense is widely understood in education to be official knowledge that becomes internalised as truth (Apple, 2004; Kumashiro, 2004; Orłowski, 2011). Particular meanings become broadly recognised as incontestable and correct (see objectives) because of the power of strong discourses (J. Peck & Tickell, 2002) and not because of a genuine truth inherent in these utterances (Dunn, 2010). How this knowledge came to be *official* in the first place is often not considered by either teachers or students (Sim & Print, 2009). Rather, teachers understand that one aspect of their duties is to ensure the delivery of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required in the curriculum (Sim, 2010). The common-sense is culturally sanctioned but largely unexamined in educational spaces (cf. Tupper & Cappello, 2012). Moreover, the uncritical acceptance of common-sense (embodied in the curriculum) may shut down possible alternatives of what society might look like by constantly reifying a dominant vision or *preferred meaning* (S. Hall, 1997a; Skelton, 2000a) but not allowing for resistance (cf. objective 1). Common-sense is an illustration that, in everyday life, many facts that are accepted by individuals as true, are full of contradictions when examined more closely (Russel, 2010). Curricula can be seen as a significant tool through which culturally acceptable attitudes are normalised, explicated in many ways by teachers, and internalised by pupils (Tupper et al., 2010).

Fairclough (2001) emphasises that naturalisation “is the royal road to common sense” (p.76). Consequently, it can be argued that citizenship education, as (re)presented in the curriculum, reflects common-sense understandings of how individuals *should* engage as citizens (Ahmad, 2004). Engel and Ortloff (2009, p.182) claim “curricula can be conceived as a state’s expression of the cultural frames of citizenship”. Yet, it seems that a reworking of such cultural frames is hampered by the common-sense itself (cf. objective 1).

Textbooks offer students a particular narrative of citizenship grounded in the common-sense (Han, 2009). The illustration and definition of citizenship is based in most curriculum documents on seemingly absolute facts ready for uncritical internalisation (Tupper, 2010). For most parts, these documents determine “young people’s responsibilities to the nation-state” (Kennelly & Dillabough, 2008, p.496) with an emphasis on good character (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Consequently, only students memorising the official definition of citizenship communicated in the curriculum can become good citizens (Tupper et al., 2010). Students are not invited into a debate regarding the complexities and challenges of being a citizen, or the contested nature of citizenship itself (Sears, 2010), but are captured by the seductive quality of common-sense (Terrell, 2013). The written definition of citizenship in the curriculum affects youth’s perceptions and imaginations of good citizenship not only within spaces of education but also beyond (Sears & Hughes, 2006). Such statements, then, partially constitute the officially aspired way students *should* think about citizenship and the ways they become dutiful citizens (Brooks, 2013), by demonstrating those actions encompassed in the syllabi (Kennelly & Llewellyn, 2011). On a similar note, Skelton (2000a) argues, “knowledge can be used to control the behavior of others, to determine how we think about others, to legitimise practices which restrict and constrain the behavior of others” (p.186). This illustrates the power of the common-sense and, as illustrated above, can also be perceived as a form of indoctrination (Sears & Hughes, 2006). Moreover, this concurs with Orlowski’s (2011) definition of hegemony as “the ideal representation of the interests of the privileged groups as universal interest, which are accepted by the masses as the natural order” (p.42).

However, Sears and Hughes (2006) argue that education has also the potential to counteract indoctrination as it “opens up possibilities for alternative understandings [and fosters the] critical application of evidence and argument” (p.4). Similarly, Orłowski (2011) states that schools have the potential to be sites of counter-hegemony through the work of educators who challenge students to understand and critique ideologies and work toward social change. Foucault’s (1977) discourse conception affirms that discourses are not unchangeable, although some seem to dominate certain contexts. There is always potential for discourses to change or for discursive meanings to shift into other directions. However, through the process of indoctrination (Sears & Hughes, 2006), made possible through the hegemonic creation and maintenance of common-sense understandings of citizenship (Orłowski, 2011), discourses of good citizenship may be reproduced by students (and their teachers) rather than challenged (cf. objective 1). Individuals’ capability to change wider societal practises is influenced by their different subject positioning (McNay, 2004). The critical and active reflection on one’s subject position is necessary to challenge behaviours of discourse reproduction (Borg et al., 2002; Butler, 1997b). Subjectivity can be shaped by such critical reflection (Fejes, 2008b). However, Youdell (2006a) indicates that although students are not necessarily aware of good citizenship discourses they are still, at least to some extent, constituted by them. Hence, norms produced through socialisation processes influence, but do not define the broad variety of subject positions available to individuals (Holt, 2008). It is not simply “that there is a ‘discourse’ ... that produces these effects, but rather that there is a limit to discourse that establishes the limits of human intelligibility” (Butler, 2004a, p.35).

2.11 Institutional Power Relations

When analysing processes of subjection and resistance to official discourses of good citizenship communicated in educational institutions (cf. objective 1) notions of power-play come to mind. Studies in organisational geography have focussed on the complex correlations of power that take place in organisations (cf. Crang, 2000; Philo & Parr, 2000). Del Casino et al. (2000) state organisations “are productive of certain meanings rather than others, and in this sense one can select them as candidates through which to view

the operation of social power that limit what is thought [to be possible]" (p.526). Therefore, many scholars have investigated such power-play in the spatial context of schools as a site constitutive of, and constituted by, social relations of power (Ball, 1990; Blackman, 1998; Dwyer, 1997; Raissiguier, 1995). Such power-plays are complex and the diffusion of power is difficult to define (Allen, 2003). Power is not an attribute allocated to specific institutions but something that permeates organisational spaces in temporally and spatially fluctuating configurations (Mathews, 2011). Both the (re)production and contestation of discourses illustrate the complexity of power-play processes (Massey, 2000). Power, in its complex nature, is not simply an all-embracing dominant force that helps to oppress society (Allen, 2003), but a relational effect of multi-layered and multi-faceted social interactions (Holt, 2008). Power is always in conflict with resistance, which produces multifaceted entanglements of power (Allen, 2003; Sharp et al., 2000a). Allen (2003) observes "some people and some groups have more power than others, not by accident or by a series of fortunate events, but by virtue of the structure of relations of which they are part" (p.26). Such dominant power and the discourses that develop in reaction to it can have profound effects (Foucault, 1980; S. Hall, 1997a). Power relations in social interaction can be seen as potentially dominating and suppressive but always allow for resistance in productive ways (Hodgson, 2005). Therefore, when analysing power relations the hierarchical and contentious nature of social relationships needs to be scrutinised (S. Turner & An Nguyen, 2005).

Butler (1997b) offers a convincing account of power in the light of her performativity theory: "Power acts on the subject in at least two ways: first, as what makes the subject possible, the condition of its possibility and its formative occasion, and second, as what is taken up and reiterated in the subject's 'own' acting" (p.14). Consequently, power is about creating subject positions that are both highly regulated and at the same time encouraged to make their own self-dependent decisions (N. Rose & Miller, 2010). Political power, then, is exercised in the form of personal autonomy (Olssen, 2005).

2.12 Performativity Concepts

It has been argued in Chapter One that good citizenship is not always internalised but can be expressed as reworking disguised as pragmatic compliance: the *performed* subjection to discourse. There are very different ways in which performativity and performance are theorised (see Bial, 2004; Loxley, 2007; Striff, 2003). The critical discussions of performativity depend on particular, often contrasting, understandings of agency, subjectivity, and power, each of which having different critical effects on the conceptualisation of performativity (Gregson & Rose, 2000). Prior to the mid-1990s, there was relatively little interest among human geographers in the performativity of spatial practices. Over the past decades, however, the level of geographical attention paid to theories of performativity has increased significantly (Bell, Binnie, Cream, & Valentine, 1994; Gregson & Rose, 2000; Kaiser & Nikiforova, 2008; McCormack, 2005; Nash, 2000; Nelson, 1999; Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000).

One of the first scholars suggesting a connection between social life and the concept of performance was Goffman (1963, 1971, 1972). Performances, he argued, are critical for the study of societal interactions. For him, interaction encompasses two elements: the performance of the individual and the interpretation by the audience. His concept of interaction, thus, is based on a dynamic, conscious, and performing individual. Subsequently, Irigaray, (1985) and Rivière (1986) investigated performance from a psychoanalytic perspective, before more recently, several scholars in queer studies, particularly Butler (1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1997a, 1997b, 2002, 2004a, 2004b), deployed a linguistic definition of performance and performativity.

Important in Butler's theoretical conceptualisation is the distinction between performativity and performance. It is performativity as a discursive practice, which establishes ontological effects (Gregson & Rose, 2000). Although the notion of the pre-existing subject is challenged performativity does not reject the existence of the subject or its agency *per se* (Butler, 1993). Performance, on the other hand, assumes an existing subject and takes place within the framework only made possible through practices of performativity (Carlson,

2004) without necessarily being performative (e.g. theatrical performances). Performances are acts executed by individuals, while performativity stresses the citational practices that repeat and/or undermine discourses and which allow and limit the performances of the subject (Weber, 1995). Consequently, the performance of the good citizen could also have a performative character. However, Butler (1993) insists, that “performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition of the subject” (p.95).

The origin of performativity can be traced back to Austin’s (1962) speech act theory. Austin (1962) explored the ways in which the saying of something entails the performing of a social action. One important assumption underpinning Austin’s conception is that the act of saying acquires its performative force through compliance with an established set of social conventions (Rose-Redwood, 2008). Derrida’s (1988) deconstruction of speech act theory questioned Austin’s assumptions about adopted language theory and his interpretations, which claim *linguistic utopias* that assume only one-dimensional meanings of communication within society (Barnett, 1999). Through Butler’s (1993) reworking of Derrida’s (1988) work performativity established its value as a set of theorisations about power and agency. Butler’s performativity theory helped to overcome the traditional dichotomy between the ideal and the material while avoiding to privilege one over the other (similar to habitus theory see below). This led Nash (2000) to state “for Butler the concept of performativity is an attempt to find a more embodied way of rethinking the relationships between determining social structures and personal agency” (p.654).

Butler (e.g. 1990, 1993) has constantly contended that identities cannot pre-exist their performance, and the performed reproduction does not necessarily result in an exact copy of the original (Gregson & Rose, 2000). Repetitions of performances serve not to reproduce powerful discourses but have also the power to transform them (Butler, 1993). Feminist theorists drawing upon Butler’s (1990, 1993, 1997b, 2004b) ideas have emphasised subjects are

subconsciously inculcated with norms of performed correct identities. Identity performances are often done without consciously realising these processes (Gregson & Rose, 2000; Nash, 2000). "Performative acts are forms of authoritative speech; most performatives, for instance, are statements that, in the uttering, also perform a certain action and exercise a binding power" (Butler, 1993, p.225). Performativity differs here from constructivist arguments in the way that it rejects the idea that discourses present an omnipotent and deterministic force, which acts to govern subjects and eliminates all accounts of human agency (Butler, 1993). It is social constructivism that creates a human agent wilfully engaging in construction without any constraint (Butler, 1993). Political stakeholders, then, could be considered as being responsible for consciously and deliberately constructing reality. This, however, would suggest that these agents deliberately exercise control over cultural, historic and identity matters and are situated outside of the domain of reality constitution. But agents are not fully sovereign and independent. Rather, they are constituted within and through power (Youdell, 2006a). The subject positions that agents (subconsciously) assume are therefore contextualised within normative definitions of personhood (Holt, 2007). Performativity, then, helps to tackle these agency issues.

Although Butler's (1993, 1997) theorisation of performativity is grounded in the wider contexts of gender and sex, her approach is similarly applicable for the conceptualisation of national identity (Weber, 1995). If national identity is the discursive effect of performative practices, it follows that there is no pre-existence to its performance. Although Butler (1992) challenges the notion of the independent individual, she does not reject agency in general (McNay, 2004), but rather comprehensively engages with it.

Discursive Agency

Butler (1993) claims that the reiteration and sedimentation of norms lead to the construction of identities. Hence, performative utterances are repetitions of preceding performances, which are institutionalised through reiteration and become sedimented over time (Butler, 1993). Reiterative practices, according to Hodgson (2005), form linkages between the performative, organisations, and broader social structures. Butler (1993) argues all subject positionings are

always in becoming and partial. She (Butler, 1997a) insists that sedimented norms of persistent and dominant discourses always hold the possibility of disruption and change (cf. objective 1). Even though this thesis generally concurs with Butler, performativity cannot sufficiently explain the persistence of certain dominant discourses in society. Butler (1997a) proclaims that individuals can contest predominant processes of subject constitution through the self-conscious utilisation of discursive practices. This statement has substantial implications for the education sector. B. Davies (2006) claims that both teachers and pupils are commonly seen as independent subjects, however, with changing degrees of autonomy to decide what kind of person to be(come). Butler's performative approach to subjectivation illustrates that labelling students as this or that only appears to describe a pre-existing subject, but that it is this naming or defining of individuals, which constitutes the subject as if it was already a student. This has significant impacts on processes of rejection and subjection, which are the focus of this research project.

The individual might fight and struggle with the dominating power of subjectivation, but its own existence is constituted by it (Butler, 1997b). No individual can exist without these acts of self-formation or can construct her conditions of possibility isolated from such acts (Butler, 1993). Every act of subject becoming, however, reiterates and sediments the conditions that make subjects possible (Butler, 2004a). At the same time, subjects are not determined by these discursive practices but have agency. Following Butler (1995a), individuals can reflectively and actively analyse their conditions of possibility. This reflexivity allows them to disrupt and escape the powers that operate on them and which they enact. However, even if pupils possess such reflexive consciousness any attempt to contest subordination "will necessarily presuppose and reinvolve it" (Butler, 1997b, p.12). The ability to constitute the subject through designation is termed discursive agency (Butler, 1997a). Agency is conceptualised as a result of being constituted by and in discourse. Although Butler maintains the rational acting subject in her concept of agency and intent she rejects an autonomous subject pre-existing its citation (Butler, 1997a). The subject, however, can still utilise discourses performatively that are potentially formative, although discursive effects eventually surmount

such will and intent. Consequently, processes of discursive performativity are both constituted by the subject and constituting it. This means “‘agency’ is to be found in the resignification opened by discourse” (Butler, 1995b, p.135).

Foucault (1997) brings to mind, however, that practices of self-constitution “are nevertheless not something invented by the individual himself. They are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, his social group” (p.291). B. Davies (2006) concludes processes of subject formation are, thus, not dependent on internal powers of the subject, but on external power relations. In other words, the individual is “not imagined to be an object whose recognition is induced by the mechanisms of truth, power and the self, but rather that the mechanisms of truth, power and the self actually bring about the creation of the subject” (Rasmussen & Harwood, 2003, p.26). This essential dependency on discourses that initiates and sustains subject’s agency is what constitutes subjection (Butler, 1997b). Moreover, a subject with agency ignores or denies her dependent position out of necessity and not out of an underdeveloped ability for self-reflection. To achieve one’s accomplishment as a recognisable and existing subject it is crucial to develop a certain degree of perceived self-autonomy (B. Davies, 2006).

Butler (1997b) claims further “to master a set of skills is not simply to accept a set of skills but to reproduce them in and as one’s own activity. This is not simply to act according to a set of rules but to embody rules in the course of action and to reproduce those rules in embodied rituals of action” (p.119). Hence reiterating a particular terminology and repeating rituals of actions is fundamentally important for the internalisation of citizen identities (Hodgson, 2005). Moreover, conceiving multifaceted identity locations, such as race or citizenship as embodied social capital could potentially open up the opportunity to synthesise Butler’s performativity theory with Bourdieu’s habitus concept. According to Bourdieu (1991), embodied social capital emphasises how the socio-spatial context within which people live their life, as well as their social relationships and networks affects their becoming of an embodied individual (Holt, 2008). The key significance of Bourdieu’s work for this project, then, is the significance and value assigned to different social

relations. Individuals being well connected to multiple social networks can utilise this social capital to maintain their advantageous position in society (Holt, 2008). Youth's social networks in the field of education, thus, can both support and obstruct their acquirement of institutionalised cultural capital (W. Thomas & Webber, 2001). The engagement between Bourdieu's theories of habitus and Butler's performativity approach, thus, can provide a better understanding of how and why the non-representational frequently (re)constitutes relatively stable socio-spatial and material differences through the embodiment of social identities (Holt, 2008).

2.13 Concept of Habitus

Habitus is an inherently complex concept that is not easy to define (Lizardo, 2004). The concept is employed in a wide range of disciplines, for example sociology or geographies of education (Bridge, 2006; Waters, 2006a; Holt, 2008; Reay, 2004). Habitus theory aims to elucidate how everyday practices constitute and sustain the persistence of socio-economic disparities (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979; Bourdieu, 1984, 1986, 1990a). It is the unconscious background of social relations that are shaped by a multitude of internalised dispositions (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991; Jenkins, 1992; Pimlott-Wilson, 2011; Reay, 2004; Sweetman, 2003). In contrast to Butler's performativity concept, habitus operates generally at a sub-conscious level with habitus transformations predominantly occurring through unconscious reactions to a specific field (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). Both objective and subjective perspectives on reality are harmonised in habitus theory, hence, it "enables an intelligible and necessary relationship to be established between practices and a situation, the meaning of which is produced by the habitus through categories of perception and appreciation that are themselves produced by an observable social condition" (Bourdieu 1984, p.101). According to Bourdieu (1984), the daily subconscious routines of constituting distinct identities are directly connected to the processes of habitus formation.

Habitus places weight on past experiences through unconscious socialisation effects of different social groups, to make individuals aspire to possibilities that they think are feasible and seem within reach (Bourdieu, 1990a). It is the multitude of internalised dispositions that are constituted and memorised

while exerting power to (re)shape everyday behaviours (Navarro, 2006). The habitus is not fixed but responsive to the ongoing dialogue individuals have with their self and others (Holdsworth & Morgan 2007). Strongly related to habitus is the concept of fields. A field constitutes the operational structure of habitus.

[Fields are] a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions.

(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.97)

Fields are designated spaces of contestation over, for example, knowledge or status, while they also characterise the particular distributional organisation of these different capitals. Consequently, fields are the structured spaces of capital formation. Several different fields can be distinguished, for example the field of religion, education, or culture (Navarro, 2006). Habitus reveals itself in everyday practices and actions, in the way how individuals position themselves within particular fields. Hence, actions and interactions cannot be separated from these structures (Bourdieu, 1990b). Consequently, Bourdieu (1998) sees cognitive structures primarily as internalised and embodied social structures. According to Bourdieu (1984), people acquire knowledge without concepts. Through conditions that differentiate, through exclusions and inclusions, hierarchies and classifications are inscribed in cultural practices and in institutions such as families and education systems, in the interaction of everyday life, social divisions are inscribed in people's minds. Similar to the concept of neoliberalism, one can attribute to oneself a choice that has actually been predefined by one's social conditions (cf. objective 2).

Under close scrutiny, Bourdieu's concept of habitus and Butler's theorisations of performativity reveal multiple similarities, which have stimulated academic debate (McNay, 2004). Austin's (1962) speech act theory influences both theories significantly. Austin (1962) distinguishes utterances that seem to

create what they declare—speech acts with almost ‘magical power’ (Lovell, 2003)—and those whose effects are mediated. Similarly, Bourdieu (1990a) refers to speech acts saturated with some seemingly intrinsic power as ‘social magic’. However, Bourdieu (1991) contends that it is the social institution and the status of the individual within this organisation, which influence the effectiveness of speech acts and not the words themselves. Butler (1999) recognises certain similarities between Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and her theorisation of performativity. Habitus is not a deterministic but generative concept that allows for subject’s agency while recognising the impact of organisational norms on everyday practices, the “embodied rituals of everydayness by which a given culture produces and sustains belief in its own ‘obviousness’” (Butler, 1999, p.114). The individual, hence, internalises social norms through habitus. Butler (1993) stresses the habitual and mostly non-reflexive character of everyday practices of citation, which (re)produce social norms. Bourdieu (1990a), however, argues the deeper logic of those (citational) practices exceed the scope of a reflexive consciousness. Butler (1997a) claims that the logic of iterability, which allows for the performative transformation or subversion of social norms, can rework even deep-rooted institutionalised norms, because both those norms and organisations depend for their reproduction on performative acts of (re)iteration.

Habitus is the embodied materialisation of internalised capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Painter, 2000; Shilling, 2003). Similarly to performativity theory, the concept of habitus challenges prevalent dichotomies of structure/agency and objectivity/subjectivity (Holt, 2008), unconscious and deliberate acts (Lawler, 2004) or society/individual oppositions (Shilling, 2003), by revealing that both conscious and unconscious acts of embodiment constitute socially situated practices of the everyday.

The concept of habitus helps to break down the subject/object dichotomy. It is ‘history become nature’, an intermediary between social positions and practices that represent the world as structured. Habitus is an objective relation between practices and situation that produces meaning through categories of perception and appreciation that are themselves socially produced.

(Bourdieu, 1990b, p.40)

Even though agency is important to theorisations of habitus many studies drawing on Bourdieu's work underestimate individuals' agency to transform common societal structures (Nash, 2003). Crucial for this thesis (cf. objective 1), Bourdieu denies individuals the ability to modify the structures of the field, thereby eventually re-inscribing even this agency/structure dualism he initially intended to avoid (Jenkins, 1992). In contrast, Butler (1999) conceptualises agency as subjective, which offers individuals the potential for innovation and resistance. The concept of habitus, however, prevents this opportunity (Butler, 1999). In the everyday, the distinctive habitus of the subject who is formed by daily practices within the field is shaped by the field itself (Butler, 1999). Hence, their two different concepts of agency divide Butler and Bourdieu. Butler (1999) argues that Bourdieu (1991) replaces the power of utterances with the power of social organisations. In her eyes, Bourdieu overvalues the speaker's institutional position and only allows them to speak with authority and effectiveness. Hence, only those individuals who are qualified to speak authoritatively in a specific institutional field can do things with words (Austin, 1962). However, it seems the truth is to be found in between these two perspectives. This thesis argues that rather than a structural field (Bourdieu, 1991) discourses work together to produce *structural* effects (Dunn, 2010), which then operate as *structuring* effects. In other words, the educational field itself does not generate the habitus but the structuring effects of the field frame or limit an otherwise free and limitless formation of and resistance to one's subject positions as good citizens (cf. objective 1).

In summary then, the concepts of capital, habitus and the field do not explain completely why individual subjects or collectives accept their "location within particular fields and embody capitals as habitus" (Holt et al., 2013, p.3). Butler's concepts of subjugation and appreciation, in contrast, demonstrate the inculcation of habitus into the individual or the collective more clearly (Butler, 1997b, 1999, 2004b), although concerns have been raised about her theorisation of agency (McNay, 2004; Holt, 2007). Butler's work on subjection has been rather underexplored in human geography (Bondi, 2005; Gallagher, 2011; M. Rose, 2002; M. Thomas, 2010; Werner, 2006), despite her strong influence on the discipline. Central for this thesis (cf. objective 3) is the fact

that subjects' emotional desire for recognition in, for example, formal education helps to explain why students accept and internalise certain habitus in emotionally charged environments (Butler, 1997b, 2004b).

Agency Revisited

Related to the concepts of habitus and performativity, concerns have arisen over how (and whether) agency can be adequately conceptualised (Gregson & Rose, 2000; M. Rose, 2002). Butler (1990) suggests that individuals are subjects constituted within and through power and are capable agents exercising and transforming power. Various gradations of subjects as a self-conscious, reflexive (albeit not fully conscious) agents and/or a site of power relations are suggested (Butler, 1990, 2004b). Butler insists that the subject can exceed, if not fully escape, the power-knowledge nexus of its origin (Butler, 1997b, 2004b). She argues that individuals do not become positioned by a dominating source of power imposed upon reluctant beings (see above). Rather, individuals become acting agents through subjectification, as they are recognised and recognise themselves (Holt, 2007). Butler suggests that agency is not a set of situated actions but rather a characteristic of language (McNay, 2004). McNay (2000, 2004) concludes that Butler's conceptualisation successfully constitutes a potential for individual agency, but fails to analyse agency in relation to certain transformations.

Agency conceptualised by Bourdieu (1991) results in prevailing relationships of society that are frequently replicated through habitus. Cultural and social relations are predominantly just lived (Cresswell, 1996). Hence, habitus is an important mechanism to replicate and sustain social inequity (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979) and enriches the analysis of processes of social reproduction (Cresswell, 2002). Nevertheless, Bourdieu's theory of habitus is not without limitations. Arguably, the autonomous agent is underdeveloped if not rejected in Bourdieu's work (McNay, 2004). Thus, according to Lovell (2003), it can be reasoned that both Butler's concept of performativity and Bourdieu's habitus theorisation recognise agency as not inevitably associated with resistance.

2.14 Resistance and Consent

The constitution of a subject is a set of ongoing and recursive processes of sedimentation (Hodgson, 2005). According to Butler (1990) subjectivity is the result of recurring practices of the subject. Crucially, these performative processes take place in a field of social power, which impacts on subjects' practices and their agency: a constitutive constraint (Butler, 1997b). Butler's theorisations propose a convincing subjectivity conception not predetermined, but always already transformed by power involved in its construction. Butler (1997b) states "social categories signify subordination and existence at once. In other words, within subjection the price of existence is subordination" (p.20). Hence, the citizen comes into being by the reiteration of particular performances that, at the same time, constrain its conduct (cf. objective 1). Moreover, Butler evades the accusation of determinism implied in this statement and clarifies that "social norms are reproduced but may be reproduced awry, or with a difference" (Lovell, 2003, p.2).

At least two potential avenues for such transformation are suggested. First, imperfect reiteration (repetition) can lead to slippage and a change in how identities are performed (Gregson & Rose, 2000). The moment of repetition is always uncertain, and exactly how identities will become is not predetermined (M. Rose, 2002), despite the apparent regularity of how identity positionings are reproduced. Second, Butler's later work implies that thinking, feeling, and embodied agents although they are not fully conscious, rational, reflexive, or autonomous, can consciously seek to transform the subject positions they adopt providing scope for inter-subjective recognition (Butler, 2004b), identification, and empathy (Bondi, 2003). Hence, the circular and repetitive character of performativity offers the opportunity of alignment as a pragmatic but useful form of resistance, which can also be theorised as subversion (Hodgson, 2005). This would support the argument made in Chapter One that good citizenship is not always internalised but can be expressed as reworking disguised as pragmatic compliance: the *performed* subjection to discourse.

According to Butler (1995a), the contradictions inherent in the parallel acts of mastery and submission are at the heart of becoming a subject. She (Butler,

1997b) claims “the more a practice is mastered, the more fully subjection is achieved. Submission and mastery take place simultaneously, and this paradoxical simultaneity constitutes the ambivalence of subjection” (p.116). The achievement of mastery is, according to Allen (2008), more than just the voluntary submission. Subject positions might be assumed for which the individual might have only little knowledge. The success in achieving mastery encompasses not only socially accepted norms of how the subject should become a good citizen, but also the creative ability to constitute herself out of the unknown (B. Davies, 2006). Not everyone has access to mastery, nor is it always available. Pupils, for example, are exposed to the permanent danger of being deemed incompetent in the educational field (B. Davies et al., 2001; Rasmussen & Harwood, 2003). The accomplishment of mastery, hence, is a continuous battle to be accepted and acknowledged by others. Bourdieu (2010) suggests that even those disadvantaged by the system, such as women and youths, may recognise their legitimacy because the only chance of neutralising the systems’ most negative effects on themselves is “to submit to them in order to make use of them” (Bourdieu, 2010, p.165). This could further support the idea of pragmatic compliances as *performed* subjection to discourse. However, the absence of recognition is not the only situation where a subject is excluded from mastery (Allen, 2008); pre-existing categories of subjectification could also result in exclusion (B. Davies, 2006). It is the iterative character of performances that undermines total submission and complete identity internalisation (Butler, 1995a).

Almost four decades ago, Willis (1977) revealed already that neither pristine acts of submission nor clear acts of resistance effectively exist. Lovell (2003) confirms that evidence of compliance can be found in most oppositional acts just as elements of resistance in numerous acts of habitual subjection. The demonstration of compliance to norms, thus, can conceal deep resentments. Butler (1997a) claims that the impression of submissive speech acts can be disrupted by the body. Bourdieu (1991), equally right, states that subjugated beings agree to more than they know as a result of the persuasive language of habitus. The inconsistency of opposition is reflected in the ambiguity of subjection. The dominated subject may demonstrate submission without fully internalising it (Lovell, 2003). The discrepancy, then, between the consciously

articulated and the bodily expressed is elucidated by both the scholarship of habitus and performativity. However, the two different approaches analyse these ambivalences from entirely contrary perspectives.

Bourdieu's theorisation (1991) fails to recognise that both the bodily and the habitual are equivocal and may cover deep resentments. At the same time, Butler (1997a) seems to over-interpret the fissure between verbal utterances and the bodily expressed. "What is bodily in speech" (Butler, 1997a, p.142) is only interpreted as acts of resistance. This one-sided perspective ignores the ambivalence of speech acts also inherent in the body (Lovell, 2003). Sennett (1980) illustrates that there exists an interdependent relationship between dependence and resistance. It is through acts of resistance that dominating authorities and dominated subject are bound together (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Porfilio and Carr (2010) argue on a similar account that an idealised purity of resistance can be dismantled by the fact that power-plays always impact on the subject constitution as well as the production of agency. Along with Kondo (1990) and Collinson (1994), Fleming and Sewell (2002, p.865) have claimed that the concept of a "pristine and romantic space of 'authentic resistance' untainted by conformity and consent" is profoundly deceptive. Parallel acts of domination and potential subjection are the inevitable consequence of power, which affects the constitution of the subject (Hodgson, 2005). Similarly, Valentine and Skelton (2003a) problematise resistance as a concept and emphasise the "diverse range of practices, degrees of intentionality, and reflexivity" (p.314) that could be differentiated in a more effective way. There is the danger of romanticising resistance (Cresswell, 1996) and viewing any incidents as deliberate acts of opposition. Ettliger (2011) clarifies that real acts of resistance are relatively scarce despite the fact that a power concept as diffuse offers a multitude of possibilities for resistance. Foucault's (1995) concept of resistance regarding the efforts to challenge existing mentalities require individuals' reflexivity (Archer, 2007). Foucault (2007a, 2007b) claims further that developing a consciousness for resistance encourages reflexivity, which is necessary for self-transformation and the constitution of a (new) subjectivity. From this point of view, resistance requires prior knowledge of prevalent power-plays at work to challenge and transform the undesired situation constituted and governed by

the state. An analytics of reflexivity (Foucault, 2005) necessitates individuals' understanding of the external gaze and mechanisms of power by which their everyday practices are governed. In doing so, they are able to critically evaluate these processes of governance to determine whether to continue performing practices of norm reproduction and societal conformity or to resist (O'Grady, 2004). Targets of resistance, for Foucault (2005), thus, are everyday mind-sets of the (re)production of norms and discourses rather than institutions (schools) or individuals (students).

2.15 Resistance in Education

Theories of performativity emphasise that the becoming of identities is socio-spatially specific and contextual, rather than pre-given and pre-determined (Holt, 2008). Context matters to the performative process. Depending on the context, the discourse of good citizenship is interpreted, understood, and internalised in multiple ways and with different intentions and consequences (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Contexts can be seen as the central component of identity practices beyond a mere condition of identity and meaning (M. Thomas, 2005a). Although the reiteration of identities produces the appearance of a fixed and natural subject position (L. Harris & Alatout, 2010), the norms that subjects (at least partially) reiterate are socio-spatially shifting and fragile (Butler, 1997a). Social circumstances can act to replicate or transform dispositions (Reay, 2004), changing the way youth come to view their potential positionings (Pimlott-Wilson, 2011). Consequently, context and space are crucial to differential performances of identities (Holt, 2007). Practices of youth, thus, are situated in social processes of normativity and convention (M. Thomas, 2005a). Although pupils are themselves the practitioners of a good citizen subject they do not accomplish this in a social vacuum. Hence, the implementation of identities is always spatially biased (Holloway & Valentine, 2000).

Young people are spatially restricted; they must attend school to satisfy the state and almost always their parents or guardians. They have limited power to challenge adults' restrictions and requirements that demand their bodily placement in school (Sharp et al., 2000). Thus, schools stand for an especially important institutional space through which youth identity is

performed (cf. Aitken, 1994, 2001; Foucault, 1995; James et al., 1998). At the same time pupils do not occupy a distinct, bounded, socio-cultural realm (Holt, 2007). They learn, (re)produce, accept, and transform norms and expectations through socio-cultural exchange with others, both youths and adults (Gagen, 2000). Educational institutions, therefore, are *one* site of learning that influence, without determining, pupils' performances of citizenship, but not the only one.

According to Massey (2005) it is possible to view schools as specific moments within broader socio-spatial relations, wherein institutional powers are variously interpreted by adults and students as agents, within the specific space of schooling. Within these educational settings, certain values and dispositions, acquired through processes of socialisation, continue to be endowed with greater value (Ball et al., 2002; Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2011). Those who possess the appropriate values and dispositions, thus, are more able to navigate their way through the field of education (Bourdieu, 1984). A helpful approach to conceptualise resistance in such an educational context is brought forward by Mathews (2011), who suggests the hegemonic discourse of good citizenship is maintained through practices of seduction and inducement. Regarding the former, it is essential to understand subjects as having choice. A fundamental aspect of seduction, then, is the possibility of the individual to decide against a certain action (Allen, 2003). The *desired* choices possible to make are limited, however, by the educational system, as it demands compliance with the syllabus to obtain recognition in the form of good marks (Maxwell & Aggleton, 2010). Butler (2004b) confirms that "desire is always a desire for recognition and that it is only through the experience of recognition that any of us becomes constituted as socially viable beings" (p.2). Thus, by stressing emotions as vital elements of one's existence (cf. objective 3), the previous quote provides a better understanding of how subjects—not always consciously—adopt certain subject positions (see above). The inculcation of norms and values through the mechanisms of emotional interdependencies illustrate the significance of the geographies of emotions (Anderson & Smith, 2001) regarding the multiple challenges of culturally, socially, and politically (re)constituted identities in modern times (Davidson, Bondi & Smith, 2007).

The other educational tactic suggested by Mathews (2011), inducement, becomes implemented with a notion of power, regularly utilising the plausible necessity to obtain good grades in order to strive in and contribute towards society (Barr & Skrbiš, 2008). Students are being convinced that particular choices are more beneficial than others, which predominantly prompts them to follow the normative line. Mathews (2011) extends the two tactics of seduction and inducement by the instrument of coercion. She argues that the instrument of imposing negative sanctions is utilised where pupils continue to challenge the educational common sense. These negative sanctions can be either explicitly communicated (the risk of failing class) or implicitly infused into the syllabus through discourses of threat and danger (Mathews, 2011). All these tactics ultimately result in an internalised self-disciplining amongst pupils.

One potential pathway of resistance, however, is offered by Skelton (2000a) who states "there are ways in which dominant representations can be resisted, not necessarily by those most marginalised, but by intercedents" (p.200). Hence, she attributes some (re)constitutive power to the teachers, and not to the marginalised: the students. Sim (2008, 2010) observes that current education systems and official curricula allocate only minimal freedom to teachers who attempt to transform their practices. Moreover, teachers are regularly prompted to demonstrate their system conformity while risking to be alienated when expressing critique. Honan (2004) insists, however, that numerous teachers are undermining official syllabi on an everyday basis and feel committed to liberal teaching practices. Nevertheless, assuming that pupils possess critical reflexivity towards their own actions and are aware of the normative saturation of formal education their *pragmatic compliance* with prescribed behaviours could be as satisfying as resistance itself (Ettlinger, 2011).

2.16 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated a number of key issues pertaining current debates of education, neoliberalism, governance, and habitus and performativity in relation to (youth-) citizenship and citizenship education. It has been argued by connecting the four theoretical streams new insights and

understandings of the complex and messy web of interrelated motivations, instruments, and processes of modern citizenship education as well as different meanings of youth-citizenship (identity) can be uncovered.

In the first section, citizenship was illustrated to constitute one facet of fluid, multi-faceted, and contingent collective identities. In addition, citizenship as a lived experience constructed through discourse was emphasised. The concept of youths as citizens-yet-to-be was criticised arguing that youths are citizens now and here and participate in and engage with an adult imposed society in many different ways. Subsequently, it was shown how citizenship education as a tool of statecraft is geared towards the constitution of the good citizen. The ideal of the good citizen communicated through education was demonstrated to capture important elements of how individuals should engage as citizens. The potentially problematic focus of citizenship education regarding the official knowledge inculcated and the tactics used to achieve uncritical acceptance of the status quo was stressed. The overall framing of today's citizenship education which aims at the construction of the neoliberal subject was criticised to illustrate problematic practices of self-governance through choice conditioned by neoliberalism.

This was followed by a section regarding the concepts of governmentality and risk theory which elaborated on discourse formations and issues of power struggles related to good citizenship. It was demonstrated that individuals' repertoire of possible subject positions is constituted by discourses of good citizenship thereby limiting youths' choices of identification. Moreover, the concept of risk was introduced to demonstrate the omnipresence of fear in today's language and the emotional framing of citizenship which draws on individuals' anxieties and uncertainties. Governance through risk, it was argued, exploits these (individual perceptions of) fears leaving citizens in a condition of insecurity: docile citizens more easily governed. This was shown to concur with the theoretical approach of post-materialism which suggests that under conditions of insecurity people are more willing to subordinate to strong authorities. It was argued that it is in the best interest of authoritarian governments to preserve such perceptions of insecurity among the citizenry to prevent the rise of a post-material, elite-challenging public.

The theories of performativity and habitus were debated and criticised to propose that neither approach is sufficient to satisfactorily explain why official discourses of good citizenship are seemingly internalised relatively uncritically by youths in the Singaporean context. The importance of individuals' agency was stressed to carve out the different conceptualisation of agency in both theories thereby suggesting some middle-ground between the theories. It was argued that structuring effects of the educational field frame and limit the formation of resistance to official subject positions. Following this, the concept of resistance itself was discussed in both general terms and a specific setting of formal education. Peoples' yearning for emotional recognition was identified as one important obstruction to resistance of official discourses (in school). The tactics of seduction, inducement, and coercion were shown to be powerful educational instruments to help maintain the hegemonic good citizenship discourse. It was illustrated that acts of resistance and submission are equivocal and coexistent. Displays of submission and/or resistance can be deceiving: they may conceal deep resentments. Finally, pragmatic compliance was suggested as one theoretical concept to account for these simultaneous acts of resistance and subjection, thereby claiming that displays of conformity to official discourses of good citizenship may not be as affirmative of their successful internalisation as (officially) expected.

The next chapter introduces the methods and methodology of this thesis. Following on from some of the arguments made in this chapter, I will discuss why it is most appropriate for this project to take on a discursive approach. I will also clarify why youths' voices are of particular interest for this study and how the research endeavour was carried out in detail.

3. Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

Within qualitative, discursive and critical approaches to geography it is acknowledged that methodological issues cannot be separated from theoretical assumptions. When employing a particular method researchers draw upon and consolidate ideas about how the world works. From a discursive perspective, the methods employed are inherently bound up with theory. The choice of how to investigate a given topic is intimately connected to epistemological and ontological issues relating to the very nature of the topic. As such, the present chapter comprises both a presentation of what occurred in this study, as well as a discussion of the particular issues surrounding methods in discursive geography and in studies of collective identities. Each section will include descriptive details of how the study was developed and conducted, as well as a discussion of the associated theoretical issues. The aim is to provide an account of the various methodological issues relating to the topics under discussion and to highlight some of the central issues involved in adopting a discursive approach to the study of national identity.

Models and Paradigms

Models like positivism or constructivism provide an overall framework for how reality is perceived, what reality looks like, its basic elements (ontology) and its nature and status of knowledge (epistemology). Models are sometimes spoken of as paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Both positivism and constructivism are concerned with reality, more precisely our assumptions about what is real and how it should be studied. Normally, we take reality for granted. In everyday life, we imagine knowing what is real and do not doubt its existence. Such a perspective on reality is called natural attitude (Schutz, 1967). It is an understanding of the social world based on common knowledge (Filmer, Phillipson, Silverman & Walsh, 1973; Garfinkel, 1967) or a version of social reality that is based on self-evident truths resembling the physical laws of nature. Constructivism is concerned with how human interaction creates social reality. Constructivists believe that "we do not find

or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it" (Schwandt, 2000, p.197). Hence, as a counter-argument to positivism, constructivists see knowledge of social reality as subjective, situational, and ideologically conscious (Marvasti, 2004).

Regarding the broad research design, this thesis takes a general constructivist approach in arguing that Singaporean identities are socially constructed and not something 'out there' to be discovered. Moreover, the ways in which the materiality of people, territory, and government as it is understood, does not pre-exist its performative expression (Weber, 1995). The claim here is that there can be no reference to subjectivity which is not, at the same time, a further production of that subjectivity, simply because our knowledge of it is already and always indebted to some form of language and tradition of interpretation (S.S. Tan, 2007).

3.2 Methodology / Qualitative Research

Methodology refers to the choices made about which cases to study, the methods of data gathering, and the forms of data analysis, in planning and executing a research study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, the methodology characterises how a phenomenon is studied. Methodologies can be defined very broadly (e.g. qualitative or quantitative) or more narrowly (e.g. grounded theory or conversation analysis). The traditional qualitative / quantitative distinction assumes a fixed preference or pre-defined evaluation of what is generally deemed appropriate or inappropriate research. However, the everyday commitment to this dichotomy in social sciences is not useful as it blurs the fact that methods are more or less appropriate to particular research questions, but are not intrinsically true or false. Research methods should therefore be chosen based on the specific task at hand (Henwood, 1996).

It is important to choose a method that is appropriate to what the researcher is trying to find out (Punch, 2005). The choice of method is contingent upon the research object; therefore, no method of research, quantitative or qualitative, is better than any other. How research problems are framed inevitably reflects a commitment to a particular model for understanding of

how our worlds work (Silverman, 2010). Subsequently, researchers always need to be "alive to the possibilities of other methods" (Becker, 1998, p.6). In this research a general qualitative methodology is deployed due to the themes this project is concerned with. The interests of this study lie in *how* questions rather than in *how many* questions, since the project is concerned with the social construction of identities.

3.3 Methods

Methods are specific research techniques. Methods include quantitative techniques like statistical tests, as well as qualitative techniques like participant observation or interviewing. The choice of method should reflect an overall research strategy (Mason, 2002) as the methodology shapes which methods are used and how we use each method. Hence, similar to the choice of methodology, choosing a research method is not about deciding right from wrong, or truth from falsehood; instead, the goal should be to select an approach that is suitable for the task at hand (Marvasti, 2004).

Qualitative methods are the main instruments used in this project. Both in an analysis of semi-structured interviews and in a discourse analysis of selected texts are deployed. The intention is not to reveal an ultimate truth or an all-inclusive account, but to make use of supplementary data and analytical tools to accomplish a better understanding of driving forces, processes and actors in the becoming of identity. However, many theoretical perspectives advise against aggregating data in order to achieve a more robust result; this means, a multiple methods approach should be utilised with caution (Punch, 2005). Multiple methods are often adopted in the mistaken assumption that they will reveal the whole picture. Hence, when taking social reality as constructed in different ways and different contexts, it is impossible to utilise tools that represent all data comprehensively. Such attempts can result in conceptual ambiguity; however, if mixed methods are utilised cautiously, they can enable the researcher to gain a more holistic view of a certain phenomenon since many sources of evidence were used (Noor, 2008).

Analysing Texts

Texts influence how people see the world and others in it, and how people act in the world. Text documents are one aspect of what people are actually doing in the world without being dependent on being asked by researchers. Texts are usually readily accessible and not always dependent on access and/or ethical constraints. Although for social geographers texts are mostly deemed important only as background material for the real analysis, they are not to be underestimated as valuable resources. Traditionally, where texts are analysed they are presented as official versions of social phenomena (Atkinson & Coffey, 2004), which are then compared to interpretations found in qualitative analyses of, for example, interviews (Aitken, 2004). This approach to texts positions texts as a resource to be used to gain a better overall picture of how social institutions operate.

In this research project, texts are conceptualised broadly and comprise objects such as webpages, brochures, school curricula, and, secondary school textbooks, which help to constitute social contexts. Given the constructivist methodology adopted, this project is concerned with how these documents are assembled and evaluated by individuals. In this sense, texts are seen as a topic of social research and not just as a resource for it (Noaks & Wincup, 2004). This acknowledges the subjective rather than objective status of texts. This thesis draws on the language deployed by the documents as a medium of expression and thought and conceptualises documents as things which can be produced and manipulated, used or consumed; things that can act back on their creators (Prior, 2004). Moreover, rather than criticising or assessing texts in terms of objective standards (Silverman, 2006), the analysis focuses on how texts work to achieve particular effects. The research is interested in identifying constitutive elements used and the functions these play in society by elaborating on how texts produce a socially organised context. This involves considering how texts are used in organisational actions and how they enter into the construction of specific identities. The method I have chosen to analyse texts is discourse analysis.

3.4 Discourse Analysis

This research deploys discourse analysis as its main method to illuminate the social construction of a Singaporean identity, through official school textbooks and how these constitute a particular reality for Singaporeans. The project is particularly interested in how official discourses are constructed and embedded in textbooks, the extent to which these discourses constitute both what subjectivities are constructed as desirable (Fejes, 2008b), and what perceptions of reality are induced to pupils. Rather than arguing for the existence of a singular discourse constituting *the* Singaporean identity, it is suggested that the mobilisation of power can elevate certain discourses above others. The discursive landscape of becoming—the Singaporean identity—is strongly shaped by official discourses communicated in the textbooks and is seen to have generated specific views and realities on the good citizen.

Discourses can be seen as a way of writing or speaking, which constructs a particular type of knowledge with related practical and rhetorical implications (Marvasti, 2004). Discourses are systems of meanings and ways of thinking that are linked to social practices and societal power structures (Goodwin et al., 2013). Discourse analysis, thus, looks above words, sentences and linguistic features and focuses its attention on the way language is used, what it is used for, and the social context in which it is used. Hence, discourse inseparably saturates social life, since everything we do is framed within some sort of discourse (Punch, 2005).

Discourse analysis today is conducted within various disciplines, which draws on different research traditions. Despite its ubiquity in qualitative analysis, it is far from being a unified body of theory, method, and practice (Hammersley, 2002; Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001), which makes discourse analysis difficult to define (Gee, Michaels, & O'Connor, 1992). In the absence of a unified theory there are several common and discernible themes. Gill (2000) argues discourse and language produce social reality; discourses not only describe reality but create it. It is a type of social action in its own right; not just a description, it does things. To understand discourse, discourse analysis takes place within a larger body of social and cultural research that

is concerned with the production of meaning through talk and text. It involves a perspective on language that sees it not as reflecting reality in a transparent or straightforward way, but as constructing and organising the terms in which that social reality is understood.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is often associated with the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucauldian discourse analysis focuses on the authority of texts and the social and political factors that give a written work the power to influence human action rather than its authorship (Prior, 2004). The focus is not a presumed subject or intention behind the texts but, rather, what realities or ways of seeing are made *possible* through texts (Marvasti, 2004). When analysing the discursive content of written texts, it is important that one does not treat the information communicated through the text as rhetorically neutral or simply a statement of uncritical facts. From a Foucauldian perspective, all forms of representation involve a relationship of power and knowledge between ways of knowing and their political implications (Foucault, 1988, 1991). Therefore, it is necessary to examine how systems of power/knowledge construct subjects and their world. Power operates in and through discourse as the other face of knowledge (Foucault, 1980). Discourse not only puts words to work, but it gives them their meanings, as well as it constructs perceptions and formulates understandings (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005).

As stated above, social constructivism assumes knowledge is not disinterested, apolitical, and exclusive of affective and embodied aspects of human experience, but in some sense highly ideological, political, and permeated with values (Rouse, 1996). By examining documents it is possible to see how they are produced in a politically structured space (Rose, 1988; Young, 1995). Therefore, having the power to influence what is fact and what is not and how those facts are to be defined is highly significant. As elucidated later in this chapter, the project is not only interested in realities created by official textbooks discourses, but how these discursive realities are experienced by Singaporeans in everyday life. Texts and documents are not only produced but are also producing something (Prior, 2004). Identities, for

example, are to some extent constructed through documents, because they explain how subjects have to behave. The way in which documents function is often affected by their content, but content is not always the dominant factor. The content of a document is never fixed or static because every document has always to be read. Reading, then, implies the content of a document will be situated rather than fixed (Prior, 2004). Hence, rather than analysing documents in isolation, analysing them in action opens up new opportunities to investigate how they are integrated into other processes, how documents relate to power, and how they are manipulated and performed.

The difficulties in formulating a standard approach to Foucauldian discourse analysis are partly due to the broad variety of frameworks adopted by researchers, and partly because the process tends to be data-driven rather than pre-defined. Foucauldian discourse analysis often adopts a 'wait-and-see attitude' to what avenues the data will eventually open up (Tonkiss, 2004). Like other qualitative approaches, Foucauldian discourse analysis is a very detailed data analysis. To make such analysis effective, it is imperative to have a discrete body of data to work with. Moreover, methodological templates are rejected in Foucauldian discourse analysis since they can become too formulaic and reductionist (Foucault, 1980). This absence, however, led some scholars to describe this method as too vague (Barrett, 1991). At the same time, others concur with this approach of avoiding formal guidelines and argue such guidelines would undermine the very potential of discourse analysis (Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Potter, 1996). Hence, Foucauldian discourse analysis is typically intuitive and often left implicit rather than explicit (Waitt, 2010). Nevertheless, some human geographers, along with other social scientists, have designed certain checklists to assist research utilising a Foucauldian discourse analysis.

Rose (2007) identifies seven stages of Foucauldian discourse analysis. First, the choice of qualitative rich texts providing detailed insights into how understandings are forged is deemed important (Waitt, 2010). Second, "pre-conditions must be held in suspense" (Foucault, 1972, p.25) with researchers being self-critical focusing on the producer's understandings of the world and not the researcher's (Wood & Kroger, 2000). Third, Foucault understood

discourses to be grounded within social networks in which groups are empowered and disempowered relative to one another (Foucault, 1980). The key point, thus, is that all texts are the outcome of a power-laden process, fashioned within a particular social context (Berg, 2009). Fourth, coding is to be implemented as a twofold process; once for the organisation of data and again for its interpretation. Identifying key themes and arguments in the text are essential steps during this process (Tonkiss, 2004). Fifth, Foucault (1980) sees discursive structures as a subtle form of social power that fix, give apparent unity to, constrain, and/or naturalise particular ideas, attitudes, and practices as common sense. This social control is termed effects of truth (Waitt, 2010), through which specific knowledge is deployed by institutions and/or governments. Sixth, one rationale of doing discourse analysis is to explore inconsistencies of discursive structures that appear as fixed and natural (Wickham & Kendall, 2007). Since they are embedded in different social networks, however, they are fragile and continually ruptured. Last, becoming attuned to silences in texts is as important as being aware of what is present. Silences are "as productive as explicit naming; invisibility can have just as powerful effects as visibility" (Rose, 2007, p.165). Hence, identifying silences produced by texts is an integral part of discourse analysis.

3.5 Curriculum and Textbooks

Curriculum documents are texts generated in institutions with particular purposes, and because of this they have special conventional force (J. Marshall, 2001). Marshall (2001) draws on Austin's speech theory (1962) and calls for paying attention to the performative aspects of language in the context of education. He argues that because of their performative nature, statements made in educational institutions constitute their subjects. Moreover, curricula reflect the current political agenda and construct the object of reflection and action and, moreover, define what is counted as true and false (Popkewitz, 2004). Curriculum documents produce symbolic representations of education, and define and legitimate social practices in particular educational contexts. Ideas and expectations concerning potential students are embedded in these documents. Moreover, syllabi also function as a tool for social selection and categorisation (Hargreaves, 1994). Distinctions within the curriculum qualify and disqualify individuals for

participation. They define what is desirable and, in addition, frame ideal good citizenship.

Textbooks are seen to be bearers of official educational aims as well as the definite authority on facts and interpretation; or truth (Éthier et al., 2013). As many teachers appear to rely heavily on textbooks in their daily practice (Lebrun et al., 2002), this project seeks to develop an understanding of the discourses found in such material in relation to general educational aims of citizenship education. However, textbook studies have been criticised for their discussion of textbooks in isolation from the classroom context (Luke, Cook, De Castell & Luke, 1989; Whitson, 1986). It is evident that much of the classroom experiences are determined by the use of approved texts (Clark, 1995). One of the few studies involving texts in classroom settings was conducted by Anyon (1981), who concluded there were profound differences in the curriculum and views of knowledge in the schools. Teachers viewed students' curriculum needs as differing according to the future lives they were expected to lead. These expectations were based on social class (Clark, 1995).

This thesis does not consider the complexities of texts in use. It is concerned with the discourse of the texts themselves—texts as social artefacts—rather than with the texts in the classroom. There is no doubt that individual experiences with written texts differ. In the case of school textbooks, the teacher's role as mediator between text and student is important. Tone of voice, level of enthusiasm, examples and anecdotes provided, and the time the teacher chooses to spend on various segments of the text, are all examples of ways in which the teacher mediates the texts' influence. In addition, even in the context of a single classroom, each individual student's experience with a text is unique (Beck & McKeown, 1991). These are important areas of investigation; however, they are not focus of this project.

Textbooks are social products that can be examined in the context of their time, place, and function. Concurring with the seminal work of Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) "textbooks are not simply 'delivery systems' of 'facts'. They are at once the result of political, economic, and cultural activities,

battles, and compromises. They are conceived, designed, and authored by real people with real interests" (p.2). Textbooks are related to government rationality, economic circumstances, and available discourses (Hardwick, Marcus & Isaak, 2010). What school textbooks teach is always political (Neumann, 1974). Bourdieu (1996) has identified several ways in which education serves the interests of powerful groups in society (Kennedy, 2004). Textbooks not only express the dominant groups' ideologies, but also help to form attitudes in support of their social position (Anyon, 2011). Textbooks speak about the society, the political and economic context, and about the subjectivities they promote (Goh & Gopinathan, 2005). Textbooks portray societies for pupils and introduce students to different values and norms thereby constructing textual realities to think in specific ways, to do some things and not others, to talk about particular topics, and to behave in certain ways (Soysal & Schissler, 2005). These textual realities, then, are not disconnected from political, economic, and social contexts in which the textbooks are produced. This means that when textbooks create textual realities, they reflect particular (political) choices that have been made (Mendez, 2006).

In this thesis it is argued that the subject of national identity is concretised in the ideal of the good citizen communicated in Social Studies. This good citizen reflects the perfect personification of textual realities and can be seen as the essence of the officially promoted values and norms (Sim & Print, 2009). To go beyond the anticipated outcome of simply "Loving Singapore" at the primary school level, the complex and multifaceted conceptualisations of good citizens at the secondary level of Social Studies education was deemed most suitable for addressing the research questions in this thesis. Primary data was gathered from the entire Social Studies syllabi and textbooks. Both syllabi and textbooks are centrally controlled by the Ministry of Education (MOE). The material analysed consists of three curricula: Social Studies Syllabus Primary (MOE, 2008c), Social Studies Syllabus Lower Secondary (MOE, 2005b), Combined Humanities O Level Social Studies Syllabus (MOE, 2008b); and four textbooks: Social Studies Secondary 1 (MOE, 2005a), Social Studies Secondary 2 (MOE, 2006), Upper Secondary Social Studies 3 (MOE, 2007), and Upper Secondary Social Studies 4&5 (MOE, 2008a). Social

Studies teacher's guides were not included as sources of data in this project because these documents are mainly collections of objectives as well as teaching and assessment guides, which are not the focus of this research.

Following the guidelines to Foucauldian discourse analysis (G. Rose, 2007) the syllabi were initially approached with 'fresh eyes' suspending, as far as possible, all pre-existing categories and denominations regarding the material. Looking at the curricula with an 'open mind' several topics and structures began to emerge during this first analysis. Thematic categories were then developed and informed the preliminary analysis of both lower and upper secondary Social Studies textbooks. This led to the identification of the main discourses within the Social Studies textbooks, which work to construct Singapore's national identity. Since the 1980s, discursive textual analysis has been used by scholars to investigate how meaning is constructed through language and text (Sleeter & Grant, 1991). This discursive construction of meaning depends upon what is said, how it is said and who says it, as well as on what is not said and who is left out of the discussion (Gauthier, 2008). The majority of textual analyses still takes a quantitative approach, hence, this thesis represents an in-depth qualitative study paradigm that is seen as overdue (Delhey, 2010).

After identifying major discourses of good citizenship communicated in all four Social Studies textbooks only two, Upper Secondary Social Studies 3 and Upper Secondary Social Studies 4&5, were analysed further. The reasoning for this was two-fold: first, the Ministry of Education has developed two separate citizenship education programs for normal/technical and for normal/academic and express streams incorporating different values, skills, and knowledge transferred to pupils of the different tracks (Ho, Alviar-Martin, Sim, & Yap, 2011). Moreover, Gopinathan and Sharpe (2004) argue that "only students in the top tier of institutions will have an opportunity to think independently, debate issues and controversies and thus prepare for active citizenship" (p.128). Hence, students from the normal/academic and express streams using upper secondary Social Studies textbooks will have been the most likely to develop an independent and critical stance towards citizenship, which is of particular interest for this study. Second, predominantly students

from normal/academic and express streams pursue higher education at Singapore's universities, while students from the normal/technical stream tend to go on to technical education at polytechnics or other institutions. The intent of this research was, therefore, to focus on educational material that has been used by elites in Singapore's education system since these students were the target group of the corresponding interviews conducted for this study.

In the subsequent analysis the identified discourses of good citizenship in the upper secondary Social Studies textbooks were analysed in detail to uncover the official conceptualisations of the good citizen communicated through this subject, which aims to develop "students into well informed, responsible citizens with a sense of national identity" (MOE, 2008b, p.3). These results are presented in Chapter Five. Rather than reproducing large excerpts from Social Studies textbooks, direct quotes were used only to substantiate the key points of the chapter. Minor points, which supported the analysis, were given as reference citations including page numbers from where evidence has been drawn. This decision was made mainly to maintain clarity and readability of the thesis. Chapter Six consists of the analysis of interviews with a participant cohort recruited from university students at the National University of Singapore and the National Institute of Education, Singapore. Polytechnics and other technical institutes did not qualify for recruitment due to the research's focus on the Upper Secondary Social Studies textbooks and the corresponding participant cohort pursuing predominantly higher degrees outside institutes of technical education such as polytechnics. In Chapter Seven, findings from the interview analysis are discussed in comparison to the results of the textbook examination presented in Chapter Five.

3.6 Interviews

Interviews are usually organised according to the needs of the researcher, but at the same time flexible enough to allow informants to play a role in the shaping of the research. Valentine (1997) states interviews "are generally unstructured or semi-structured. In other words they take a conversational, fluid form, each interview varying according to the interests, experiences and views of the interviewees" (p.111). Therefore, interviews are the chosen

method when researchers are interested in the stories of participants capturing individual experiences (Mason, 2002; McDowell, 1997). Qualitative interviews illustrate a particular representation of individuals' attitudes and values (Byrne, 2004). They can reveal experiences, which might be ignored, misrepresented or suppressed in the past demonstrating differences and contradictions, thereby adding to the depth and richness of data. Consequently, interviews enable researchers to become attuned to subtle differences in people's positions and to respond accordingly, both at the time of interviewing and in the subsequent analysis.

The project was aiming for a reasonable number of interviews, to ensure academic credibility, and explanatory power of its results. Although there was no intention to commit to a certain number, an estimated 25 to 30 interviews were expected to be conducted. Concurring with recent calls to consider the voice of young people as an important factor (Holt, 2004b), the focus of this research was not on children in school but on youth 'in between'; individuals who are still embedded in the apparatus of formal education (universities) but who have completed secondary school. Hence, they were not exposed to citizenship education in a strict sense anymore, but, nevertheless, bound by structural effects of the educational sector. To secure conceptual transparency it is important that the grounds for including university students in the group of young people need to be made explicit here. Youth are often imagined as both the solution to societies' problems and the greatest threat to social order (Twenge, 2006). Hence, considerable effort is devoted to cultivating citizens who will engage in behaviours seen as appropriate. The focus on universities as key sites for these efforts is justified by their function in training youth who are most likely to lead the country in the future.

Moreover, higher education has tended to shift from a liberal focused education to a more technical, specialised and skills-based training for neoliberal citizens. Critics argue that modern university education emphasises the preparation for employment and lacks a broader competence of a democratic public realm (K. Evans, 1995; Castree, 2000; Fish, 2008). Yet universities are also sites where young people often become politicised and begin to question the values and norms imparted by formal schooling,

explore new ideas, and use their critical thinking skills to challenge, rather than reproduce their communities. Therefore, the group of university students were seen as most likely to realise contradictions and oppose unacceptable facets of the good citizen communicated in Social Studies as they were no longer bound by the structural effects of secondary schooling (e.g. grades, assessments). The National University of Singapore (NUS) was chosen for participant recruitment because of its elitist character to select only the best students among its applicants. In addition, about half of the interview participants were recruited from a cohort of future Social Studies teachers-in-training at the National Institute of Education (NIE). Compared to their counterparts at NUS, they were expected to conform more to the government in their role as socialisation agents of citizenship education. Furthermore, they were seen to be bound by the structural effects of the educational field (e.g. MOE directives and regulations) even during their future working life. Except for two mid-career entrants being amongst the sample of the university students, all participants have been recent products of the elitist Singapore education system.

Thus, following the in-depth analysis of the Social Studies curricula and textbooks, 31 semi-structured interviews were conducted at NUS and NIE during a six week field trip in 2012. Initial contact was made with both universities before commencing the fieldwork to secure support and obtain consent for the facilitation of participant recruitment among their students. The main focus of participant recruitment was undergraduate students of social sciences at NUS and social studies teachers-in-training at NIE. Moreover, all NIE participants obtained an undergraduate degree in social sciences from either NUS or Nanyang Technological University (NTU) before commencing their study at NIE. It was assumed both student groups would have been exposed to, and be aware of, the concepts and debates around national identity and belonging compared to their counterparts of other subject areas, for example, science or engineering. Therefore, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) was the main contact point at NUS and the Humanities and Social Studies Education (HSSE) Academic Group at NIE respectively. Lecturers in Sociology and Geography at NUS and Social Studies staff at NIE were contacted and asked to allow for the introduction of this

research project to their classes so as to recruit interview participants among their students. Responses to interview requests following classroom visits were relatively low; therefore the snowballing method was utilised to recruit additional participants (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010). At no time during this project were potential participants approached directly. Instead, I waited for them to make the first contact. The interviews were principally conducted with individuals, or in pairs, except for one occasion where participants preferred to be interviewed in a group of three. All interviews, except for one, were conducted on campus, either at NUS or NIE, with the same interview schedule used at both institutions; however, the direction of discussion during the interviews varied due to their open nature. The generic interview schedule is provided as Appendix A.

Throughout this thesis references are made to the comments of interview participants using unique identifiers, created as follows. To guarantee the highest possible level of confidentiality, interview participants have been given individualised synonyms. First, an abbreviation indicating the institution they attended (NUS, NIE) was chosen. This is followed by a sequential number between 1 and 31. Then, an ethnic indicator follows: Ch=Chinese, Ma=Malay, In=Indian, Oth=Other. When interviewees were of mixed background both ethnic indicators were included. Last, the gender of participants (M=male, F=female) and their year of birth were integrated into the identifiers. Therefore, the synonym NIE/1/Ch/24/F has to be read as follows: NIE student, interview number 1, Chinese ethnicity, 24 years old, female. Programs of study were excluded from the identifier in order to reduce the potential risks of identification. Four of the 31 interview participants were male and 27 were female. While the sample composition regarding participants' gender was unintentional to some extent, the study paid extra attention to the interviewees' ethnic mix. The majority of interviewees were Chinese, followed by Malay, Indian, and other ethnicities. Taking into account both the mixed and 'pure' ethnic backgrounds, the interviewees participating in this study represented fairly accurately Singapore's overall ethnic composition (cf. Chapter Four). Using Singapore's official CMIO categories, 72.6% of the respondents were Chinese, 12.9% were Malay, followed by 11.3% who were Indian and 3.2% 'Other'.

Table 1: Interview Synonyms

Number	University	Ethnicity	Age	Gender	Synonym
1	NIE	Chinese	24	Female	NIE/1/Ch/24/F
2	NIE	Indian	23	Female	NIE/2/In/23/F
3	NIE	Chinese	30	Female	NIE/3/Ch/30/F
4	NIE	Chinese	31	Male	NIE/4/Ch/31/M
5	NIE	Chinese	23	Female	NIE/5/Ch/23/F
6	NIE	Indian	23	Female	NIE/6/In/23/F
7	NIE	Chinese	23	Female	NIE/7/Ch/23/F
8	NIE	Chinese	23	Female	NIE/8/Ch/23/F
9	NIE	Chinese	23	Female	NIE/9/Ch/23/F
10	NIE	Other (Korean)	24	Female	NIE/10/Oth/24/F
11	NIE	Malay/Chinese	23	Female	NIE/11/MaCh/23/F
12	NIE	Chinese	23	Female	NIE/12/Ch/23/F
13	NIE	Chinese	23	Female	NIE/13/Ch/23/F
14	NIE	Malay/Chinese	26	Male	NIE/14/MaCh/26/M
15	NIE	Chinese	23	Female	NIE/15/Ch/23/F
16	NIE	Chinese	23	Female	NIE/16/Ch/23/F
17	NIE	Indian	23	Female	NIE/17/In/23/F
18	NUS	Chinese	21	Female	NUS/18/Ch/21/F
19	NUS	Chinese	21	Female	NUS/19/Ch/21/F
20	NUS	Chinese	22	Female	NUS/20/Ch/22/F
21	NUS	Malay	21	Female	NUS/21/Ma/21/F
22	NUS	Chinese	22	Female	NUS/22/Ch/22/F
23	NUS	Chinese	22	Female	NUS/23/Ch/22/F
24	NUS	Chinese	22	Female	NUS/24/Ch/22/F
25	NUS	Chinese	22	Female	NUS/25/Ch/22/F
26	NUS	Chinese	23	Male	NUS/26/Ch/23/M
27	NUS	Chinese	21	Female	NUS/27/Ch/21/F
28	NUS	Malay	21	Female	NUS/28/Ma/21/F
29	NUS	Indian/Chinese	22	Female	NUS/29/InCh/22/F
30	NUS	Malay/Chinese	22	Female	NUS/30/MaCh/22/F
31	NUS	Chinese	24	Male	NUS/31/Ch/24/M

Interview data was approached in a similar way to the analysis of Social Studies curricula and textbooks deploying a Foucauldian discourse analysis. Through open coding and looking at the interview transcripts with an open mind (G. Rose, 2007), several topics and structures emerged. These topics were developed further to identify the main discourses of good citizenship communicated by interviewees. To maintain clarity and readability of the chapter the main discourses of good citizenship were ordered into a similar structure as in Chapter Five. In the final discussion and findings (Chapter Seven), the concept of the good citizen was utilised to uncover both internalisations and resistances to official discourses communicated in the Social Studies textbooks. In other words, the playing out of certain repertoires that fit or challenge context specific framings of the good citizen

was analysed in the final chapter to inform the theoretical debates discussed previously in Chapter Two.

3.7 Research and Ethics

In feminist theory, positionality has been utilised to describe the social embeddedness of subjects in terms of their “gender, race, class, sexuality and other axes of social difference” (Nagar & Geiger, 2007, p.267; see also S. Turner, 2010; Vanderbeck, 2005). Positionality emphasises distinct identities, experiences and perspectives of different subjects that shape their understanding of and engagement with the world (Haraway, 1988). It frames people’s ontological and epistemological stance and emerges relationally, through connections and interactions with differently positioned subjects (Domosh, 2003; Sultana, 2007). Of interest for this research are the unequal power relations inherent in different positionalities, particularly when children and young people are involved (Skelton, 2010). One “cannot eliminate the power dimension from [one’s] research, since it exists in all situations. The best strategy is to be aware of, understand, and respond to it in a critically reflexive manner” (Dowling, 2010, p.33). The (young) interview participant, for example, emerges through her relations with the (senior) researcher and vice versa; however, the latter are often seen to dominate not only the interview process but the entire fieldwork project (Mohammad, 2001; Nast, 1994). Positionality is simultaneously about difference and inequality and calls into question generalisations of any positionality; hence, positionalities are not fixed. They are (re)enacted on an everyday basis in ways that simultaneously reproduce and challenge them, a two-sided process termed ‘citation’ by Butler (1990). Everyday practices routinely reproduce pre-existing positionalities giving them a durability that seemingly naturalises them. Yet they remain social constructs, always subject to the possibility of transformation. Through subjects’ practices and imaginaries, then, relations of power and situated understandings are contested and re-negotiated thereby (potentially) transforming these seemingly rigid positionalities (G. Rose, 1997; Valentine, 2002).

Consequently, I tried to ‘disempower’ myself as a researcher in relation to my interview participants (Skelton, 1991). As mentioned above, at the beginning

of my fieldwork, I contacted several staff members at NUS and NIE to help me conduct this research; gatekeepers in Singapore's educational setting (Burgess, 1991). In this matter, I relied on their cooperation and good will to facilitate the recruitment of interview participants among their students. When I attended lectures I was introduced to class and given the opportunity to briefly present my project. Responses to interview requests following these classroom visits, however, were rather low and I decided to employ the snowballing method to recruit additional participants (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010). At no time during this project were potential participants approached directly. Instead, I waited for them to make the first contact. When arranging the interviews I was letting the participants choose both the time and venue of the interview (Chacko, 2004). In this way, I was hoping to accommodate their needs and to minimise, where possible, uneven power relations inherent in interview sites (Elwood & Martin, 2000; Sin, 2003). All participants decided to conduct the interviews on 'their' campus, either at NUS or NIE; except for one interview, which took place at a coffee shop near NUS University. In addition, I let the interviewees decide whether they want to meet with me alone or bring a friend along to the interview. I tried to 'give up control' (Howitt & Stevens, 2010) and to respect and empower the interviewees by letting them make decisions. Most interviews were conducted with individuals or in pairs. There was only one occasion where participants preferred to be interviewed in a group of three. I always explained the research project in detail to the participant(s) and left sufficient time for contemplation and questions. I answered their queries about my professional and personal life in an honest and open manner and reminded them that they can stop the interview at any time and have no obligation to participate. Nevertheless, Skelton (2001) and Rubin (2012) illustrate that individuals can feel a duty to participate in research due to the researchers relative position of power as someone searching for the truth in the name of science (Chacko, 2004).

Consequently, I knew that I had certain power invested in me because I was different: a white, male, Western, well-educated outsider. Traditional insider-outsider dichotomies contrast outsiders as culturally, socio-economically, or ethnically different from their informants (cf. Dowling, 2010; Ley & Mountz, 2001; Rubin, 2012), while insiders are similar in gender, ethnicity, or

language (Ganga & Scott, 2006; M. Jones, 2006). It is often claimed that both the information collected and the interpretations made by an insider are more valid than those of an outsider due to the lack of shared experiences and a common perspective on the world (M. Jones, 2006). Being an outsider, however, can be also beneficial. It could result in some informants making an effort to articulate themselves and their feelings more clearly (see Dowling, 2010). This concept of an either/or dichotomy, however, has been rejected (e.g. Carling, Erdal, & Ezzati, 2014; Gilbert, 1994; Gold, 2002; Mohammad, 2001; Mullings, 1999; Sultana, 2007) due to the fact that each individual has “overlapping racial, socio-economic, gender, ethnic, and other characteristics. If we have multiple social qualities and roles, as do our informants, then there are many points of similarity and dissimilarity between ourselves and research participants” (Dowling, 2010, p.36).

Thus, I was an insider and an outsider at the same time and the same place. From one perspective, I was different (cf. G. Rose, 1997) as a white, Western, male researcher. All my participants were Singaporeans. None of them was white but rather of different Asian descent. Most of them were female. All these characteristics made me an outsider in this situation. At the same time, from another perspective, I have also been an insider to. I was a graduate student at university and all of them were studying at universities themselves. Another similarity was that about half of the participants were majoring in Geography and I was doing my PhD in the same discipline. We had mutual interests in issues regarding education, citizenship, and multi-cultural societies. All these aspects and situations united and separated us at the same time. Thus, the nature of interaction during interviews raised some of the most critical questions that needed to be dealt with in this research: The necessity of not only acknowledging but also adequately addressing aspects of power, difference and ethics is crucial.

Therefore, it was important for this research project to consider what effects my position as a white Western male researcher conducting this project in Southeast Asia with young (predominantly female) adults might have on the interview process and outcome. The mutual interactions during the interviews are not separate from societal structures (Dowling, 2010) and raise both the

question of how the researcher addresses these aspects of power and difference, but also how the interviewees are enabled to do the same.

I have emerged from interviews with the feeling that my interviewees need to know how to protect themselves from people like me.

(Finch, 1984, p.80)

While listening to the interviewees the researcher observes the informants and they observe the researcher. Neither the informant or the researcher, nor the nature of interactions will remain the same during or after the research project (Kobayashi, 1994). This is described as inter-subjectivity (see Kearns, 1997), a sensuously relational experience (Crossley, 1996). As mentioned above, this stylised social event (Holland & Ramazanoglu, 1994) is affected by differences such as age, class, gender, ethnicity and religion (Ley & Mountz, 2001). Therefore, inter-subjectivity is dependent upon reflexivity and positionality, which affect the research situation and ultimately its findings (Mansvelt & Berg, 2010). Reflexivity involves critical self-scrutiny, asking oneself about one's role in the research at all stages of the process (England, 1994). Moreover, it involves moving away from the idea of the neutral, detached observer (Henry, 2003; Oakley, 1981). Research is approached from a specific position, which affects the approach taken, the questions asked and the analysis conducted (Gold, 2002). Caplan (1993) suggests that, in relation to our research participants, we should ask ourselves: 'Who are we for them and who are they for us?' (p.178) to reflect on how the researcher is socially located and positioned vis-à-vis the researched.

One important facet of my social positioning is my gender. Being a male researcher interviewing predominantly female participants could have had a significant impact on the data collected during my fieldwork (Dowling, 2010). In the 1990s, a long and broad debate about the masculinity of Geography as a discipline² emerged (Berg, 1994, 2001; Campbell et al., 1999; Gregson & Crewe, 1998; Jackson, 1991; Johnston, 1998; Longhurst, 1994, 1995, 1997; Pile, 1994; G. Rose, 1993; Sparke 1996; Woodward, 1998). Much of this early feminist geographic scholarship illustrated how "geography had been

² For an excellent overview of masculinities and geography see Berg and Longhurst (2003)

written by men, for men and about men and therefore, women have been marginalized" (Hopkins & Noble, 2009, p.811). While my research was highly sensitised by post-colonial and feminist scholarship and I was cautious to maintain a critical view on my research, I was still ultimately positioned as a *man* doing fieldwork. My research "represents the situated knowledge of a man interrogating the masculinity of fieldwork by turning to feminist work" (Sparke, 1996, p.214). Thus, my position as a man made a difference. My masculinity could have influenced my research project in both facilitative and obstructive ways (Vanderbeck, 2005).

The fact that all the educational gatekeepers I contacted were men, for example, might have been an advantage for me asking for their support. It seems, however, it was their genuine wish to help that prompted them to support my research rather than the idea of having something in common as 'male academics'. Regarding the gender of my interview participants a more differentiated analysis seems required. The vast majority of participants in my research were women. While the gender-ratio between male and female students in the classrooms at NUS was relatively balanced the student cohort at NIE was characterised by a strong gender imbalance with the majority of students being female. By using a 'passive' approach to recruit participants among these students (see above) and not selecting them directly to achieve, for example, a balanced gender ratio, the probability of a gender imbalance among the interview participants was relatively high. This gender disparity was reinforced by employing the snowballing method which could have facilitated the uneven participation of female students being close friends with the first (female) participants. Whether the sample profile of this study is the result of my own gender or should be interpreted as a consequence of relying on volunteer respondents cannot be ascertained.

The research relationship between interviewer and interviewees raises also other ethical issues. The protection of respondents from harm during and after the research process needs to be considered by the researcher including questions of disclosure, consent and anonymity (Byrne, 2004). Hence, ethical approval from all three academic institutions involved in this research, the University of Auckland, the National University of Singapore, and the National

Institute of Education Singapore, was obtained prior to data collection. Moreover, informed written consent was obtained from all interview participants, who were also provided with a participant information sheet to enable them to make an informed decision. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by myself to ensure an accurate and satisfactory data analysis. I believe that my research allowed most participants to reflect on and re-evaluate their everyday life-experiences (England, 1994). Moreover, this project offered space for participants' voices by using a wide range of their direct quotes (R. Butler, 2001) without paying any attention to their gender or ethnic background. The analysis of the data and the writing up of this thesis, however, was entirely mine, even though I claim that I am representing the voice of my respondents (Chacko, 2004; England, 1994). I have only presented my own perspective of what I thought my participants were thinking (Sparke, 1996). Hence, my findings will always be interpretive and incomplete. However, these stories, even if expressed in a subjective and potentially inaccurate way, may otherwise not have been told (Sultana, 2007). The potential failures of my views and interpretations highlight the subjective character of my own reading (Ali, 2014). As such they also reveal broader practices of exclusion and misinterpretation that my positionality imposes on the researched.

As a researcher entering a foreign field (Henry, Higate, & Sanghera, 2009), I was positioned through the production of discourses of knowledge and master narratives within the academy, and by my specific discipline in terms of the roles and responsibilities in the field (Thapar-Björkert & Henry, 2004). Hence, reflecting on debates around the involvement of researchers in the acts of knowledge production that have occurred in cultural and feminist geography (England, 1994; Herod, 1999; Jackson, 1993; McDowell, 1992; Nast, 1998; G. Rose, 1997; Wolf, 1996) have helped me to recognise and acknowledge my own personal embodiment, and this was a fundamental experience in writing this thesis. However, I found the goal of total self-reflection impossible to achieve and was left with an uncomfortable feeling of failure after writing this. Gillian Rose (1997) offers a valuable perspective on my predicament:

We cannot know everything, nor can we survey power as if we can fully understand, control or redistribute it. What we may be able to do is something rather more modest but, perhaps, rather more radical: to inscribe into our research practices some absences and fallibilities while recognizing that the significance of this does not rest entirely in our own hands.

(G. Rose, 1997, p.319)

After following the strict and multiple processes of obtaining ethical consent before commencing my fieldwork the possibility of harmful effects emanating from my research appeared rather minimal at that stage. Issues of ethnicity, being a white researcher in Singapore, seemed to be less relevant compared to other study sites in Southeast Asia. I had the perception of Singapore as a multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan city-state where the everyday presence of white expatriates and other 'Westerners' has blurred the boundaries between 'me' and 'them'. During the fieldwork I had never the impression of being superior or privileged towards my participants. On the contrary, I had the impression of the interviews taking place on a 'plain field' among university students. This might have been a naïve perception of the situation at that time. Certainly, while writing this chapter a sense of failure (G. Rose, 1997) takes shape in my mind and I would like to conclude this section with a quote from Matthew Sparke (1996): "I would another time organize my interviews quite differently" (p.229).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological approach and specific methods used in this project. By demonstrating the applicability of a qualitative research approach it was explained that Foucauldian discourse analysis constitutes the primary mode of data analysis, in this research, to investigate the social construction of national identity, the good citizen ideal communicated in Social Studies textbooks, and how this official discourse constitutes certain perceptions of reality among interviewees. Social Studies syllabi and textbooks were selected as objects of analysis constituting the essence of officially promoted values and norms in Singapore's citizenship education system. Interviews were used to uncover internalisations and challenges of

official discourses constituting the good citizen. Finally, the critical research position taken on and other ethical considerations were illustrated.

The next chapter gives a broad overview of Singapore's physical, political, and historical features before investigating its education system in general and in particular the subject of Social Studies, the main vehicle of citizenship education in the city-state. The chapter concludes by examining two key discourses infused into Singapore's education system that impact significantly on how the ideal of the good citizen is constructed in Social Studies: Meritocracy and Critical Thinking.

4. Citizenship Education in Singapore

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contextualises the foregoing theoretical debates of citizenship and citizenship education reviewed in Chapter Two and elaborates on how these themes have played out in Singapore. Some general background information regarding the physical, political, and historical features of the city-state will be provided followed by a detailed account of Singapore's education system in general and its prime subject of citizenship education—Social Studies—in particular. The chapter gives an account of the limitations and inequalities of Singapore's highly competitive and rigid education system as well as investigates debates over the content and purpose of Social Studies as a subject of citizenship education. The chapter presents the first empirical section of this thesis which comprises a critical discussion of two important discourses in Singapore's citizenship education strategy: Meritocracy and Critical Thinking. By examining the two discourses it will be demonstrated that the citizenship education framework in Singapore articulates several dialectical tensions which undermine the official goals stipulated in this education initiative. It will be illustrated that Social Studies curricula send contradictory and inconsistent messages to pupils leading to irregularities within the educational framework. Moreover, it will be suggested that these inconsistencies are revealing an alternative reading of Social Studies as highly elitists and paternalistic in character which conceals the real motivations infused into citizenship education in Singapore.

4.2 Singapore

The main Singapore island-state and its approximately sixty smaller islands comprise about 710 km² in area. Immediately surrounding Singapore are Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia to the north, Sabah and Sarawak to the east) and Indonesia (Sumatra to the south, Kalimantan to the east) (see Figure 1 below). Singapore is one of the most densely populated cities in the world with a population of 5.31 million and a population density of 7457 per km² (Singapore Infomap, 2013). From 1819 onwards Singapore was a British colony, beginning with the arrival of Sir Stamford Raffles and ending when

Singapore gained self-rule in 1959. Unlike many other colonial independence movements there was no armed confrontation between the British colonial power and Malaya (Chua, 1995; Nathan, 2010). Rather, agreement was reached between the Malayan and the British government, which resulted in the merger of Malaya with Singapore to form the newly independent Malaysian Confederation in 1963 (Lau, 2004; Liow, 2009; E. Lee, 2008; Rahim, 1999). The merger ultimately failed and in 1965 Singapore became an independent nation (Chan, 1971b).

Figure 1: Map of Singapore



(Source: Author's Own)

Singapore was faced with a number of challenges when achieving independence, similar to many other post-colonial nations. Beside its highly diverse ethnic make-up it was characterised by a lack of natural resources and an underdeveloped economy with high unemployment (J. Tan, 1997). Singapore's newly elected political leaders emphasised that, for Singapore to survive, the main challenge of nation-building would need to be overcome through the development of a shared national identity, an up-to-date infrastructure, and a modern and efficient economy (Chua & Kuo, 1995; Hill &

Lian, 1995). Rapid industrialisation and the promotion of social cohesion became chief strategies adopted by the government at that time. Political and economic survival became the prevailing national sentiment, with themes related to vulnerability and survival (cf. objectives 2 and 3) being strong ideological constructs of Singapore's government until today (Chua, 1995, p.48).

Singapore is a nation of immigrants; a diverse society built by settlers who came primarily from China, Malaysia, and Southern India. Singapore's linguistic, ethnic, cultural and religious diversity illustrates its immigrant history and constitutes its main challenge in forging a cohesive nation (Hong & Huang, 2008). The diversity of ethnicities (74.2% Chinese, 13.3% Malay, 9.2% Indian and 3.3% others), religions (e.g. Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism and Hinduism) and languages (e.g. Chinese, Malay and Tamil) which come together in this densely populated city-state (Singapore Infomap, 2013), illustrate Singapore's inevitable task of balancing the interests of its large Chinese community with those of the smaller (especially Malay) communities (Chua & Koh, 1998). One of the consequences of Singapore's diversity was the official adoption of its multi-racial, -lingual, -cultural, and -religious policies through which attempts to homogenise the differences of the various ethnic, religious, and cultural groups in Singapore were made (Chua, 1998; Goh & Holden, 2009; Hashim & Tan, 2009; PuruShotam, 1998). Moreover, this sorting of citizens into four confined pre-constituted society groups of Chinese, Malaysian, Indian, and Others (CMIO) aimed to give equal rights and representations to all citizens of the nation-state (Goh & Gopinathan, 2005).

Developing racial and religious harmony has been one of the most important political aims in modern Singapore (cf. objective 4). Singapore's efforts at balancing unity and diversity have focused on strategies which enable Singaporeans to feel a sense of belonging to the nation, while at the same time retaining their roots in particular racial and religious groups (Goh & Holden, 2009). Racial and religious harmony is stressed through public policies and messages of equality deeply embedded in society. The languages, religions, and cultures of Singapore's main ethnic groups receive

equal treatment formally. This translates, for example, in the education sector into the regulation that every student needs to learn a native language (Mandarin for Chinese, Malay for Malays, and Tamil for Indians, with mixed pupils being able to choose their 'native' language) in addition to English as *lingua franca* in Singapore. Through these multi-racial practices in public institutions, race becomes highly visible in the public sphere and is used to contribute directly to the formation of Singapore as a nation (Chua, 2003). Moreover, multi-racialism is managed in such a way as to allow the government to assume a neutral position that insulates it "from claims of entitlement of the people as both racialized collectives and individual citizens" (Chua, 1998, p.193).

Singapore's history is strongly entangled with one figure—former Prime Minister of Singapore and General Secretary of the People's Action Party (PAP)—Lee Kuan Yew: the Father of Singapore. His political craftsmanship since the 1950s and biographical and semi-biographical output since the late 1990s (K. Lee, 1998, 2000) has placed him on the centre-stage of Singapore's history-making: the Singapore Story (Barr & Skrbiš, 2008). The starting point for the Singapore Story is the strong emphasis put on the specialness of Singapore. It is a *story* of humble beginnings, a struggle against the odds, which ultimately led to success and prosperity in which all Singaporeans can rejoice, regardless of their diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds (K. Lee, 1998). There is a moral didactic intent in the Singapore Story to interpolate citizen subjects whose loyalty to the nation remains 'unfettered in the tides of globalisation' (Koh, 2005; see also Chapter One). The Singapore Story, thus, has emerged as a nationalist signifier that needs to be fulfilled and also became a metaphor of the collective imagery of national identity in the city-state (Barr & Skrbiš, 2008; T. Lee, 2004). The Singapore Story seeks to create a national identity or unity defined primarily by a political-economic agenda (cf. objective 2) at the same time weaving different narratives about reality, different cultural traditions, and different ethnic identities closely together for its conceptualisation of national unity (Barr & Low, 2005; R. Moore, 2000; Quah, 1990; Rahim, 1998).

The dominance of the PAP in Singapore's political landscape makes the Singapore Story almost synonymous with that of the PAP (Lau, 2004). The victorious emergence of the nation-state from the political struggles of the early days this period was portrayed in the Singapore Story as a turbulent era as well as signifying the birth of the nation. The PAP government is presented as having consolidated Singapore's independence through the politics of survival and its strong emphasis on economic pragmatism and rationality built on meritocracy, multi-racialism, -lingualism, -culturalism, and -religiosity (Mauzy & Milne, 2002). As a young nation-state with sizeable minorities, the PAP government could appeal to neither race, religion, nationalism, nor a common identity to forge a unifying consensus. Given the circumstances of the time, however, it could appeal to broad concerns and fears about social and political instability as well as economic deprivation (Wong & Huang, 2010; see 2.8, 2.9). For the PAP (as the ruling party in Singapore since self-rule was achieved in 1959) the overriding priority was and still is economic growth inextricably linked to national survival (Yong, 2004). Security and survival became recurrent themes in the political leaders' refrains and the goals of their efforts (Chan, 1971a; Chua, 1995; Hill & Lian, 1995). This official perspective on Singapore's history is most evident in the sphere of education.

Since Singapore's independence education has played a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and nation-building (see also 2.5). In the wake of Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1965 the prevailing national sentiment and ideology was one of political and economic survival (K. Lee, 1966). During this early stage, Singapore's government utilised schools to construct a unified national system of education and to equip a labour force with the skills and attitudes necessary for its industrialisation (Sharpe & Gopinathan, 2002). This centralised education system constituted an important ideological apparatus with citizenship education focussing on cultivating national loyalty, patriotism, a sense of belonging, and a strong commitment to actively participate in the goals of national development (Green, 1997b; see also 2.5). The principle of meritocracy was laid down as the basis for educational and economic opportunity of all citizens which contributed to the rapid growth of the nation (Chua, 1995). Schools were

seen by the government as the natural place of citizenship education, biased towards the development of a united and stable nation (Chew, 1998; Turnbull, 2009).

Education played a crucial role in focused efforts to build and mould a nation, not only economically, but also culturally and psychologically (Chua & Kuo, 1995). The ideal citizen—the good citizen—was seen in moral terms as an individual who would hold certain moral principles and display certain virtues (Cogan, Morris & Print, 2002; see also 2.5). Moral education and citizenship education were closely integrated with moral values and the right conduct constituting the basis of good citizenship. Citizenship education in Singapore was focused on political and moral socialisation through the inculcation of issues of national concern such as racial and religious harmony, economic growth and national security (Tan & Chew, 2004). The citizenship education concept envisaged the population to be a tightly organised and highly disciplined citizenry pulling in the same direction with an aspired sense of public spiritedness and self-sacrifice in the national interest (Chua, 1995). Whether classifying Singapore as authoritarian (Barr, 2012), soft-authoritarian (Nasir & Turner, 2013) or competitive authoritarian (Ortmann, 2011), all these concepts involve a tight system of political control to maintain the social order developed in the early days of Singapore's independence allowing only few opportunities for dissent (George, 2000; Tamney, 1996; see also 2.15).

First nascent manifestations of a burgeoning liberal democracy, however, are visible in Singapore. In the most recent elections in Singapore 2011, the PAP government, despite winning the overall elections, achieved its worst result since Singapore's independence, by gaining only 60.14% of the total votes (Sreekumar & Vadrevu, 2013). Nevertheless, Singapore's government has enjoyed and continues to enjoy broad-based support, and it is recognised that the legitimacy of the government is largely based on its ability to provide for the security and prosperity of its citizens (Wong & Huang, 2010). The level of its legitimacy, however, appears to be rather shallow with scholars observing "a surprising lack of enthusiasm for the regime and a consistent sense of (...) disappointment about aspects of the Singapore system" (Barr &

Skrbiš, 2008, p.158). It is argued that throughout the course of its rule Singapore's PAP government employed "artful manipulations of institutions and procedures" (Case, 2005, p.227-228) to influence public opinion, discourage opposition, and neutralise its critics. The 2011 elections were characterised by a new strong opposition and an increasingly politically emboldened electorate, with primarily younger Singaporeans in the mood for political change, and the widespread perception of the PAP government as being disconnected from the people and its policies resonating with the image of an elitist party out of touch with the needs of ordinary Singaporeans (K. P. Tan, 2012). While the mainstream media continued to be the primary source of political information for Singaporeans, many youths turned to online options for alternative news and commentaries. Online information and views were widely recirculated via social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, especially among youths (Sreekumar & Vadrevu, 2013; see also 2.4). The government continues to claim it has acquired a strong mandate to rule, through regular democratic elections. The relation between the government and the people, however, seems based on forms of pragmatic consent rather than on popular support (George, 2007; see 2.15).

4.3 Asian Nationalism

Contrary to the experiences of most Western European countries, the formation of a nation-state and nationalism in Southeast Asia has not been a natural outcome that citizens have shared and identified with. Hill and Lian (1995) point out "states in Southeast Asia, which have been formed as a consequence of decolonisation, are not products of popular uprisings in the sense that revolutionary democratic states could be seen to be. They were independent states created out of territories under colonial administration" (p.18). As a result, the notion of statehood precedes the development of the concept of nation or the birth of the nation-state in most Southeast Asian countries. According to Selvaraj Velayutham (2007) the forging of loyalty and identity with the nation-state is a relatively recent phenomenon in Singapore and yet in the course of becoming an independent nation-state the state was instrumental to the development of the idea of a Singaporean nation. Singapore's historical experiences of statehood show that the "state preceded the development of nationalism rather than emerging as its political

consequence and the state itself became the first major symbol of national identity" (Willmott, 1989, p.581). Therefore, the development of nationalism in Singapore is managed top-down (see 2.6), and incorporated governmental projects of nation-building with many experiences and articulations from below, have been excluded from the collective imagery. Economic growth and national prosperity do not necessarily engender an affectively bound attachment when the task of creating a commitment is imposed from above (cf. objective 3) and disregards people and activities that are "crucial to the daily functioning of the nation-state" (Cheah, 1998b, p.318).

4.4 Singapore's Education System

Historically, citizenship education played an important role in national education and in the rise of the nation state (Green, 1997a). Over the past few decades, citizenship education in the West has largely shifted its focus from the forging of a national identity to an emphasis on the cultivation of democratic and civic values (Barton & Levstik 2004; Osborne, 1999). In contrast, citizenship education in Asia stresses moral and communitarian values as well as national identity (W. Lee et al., 2004). An emphasis on education for the purpose of forging national identity is hardly surprising given the relative youth of many Asian states (see 2.5). In numerous such states—including Singapore—the goals of national development are often couched in terms of national survival and economic competition (Sim & Print, 2005, cf. objective 2). With the worldwide economic climate increasingly driven by globalising forces, in 1997 Singapore introduced several education strategies to remain economically competitive on the global market (Economic Review Committee, 2003), with its political elites exercising direct authority over curriculum policy and its implementation (Gopinathan, 2007). The reforms were encapsulated by three major policy initiatives: Thinking Schools Learning Nation (TSLN), the Masterplan for Information Technology (IT) in Education, and National Education (NE) (Ministry of Education (MOE), 2013a). TSLN officially aimed to create a critical and creative thinking culture in schools through such means as changes in curricula, examinations and assessment systems, and teacher education programmes. The Masterplan for Information Technology, or IT Masterplan, consisted of the MOE's plan to substantially invest in IT to support teaching and learning, and in particular

to encourage creative thinking and lifelong learning. While the official TSLN vision and IT Masterplan seek to cultivate creative and critical thinking amongst pupils, NE was conceived as a comprehensive citizenship education framework for the entire educational system in Singapore (MOE, 2012a). Before discussing National Education in more detail a brief overview of the structure of Singapore's education system at large will be provided.

Singapore has one of the best-performing school systems in the world (McKinsey & Company, 2010). This system comprises six years of compulsory primary education (Primary 1 to 6), four to five years of secondary education (Secondary 1 to 5), followed by two to three years of Junior College (JC) or Polytechnic education, before pupils commence studies at the university level (MOE, 2012b) (see Figure 2). Primary school students in Singapore learn the three core subjects of English Language, their Mother Tongue (i.e. their native language), and Mathematics. Students also take subjects such as Art, Civics & Moral Education, Music, Social Studies and Physical Education. The subject of Science is introduced from Primary 3 onwards and it features as a prominent field of study in Singapore's education system (MOE, 2013b). After the foundation stage of primary education (Primary 1 to Primary 4), the three core subjects are taught according to the differing abilities of the students (MOE, 2012b). In Primary 5 and 6, each core subject is offered to students at either the (lower) foundation or (higher) standard level with the official educational streaming system taking effect. The practice of streaming from the beginning of Primary 1, however, has become a common practice amongst primary schools in Singapore (Hornberger & Vaish, 2009). At the end of Primary 6 all students, of both foundational and standard streams, sit for the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) to assess their abilities for placement in an academic stream in secondary school (MOE, 2013c). The focus on the synergy effects of combining similarly 'intellectually equipped students' aligns well to the system of meritocracy; however, streaming has shown significant weaknesses with its inflexibility and rigidity reinforcing prevalent disadvantages based on ethnic and socio-economic categories (Senin & Ng, 2012).

students' learning abilities and interests. Students in the Express stream typically offer six to eight subjects at the final exam of Secondary 4: the Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Ordinary (GCE 'O' Level) Examination. Students in the Normal (Academic) course will offer academically-based subjects whilst those in the Normal (Technical) course will follow a curriculum that is more practice-oriented. At the end of Secondary 4 students in both streams have to sit for a final exam: the Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Normal (GCE 'N' Level) Examination. After the GCE 'N' level examinations students in the Normal (Academic) stream who satisfy the requirements go on to a fifth year of study where they will sit for the GCE 'O' level examination at the end of the year (MOE, 2013e). The completion of the GCE 'O' level examination is a prerequisite for students to enter Junior College, and for the later commencement of studying at the university level. In addition to these common routes, Singapore's education system offers multiple other alternative educational pathways (see Figure 2).

4.5 National Education

National Education (NE) was launched in 1997 as part of an extensive educational reform package to develop the knowledge, values, and skills deemed necessary for Singaporean citizens by the government (Sim & Print, 2005). Efforts to forge a national identity in the midst of globalisation was paramount to NE (cf. Chapter One) and made citizenship education a primary concern of education policies in Singapore (Sim, 2008). NE was seen as "the state's attempt to secure political legitimacy, build ideological consensus, and forge a sense of national identity" (Kong & Yeoh, 2003, p.15). The objectives of NE were to develop national cohesion, foster a sense of national pride, learn the Singapore Story, understand Singapore's unique challenges, constraints, and vulnerabilities, and to instil the core values of meritocracy, racial harmony and good governance (MOE, 2013a; see also 2.5). These core messages are infused through subjects such as Civics and Moral Education (CME), Social Studies, as well as History and Geography (Wang et al., 2006). NE was more than a curricular subject; it was a comprehensive citizenship education framework for the entire educational system in Singapore (Sim & Adler, 2004).

The key aims of NE were updated in 2007 and comprise the following six messages:

1. Singapore is our homeland; this is where we belong.
We treasure our heritage and take pride in shaping our own unique way of life.
2. We must preserve racial and religious harmony.
We value our diversity and are determined to stay a united people.
3. We must uphold meritocracy and incorruptibility.
We provide opportunities for all, according to their ability and effort.
4. No one owes Singapore a living.
We find our own way to survive and prosper, turning challenge into opportunity.
5. We must ourselves defend Singapore.
We are proud to defend Singapore ourselves; no one else is responsible for our security and well-being.
6. We have confidence in our future.
United, determined and well-prepared, we have what it takes to build a bright future for ourselves, and to progress together as one nation.

(MOE, 2012a)

NE officially aims to cultivate positive values and attitudes in the young towards the nation in order to develop national cohesion and their confidence in the future. One important motivation for the education reform in 1997 was the perceived destabilising effect of globalisation on the nation-state by the government. Globalisation was seen by the elite in Singapore as exacerbating complex and fluid social fissures of race, language, religion, and class (K.P. Tan, 2007). It was feared by the government that this could jeopardise social peace and harmony in the city-state—a rhetoric continuously deployed to justify its policies until the present day (see Chapter One and 2.6). The task of producing locality among the citizenry is increasingly a struggle and can result in mutating citizenship (Ong, 2006a) in which the mobility of global professionals—cosmopolitans—challenges their commitment to the nation. The increasing global connectedness of citizens leads to more complex social interactions, which cannot be controlled by a nation-state. According to Appadurai (1997) “this is a world where nation-states are struggling to retain control over their populations in the face of a host of sub-national and

transnational movements and organizations" (p.189). Some argue that a rootless and unbounded identity formation has resulted in the search for more salient alternative to the nation (Hannerz, 1996) with the general effect of globalisation seen as the weakening of national identity (Ohmae, 1995; Bauman, 1998). Subsequently, by the mid-1990s the issue of globalisation and the respondent educational policies took centre stage in Singapore's official discourses and rhetoric (Chong, 2005; Kong, 2000; Kwok & Low, 2002; T. Lee, 2004).

4.6 Cosmopolitanism

One strategy deployed by the Singaporean government to accommodate for the increasing global mobility, and its impacts on national identity, was the integration of cosmopolitan ideas into its official rhetoric (Yeoh, 2004, see also Chapter One). Traditional concepts of cosmopolitanism have been associated with the Kantian moral-political philosophy (Linklater, 1998) which predominantly "designates an intellectual ethic, a universal humanism that transcends regional particularism" (Cheah, 1998a, p.22). As such, cosmopolitanism means a way of being in the world detached from "the bonds, commitments and affiliations that constrain ordinary nation-bound lives" (Robbins, 1998, p.1). The overall defining characteristic of Singapore's engagement with globalisation, manifested in its official rhetoric and educational policies, is a notion of cosmopolitanism that is legitimated by nationalists: a nationally embedded cosmopolitanism (Guibernau, 2007). During the 1990s, *rooted cosmopolitanism* as a concept found strong support in Singapore (Ackerman, 1994; Cheah, 1998a; Cohen, 1992; Hollinger, 1995; Robbins, 1998) and paved the way for the linkage not only of nation and state but also of nationalism and cosmopolitanism (Ho, 2006; E. Tan, 2003). As was illustrated earlier, the key component of Singapore's nation-building project has been the promotion of economic development (cf. objective 2). The city-state's very survival, therefore, is seen to hinge upon Singapore's successful engagement with the global economy (see Chapter One).

The government's strategy to reconcile this global-local dilemma shows Singapore's efficiency and administrative skills in constructing a national identity (Mauzy & Milne, 2002). National identity that appeals to

cosmopolitanism is strategically managed by a series of top-down processes (Ho, 2011; Baildon & Sim, 2010) which illustrate that Singapore's vision of cosmopolitanism is *economic* and not *political* (Ho, 2006; cf. objective 2). Since successful communities require a certain level of economic sufficiency to function adequately, Singapore's elites supported the type of cosmopolitanism that is based on patriotic sentiments: a rooted cosmopolitanism (Baildon, 2009). In his famous National Day Rally Speech of 1999 Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong referred to Singaporeans as cosmopolitans and 'heartlanders' (Goh, 1999). The term heartlander links to the conservative majority in Singapore who tend to be rooted in their cultures and traditions, respectful of authority, which play a major role in maintaining the core values and social stability of Singapore (E. Tan, 2003; Yeoh, 2004). Cosmopolitans, on the other hand, were seen by Goh (1999) as having an international outlook that enables them to work and navigate comfortably almost anywhere in the world. According to Goh (1999), for national stability and unity to be maintained it was crucial to construct a feeling of obligation and sense of duty to cosmopolitans. Official concepts of national identity consequently call for a cosmopolitan spirit *rooted* in the normative Singapore Story (Quah, 2001; see also Chapter One). Similarly Hill and Lian (1995) argue citizenship in Singapore is conceived as conferring duties in the creation and maintenance of the nation, notably in a state, in which "political leaders have constantly maintained that the values of the collectivity over those of autonomous individuals are essential to its very survival" (Hill & Lian, 1995, p.1).

4.7 Social Studies

A manifestation of the concept of rooted cosmopolitanism in Singapore is the Social Studies slogan of 'Being Rooted and Living Global' (W. Lee, 2012b). The Social Studies programme was launched in 2001 as a compulsory subject offered at primary and upper secondary levels (Baildon & Sim, 2010). It was designed primarily as a vehicle for NE to prepare students to live in a modern global society. Officially, in addition to developing a deep sense of shared destiny and national identity among the students, Social Studies also aims to enable students to understand the issues that affect the socio-economic development, governance and future of Singapore. Social Studies also

envisages pupils to learn from the experiences of other countries to build and sustain a politically viable, socially cohesive and economically vibrant Singapore and to develop into citizens who have empathy towards others and who will participate responsibly and sensibly in a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious society (Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB), 2012). However, as argued in this thesis, decisions about which social knowledge is important, which skills and behaviours are valuable, and what values are significant are always context-specific. Consequently, to understand the citizenship education curriculum in any society one must understand the national context in which it is embedded (see Chapter One).

In the Singaporean context Social Studies can be seen as an important component of citizenship education (MOE, 2012a). Debates about the conceptualisation of the good citizen (see 2.5) strongly impact on the nature and implementation of Social Studies to foster either the socialisation of young people to the status quo, or to transforming and reconstruct society (R. Evans, 2004). Ochoa-Becker and Engle (2007) claim the dimensions of socialisation and counter-socialisation are central to the education of good citizens. Socialisation is a process by which society inducts young people into its customs, values and behaviours as a way of continuing existing traditions and practices (see 2.2). Youths are thus taught to fit into the existing social order with the transmitted traditions and values often grounded in the past experiences of society (Chew, 1998). Processes of socialisation can be balanced by counter-socialisation practices (cf. objective 1), which emphasise independent critical thinking and responsible social contestation (Ochoa-Becker & Engle, 2007). Counter-socialisation is the process of developing and expanding the individual's ability to be a rational, thoughtful, and independent citizen by promoting active and vigorous reasoning, which includes the critical reflection on what has been internalised through socialisation. Social Studies ideally serves three functions: citizenship transmission, learning the discipline, and learning reflective inquiry and thinking (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977). The engagement of socialisation and counter-socialisation forces, then, can communicate contradictory messages, which ideally are a stimulating input for citizenship education in democratic societies (Han, 2009).

As with citizenship education in general, debates over the content and the purpose of Social Studies as a subject of citizenship education have been long and contentious (e.g. J. L. Nelson, 2001; R. Evans, 2004, Ross, 2001). In many countries, including Singapore, the task of preparing young people to be citizens (see 2.4) has been specifically delegated to the subject of Social Studies (Adler & Sim, 2005; Gonzales, Riedel, Avery & Sullivan, 2001; Print, 2000). The focus of Social Studies curricula on cultivating national loyalty, patriotism, and a sense of belonging, is seen as typical for citizenship education in Asia (Cogan, Morris & Print, 2002; see also 2.5). Although there have been some variations in the emphasis given to different citizenship education programmes, in Singapore since 1959 the central element of citizenship education has been to describe the ideal citizen in moral terms: as a good citizen (Sim & Print, 2005). Tan and Chew (2004) state that moral reasoning needs to involve “the search for, understanding of and sincere living by moral truths” (p.598) irrespective of government policies and goals. In Singapore, however, values and citizenship education is practiced as an instrument of statecraft with the inculcation of a predefined set of desired attitudes and values by the government to reinforce Singapore’s status quo (see 2.5) notwithstanding the fact that official citizenship education rhetoric suggests something different (Olson, 2009; Sim & Print, 2005).

Schooling, teaching and the curriculum are always about the construction of official knowledge and common truth (Apple, 2000). Consequently, schooling can be both the ideological arena where conflicting demands and beliefs are contested and the ideological apparatus emphasising the promotion of only one single acceptable way of thinking (Sim & Print, 2009). Official knowledge comprises what is included and excluded in textbooks, syllabi and curriculum guides (Adler & Sim, 2005). The official aim of the Social Studies curriculum in Singapore is to develop “students into well informed, responsible citizens with a sense of national identity and a global perspective” (SEAB, 2012, p.iii). This concept of responsible citizens is built around a specific set of shared values, which are reflected in the Social Studies curriculum (MOE, 2012a). The core values instilled into Social Studies include patriotism, loyalty and the willingness to defend the nation. Other values commonly associated with citizenship education in the democratic West, such as social justice and

democratic civic engagement, are noticeably absent (see 2.3). Consequently, Social Studies in Singapore emphasises social cohesion, multi-culturalism and national identity *above* (Western) democratic values (Baildon & Sim, 2010). Shared values in Social Studies prioritise nation before community and society before self, family as the basic unit of society, community support and respect for the individual, consensus instead of conflict, and racial and religious harmony (C. Tan, 2012).

4.8 Social Studies Curriculum

Social Studies in Singapore aims to prepare both pupils for a life in the knowledge-based global economy, and at the same time, to develop and strengthen a national solidarity (SEAB, 2012; see also Chapter One). A national sense of belonging, however, is difficult to achieve among an increasingly materialistic, highly mobile and globally oriented Singaporean youth (Han, 2000; Neo, 2003; Sim, 2008). Social Studies can be seen as the direct response—drawing on highly contestable official rhetoric—to address the *problem* of young Singaporeans' lack of knowledge and interest in Singapore's recent history and their societal *malfunctioning* with regards to their poorly developed national identification (Sim & Adler, 2004; see also 2.4). The curriculum invites every student to become a good citizen through learning the definitions made available in the document (see 2.5). It is anticipated by the government that pupils (uncritically) internalise discourses of good citizenship mediated in and through official knowledge that has become the curricular common-sense (Apple, 2004; Tupper & Cappello, 2008). The curricular objectives express the ideal of educating students to become good and responsible citizens in an official way (Tupper et al., 2010). Both the written definition of citizenship and students' possible responses listed in the curriculum are indicative of what might be said and thought about good citizenship within and beyond the curricular space (cf. objective 1). The syllabus presents itself as liberating students through literacy in order to become active agents who will freely *choose* to be good citizens (see 2.6). This suggests Social Studies in Singapore as a form of governing its pupils. According to Foucault (2002) governance does not "refer only to political structures or to the management of states [but defines] the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed. To govern, in this

sense, is to structure the possible field of action" (p.341). Subsequently, Davies (2006) states governance is manipulative and contains and shapes the conditions of possibility available to school students (see 2.6 and 2.7).

As clarified in Chapter Three, the compulsory Upper Secondary Social Studies subject is the focus of this study. Depending on the academic stream (Academic or Express) Social Studies is conceptualised as a two- or three-year program concluding in a high stakes national examination (SEAB, 2012). Because of the centralised nature of Singapore's education system, the Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD) of the Ministry of Education (MOE) not only creates the national curriculum framework and produces the detailed syllabus for the use in all secondary schools, but also authors the Social Studies textbooks used in Singapore (MOE, 2013g). As stated in the curriculum, the main goals of the Social Studies program are to enable students to:

- *Understand the issues that affect the socio-economic development, the governance and the future of Singapore;*
- *Learn from experiences of other countries to build and sustain a politically viable, socially cohesive and economically vibrant Singapore;*
- *Develop citizens who have empathy toward others and who will participate responsibly and sensibly in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious society; and,*
- *Have a deep sense of shared destiny and national identity.*

(SEAB, 2012)

The Upper Secondary curriculum is organised around the official core motto of 'Being Rooted and Living Global' (see Chapter One and above), which aims to promote national identity, common multi-cultural understanding, and a global perspective on Singapore in the world (SEAB, 2012). It is divided into six thematic units: Singapore as a Nation in the World, Understanding Governance, Conflict and Harmony in Multi-Ethnic Societies, Managing International Relations, Sustaining Economic Development, and Facing Challenges and Change (SEAB, 2012). Units one to three reflect the core idea of Being Rooted whereas units four to six communicate the main idea of Living Global. The curriculum is designed to instil students with official

knowledge to understand Singapore's geopolitical situation, including its constraints and vulnerabilities. Key features of the Social Studies curriculum include the inculcation of national pride and identity as well as instilling the importance of cultural, racial, and religious consensus into Singapore's youths (see 2.5 and 2.15). However, the NE framework articulates several dialectical tensions undermining the claimed goals of the education initiative. The Social Studies curriculum sends highly contradictory and inconsistent messages to pupils leading to irregularities within the citizenship education framework.

The subsequent section constitutes the first part of the empirical section. The contradictions and inconsistencies will be highlighted in relation to how they manifest in Social Studies, with two central concepts being scrutinised: Meritocracy and Critical Thinking.

4.9 Meritocracy

Meritocracy is the guiding principle of both practices of governance and the system of educational distribution in Singapore (K. Lee, 2000; Mauzy & Milne, 2002; K. P. Tan, 2008). Multiple contradictions between theory and practice of meritocracy, however, exposed the ambivalence of the concept (C. Tan, 2008; J. Tan, 2008; K. P. Tan, 2008). In an egalitarian sense, meritocracy can be conceptualised as the individual reward in the form of a respected position in society, good career opportunities, high salaries, the development of social capitals, and societal prestige (Jencks, 1988; K. P. Tan, 2008). Such an egalitarian framing of meritocracy can be identified in Social Studies, which emphasises that meritocracy rewards hard work and talent and gives equal opportunities to everyone regardless of race, religion and socio-economic background (MOE, 2007, p.37).

Another understanding of meritocracy is less focused on the equal provision of resources to everyone but on disclosing the most suitable subject for an effective resource management (Cavanagh, 2002; K. P. Tan, 2008). Such a meritocratic perspective on system efficiency, which categorises subjects into societal positions, can be termed utilitarianism (Jencks, 1988). This functional reasoning is also infused into Social Studies illustrated, for example, by statements of potential leaders in Singapore being specially selected and

groomed (MOE, 2007, p.33). Important here are processes of economic and cultural capital conversion of one generation into educational capital of the subsequent subjects (Bourdieu, 1984; Lareau, 2003; see also 2.13). The egalitarian aspects of meritocracy, then, are replaced by the strong focus on competition and productivity and can result in the justification of uneven resource distribution in the education system and beyond.

K. P. Tan (2008) terms this form of meritocracy “an ideology of inequality” (p.9) and claims it can lead to the assumption that a meritocratic resource distribution ultimately benefits the whole society. This belief is deeply rooted in Singapore’s education policies that emphasise the development of a small elite who will ultimately strive to increase the well-being of society at large. J. Tan (2008) insists that prevalent disparities based on ethnicity are inevitably intertwined with class-based inequalities in Singapore. Arguing further that Singapore’s education system is racialised, Barr’s (2006a) analysis of English textbooks on the primary level reveals how syllabi have been “systematically designed [to] evoke high levels of racial consciousness [and] have displayed a pro-Chinese bias that has deprived non-Chinese children of inspiring role models” (Barr, 2006a, p.15). Assertions in Social Studies textbooks that schools and tertiary institutions are open to all Singaporeans, regardless of race or religion (MOE, 2007), thus, seem highly questionable and link meritocracy to the fragility of racial and religious harmony in the city-state (cf. objective 4). This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

Satz (2007) stresses that (educational) policies of non-discrimination are necessary to provide equal opportunities to everyone and argues further that all societal positions and professions must be accessible for all subjects in society with talents and qualifications being the points of assessment and not class, ethnicity, or gender (Gulson *et al.*, 2013). Such categorisation are the intrinsic pre-condition for an unequal distribution of social benefits in schools in particular and in society more general (Lareau, 2003; C. Mills, 1997; Pateman, 1988). The Social Studies curriculum envisages different curricula for students of different academic groups (Ho, 2012; J. Tan, 2006). These practices of sorting citizen (Ho, 2012) differentiates between potential leaders and the other (Ho *et al.*, 2011). J. Tan (2008) recapitulates that this *charade*

of meritocracy (Barr, 2006b) could force the Singaporean government to acknowledge emerging conflicts between meritocratic and nationalist principles over fair access to elite education, high level employment, and social and economic mobility. Social Studies curricula, however, stress that socio-economic backgrounds do not prevent any Singaporean from achieving success and prosperity. It is argued further that particularly the lower-income group of society benefit from Singapore's meritocratic commitment (MOE, 2007). When reflecting on Singapore's widening income gap, between rich and poor, such a bold statement is at least surprising and somewhat inconsistent with today's character of Singapore's society.

4.10 Critical Thinking

The concept of critical thinking is seen as an essential focus of Social Studies education (Beyer, 2008; Engle & Ochoa-Becker, 1988; Newmann, 1991; see also 2.5). There are multiple understandings of what critical thinking means (cf. Bailin, Case, Coombs, & Daniels, 1999; Facione, 2011; Walters, 1994). Critical thinking is often conceptualised as a set of competencies (Pithers & Soden, 2000). French and Rhoder (1992), for example, offer a taxonomy of critical thinking skills to be applied in identifying a problem and its assumptions, before making inferences, using both inductive and deductive logic, and judging the validity and reliability of assumptions, sources of data and information (Cottrell, 2005). Notwithstanding the multiple definitions of, and approaches to, critical thinking there is some consensus that it entails divergent thinking, the consideration of different perspectives, and critical judgment (Walters, 1994). Although the officially aspired development of critical thinking skills in education has started to challenge the unquestioned acceptance of the official point of view, particular guidelines—out-of-bounds (OB) markers—are still reproduced through National Education and continue to determine those practices deemed acceptable to challenge and those not (Koh, 2004; Han, 2000). It is not unusual to find critical thinking presented in Social Studies as a list of discrete skills which provokes Ong and Borich (2006) to note that passive memorisation and learning by routine still proves sufficient for doing well in Singapore's examinations. The tendency to stipulate and sequence critical thinking skills as a rigid set of steps and procedures fails to recognise how analytically discrete elements are

interdependent, complex, and uncertain in practice (Giroux, 1994; Walters, 1994). (Critical) thinking is multi-discursive, inherently ideological, and located in varying socio-cultural, economic and political contexts (McLaren, 1994). Developing thinking skills and good citizenship can never be neutral; the conception of critical thinking in Social Studies and other subjects, however, assumes an independence of context and creates the illusion of critical thinking as being neutral and apolitical (see 2.5). Such strategies and practices reinforce and universalise dominant categories of official knowledge and values, thereby maintaining the status quo of power relations (Apple, 2000; Giroux, 1994). Teaching critical thinking as pre-defined *skills* in Social Studies can, therefore, socialise students into an unquestioned acceptance of dominant norms, beliefs and values (cf. objective 1).

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted a number of important political and social contexts for the study of citizenship education in Singapore. A brief history of Singapore's development as a nation-state has been presented, in order to illustrate the underlining political processes and motivations for the government to foster a common national identity among its citizenry. The chapter has shown that citizenship education cannot stand by itself, independent of cultural norms, political priorities, social expectations, national economic development aspirations, geopolitical contexts and historical antecedents, but is constructed by all of these forces. It was suggested that ideally citizenship education involves the preparation of young people to become informed, responsible and participative citizens, an ideal which Singapore seem not to achieve. Social Studies was shown to aim at the inculcation of pre-defined discourses of good citizenship, which make a certain subject position of the good citizen available to the student and aims at the uncritical internalisation of official knowledge.

It was demonstrated that the egalitarian ideal of meritocracy is overpowered by a rather utilitarian perspective which leads to meritocracy as an ideology of inequality in everyday life and to the legitimisation of an unequal distribution of resources both within and beyond the education system. It was illustrated that the encouragement of critical and creative thinking in

Singapore is linked with economic development and nation-building efforts. It was shown that the extent and the very nature of critical thinking is encapsulated by a narrow set of pre-defined skills which do not allow for a critical judgement or reflection of daily situations and information beyond the officially anticipated *correct* answer enshrined in Social Studies.

The next chapter illustrates how citizenship education curricula have been translated into Social Studies textbooks in the city-state. The main discourses of good citizenship will be identified as being communicated in the textbooks, thereby constituting the specific aspired subject position of the good citizen. Moreover, it will be illustrated that the two underlying rationales of economic reasoning, and the exploration of fear, both transcend the study materials and consolidate the discourses of good citizenship.

5. Constituting the Good Citizen in Social Studies

5.1 Introduction

This chapter forms the second part of the empirical section (Chapter Four to Six). It is argued that official discourses of good citizenship in Social Studies textbooks are permeated by the two overarching rationales of economic reasoning and the exploitation of threat and fear (cf. objectives 2 and 3), which are considerably moulding the ways secondary students are taught attitudes and values of national identity and good citizenship in Singapore. Building on the results of the previous chapter, the ideal of the good citizen subject will be discussed as it is conceptualised in the textbooks. School textbooks are often written to produce a sense of nationhood and national belonging (Jerdee, 2010). This is as true in Asia as it is in Europe (Green, 1997b). Even though students interpret textual realities in different ways, preferred meanings are still inculcated into pupils through textbooks (Jordanova, 2006). Consequently, in this chapter the meanings, values and identity of the good citizen subject position, articulated in Social Studies textbooks, will be analysed in detail to address the overall research question of this thesis and particularly illustrate good citizenship as one important facet of Singapore's national identity. Four discourses in the textbooks have been identified and are examined in this chapter: (1) Racial and Religious Harmony; (2) Community before Self; (3) Civic Engagement and Participation; and, (4) National Belonging.

The first text analysed in this study is the Upper Secondary Social Studies 3 textbook (MOE, 2007), which comprises six chapters arranged into four sections: Singapore as a Nation in the World, Understanding Governance, Conflict and Harmony in Multi-Ethnic Societies, and Managing International Relations. In the first textbook chapter, Singapore's historic development from 1942 until today is portrayed. This is followed in the second and third chapter by a discussion of good governance in general and health care regulation in particular. Chapters four and five examine issues of multi-ethnic societies and social bonding strategies in heterogeneous societies. The final chapter emphasises the importance of peace and security for Singapore's

present and future (see Figure 3). The second text analysed is the Upper Secondary Social Studies 4&5 textbook (MOE, 2008), which consists of three substantial chapters: Managing International Relations, Sustaining Economic Development, and Facing Challenges and Change. The first chapter discusses issues of peace and security by drawing on the Iraq War and international terrorism as examples. This is followed by a chapter focusing on economic development, emphasising the strong effects of globalisation on Singapore's economy. Finally, the last chapter consists of an extensive section about historic Venice, which compares its rise and decline with today's Singapore to illustrate common threats and challenges of small states and how these could be best managed or overcome.

Figure 3: Chapter Overview Upper Secondary Social Studies Textbooks

	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
Upper Social Studies 3	Singapore as a Nation in the World	Singapore: Understanding Good Governance	Managing Healthcare: Case-Studies of Singapore and Britain	Conflict and Harmony in Multi-Ethnic Societies	Bonding Singapore	Managing Peace and Security: Deterrence and Diplomacy
Upper Social Studies 4&5	Managing International and Regional Conflict	Sustaining Economic Development in a Globalising World	Facing Challenges and Change: Venice, a great City-state of its Time			

5.2 Overarching Rationales in Social Studies

Before elaborating on the four discourses mentioned above, the following section examines the two overarching rationales of economic reasoning and the exploitation of threat and fear infused into Social Studies to demonstrate their impact on the conceptualisation of the good citizen communicated in the textbooks (cf. objectives 2 and 3).

Overall Economic Reasoning

The Singapore government has adopted an economic instrumental rationality in its policies encapsulated ideologically in the concept of pragmatism (Chua,

1995). A strong economy is conceived as essential for a good life for all Singaporeans and becomes the basis for a new sovereignty (Gordon, 1991). In order to achieve this good life, citizens are encouraged to undertake economically productive activities, and obtain the necessary skills for success in the global economy (Roberts, 2009; see 2.6), while leaving politics to the government (Chan, 1997). Thus, what are constructed in Social Studies are consumer-oriented, entrepreneurial and economic subjects (Peters, 2011) that align well with the needs of the global economy (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2010). Singaporeans have apparently shown little interest in politics for many years, seen as preferring to leave such matters to the government as long as it provides them with a good quality of life (Seah, 2005; see also 2.9). This mind-set has transformed Singapore's economy and the material life of its people. Economic growth has brought prosperity to Singapore, with associated overall improvements in healthcare, education, and housing, allowing Singaporeans to live better in terms of material comforts than they did a generation ago (Preston, 2007). The provision of material comforts and the continued desire for material well-being have prompted an acceptance of the status quo in Singapore, as long as this comfort is still delivered (George, 2000). Crucial to this acceptance of the status quo, however, are individuals' *perceptions* of (personal) security and not mere socio-economic data (Inglehart, 2008). Therefore, as will be highlighted below, even in a prosperous city-state like Singapore perceptions of economic insecurity and material anxiety can be created and maintained among the people through, for example, citizenship education (cf. objective 3).

A strong rationale of economic reasoning permeates official discourses of good citizenship in Social Studies textbooks. It is an economic impulse that drives the official advocacy of good citizenship in Singapore rather than the motivation of a fair and just—a good—society. This is probably illustrated best by the example of globalisation used as a framework in Social Studies textbooks to validate the (economic) effectiveness of the Singapore Model (see also Chapter One and 2.6). The textbooks describe that Singapore's consequent pro-globalisation policies are the reason for an overall increase in income levels and the improvements of the country's living standard in general (MOE, 2008, p.51). This gives a somewhat distorted image of the

ambivalent ramifications of globalisation on Singapore. Moreover, by using vogue phrases such as “growing competition for investments” (MOE, 2008, p.51), fierce “battles over markets” (MOE, 2008, p.53), or the international competition for “talents [and the constant risk of a] brain drain” (MOE, 2008, p.54) the textbooks weave economic reasoning into multiple aspects of good citizenship discourses which provide a good example of the marketization of Singapore’s society (Fairclough, 2010; cf. objective 2). Taking the foreign talent argument, for example, economic reasoning is drawn upon in the textbooks to justify current immigration and labour policies that, on a regular basis, favour foreign employees over domestic workers (MOE, 2008, p.75). It is argued further in the textbooks that international competitiveness and an (alleged) lack of suitable domestic employees are leaving the government no other *choice* but to attract foreign talents, thereby completely silencing rising tensions and discontent in Singapore’s society over these unbalanced policies (MOE, 2008, p.74-76; see also Chapter One and 2.6). ‘Foreign talents’ are expected by the government to become future citizens of Singapore (MOE, 2007, p.53) whereas a large group of foreign workers are marginalised (Lister, 2003) by explicitly barring them from these one-sided immigration policies. Moreover, the community of ‘foreign workers’ is completely ignored in Social Studies, despite their high numbers working in construction, hospitality, and as domestic workers.

Another example of economic reasoning permeating social life is the required effort of constantly upgrading one’s skills and knowledge to stay employable and to contribute to the nation, as demanded in the textbooks (MOE, 2007, p.36). Rapid changes in the world economy, due to globalisation forces, are used in the textbooks to create a circle of seemingly infinite adaption and individual responsiveness of citizens (MOE, 2008, p.42). The Social Studies textbooks communicate the importance of being “adaptable and responsive to sustain Singapore’s economic development” (MOE, 2008, p.43), “venturing on entrepreneurial endeavours” (MOE, 2008, p.73) and committing to “life-long learning to stay employable in a competitive workforce” (MOE, 2008, p.74). All these are economic motivations, shape the behaviour and attitudes of the ideal citizen subject (see Chapter One). On a more systemic and less individual level, economic reasoning constitutes to some extent

argumentation lines along a broad spectrum of topics in Social Studies ranging from the *economic* benefits of international diplomacy (e.g. MOE, 2007, p.179, p.183), the negative effects of violent conflicts on the *economy* (e.g. MOE, 2008, p.22, p.28), to the *economic* consequences of transnational terrorism (MOE, 2008, p.35-37). These practices of constantly connecting issues of everyday life with economic growth and prosperity articulate the strong significance of an economic rationale on the construction of the ideal citizen in Social Studies textbooks (cf. objective 2).

Exploitation of Threat and Fear

The language of risk and fear has become an ever-present part of everyday life (Furedi, 2002, 2007) with politicians and the media promulgating the impression of an existing risk society from which nobody is able to escape (Beck, 1992; see also 2.8). Moreover, such regimes of truth (Foucault, 1980) can be uncritically interiorised by individuals (Mackey, 1999; Tupper & Capello, 2012) in the form of common-sense (Apple, 2004), with specific ideas and statements made *true* (Foucault, 2007a) in society (see 2.10). In a similar vein, earlier studies on citizenship education in Singapore have revealed the discourse of vulnerability as a major official imperative deployed by the government (Chan, 1971b). This project agrees for the most part with previous studies, but argues a somewhat different perspective, that a dominant rationale present in Social Studies textbooks is the exploitation of threat and fear (cf. objective 3), which enframes students in an apparatus of (in)security (P. Harris, 1999). The utilisation of emotions to define good citizenship (Johnson, 2010), thus, aims to construct an affective citizenship through both materialistic and safety desires as well as fear and anxieties (Fortier, 2010; see also 2.8). One aspect of the good citizen concept is her submission to authority. In authoritarian societies, an individual's personal goals need to be subordinated to those of external authorities. Under conditions of (economic) insecurity people are in general more willing to do so (see 2.9), thereby demonstrating a conduct on the basis of anxieties and insecurities rather than rationalities (Isin, 2004). In the case of internal disorder or economic collapse, for example, people seek strong authoritative figures that can protect them from danger (Inglehart, 2008). It is suggested that governing through fear (Isin, 2004) is an approach used by the

Singaporean government in Social Studies to maintain a sense of constant anxiety in society for it to demand a strong government (cf. objective 3).

Such a governance through fear approach is illustrated, for example, by the textbooks referring to the first moment of Singapore's existence as a new nation, its independence, which lays the foundation for Singapore to be portrayed as being subject to constant threats and challenges (MOE, 2007, p.19). There is much *talk* in Social Studies about threats to the state (B. Davies, 2000). Singapore as 'a little red dot' on the map exemplifies this constructed vulnerability in Social Studies: "A credible deterrence is essential for the survival of a small state, a little red dot, such as Singapore" (MOE, 2007, p.176). The constant threat to peace and freedom is a central aspect of the Singapore Story, the narrative of citizenship communicated in Social Studies (Han, 2009; e.g. MOE, 2007, p.157, p.159, p.161). The following quote is one example of the many threats depicted in the textbooks:

Singapore needs to handle this threat [of terrorism] carefully as it can divide the people and (...) threaten racial and religious harmony in the country. (MOE, 2007, p.142)

In addition to references to threats and dangers, the textbooks devote an entire chapter (MOE, 2008, CH1) to the Iraq-Kuwait war (MOE, 2008, p.3-26) to illustrate the devastating effects of war and violence on societies:

At the time of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, nearly two million foreign workers from Bangladesh, India, Egypt, the Philippines and Palestine were employed in Kuwait. These workers fled the country when war broke out. Many of these workers had been supporting large families back home and the sudden loss of income meant great suffering for their families. (MOE, 2007, p.26)

The interconnected and frequent use of both rationales, economic reasoning and the exploitation of threat and fear, is demonstrated by this section (cf. objectives 2 and 3). It can be also found in the textbook chapter on globalisation (MOE, 2008, CH2), in which rapid changes of the world economy are construed as a constant threat to Singapore:

Singapore has experienced steady economic growth for many years but the 21st century brings with it new challenges. Can this economic progress be sustained in the years to come? The path ahead is not likely to be a smooth one. Singapore needs to respond creatively to the challenges and opportunities nimbly to ensure its continued prosperity in the times ahead. (MOE, 2007, p.80)

The rationale of threat and fear incorporated in the textbooks is also exemplified by an elusive danger of transnational terrorism depicted in Social Studies textbooks (MOE, 2008, p.29-41). A perceived threat (see 2.9), an unknown danger, to Singapore's society and the alleged necessity of permanent awareness and constant vigilance to prevent an unanticipated incident is instilled into the textbooks (MOE, 2007, p.166). Thus, strong armed forces paired with a competitive defence industry (MOE, 2007, p.168-171) are illustrated as an important way to face common threats such as terrorism as well as a way to strengthen a common bond among the citizens (MOE, 2008, p.40-41). By urging good citizens to stay vigilant and to identify potential (terrorist) threats to Singapore, the textbooks foster feelings of suspicion among the people, particularly between different religious groups, rather than fostering trust and unity in Singapore's multi-religious society (cf. objective 4). This supports arguments which deem citizenship education in Singapore as not incorporating social and cultural differences of society but reinforcing them (Gordon, Holland, & Lahelma, 1999).

Transnational terrorism refers to acts of violence which are global in terms of aims, organisation and impact. These acts can test the social bonds of the people in Singapore. Singapore needs to handle this threat carefully as it can divide the people. In multi-ethnic societies like Singapore, race and religion may be used to create ill feelings among the different ethnic groups. This can, in turn, threaten racial and religious harmony in the country. (MOE, 2007, p.142)

In addition, the textbooks foster the perception of Singapore's national security as being under constant threat, illustrated by the substantial section on Singapore's armed forces and defence industries (MOE, 2007, p.165-175). Besides a strong focus on military solutions to supposedly omnipresent

security threats, the importance of diplomacy to *prevent* conflicts in the first place is dealt with only superficially in the textbooks (e.g. MOE, 2007, p.165, p.178). Overall, then, the persistent insinuation of potential threats and fears in Social Studies is introducing the perception of permanent risk and danger to Social Studies students creating a pervasive sense of fear and anxiety (see 2.9).

5.3 Social Studies Discourses

As mentioned previously, four discourses of good citizenship were identified in this study. The first official discourse that will subsequently be examined is 'Racial and Religious Harmony', followed by an analysis of the discourses 'Community before Self' and 'Civic Engagement and Participation'. This chapter concludes with a critical investigation of the discourse of 'National Belonging and Identity'.

Racial and Religious Harmony

Racial and religious harmony is one key topic in the Upper Secondary Social Studies curriculum (cf. objective 4), organised around the unit of 'Conflict and Harmony in Multi-Ethnic Societies' (SEAB, 2012, p.11). Two case studies, Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland, are featured in the textbooks with the former exemplifying risks related to ethnic segregation and the latter concerned with the peaceful coexistence of varied religions. The textbooks work on the assumption that there are analogies between Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland and Singapore regarding the challenges posed to society by ethnic and religious diversity (MOE, 2007, p.96). These cases emphasise, for example, that ethnic harmony is a vital requirement for social (MOE, 2007, p.109) and economic (MOE, 2007, p.107) wellbeing. This illustrates the dominance of an economic rationale, which is infused into several contexts of Social Studies (e.g. MOE, 2007, p.155).

The textbook section on Sri Lanka's challenges divergent citizenship rights and the discrimination of some (native) languages in everyday governance (MOE, 2007, p.98-99), for example, highlights substantial (dis)advantages of certain ethnicities in society (MOE, 2007, p.100). This section is deployed to demonstrate the severe implications of racial tensions leading to "hardship

and suffering" (MOE, 2007, p.109), "armed conflicts" (MOE, 2007, p.103) and "foreign [military] interventions" (MOE, 2007, p.106). The section on Sri Lanka concludes that "attempts (...) to resolve the conflict (...) have proved to be unsuccessful" (MOE, 2007, p.110), thereby indirectly praising Singapore's well-managed ethnic diversity management (cf. objective 4). Moreover, the textbooks create the (false) impression that racial (MOE, 2007, p.137-138) and religious *perceptions* (MOE, 2007, p.139-141) or ethnic diversity as a whole (MOE, 2007, p.143) could be 'managed' in a particular way and hints at the need for a strong governmental role in resolving these issues. Within Social Studies people are conceptualised as needing to be managed to benefit Singapore's economic development (MOE, 2007, p.43). Subsequently, when constructing Singapore's citizenry as a workforce merely educated to benefit economic growth, rather than stressing the benefits of economic prosperity for the people, the dominance of the economic rationale in education and politics is demonstrated (see below).

The case study of Northern Ireland is utilised in the textbooks to illustrate another challenge pervading multi-faceted societies: how to achieve and maintain religious harmony? The textbooks sketch a simplistic and one-sided picture of (historic) reasons for today's civic tensions in Northern Ireland (MOE, 2007, p.111-113). As with the Sri Lankan example, it is argued that inequalities between different society groups based on religious beliefs lead to tensions, which ultimately result in violent conflicts and the loss of life (MOE, 2007, p.121-123). The textbooks, thereby, create the connotation of threat and danger affiliated with ethnic and religious diversity.

This lack of common identity further prevented understanding and cooperation between the Catholics and Protestants. The religious differences between the two groups have also created tension between them. (MOE, 2007, p.114)

Unequal housing allocations favouring certain religious groups is illustrated to demonstrate the frustration over "shocking slum conditions" (MOE, 2007, p.117) for Catholics. This serves to remind the Social Studies student how officially well managed public housing and how *fair* and *just* the ethnic integration policy ensuring "an even distribution of the different races in all

housing estates" (MOE, 2007, p.151) are in Singapore (cf. objective 4). Another issue communicated in the textbooks is that of unequal employment opportunities in Northern Ireland. The argument is that certain (religious) groups in society "do not have the same opportunities" (MOE, 2007, p.118) as others, which links to Singapore's meritocratic mantra "to give everybody in society an equal opportunity" (MOE, 2007, p.37). Similar connections are drawn in the textbooks through the example of social segregation in Northern Ireland's education system, which is identified as an important origin of inter-religious tensions. A quote by a young Catholic illustrates this:

I don't like all the killings that go on because at times there are machine guns fired outside my house. Before I went to this integrated school³, I thought Protestants were bad but I don't think that now because my best friend is a Protestant. And he is not bad. (MOE, 2007, p.120)

This quote emphasises the supposedly successful approach to multi-ethnic schooling deployed in Singapore with its "educational institutions such as schools and tertiary institutions [which] are open to every Singaporean, regardless of race or religion" (MOE, 2007, p.150). It seems more than a coincidence that the inequalities pertaining Northern Ireland are identical to the problems Singapore's society is faced with. While the textbooks recognise Singapore's violent past (MOE, 2007, p.137-141), thereby more explicitly drawing similarities between the city-state and the two examples of Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland, it can be argued that Social Studies creates the impression that Singapore, compared to the other two nations, has found a successful solution to all these challenges. Noteworthy, though, is the fact that textbooks emphasise predominantly economic consequences of violent conflicts, which illustrates the two correlated and omnipresent rationales of economic reasoning and the exploitation of threat and fear in Social Studies.

These foreign-owned factories closed down when violence increased operating costs in Northern Ireland. The constant threat of bombings and high costs of security drove away large manufacturers in great numbers. (MOE, 2007, p.126)

³ Integrated schools are an attempt to bring together students and teachers from both Catholic and Protestant persuasion giving them the opportunity to understand and respect their different backgrounds.

The Northern Ireland example concludes that, unlike in Singapore, “attempts to bring peace back to Northern Ireland [ultimately failed]” (MOE, 2007, p.128). This message is explicit: without racial and religious harmony, there would be a catastrophe, as illustrated by the cases of Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland (cf. objective 3). These potential disasters are presented in terms of inevitable consequences of racial and religious discrimination and conflict when not taken care of—or managed well—, which creates negative connotations of racial and religious harmony. This demonstrates the superficial way of how racial and religious conflicts are communicated in the textbooks (Gordon et al., 1999). The main causes and consequences of conflicts in both case studies are stripped of their complexity and are represented as an accessible list to be memorised by students for the examinations; thereby deploying a similar strategy as utilised to teach critical thinking in Singapore (see Chapter Four).

This simplistic illustration of conflict can be seen as deliberately deployed, to show the contrast between countries in conflict and those in peace and harmony, the latter represented by Singapore. The city-state, thus, is portrayed in the textbooks as a well-governed country able to overcome all odds and risks of multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies. The threat of terrorism is used as an example to illustrate the resilience of social bonding among the people of Singapore:

In response to the [terrorist] arrests, there were calls by political and religious leaders in Singapore for people to remain calm and be committed to living in harmony with other racial and religious groups.
(MOE, 2007, p.143)

Despite the textbooks topic sentence state that, in the case of an emergency, “the social fabric [of Singapore] holds society together” (MOE, 2007, p.144), Social Studies student are cautioned that “the rise of mutual suspicion and distrust [showed that] it is crucial to ensure that the different racial and religious groups in Singapore continue to live and work harmoniously with one another” (MOE, 2007, p.143; cf. objective 4). Nevertheless, Singapore’s multi-ethnic and multi-religious ‘success-story’ is communicated in the textbooks through the examples of its constitution prohibiting racial or ethnic

discrimination (MOE, 2007, p.145), the established Council of Minority Rights (MOE, 2007, p.29), and the official proclamation of a fair and just society (MOE, 2007, p.18). When looking closer at the example of religious equality, however, the textbooks state that “*no man* needs to feel that to belong to a particular religion puts him at a disadvantage or gives him an advantage” (MOE, 2007, p.141; emphasis added). This use of gendered language raises questions about the role of women and their inclusion in activities as citizens as well as gender equality in Singapore in general. While these issues are an important subject and worth exploring they are beyond the focus of this current project.

Several other initiatives by the government are presented in the textbooks to demonstrate the successful management of Singapore’s ethnic and religious diversity. For instance, the policy of bilingualism (MOE, 2007, p.146) and minority representation (MOE, 2007, p.147), the creation of community self-help groups (MOE, 2007, p.148) and the provision of common places in housing, education, and the army (MOE, 2007, p.149-153), aim to illustrate Singapore’s successful approach towards racial harmony.

Schools are good places for children to learn about racial mixing. If they start mixing early, they will make friends with people of different races. The more you communicate, the less the chance of fights breaking out between people. (MOE, 2007, p.150)

Multi-ethnicity is communicated in the textbooks as a constant threat to Singapore (cf. objective 3). This alerts the pupils to the possibility of racial conflict in the city-state. Differences are shown to make societies fall apart (MOE, 2007, p.93), thus, inevitably leading to the destruction of “lives, homes and property” (MOE, 2007, p.130; see 2.9). One-sided and simplistic portrayals of Singapore’s ethnic diversity management (MOE, 2007, p.144) help guide pupils to accept and uncritically internalise the political status quo and the shared value of racial and religious harmony conferred by Social Studies (cf. objective 1). At the same time, the fragility and crucial importance of peace and safety is emphasised for Singapore’s success and stability, which illustrates the constant exploitation of threat and fear as one rationale in the textbooks (MOE, 2007, p.142-143). Despite underlying

tensions in Singapore's society, which suggest ethnic tolerance rather than racial harmony (cf. objective 4), the past achievements of multi-racial and multi-religious governance need to be acknowledged:

Since independence, Singapore has enjoyed racial and religious harmony among its people. Various policies and programmes have been implemented to ensure that all living here, regardless of race and religion, enjoy a harmonious living environment. (MOE, 2007, p.144)

It is argued in this thesis that the unit 'Conflict and Harmony in Multi-Ethnic Societies' is not about teaching an understanding of diversity, but rather it is to socialise students into a set of (official) core values of society (Conversi, 2013; see also 2.3 and 2.5). The subject matter is not presented in a way that encourages students to question and discuss the issue of diversity openly: to think critically (Sim, 2010). On the contrary, knowledge and values are not regarded as problematic and subjective, but as fixed official ideology to be transmitted to students (Sturm & Bauch, 2010). While this strategy provides consensus and harmony in society—at least on the surface—it does not foster the required critical thinking skills (Chapter Four).

Community before Self

The discourse of 'Community before Self' constitutes one of the fundamental shared values underpinning Singapore's society. Shared values and norms, known in the Singaporean context as Asian Values, are an essential aspect of the Social Studies syllabus. The concept of communitarianism is emphasised in the Social Studies syllabus (SEAB, 2012). The focus on Western civic norms rather than Eastern Confucianism in the textbooks, thus, might confuse the Social Studies student (MOE, 2007, p.18). Consensus-making processes are repeatedly emphasised in Social Studies (MOE, 2007, p.158). The discussion of harmony and consensus in the textbooks illustrates an uncritical perspective on contrasting Asian and Western values, where Western values of individualism are seen as threats that could destabilise Singapore's society (Hill & Lian, 1995). Although Singapore draws on its cultural heritage in articulating the value of community before self, it is misleading to place this value in contrast to individualism in the West since the Western tradition of the 'public good' is not inconsistent with

communitarian values (Hill & Lian, 1995). Likewise, democratic citizenship in the Western civic-republican tradition emphasises the responsibilities of citizens to participate and sustain the political community (Barbalet, 1999). The concept of citizenship in Singapore is formed in a civic-republican tradition, where morality is grounded in giving one's service and fulfilling one's duties to the community (Hill & Lian, 1995; Oldfield, 1998). Most societies, Asian or Western, struggle to find the balance between individual needs and desires and the good of the whole society (see 2.6 and 2.9), with Singapore being no exception (Hill & Lian, 1995). Opposing Asian and Western values in the textbooks is thus overdrawn, particularly given the focus on individual responsibility deeply embedded in the communitarian framework.

The binary between individualism and communitarianism is visible in Social Studies at various stages. Pupils' development of pride in and loyalty to Singapore is one aspect of 'Community before Self' in the official conception of citizenship education. Pupils need to "develop into citizens who have empathy towards others and who will participate responsibly and sensibly in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society" (SEAB, 2012, p.3). The demand for such responsibility can be identified at several locations in the textbooks (cf. objective 2). By drawing on traditional images of the family as a source of emotional, social and *financial* support (MOE, 2007, p.57), for example, the textbooks define the family as an important locale for responsible behaviour. Most Chinese-Singaporean families expect their children to take responsibility for their parents once the young start working. Financial support in the form of a monthly allowance is the most common practice (Phillips & Bartlett, 1995). These responsibilities are integrated into Social Studies, thereby communicating (ethnic-biased) expectations and duties of the good citizen and condemning self-centred Singaporeans who only "spend money on themselves" (MOE, 2007, p.49). The elderly in particular are used in the textbooks to instil a sense of filial duty to pupils stating that they should share the "responsibility [of] taking care of elderlies" (MOE, 2007, p.56) so that Singaporeans depend not on the government but on their families and the community (MOE, 2007, p.80). The textbooks state that the government, if necessary, supports parents to "seek financial

support from their children [in the] Tribunal for the Maintenance of Parents” (MOE, 2007, p.58). Both the family and the community are therefore encouraged to substitute governmental efforts to provide for the elderly’s (financial) needs (MOE, 2007, p.57). This shows evidence of the communitarian ideal as well as the strong economic rationale articulated in the textbooks. Statements such as “family-friendly policies make good business sense” (MOE, 2007, p.52), or society needs to “utilise skills and knowledge of senior citizens contributing to society” (MOE, 2007, p.55) further support this argument. The economic rationale is infused into textbook at multiple instances demanding, for example, that it is every citizen’s “responsibility (...) to [actively] participate in the growth and development” (MOE, 2008, p.70) of Singapore, thereby confirming earlier comments on the utilisation of the people for economic prosperity. Similarly, Singaporeans going overseas are required “to learn something and bring it home” (MOE, 2008, p.71) so that the city-state can benefit from those new skills and obtained knowledge (cf. Chapter One). This position ignores the importance and benefits of such capabilities for the individual in the textbooks.

Singapore’s Total Defence strategy propagated in the textbooks functions as a binding factor utilised for the purpose of uniting Singapore’s society. It is another example of communitarian responsibilities communicated in the textbooks. Social Studies stresses the importance of ‘we are in this together’ attitudes elaborating five aspects of Total Defence: Military defence; civil defence; economic defence; social defence; and, psychological defence (MOE, 2007). “Total defence can be effective only when all Singaporeans” (MOE, 2007, p.172) are deeply committed to defend the country. This aspired togetherness of Singapore’s society is exemplified in civil defence responses to emergencies (MOE, 2007, p.173). The aspect of economic defence emphasises a resilient, skilled and active workforce for Singapore’s economy to remain competitive (MOE, 2007, p.174). The contradiction between communitarianism and individualism inherent in the Social Studies textbooks becomes visible when *individuals* are made responsible for coping with and adjusting to changing (economic) conditions in order to stay *employable* (see 2.6 and 2.7). This shifts responsibilities from society to the individual level

(Chen, 2013). Social defence, another characteristic of Singapore's defence strategy, urges all citizens regardless of ethnicity or religion to foster strong social ties among each other to ensure society's unity (MOE, 2007, p.174). In contrast, psychological defence emphasise the need for pride in, and loyalty to, Singapore to ensure its survival (MOE, 2007, p.175).

To communicate the fragility of peace and security in the city-state, the textbooks (again) deploy a rationale of threat and fear (cf. objective 3). Elsewhere in the textbooks, the example of terrorism is utilised to summon a communitarian behaviour among Singaporeans demanding that "all members of society have a role to play in countering the threat of terrorism" (MOE, 2008, p.40), even if this means tighter security measures and the limited freedom for every individual (MOE, 2008, p.38). This illustrates of how the threat of terrorism is deployed by Social Studies to justify strict measures of control taken by the government. This aims to instil the perception among students that the good citizen needs to subordinate herself to authority (Inglehart, 2008) and accept the limitation of her personal freedom for the good of society as a whole (see 2.9).

The textbooks communicate a completely different neoliberal subject position (Barker & Galasinski, 2001; Bondi, 2005; see also 2.6) to the pupils when Singapore's healthcare policies are debated. By praising Singapore's very low government expenditures⁴ on public healthcare (MOE, 2007, p.81), the textbooks offer a perspective on welfare states that suggests welfare creates dependent and passive (needy) individuals (e.g. MOE, 2007, p.73, p.91) rather than active and self-responsible achievers in the neoliberal sense (B. Davies et al., 2005). This argument is best demonstrated by a paragraph in the textbooks, which quotes Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of Britain:

I came to office with one deliberate intent: to change Britain from a dependent to a self-reliant society, from a give-it-to-me to a do-it-yourself nation, a get-up-and-go instead of sit-back-and-wait Britain.
(MOE, 2008, p.85)

⁴ Singapore's robust financial situation would allow for higher healthcare funding (if politically desired).

Singapore's healthcare policies similarly aim to encourage self-responsibility as a normative path provided by the state (Chen, 2013; MOE, 2007, p.73; see 2.7). The textbooks make no reference to how this affordability might be achieved, but offer the Medifund healthcare insurance scheme as a way to ease costs particularly for lower-income Singaporeans (MOE, 2007, p.72-76). This does not mean, however, that actual costs of healthcare for the individual are regulated by the government in any way. On the contrary, the example of neoliberal restructuring of hospitals in Singapore illustrated in the textbooks one-sidedly to emphasise the benefits for patients, thereby silencing any potentially negative aspects of such deregulation (e.g. MOE, 2007, p.75, p.87). Moreover, the neoliberal emphasis on strong individual responsibilities in healthcare (MOE, 2007, p.65) is justified in the textbooks by the statement: "No matter how the government [shifts] the burden of healthcare, it would always be borne by Singaporeans" (MOE, 2007, p.81). By shifting responsibilities from society to the individual (Chen, 2013) and encompassing a variety of everyday decisions or choices (MOE, 2007, p.77), the ideology of neoliberalism forges the societal conditions that make certain choices more desirable (Read, 2009; see 2.6 and 2.7). Moreover, neoliberal subject-positions offered by Social Studies provide the basis to blame the individual for not achieving (societal) success. Following this line of argument, it is not the neoliberal system, then, which is to blame for *losers* in society, but simply their poor life choices (Chen, 2013).

Consequences of such *failures* are illustrated, for instance, by the deficient entrepreneurial activities necessary to tackle to benefit Singapore's economic development (MOE, 2008, p.73). An approach put forward in the textbooks is to showcase unsuccessful entrepreneurs who have overcome their struggles in order to motivate people to initiate risky (financial) endeavours and to demonstrate that failure is to be expected as it is part of the road to success (MOE, 2008, p.73; see also Chapter One). The Asian context holds particular challenges to entrepreneurship such as the risk of 'losing one's face', however, challenges such as this are completely ignored in the textbooks.

Lastly, even Singapore's education system itself promotes competition and individual excellence (cf. Cavanagh, 2002; Jencks, 1988; K. P. Tan, 2008).

Examinations and educational streaming create a competitive atmosphere among students in which competitiveness and individual efforts to achieve are highly valued and rewarded (see 2.6). At the same time, the education system creates a feeling of anxiety and desperation among pupils by blaming the individual for underachievement or failure in education (Chen, 2013). Thus, while Social Studies textbooks stress the importance of harmony and consensus-making, the syllabus embedded in Singapore's education system emphasises competition, individual merit and self-interest. Singapore's education system is designed around an obsession with testing, ranking, and individual competition and sends profound messages of individualism to pupils that contradict both the Social Studies textbooks and the concept of 'Community before Self'.

Civic Engagement & Participation

While the Social Studies syllabi seek greater and effective participation of Singapore's 'active' citizens, it is not entirely clear how this is to be achieved in the current educational environment created by the state (Chen, 2013). Specifically, the Upper Secondary Social Studies syllabus states that it "will prepare [pupils] to adopt a participative role in shaping Singapore's destiny in the 21st century" (SEAB, 2012, p.3). As suggested by the syllabus, the Social Studies curriculum and the general NE framework are both designed to develop students, who are considered future citizens in training (Skelton, 2002; Splitter, 2011) and citizens who would 'know Singapore' (see 2.4). As a result of this knowledge, young people are expected to be more likely to actively participate in society (A. Harris, 2009) and to fulfil their patriotic duty (N. Rose, 1999). This suggests a perception of youth as not sufficiently engaged with society (Printer & Milner, 2009); the social *malfunctioning* of youth (Biesta et al., 2009). The underlying assumption is that, by developing a base of desired knowledge, skills, and values (Geboers et al., 2012), one will automatically follow the normative line and become a more effective and participative citizen (Engle & Ochoa-Becker, 1988), who functions in a socially responsible manner (W. Lee & Fouts, 2005; see also 2.15). While the acquisition of knowledge enhances awareness of active citizenship, awareness does not predictably lead to students actively participating in shaping Singapore's future (cf. objective 1). What is needed to be an active

citizen is not simple knowledge transmission but the ability of pupils to *critically* evaluate (Sim, 2010). Social Studies textbooks communicate a *passive* stance to citizenship, which constructs citizens as responding to the world rather than shaping it (Best, 2003). This can be seen as an indication of the overall role of Singapore's society created and aspired for in formal education (Best, 2003). The inculcation of both explicit and implicit societal expectations (Cornbleth, 2002) suggests a passive and submissive character of citizenship (see 2.14). Moreover, Social Studies are primarily taught as citizenship *transmission* in Singapore (Sim & Print, 2005), thereby reinforcing the passive, materialistic and politically apathetic character of Singapore's youth (Neo, 2003). This, however, contradicts the idea of encouraging civic engagement and critical participation among the students, which the Social Studies curriculum claims to achieve.

The validity of the political status quo, for example, is skilfully constructed in Social Studies to shape pupils' beliefs and conduct towards particular (and officially aspired) ends (Cashmore et al., 2013). The textbooks emphasise the importance of young people's support for the government (see 2.9) when it makes "important decisions to meet the needs of the nation" (MOE, 2007, p.25). This can be seen to create the impression among students that they not only influence the government's decisions but also actively participate in the governance of the nation (Weber, 2008; see also 2.6). The significance of critique and opposition as part of democracy and good governance are conveniently omitted from the textbooks (cf. objective 1). Social Studies explain that the people chose their leaders through elections in Singapore's representative democracy (MOE, 2007, p.26), at the same time muting other models of democratic participation (Ardener, 1975; Dubisch, 1986). Voting is illustrated in the textbooks as one's duty to the state (Lagassé, 2000) rather than the right for civic participation in society (Best, 2003). The textbooks depict that a stable (quite possibly static) government is deemed essential to provide for peoples' needs (MOE, 2007, p.19) and that political constancy is important (MOE, 2007, p.16; see also 2.9). This creates the impression that pupils' alternative ideological encounters can lead to political instability (MOE, 2007, p.163). The textbooks seem to actively inscribe an apolitical citizenship

onto Singapore's youth (A. Harris, 2004) suggesting further that there is no need, but an actual risk, in change of government (see 2.7 and 2.8).

There are statements in the textbooks which encourage people to give constructive feedback (MOE, 2007, p.31) and to "have a say in decision-making [and to develop] a greater sense of belonging to the country" (MOE, 2007, p.38). The example of the *casino controversy*—a dispute over whether Integrated Resorts should be allowed to include a casino—demonstrates how seriously such constructive feedback is taken by the government. It is stated briefly in the textbooks that "the government considered the concerns raised and [nevertheless] decided to go ahead with the setting up of a casino as part of an Integrated Resort" (MOE, 2007, p.38). Such an example highlights the low significance of people's feedback (cf. objective 1) regarding everyday political decision-making and can be seen to favour a passive and apathetic stance towards everyday politics among pupils.

Elsewhere in the books, these everyday politics in Singapore are illustrated to be guided by a set of principles characterised through strong leadership (see 2.9). This invokes doing "what is right rather than what is popular [and being] open to new ideas and question old assumptions, [thereby safeguarding the future of the city-state through] reward for work and work for reward" (MOE, 2007, p.33). The political climate in Singapore's authoritarian system shapes the desired form of good governance and ultimately the ideal of a good citizen (Skeggs, 2004). Singapore's leaders are portrayed in the textbooks as having moral courage and integrity, to be honest, incorrupt and to respect Singapore's cultural values (MOE, 2007, p.33-34). It is anticipated by the government that these norms are being adopted by the good citizens as well (Geboers et al., 2012). The *examples* used in the textbooks to illustrate these character features, however, portray a different picture. The measures taken by the government to control the flow of traffic, for instance, highlight the habit of 'sitting things out' rather than questioning old assumptions, as communicated elsewhere in the textbooks.

Even though the Park-and-Ride scheme was unsuccessful in the 1970s, the scheme is still being used today. This shows that as time passes and needs of the people change, measures that did not work in the past may work today. (MOE, 2007, p.42)

Social Studies textbooks, therefore, generate the impression among students of Singapore's good governance practices being in sharp contrast to their everyday realities (overall research question). This contradicts Singapore's educational claim to foster an engaged and politically active youth, which is shaping the country's future. Moreover, it re-inscribes the arguably passive, materialistic and politically apathetic character on young people in Singapore (Neo, 2003; see also 2.9).

National Belonging and Identity

One of the main goals of the Social Studies syllabus is to enable pupils "to have a deep sense of shared destiny and national identity" (SEAB, 2012, p.3). The textbooks state the importance of developing an imagined community (Anderson, 2006) and feelings of solidarity and common destiny (Hussein, 2004) among citizens to build a cohesive nation-state (MOE, 2007, p.3). By drawing on the potential effect of shared experiences on solidarity, the concept of national identity is briefly introduced to the Social Studies student:

A nation is formed when a group of people accept one another and see themselves as having something in common. This sense of identity can come from common lineage, culture and historical experiences. It can also be built on common experiences. Therefore, a nation is formed when the people think and feel that they share a common bond. (MOE, 2007, p.4)

This emotional form of belonging (cf. objective 3) is further exemplified by comments in the textbooks such as "Singapore is the place I call home, as this is where my friends and family are" (MOE, 2008, p.70). Besides these traditional elements of patriotic inculcation into Social Studies students (Callan, 2004), the textbooks also draw on concepts of national identity fostered through the provision of equal rights and opportunities to all members of Singapore's society (Lister, 2010).

Everyone has equal opportunities to success, regardless of their backgrounds. (...) Since everyone is seen as a valued member of the Singapore society, a sense of national identity as Singaporeans is created. (MOE, 2007, p.145)

This conjunction of official identity construction and notions of ethnic equality is also visible in governmental efforts to strengthen forms of national belonging through the promotion of inter-racial social practices (see Chapter Four). In addition, the adoption of bilingual policies by the city-state is illustrated in the textbooks to improve the communication between different society groups, hence, to better connect Singapore's ethnic groups:

Students were expected to learn English and their Mother Tongue. With bilingualism, English is used as the language linking the different ethnic groups. Mother Tongue language is used to impart moral values and cultural traditions of each race. As English is a non-native language for all ethnic groups, no one has an advantage over others. (MOE, 2007, p.146)

A powerful and objective source of people's *distinction* can be found in their language. Language is an important element in the processes of identity formation and habitus is strongly mediated by the assumptions implicit in language (see 2.12 and 2.13), especially the language of childhood, aptly named mother tongue (Bottomley, 1992). The motivation to adopt the policy of bilingualism in Singapore's education system was to benefit from identification forces of peoples' mother tongues (Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil) combined with the unifying effects of English as a common language. The desired unifying effect seems ambivalent:

We had nationhood thrust upon us in 1965. This denied us the opportunity to develop an identity that would bind us as one people. Furthermore, the last 35 years have not made it easy to evolve that one unifying Singaporean identity either. We are still very much tied to our ethnic roots which keep us apart while being a part of the nation. (MOE, 2007, p.147)

The quote above illustrates the somewhat underdeveloped policy of racial harmony deployed by the Singaporean government as it was suggested

earlier in this chapter (cf. objective 4). Despite fostering a shallow form of ethnic tolerance in the city-state, intra-racial tensions seem to 'boil under the surface' (Barr, 2006a). Moreover, the ideological and political saturation of official knowledge in Social Studies textbooks (Sturm & Bauch, 2010) is demonstrated by the imposed norm of four racial groups (and languages) on Singapore's citizenry (Conversi, 2013). Social Studies rigidly defines that Singapore's society consists of Chinese, Indian, Malay and Others (CIMO) (MOE, 2007, p.145); therefore, only these explicit subject positions are made available to students in the textbooks (B. Davies, 2006; see 2.7). The official knowledge communicated in Social Studies resembles the dominant ideology of Singapore's government while alternative models are muted in the textbooks (Ardener, 1975, Dubisch 1986).

Another strategy to achieve a form of national belonging among different society groups is the provision of common places where people from different backgrounds can come together and socialise (MOE, 2007, p.149). The textbooks also communicate co-curricular activities (CCAs) in schools and tertiary institutions as important spaces of inter-racial friendship and social bonding (Ochoa-Becker & Engle, 2007) where students "learn to appreciate one another's talent and respect one another as individuals" (MOE, 2007, p.150). The implementation of CCAs is illustrated in the textbooks as "to promote closer bonds among youths from all races" (MOE, 2007, p.150). Singapore's integration policy in the public housing sector is another example stated in the textbooks to provide "opportunities for people from different ethnic groups to interact" (MOE, 2007, p.151) and live together in the same neighbourhood, while shared experiences during National Service "strengthen the bond among men" (MOE, 2007, p.153), which can lead to long and enduring friendships across all ethnicities (cf. objective 4).

National Service is a strong unifying force. Whether you are the son of a banker or a baker, a mechanic or a minister, you share common experiences during National Service. You live together, eat together, swim, run, march, train, shoot, shoulder to shoulder. (MOE, 2007, p.170)

The fact that ethnic Malays are at least restricted from entering 'sensitive' deployments in National Service and are effectively discriminated based on

their marginalised status and 'race' (Lister, 2003) is completely silenced in Social Studies. This casts doubt on the "strong unifying force" (MOE, 2007, p.170) of National Service. As illustrated above, the impression of Singapore's united multi-ethnic society, communicated in the textbooks, is questionable when the strong ties of particular social groups to their ethnic roots are taken into account (MOE, 2007, p.147). Therefore, Singapore's society exists as an accumulation of ethnic sub-nations or communities rather than as a united multi-ethnic society kept together by a common form of belonging: Singapore's national identity (see 2.2).

One element often discussed in relation to national identity is that of cosmopolitanism (see Chapter Four). Cosmopolitanism communicated as both a threat to national identity and a complement to it. Cosmopolitan Singaporeans, thus, are seen as both enriching the city-state's society, on the one hand (MOE, 2007, p.53), but also feeling less attached to the country (MOE, 2008, p.70) than the heartlanders, on the other (Ho, 2006; E. Tan, 2003; see also Chapter One). Similarly, globalisation is portrayed in the textbooks as enriching national identity by leading to the increased awareness of foreign cultures so "a person can learn about the history, culture and way of life of people around the world through travelling, surfing the Internet and watching foreign movies from the comfort of their homes" (MOE, 2008, p.56). At the same time, however, globalisation is constructed as a threat to national identity (cf. objective 3) leading to the loss of local culture and having a negative influence on Singapore's youth:

Globalisation has also led to the spread of pop culture across the globe. These cultures include rap music, MTV and Hollywood movies. To many people, these cultures have influenced their youths negatively as they lose interest in the local culture. Many people are uncomfortable about the advancement of foreign culture. They perceive these countries to be forcing their beliefs, cultures and languages upon the rest of the world.
(MOE, 2008, p.57)

This demonstrates the official criticism often directed towards Singapore's youth that they are less connected to, and proud of, the nation-state than the

older generation, despite the constant governmental efforts to instil and strengthen national forms belonging (see 2.4).

5.4 Conclusion

Since independence, educational reforms in Singapore were promoted and popularised through the use of slogans such as 'No Child Left Behind' and 'Thinking Schools, Learning Nation', which aim to create 'true believers' among the people through the repetition of 'cult-like mantras' (Sears & Hughes, 2006). As demonstrated in this chapter, Social Studies often presents an appearance of harmony and consensus where little actually exists (Adler & Sim, 2008). Social Studies textbooks, however, provide ideas around which people can unite and official ways of how good citizens should think (Skelton, 2000a). It was illustrated that Singapore's Social Studies curriculum is intended to unite the nation and to maintain harmony in the face of potential conflicts. In addition, it was suggested that the textbooks draw heavily on the rationales of economic reasoning and the exploitation of threat and fear, which are instilled in many discourses of good citizenship.

Young people are taught about the importance of racial harmony, but they are rarely asked to explore 'beneath the surface'. They are taught that a nation-state run by consensus will avoid the pitfalls of competition among opposing interests. Furthermore, they are told that the nation, the community and family are more important than the individual. At the same time, however, they are surrounded by Singapore's materialistic culture and are increasingly connected to the world of consumerism. The curriculum, therefore, does not equip young people with the necessary skills to explore these complexities. This implies that the *critical* study of national and global developments could lead young people to conclusions that are not supporting the political status quo and are therefore not desired by the current government. The Social Studies curriculum should (ideally) enhance pupil's reflection through critical thinking (Lawy & Bietsa, 2006) and although it *appears* the textbooks have been designed to enable young people to participate actively in society (Sim, 2010), this chapter has highlighted that Social Studies do not provide the knowledge and tools required for facilitating such meaningful participation in Singapore's society.

The following chapter analyses how young citizens perceive and interpret the contradicting messages communicated in the Social Studies textbooks, and how they perceive themselves as (good) Singaporean citizens. A particular focus of the chapter will be the complex and entangled interactions of discourse submission and resistance with a specific attention given to youths' own voice and opinions.

6. Subjection and Resistance to Good Citizenship

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is the third and last part of the empirical section (Chapter Four to Six). Building on the preliminary findings of the previous chapters it will be debated how discourses of good citizenship 'play out' in practice analysing their socialising effects among young Singaporeans, thereby addressing the overall research question of this project. It will be further shown that Social Studies classes do not just echo official norms, but are becoming a forum for the social (re)production (or socialisation) of norms and values and thus one of the ways by which values can be disseminated to a new generation, insuring continuity of society and nation (cf. objective 2). Multiple facets of good citizenship are under scrutiny in this chapter organised into six themes: Meritocracy; Formal Education; Multiculturalism; Society Values; Civic Engagement; and, National Belonging.

6.2 Meritocracy

The prevailing perspective on the concept of meritocracy among the interviewees was generally positive. The idea of an achievement-oriented society found strong support among the participants; however, support was only given to the theoretical concept rather than how meritocracy plays out in everyday life in the city-state. Therefore, without exception, interviewees stated that the meritocratic system fails to a certain extent in real life. The quote below reflects some of the inherent contradictions in the meritocratic system illustrated in Chapter Four.

The thing is that meritocracy in itself, the whole idea, is noble and great. But I don't think it's actually applicable in this country, because it assumes that everyone is the same and starts from the same line. That is not the case. (NUS/21/Ma/21/F)

Despite the practical imperfections of a meritocratic approach in Singapore, it was stated to be one of the best options available for the nation-state to economically thrive in the global economy. The widening gap between rich and poor, however, was not seen as being generated by a flawed meritocratic

approach but rather as an inevitable consequence of the current global economic system (see 2.6). This perspective, illustrated by the quote below, confirms a perceived fixity and irrevocable character of the world's economic system, which leaves no room for change (Walkerdine & Bansel, 2010):

I feel that every system would have its flaws. But it is so far the best system that works. In every capitalistic society is this divide between rich and poor that is getting worse. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

In general meritocracy is not specifically concerned with the equality of, for example, economic statuses but, rather, the equality of opportunities to develop and eventually achieve a better standard of living for everyone (K. Lee, 2000; Mauzy & Milne, 2002; K. P. Tan, 2008). Hypothetically, then, even in a socio-economically diverse society, equal opportunities or chances can be found for all society members. However, there were no perceptions of a level playing field in Singapore's society with prevalent inequalities among citizens (Tupper, 2009) been criticised by respondents.

All people in the government, people with power, are from the same family. How do you ensure that everyone in this family can do so well? How do you explain this? (NUS/20/Ch/22/F)

Despite the perceived inequalities based on power or status, meritocracy was regarded to particularly benefit low-income groups of the city-state. Though not ideal, meritocracy was seen to have at least the potential to improve the situation of disadvantaged society groups. The research suggests an uncritical inculcation of true statements (Foucault, 2007a) regarding equal economic benefits in a just society (see 2.15), which could be seen as an indicator for the socialising effects of Social Studies to create believers rather than critically reflective individuals among the participants (Lawy & Biesta, 2006; Sears & Hughes, 2006; see also 2.5):

There is some inequality. Your family background—how poor your family is—impacts on your opportunities. I would still say that this is the best system for people from a poor family. You actually have a ladder to climb up to higher social economic status. (NUS/25/Ch/22/F)

The emphasis on self-responsibility or the faith in one's own future was apparent in the participant's comment quote below, which illustrates an active self, enabled by the state (Chen, 2013; see also 2.6). This could indicate that discourses of meritocracy are instilled successfully into the participants, who rearticulate statements of Social Studies that are almost identical with the textbooks statements that "hard work will be rewarded" (MOE, 2007, p.33) and the meritocratic system leads to fairness and equity in Singapore's society. At the same time, however, a doubting undertone is recognisable in participants' statements:

I think the concept of meritocracy gives Singaporeans hope. If you strive hard... It depends on your abilities. It is not just how rich you are determining how well you get through the education system. To get through, the main idea is that you have to work for it and then you get there eventually, somehow. (NUS/30/MaCh/22/F)

Singapore's education system is one example where aspects of societal fairness grounded in the meritocratic system seem to be compromised. In particular, the socio-economic background of students was seen as relevant to peoples' success in Singapore's education system (cf. 2.5). The importance of one's family background, stressed by respondents, supports the argument that citizenship education in the city-state does not account for socio-economic differences among pupils (Gordon et al., 1999).

Not all of us have the same family background. Not all of us are exposed to the same opportunities to begin with. I believe that the family background you are coming from and the opportunities you are exposed to from a young age are playing a very big role in helping you get a head-start in the Singaporean education system. (NIE/10/Oth/24/F)

The rigid and inflexible streaming system in Singapore's formal education reinforces disadvantages based on socio-economic categories. High-quality pre-schools and kindergartens, for example, are associated with considerable financial burden and cannot always be borne by low-income families. Interviewees emphasised that at the very beginning of formal education, the higher socio-economic status of families can lay the foundation for some

major advantages in achieving further during the later years of schooling in Singapore:

When entering primary school they have already a segregation of the better students and the weaker students. We are definitely not on a level playing field. It is like they are suppressing the weaker ones. (NUS/19/Ch/21/F)

There are people who develop maybe later than me and would probably reach the same intellectual level as me, later-on in life and then progress much better than me. But simply because they were not given the right resources at the beginning they couldn't. (NIE/10/Oth/24/F)

The status or reputation of certain institutions in Singapore's education sector is important here (see 2.13). Both the academic stream a student is allocated to and the school itself profoundly impact on future career opportunities of pupils (Kallio & Häkli, 2013). As illustrated by the quote below, the prestige of a school was not necessarily seen by respondents to be the result of high quality teaching but rather as the consequence of (negative) perceptions among parents of how particular schools could impair pupils' career:

I think it is more the perception that people have. People think if you are from a neighbourhood school you won't make it as far as someone from an elite school. The perceptions are already there. (NIE/15/Ch/23/F)

The so-called elite schools were perceived by the respondents to offer a broad variety of opportunities and sources of support for students to achieve well and to guarantee best academic results compared to perceptions of lower ranked schools. This is an example of perceived positive effects of applying meritocratic principles to formal education in Singapore. At the same time, this demonstrates the internalisation of the preferred meaning or dominant vision (S. Hall, 1997a) of certain schools (cf. objective 1).

Everyone around you is achieving something great and it makes you see that it is possible. Because the school thrives on high achievements, they provide you with a lot of facilities and support in achieving what probably other schools wouldn't have. (NIE/10/Oth/24/F)

The competition evident in Singapore's meritocratic society to achieve something great is also reflected in the so-called *Kiasu* mentality, which can be translated best as 'someone being afraid of losing out'.

Kiasu Mentality

When respondents were asked to name a typical characteristic of Singapore's society all participants referred, almost instantly, to the Hokkien⁵ term *Kiasu*.

[Kiasu] strikes me as something really pervasive throughout Singaporean culture. In every dimension of Singaporean life you have that kind of thing arising. (NUS/20/Ch/22/F)

This mentality concurs well with the extremely competitive work environment of the city-state and illustrates a deeply rooted fear of being disadvantaged in life if one does not do the best one can (B. Davies et al., 2005; see also 2.8). Such sentiments were visible in the statements of interviewees about perceptions of the typical 'Singaporean identity' (cf. objective 3).

There is a certain competitiveness among Singaporeans in terms of... actually everything. I think that is something that we all recognise in each other. (NIE/12/Ch/23/F)

The 'fear of losing out' manifests itself predominantly with respect to one's career or socio-economic status. There is a strong economic rationale behind the *Kiasu* mentality (cf. objective 3), which reveals strong parallels to Beck's (1992) concept of risk society framed in an apparatus of (in)security (P. Harris, 1999; see also 2.8). The social status of Singaporean citizens is predominantly constructed through economic success and accumulation of materialistic wealth (discussed further below).

Because of the economic climate, we always want the best; the best for ourselves, for our kids, and for our families. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

Statements by interviewees, which reflect the constant fear of being left out or disadvantaged immanent in the *Kiasu* mentality, illustrate the perception that the best way to survive in Singapore's society is to be the best in

⁵ Hokkien is a southern Chinese dialect also spoken in Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, and the Philippines.

everything (see quote below). Individuals' perceptions of security (Inglehart, 2008) are important when reflecting on the *Kiasu* mentality (see 2.9). Comments made by some interviewees could be seen to reveal an inculcation of particular subject positions aimed for and offered by Social Studies textbooks (Youdell, 2006a, 2006b) by utilising the rationale of threat and fear as governance tool (Berlant, 2005). The enacted *Kiasu* mentality is an example of reiteration processes of Singapore's social norms of conduct (cf. Butler, 1997a; see also 2.7).

That is life in Singapore; how we survive. You have to be really good at whatever. That is what I think of when I think of Singapore.
(NUS/21/Ma/21/F)

According to the interviews, the mind-set based on one's fear of failure manifests itself, for example, in the personal success and societal status. The importance of *financial* concerns in everyday life given in Singapore's society illustrates the value of and the economic reasoning for a secure and well-paid employment (cf. objective 2). The rationale behind pupils' career aspirations, it seems, is predominantly of financial nature, thereby emphasising a pragmatic rather than self-fulfilling approach to life (see below).

I think Singaporeans can be considered as very pragmatic. They are placing very strong emphasis on getting a good job. Ultimately, the financial concern is very important for a typical Singaporean.
(NIE/1/Ch/24/F)

Another example of the *Kiasu* mentality in Singapore is the struggle over a free seat when using public transport in the city-state. Even though, as will be demonstrated later, respect for the elderly is a fundamental part of the Asian Value system, the competitive character of Singapore's society seemingly overpowers the Confucian value of respect. Similarly, the habit of placing pieces of tissue paper on seats in the food-court to reserve them demonstrates a potential fear of losing out that is visible in the impulse to secure seating in a 'competitive' environment.

You are afraid that you don't get a seat. So you put that up – a little piece of tissue. It came on the news quite a bit. People were just talking about how ungracious that is. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

Linked to the *Kiasu* mentality is the perceived (negative) impact of foreign influx on (job) opportunities for Singaporeans, which leads to controversy and strong sentiments among participants (cf. objective 4).

Foreign Talents/Workers

The official rhetoric in Singapore's political debates distinguishes between so-called foreign talents and foreign workers. The official discourse constructs subject positions of foreigners and conditions how good Singaporeans should imagine them to be (see 2.6). As illustrated in Chapter Five, foreign talents are communicated in Social Studies as highly educated and capable individuals compared to their lacking local counterparts. The foreign talent subjects are constructed (Foucault, 1980) as providing necessary input and contributing to Singapore's rapid economic development. Foreign workers, on the other hand, are completely absent from Social Studies textbooks in their role as low-cost manual labour filling gaps in Singapore's blue-collar professions. Hence, only specific kinds of subject positions are imagined as being possible in Social Studies (B. Davies, 2006; see also 2.7). Moreover, beside the numerous legal and economic disparities associated with the two groups, their differing immigration status and extent of societal integration was emphasised in the interviews.

While official policies welcome white-collar foreign talents to permanently migrate to Singapore and settle down, the rhetoric around blue-collar workers constitutes them as a temporary labour force destined to return to their home country after their labour is no longer required in Singapore (see Chapter One). This making up of 'citizens to be' (N. Rose & Miller, 2010) and 'unfit candidates' is illustrated by Singapore's immigration policies, which emphasise that the integration of foreign workers is not necessary or even desired and their status is of a temporary nature (see 2.3). The perceptions of interviewees regarding the impact of foreign migrants on Singapore's

society in general and the compatibility of such immigration policy with the city-state's meritocratic ideology is illustrated by the responses below:

I think foreign talents are fine. They are, from a Singaporean perspective, unique foreign talents. (NIE/5/Ch/23/F)

Foreign talents, I think, add diversity to the work culture. But at the same time, they might compete with Singaporeans for jobs. (NUS/23/Ch/22/F)

The ambivalence towards the foreign talent discourse communicated in Social Studies textbooks is evident in the statements above. They are indicative of first resistances or imperfect reiterations (Gregson & Rose, 2000; see also 2.12) of discourses articulated by interview participants (cf. objective 1). Strong sentiments were expressed by respondents regarding the lack of equity and fairness in the job market between local and foreign talents. At the same time, interviewees were bringing the criticised subjects into being through their act of citational repetition (Butler, 1990, 1993).

I think for white-collar jobs, so-called more prestigious jobs, there should be a priority for Singaporeans – for them to feel a sense of belonging – and not for foreign talents. (NIE/1/Ch/24/F)

The state could actually facilitate the development of these talented local individuals and that would be definitely much better. But I don't deny that we definitely need foreign talents. (NUS/30/MaCh/22/F)

I think the government needs to focus more on their own citizens. (NUS/18/Ch/21/F)

Balancing unequal distribution of opportunities was justified by respondents on higher moral grounds, which demonstrates a distinct in-group bias (Tajfel, 1982) towards (cf. objective 4) foreigners by stressing the government's obligation to cater for its own citizens first before facilitating the immigration and integration of foreign talents:

I think it's a bit of a moral issue, considering the state facilitates the immigration of talented foreigners who take our jobs; jobs that could possibly be filled by locals. (NUS/31/Ch/24/M)

It is not surprising, then, that most people's perceptions of foreigners are inflected with negative stereotypes and prejudices. Research shows that insuperable cultural and social differences between foreigners and local citizens were constructed by respondents to reinforce the supposed disadvantageous effects of not only allowing foreign migration to Singapore but also officially encouraging it.

If the supervisor happens to be a foreigner, he would tend to hire people of his own race; people from his country. That's what I heard. And they tend to promote their own people. It's ironic. Singaporeans are side-lined in their own country. (NIE/1/Ch/24/F)

I don't think it is competition, but I think [foreigners] are very insensitive; arrogant to some extent. When they get these talents here, they are very culturally insensitive. The way that they work is very different – at least for Asians. My father was reiterating about loyalty, but I don't think they really understood that. (NUS/31/Ch/24/M)

Westerners are very arrogant and they don't understand the context of things. The term foreign talent has this connotation that they are better than us. Employers just tend to think they are better than the local talents, even if in reality they might be not. (NIE/15/Ch/23/F)

Some of these statements suggest the internalisation of pre-described racial containers constructed in Social Studies, which uniformly subsume foreigners under the category of 'others', moreover, assigning particular sentiments to this entire heterogeneous group. However, some participants did not share these strong sentiments regarding foreigners and agree with the necessity of foreign labour, thereby demonstrating the potential internalisation of the official discourse around foreign talents:

I have rationalised everything. The influx of foreigners is not a problem unique to Singapore. It is happening all over the world. Even in China they have a problem with the influx of foreigners. (NIE/6/In/23/F)

Moreover, responses from interviewees evince the possible internalisation of the threat and fear rationale, thereby illustrating not only the passive and docile character of Singapore's youth (Print & Milner, 2007, Sim, 2010) but

also the constitution of an omnipresent *angst*, an existential fear (Beck, 1992; Furedi, 2002; cf. objective 3) among citizens. This governance through fear influences pupils' conduct on the basis of their insecurities (Isin, 2004) simultaneously reinforcing their feeling of helplessness (Inglehart, 2008):

The tenor is that China is rising and all we can do is waiting for them to 'eat us up'. So the advice is to find something that they are not good in yet. It is like we are just waiting for them to take over. I definitely feel like competing with them. They are studying so hard and they will trash us all. (NUS/20/Ch/22/F)

If you read responses to online news articles, you can see a lot of these anti-foreigner sentiments surfacing in the comments. In Chinese we call it 'Qiang Fan Wan', which means snatching away my rice-bowl. (NIE/10/Oth/24/F)

Perceptions expressed by interviewees of foreign blue-collar workers constitute a very different image compared to foreign talents. Singapore's rapid socio-economic development involved considerable effort to improve the professional qualifications among its citizens. Successes in Singapore's education system led to the common imagination that most citizens are too well educated to work as manual labourers and are aiming solely for higher ranked socially respected professions. The subsequent statements suggest an uncritical internalisation of discursive truths (Mackey, 1999; see also 2.10) about foreign workers, which can be observed among the interviewees' responses:

No Singaporean wants to be a construction worker or sweep the floors, so we do need people who are willing to do these jobs. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

It's the whole case of [Singaporeans] not wanting to do these jobs. Even people who are jobless, unemployed, they do not want to go into the construction sector. They do not work as domestic workers. It is simple as that. (NUS/30/MaCh/22/F)

I have always known that the blue-collar workers are needed because we Singaporeans do not want to do these menial jobs; for example manual labour or housekeeping. No-one wants to do that as a Singaporean. (NIE/2/In/23/F)

For some respondents, attempts by the government to constitute common imaginations of foreign workers were critically reflected upon (Lawy & Biesta, 2006) and even rejected (cf. objective 1):

The newspaper wants us to believe that Singaporeans don't want to take those jobs anymore. I don't buy that. (NIE/1/Ch/24/F)

There are still Singaporeans who want to be a bus-driver, taxi-driver, and so on. But the prime minister was saying it's because Singaporeans don't want to do these jobs. So that's the influx of those people. They are really snatching away the jobs from the people who really want to do it happily. (NIE/5/Ch/23/F)

Another facet of the imagined impacts of foreign influx on Singapore is the 'othering' (Browning, 2003) of foreign workers through the reiteration of common prejudices and xenophobia infused into the everyday (Soysal, 1994; cf. objective 4). A strong demand for cultural integration and assimilation as well as respect for Singapore's values and norms was visible among the responses, which suggests an exclusive form of national identification (Amin, 2004).

The less-educated, like construction workers or domestic workers, are crowding our public transport system, spitting, talking too loud in public, are not observing our behavioural norms; that kind of thing. (NIE/10/Oth/24/F)

Culturally, it would be different. [Foreign workers] come to Singapore and are not used to high-rise living for example. And there are a lot of unstated rules you know when you grow up here. (NIE/4/Ch/31/M)

It is the way they [foreign workers] live at home. When they come to another country, it doesn't occur to them that they should live the way we live. They just live the way they are used to. You should not reject the local culture here. (NIE/14/MaCh/26/M)

The antagonism between the expressed appeal for cultural assimilation and the failure of the government to provide opportunities for this to occur leads to the contradicting perspectives that immigrants do not *want* to integrate themselves into society. This is an example of the uncritical internalisation of

the official discourse around foreign workers and a lack of critical reflection on this issue (Sim, 2010; see also 2.5):

They are not given a chance to integrate. I don't think they want to as well. I think it's a two-sided thing. They are temporary so I don't see the need to integrate them. (NIE/2/In/23/F)

I think there hasn't been much effort to integrate them properly. The idea is that they are here on short term. So there is no point. (NUS/22/Ch/22/F)

The state approach is not to integrate them, which is a use and discard mentality. We were always told that they are here just temporarily. (NUS/25/Ch/22/F)

In addition to the cultural conflicts illustrated above, the findings suggest economic reasoning contributes to the constructed imaginary of both foreign talents and foreign workers. Interviewees emphasised global trends that are beyond the city-state's control (Walkerdine & Bansel, 2010) that demand for Singapore's current immigration policy (see 2.6):

This is all just because the government wants our society to progress, so they can hit the next GDP they want; another factor of economic growth. (NUS/18/Ch/21/F)

We do need foreigner workers, because of economic reasons and also pragmatically we don't have enough people in Singapore. I think it's true. The other side is more social. They don't really blend well with us. I think that's the thing. (NUS/25/Ch/22/F)

We are globalised. It's not their influx. We are just globalised. (NIE/5/Ch/23/F)

That is the only thing you can do if you want to stay globally competitive. It's a rat race. If you fall behind then it's too bad for you. Singapore is just doing what the government thinks is best for the country. (NIE/16/Ch/23/F)

Ultimately, the weakness of the national Singaporean identity perceived by interview participants resulted in xenophobic sentiments made by the

respondents towards culturally different immigrant groups (Licata & Klein, 2002; Soysal, 1994; cf. objective 4). Most interviewees highlighted the lack of cultural and ethnic anchoring associated with the Singaporean identity, which is desired by the government to be fostered through the othering (Browning, 2003; Haldrup, Koefoed, & Simonsen, 2006) of foreigners.

Foreigners bring in diversity, but I think it should be a more natural process. It shouldn't be that enforced bringing stress on us.
(NUS/19/Ch/21/F)

Singaporeans are united in this way. Singaporeans got more united against these foreigners. It is like there is another race called foreigners.
(NIE/6/In/23/F)

There are quite a lot of migrant workers in Singapore and I don't think we should extend that. We lose our identity we are striving to create. Identity here in Singapore, as a Singaporean, is something with a question mark. We have no national costume or national language or whatever in that sense. (NUS/31/Ch/24/M)

Formal schooling is a locale where national belonging and identification are meant to be instilled into Singapore's citizens. The next section discusses how Singapore's education system in general and issues of critical thinking and academic streaming in particular impact on the perceptions of the good citizen among interview participants (overall research question).

6.3 Formal Education

As mentioned above, the *Kiasu* mentality impacts significantly on people's everyday life in the city-state. The influence of the *Kiasu* mentality is also evident in Singapore's formal education system, which is characterised by a highly competitive learning environment. Private tuition hours and other educational support are common practice among most pupils rather than being only for under-achieving students. Therefore, it is not surprising that Singapore's education system was perceived by all interviewees as extremely demanding and challenging. Students described the immense pressure exerted on them to do well, which leaves no room for errors.

Parents will not let their children study less. There is so much competition. You think you can only go to a certain point, but then you will work even harder to pass the exams. (NUS/20/Ch/22/F)

The pressure in school was really high. If you don't get out of it alive you don't go to University. You are dead; you are really dead. (NUS/21/Ma/21/F)

The excessive focus on grades and assessments of all kinds in Singapore's education system was important because it demonstrates its competitive character (see 2.6). The whole system is based on good performances in assessments, encompassing not only tests for students but also performance checks for teachers. These 'technologies of control' (Foucault, 1995) restrict potential pathways of resistance (Skelton 2000a). The main focus of everyday formal education, therefore, is on measurable items that are easy to attain rather than on creativity and academic excellence.

The education system has been in place for so long – and the mentality. It is so ingrained and indoctrinated with all that exams and assessments. (NIE/3/Ch/30/F)

Respondents recognised the grading obsession to be problematic since it emphasised the problematic practice of assessing character building as well as moral education classes in school (see 2.5).

The Ministry of Education will find a way to quantify character. It is the same thing with Social Studies built to show students what Singapore is about and the idea of citizenship and good governance. But as the years came by it became a subject that would be graded. A subject that affects your future, because it is part of the O-Levels syllabus. It is almost like you are trying to quantify citizenship and I think citizenship, values, and character, these are things that cannot be quantified. (NIE/9/Ch/23/F)

In addition to the pressure put on students by the school itself, parents' expectations intensify the stress experienced by pupils even further. The difficulty in accepting failure is deeply ingrained in parents and affects their stance towards formal education and career opportunities in the city-state's highly competitive labour market (see 2.6 and 2.9). The financial benefits

and societal reputation attributed to certain professions direct most pupils to aim for a career as a medical doctor, lawyer, or other highly paid profession. This illustrates the prevalence among participants for materialistic wealth and reputation associated with the choice of certain profession as one's career rather than the consideration of post-material motivations (Inglehart, 1997).

I want my kids, my children, to score good results, to get into elite schools and be somebody big. To be somebody big is not being an artist or whatever. It is somebody good in life, like a doctor, a lawyer, yes.
(NIE/5/Ch/23/F)

Moreover, Singapore's education system was seen by interviewees as highly rigid and inflexible, particularly regarding the perceived disadvantages facing students from lower socio-economic and specific ethnic backgrounds (discussed further below). Interviewees spoke of the gap between rich and poor as leading to disadvantage and inequality for some groups in society as being linked to predetermined educational outcomes based on socio-economic status and ethnicity (Tolonen, 2008). Ultimately, then, the financial status of families was seen to shape people's chances to perform well in school.

Certain groups in society are somehow more privileged. They have more resources, their parents are richer, and their social circles are more influential. (NUS/20/Ch/22/F)

I am in the University because of my family. My family is well educated and helps me with my work. And my family can afford tuition for me. That makes a very big difference. (NUS/26/Ch/23/M)

I feel that the gap is somehow created by the system. If they don't address this, then there will be further social problems. (NIE/9/Ch/23/F)

Differing teaching approaches in academic streams, and the qualification of teachers in those streams, as influential socialisation agents (S. Turner & Manderson, 2007), were noted by respondents as important for Singapore's education system (see 2.11). The highly performative character of education is demonstrated by the dual teaching approach in secondary schools. Teaching in the lower technical streams focuses primarily on memorising

facts without questioning them (Sim, 2010). In the academic and special streams, however, the idea of critical thinking is integrated into the syllabus to encourage students to scrutinise information communicated in the classroom (Ho, Alviar-Martin, Sim, & Yap, 2011). This duality is also evident in interviewee responses as demonstrated below.

I think teachers are so overloaded and disillusioned with the system that they look at the kids and say: Just memorise! Don't fight! Don't create trouble for me! (NIE/8/Ch/23/F)

I would agree that teachers tend not to really push and motivate students from lower technical streams to move on to normal/academic. (NIE/2/In/23/F)

I think this [effect of streaming] was quite evident in the way textbooks are framed differently for the technical and for the academic and express streams. In the technical streams the aim was for students to be more responsible: If you don't get in trouble, you are a good citizen. In the express and normal/academic streams, there was a push towards critical thinking. (NIE/14/MaCh/26/M)

The conceptual separation of students translates into pre-determined career outcomes that originate in and constitute a highly structured workforce that aligns well with the needs of Singapore's economy (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2010; see also 2.6). The majority of interviewees perceived highly prestigious professions as desirable career choices as preferable to the social disadvantages associated with lower-skilled jobs.

People know that the education system is geared towards the economy; the workforce a country needs to develop. (NIE/8/Ch/23/F)

The system is quite bad, because Singapore does not value lower skilled jobs. For example, your teacher will ask you: Do you want to be a handicraft man? Society doesn't value such skills. I think that is not good. If the teacher asks: What do you want to be later? Everyone will say engineer, lawyer, doctor, or teacher. No one would say I want to be a cop. I think our society should value these kinds of people more. (NUS/26/Ch/23/M)

The quality of teaching as a consequence of streaming was also seen by interviewees to affect students' educational outcomes. In their views, the quality of teaching differed significantly depending on the image and social reputation of a school. Schools offering primarily lower stream technical education were seen as having a lower teaching quality as well, whereas schools offering higher academic and special stream education were reported to have a noticeably higher teaching standard.

I believe that teachers are the people who impart the skills. Teachers are the people who will make a difference in students' life. If some teachers are less qualified and not motivated, they won't be able to teach very important skills, like critical thinking and all the higher level analysis.
(NIE/8/Ch/23/F)

Related to the issue of teaching standards is the important skill of critical thinking, which features prominently in Social Studies. The textbooks used in Social Studies, however, do not allow for this skill to be developed despite official claims in the syllabus state the opposite.

Critical Thinking

The concept of critical thinking as important aspect of Singapore's education strategy is explored through a constantly changing economic environment worldwide. According to the government, Singapore's education policies need to be adjusted to reflect the changing needs of the new knowledge economy (see Chapter Four). However, recent studies have shown that students lack skills in presenting and communicating ideas beyond simply memorising them (Sim, 2008). Even though critical thinking is instilled in the current curricula, observations by interviewees revealed little evidence of the development of these skills (see 2.5).

Even critical thinking has a formula. Question: Do you agree? Step one: Take your stand. Step 2: Write two paragraphs on agree and one on disagree. Submit your paper. Balance argument. And I get a grade! That's it. (NUS/18/Ch/21/F)

The dominant view on critical thinking among the interviewees was that the current system does not encourage or even allow for it. Whereas critical

thinking was seen as an expression of individuality, most respondents felt the strict rules and rigid character of the educational system prevented such individualism rather than encouraged it (cf. objective 1).

There is a certain expectation that you have to fulfil. I think there is some governmental sanction, so-called in line with the education policy. They tell you to be creative and think 'outside the box'. But you can only go one way. A trapped mouse can go anywhere in the box, as long as it doesn't leave it. (NUS/18/Ch/21/F)

It seems that the goal of developing skills among students to be critical and independent thinkers will not likely be achieved through economically-motivated learning strategies embedded in an inflexible education system such as in Singapore. Interviewees perceived such critical and individual learning as occurring through other social influences beyond the scope of the school. Moreover, respondents stressed that thinking itself was always supposed to be critical so it was unnecessary to emphasise this point:

It is society that teaches me. My exposure to different society norms, my personal experience with society actually taught me more about critical thinking than my school. (NIE/8/Ch/23/F)

Hence, the conception of the good citizen in Social Studies seems *not* to result in fostering critical thinking individuals. Although the current approach to citizenship education aims to encourage such critical thinking skills, it conceals the conception of the good citizen infused into the Social Studies subject, one that stresses the patriotic duty of citizens: to follow the normative line rather than criticising it (N. Rose, 1999).

Streaming System

Interviewees expressed concern over the rigid streaming scheme in primary and secondary schools. The original focus on the synergy effects of combining similarly intellectually equipped students aligns well to the system of meritocracy; however, it has shown significant weaknesses in practice. One recurring issue identified in the interviews was the inflexibility and rigidity of the streaming system, which prevented students from changing streams to adequately address their needs:

When you stream, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. When the teachers expect you to do badly, then they adjust the way they treat you, and then you do badly and therefore you can't leave that stream.
(NUS/18/Ch/21/F)

These predetermined career pathways cultivated by Singapore's streaming system illustrate the power of education to make citizens (N. Rose & Miller, 2010) through performative practices whereby the discourse of good citizenship produces the effects it names (Butler, 1993; see also 2.12). Research revealed that students from the technical stream, for example, are perceived as not as well prepared as their counterparts in the academic and special streams in terms of knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to actively participate in society:

If you are told you are dumb then you behave like you are dumb. Once you are labelled you behave like that label. (NIE/11/MaCh/23/F)

Teachers have this mind-set that they are 'just' normal/technical students, so that is why they fail. (NIE/2/In/23/F)

The streaming system establishes and reinforces social structures of inequality (Gordon et al., 1999). Consequently, despite basing streaming on meritocratic principles, the system fails to include all society groups in an equal and just way; instead it disadvantages the weak and vulnerable in Singapore's communities:

There are definitely disadvantages, especially for those who are streamed into something that is less desirable. It generates social inequality.
(NUS/29/InCh/22/F)

This reflects the lack of flexibility of the streaming system, which groups students into rigid social predetermined segments of seemingly fixed identities (L. Harris & Alatout, 2010) rather than allowing for a more fluid and permeable approach (see 2.2). The reproduction of pre-existing socio-economic structures and the constitution of neatly confined society groups can be seen as an important stimulus for current streaming practices. Such

practices ultimately reiterate the economic rationale prominently communicated in Social Studies (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2010; cf. objective 2).

You have to think of the division of labour. To put it bluntly: you need someone to sweep the floor and to do other manual work. There must be people doing that. (NIE/16/Ch/23/F)

Streaming plays an important role in Singapore's economic growth. That goes hand in hand with educational capabilities. In a sense, it is good for economic growth but not for the people. (NUS/20/Ch/22/F)

Singapore's education system, then, produces a highly customised labour force, which reconstitutes and at the same time is reproduced by societal structures and norms (see 2.12). This leads to a perceived inequality among Singaporeans based on both socio-economic status and ethnic origin.

6.4 Multiculturalism

As illustrated in Chapter Four, Singapore's ideal of a meritocratic society is based on equal opportunities for all Singaporeans no matter their ethnic origin or race. Interviewees perceived the meritocratic system as successful regarding ethnic equality and stressed the fact that Singapore's government put in place several procedures to ensure racial equity (cf. objective 4). One of those measures is the racial quota system utilised in public housing distribution as well as job allocations in certain industries and public services.

They have a lot of racial quotas. I was really surprised when I heard about it. There can only be a certain quota of Malays, of Chinese... I had no idea. (NUS/21/Ma/21/F)

Despite the perceived equal opportunities for all ethnicities in Singapore, respondents noted an 'underperformance' of some ethnic groups. In these instances respondents tended to blame the individual's lack of determination and effort (see 2.6), thereby reiterating negative racial perceptions. The neoliberal focus on the individual enables these kinds of racialised claims to circulate (Walkerdine & Bansel, 2010). Moreover, the apparent resistance of race as an ontological category reflects the rigid official discourse of neatly sorted ethnic groups as communicated in Social Studies.

Take Chinese and compare them to Malays. We are doing a lot better. Some say Malays are actually disadvantaged in the state policies. I don't think that is the case. They are just not trying hard enough.
(NUS/20/Ch/22/F)

Such statements reflect an existing in-group bias of the Chinese participants over other ethnicities in Singapore (Tajfel, 1982). While some respondents articulated a more differentiated perspective on ethnic (dis)advantages, their racialised responses illustrated the same ethnic prejudices of particular ethnic groups naturally lacking 'what it takes' to become successful in a meritocratic society like Singapore (cf. objective 4).

Certain communities may actually be side-lined. For example, the Malay Muslim community is not as successful as the Indian and Chinese community. Of course they are making progress, but the fact that we champion meritocracy may actually make their situation worse.
(NIE/4/Ch/31/M)

When I come to think about it, is there any Malay SAP⁶ school around? There are Chinese SAP schools like Nanyang Girls, but there is no Malay SAP school. No, I don't think so. Even though in Singapore there are 20% Malays, here at NUS there are probably just 1%. (NUS/27/Ch/21/F)

They [Malays] are hugely disadvantaged. That's what they say in the newspaper. Every single time, when there is an increase in the number of Malay graduates, it becomes a huge thing. Indirectly, it is like saying that this racial group is less educated compared to other groups.
(NIE/9/Ch/23/F)

Interviewees' 'race talk' (Gulson et al., 2013) emphasises that some ethnic groups depend on the quota system to progress in society due to the lack of capabilities originated in their race. The racial stereotypes reiterated by the participants underline the strong impact of ethnic origin on the constitution of a common Singaporean identity. Also, the responses suggest that the main CMIO race categories constructed by the Singaporean government and

⁶ The Special Assistance Plan (SAP) is a program by the MOE to cater for academically strong students. Until today, however, SAP schools only cater for students studying Mandarin as their mother tongue.

communicated through Social Studies textbooks may be internalised by the interviewees to some extent (cf. objective 1).

Stereotypes in Singapore are based on races. It is not that I am a racist, but I have a particular idea of how Chinese, Malay and Indians behave.
(NIE/6/In/23/F)

This othering (Browning, 2003) of ethnicities puts considerable stress on the idea of peace and harmony in society and reinforces common perceptions among interviewees that it is not entirely clear what it means to be Singaporean in terms of one's ethnic background. The multitude of races in Singapore's society and associated variety of customs, norms and values, challenges traditional conceptions of one single homogeneous (fixed) national identity (L. Harris & Alatout, 2010) and instead suggests people's belonging to a wide range of groups (Splitter, 2007; see also 2.2).

Respondents stated that Singapore's racial composition was quite similar to that of Malaysia, but that the ethnic origin of citizens would not impact on everyday life in Singapore as it does in the neighbouring country. This was somewhat surprising. Malaysia was perceived by participants as a highly biased nation in which racial issues lead to everyday racism and xenophobia (Soysal, 1994). At the same time, the principle of meritocracy was emphasised by Chinese interviewees as an effective tool to prevent such discrimination in Singapore. The Chinese participants seemed to perceive Singapore as a fair and harmonious nation (from their 'dominating' position) when reiterating official discourses of racial harmony (see 2.12).

It is the idea of meritocracy. Places like Malaysia don't really use that or value it. It is more about race. If you are of a particular race you might not have the opportunities or possibilities you have here in Singapore.
(NIE/12/Ch/23/F)

I think we believe that we can live harmoniously, multi-racial in this small island, compared to our close neighbours Malaysia and Indonesia.
(NIE/1/Ch/24/F)

Hence, Singapore was perceived (by Chinese respondents) as being a just and harmonious place to live, with everyone the same no matter what race or religion one is. Such textbook-conforming statements can be seen as highly instructive for students in terms of performing the correct Singaporean identity (Butler, 1993). Importantly, however, this performance might in most cases be performed or unconsciously done (Nash, 2000) without critically reflecting on it (see 2.12).

The reason why Singapore would stand out is actually the way our state manages its relations, especially within the country. If you see Indonesia or Malaysia, they also have minority groups, but they are still very much in the process of learning how to deal with it. If you look at Thailand, they still have problems with their minorities. I don't think we have such problems. (NIE/16/Ch/23/F)

Some interviewees expressed a critical standpoint towards the official discourse of racial harmony and contested its manifestation in everyday life. In these instances, students exhibited a reflexive analysis of official discourses (Foucault, 2005), which resulted in its conscious transformation (Butler, 2004b). Rather than reiterating the official discourse of racial *harmony*, respondents instead emphasised racial *tolerance* as prevalent among different ethnic groups in the city-state (cf. objective 1).

I think our nation has been working on a policy of tolerance since its inception; and I think it will continue to be that way. At the same time, I am a very strong advocate for the fact that there is no racial harmony in Singapore. There is no harmony. It is just tolerance. (NUS/31/Ch/24/M)

At the same time, most Chinese participants emphasised that the concept of racial integration works effectively in Singapore. These participants stressed the success of integrative policies and instruments utilised in formal education to foster trust and mutual understanding. This suggests that the official discourse has been successfully inculcated (Sears & Hughes, 2006) and influenced the perception of Chinese participants, grounded in, at least to some extent, Singapore's proactive education policies.

You meet people that look different from you and speak different from you. You get used to it. Then you start making friends with them and then you realise they are not that much different. It is just a different colour. It is just a different sort of culture, but either way we are friends. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

It never clicked to us that there are many Chinese in our class. Probably because we have been schooled in such a way that we hardly see this difference. As much as the teachers try to tell us to make sure every group has a Malay or Chinese, when we do it in school, we just do it naturally. (NIE/16/Ch/23/F)

Somewhat surprisingly, highly restrictive governmental interventions were perceived in this context as positive and necessary in order to maintain Singapore's imagined racial harmony. Despite such intrusions into individual space and rights being generally seen as problematic and unacceptable the official justification for the limitation of personal freedom was uncritically internalised by students (see 2.9). This suggests their submission to official authority under the condition of Singapore's permanent insecurity (Inglehart, 2008):

What contributes to our harmony is not really whether we accommodate each other's difference or not. It is the fact that we know we are not supposed to say something if we have a problem with someone from a different race. We know our boundaries and what to say and what not. (NIE/17/In/23/F)

I think Singapore is one of the most successful stories, where the country is able to manage racial issues and to arrest... to avoid any possibility of escalation. It is not that there were no issues, but I think the government has a lot of ears on the ground, especially for such issues. When they sense that an issue is going to boil over then there is always intervention. (NIE/4/Ch/31/M)

At this stage, a reminder of the distinct ethnic composition of Singapore's society seems necessary. The majority of its population (>75%) are ethnic Chinese, followed by Malays and Indians. The Chinese pre-dominance in society results in perceptions of an unbalanced racial mix deemed somewhat

unproblematic by respondents. This could, nevertheless, create potential problems in a society where race is officially prescribed and constructed in an overly simplistic way. This pre-dominance was recognised by most interviewees retrospectively when discussing their time in secondary school. It was not perceived to have had a negative impact on pupils' experiences though:

They were predominantly Chinese. It was quite strange because we didn't have any other races in my class. There was only one Indian girl in the entire school. All the others were Chinese. (NUS/22/Ch/22/F)

My school is pretty bi-lingual. Our school pledge, our school song, it's all in Mandarin. And we do learn Chinese ethics and all that heritage stuff. We have it actually as part of our curriculum. Things are a bit different there. (NUS/31/Ch/24/M)

It was only Chinese students, because it was a SAP school. I had no Indian or Malay in my school. Even if there were Indian or Malay, they would all speak Chinese; but I don't remember any. (NIE/13/Ch/23/F)

These perceptions of racial imbalance regarding the participation of ethnic minorities in Singapore's high achieving schools can be seen as reproduced by the ethnic composition of different streams in primary and secondary schools, with Chinese students predominantly obtaining spots in the most prestigious institutions. This supports arguments made earlier regarding the impact of both the socio-economic background *and* ethnic or racial origins on students' educational opportunities and/or achievements (see 2.5):

If you look at our neighbourhood schools – they are divided into express, normal/academic and normal/technical streams – you will see a huge ethnic divide. You will see a lot of Chinese students in the express route. In the normal/academic, there is a good number of Malays. And you see at the normal/technical a huge number of them. In fact, I would say that being Chinese in the normal/technical stream makes YOU the minority. (NIE/9/Ch/23/F)

Consequently, Singapore's multi-ethnic society is being placed under considerable pressure from inside. Although the powerful discourse of racial

harmony was utilised successfully in the past, it is becoming apparent that Singapore's immigrant society will face major challenges in the future. The negative perceptions relating to the influx of foreign migrants, as discussed earlier in this chapter, constitute a real challenge to stability and harmony in the city-state. In particular, interviewee responses exemplified the strong negative prejudices and sentiments directed at immigrants from China and India (cf. objective 4):

The thing that really worries me is actually the 'new foreigners' coming in. They probably mix with people who are from the same... They are from India as well. They live in private condominiums and all that. How do they fit in, if their children do not go to local schools? How does the racial harmony thing come in? (NIE/16/Ch/23/F)

Indians here get a bad reputation because of their nationals from India and Chinese get a bad reputation because of Chinese nationals from China. (NIE/6/In/23/F)

I think it is the cultural background. This is the difference. I wouldn't say it is their [Mainland Chinese] fault but their cleanliness habits are very different from ours. We cannot take it. They sit beside you and they are taking off their shoes and scratch their feet. There are people who eat! (NIE/14/MaCh/26/M)

It is important to stress the fact that a threat to Singapore's harmony was not perceived by interviewees to originate within society (see 2.9); rather, the risk to its stability was seen to originate in the group of foreign migrants, mainly from China and India, who were imagined by interviewees as lacking the will and ability to integrate into Singapore's inclusive society (Amin, 2004). At the same time, however, respondents stressed the fact that there is no identifiable Singaporean *culture* and no subsequent cultural identity under threat (Furedi, 2007), as is communicated in Social Studies.

We do not have a dominant culture in Singapore. We have festivities for about every race in Singapore, but the common identity, in terms of culture, compared to our neighbours, is lacking. (NIE/4/Ch/31/M)

This illustrates just one of many contradictions in Singapore's society. The findings suggest that the official discourse of good citizenship constituted in Social Studies conceals the racial tensions 'boiling under the surface'. The next section will illustrate in more detail some characteristics and features of Singapore's society at large with its contradictions and intrinsic paradoxes.

6.5 Society Values

The concept of Asian Values propagated by Singapore's government can be seen as deeply instilled into interviewees' perceptions of values and norms accounted for in society, even though their acceptance was not developed to a large extent (see 2.15). Most participants demonstrated an awareness of the officially constructed character of the Asian Values inscribed onto youth (A. Harris, 2004; see also 2.5) and emphasised inherent political and ideological motivations (Sturm & Bauch, 2010) of the government:

They have been promoting Asian Values to distinguish us from the West. They can't actually go back. That is 40 or 50 years of nation building we are talking about. You can't just ignore that. (NUS/18/Ch/21/F)

Singapore's Asian Value system is deeply grounded in Confucianism which emphasises traditional behavioural norms that characterise a typical communitarian society (Chua, 1995), but which also privileges Chinese moral values in a supposedly multi-cultural society. At the same time, Singapore's society can be seen as being captivated between tradition and modernity, which results in everyday balancing acts between appreciating old-fashioned communitarian values and expediting a modern-day life (see Chapter Four). This leads, in the eyes of some respondents, to some contradictions, particularly when reflecting on their former experiences in education.

I think there are really simple illustrations in Civics and Moral education. We teach them honesty is the best policy, but then you go to work and suddenly you realise that this is not the case in reality. (NIE/8/Ch/23/F)

The early indoctrination strategies of Singapore's government to impose certain norms of the dominant elite on the citizenry (Conversi, 2013) by instilling the official discourse of Asian Values into practices of everyday life

can be seen as a successful fusion of civic and moral values (Sim & Low, 2012; see also 2.5). The following responses demonstrate this:

The whole state policy of community before self is how you got brought up and how our parents got brought up. We have this thing about being respectful to our seniors. We always have to do that. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

A lot of Confucianism has been infused into the curriculum. You have to respect the elderly and this feeds into the slogan of 'family first'. It is quite an Asian Value. (NIE/3/Ch/30/F)

That is an Asian thing. Compare us to the Caucasians: We respect authority more. We know that there should be some form of formal respect between parents and children, teachers and pupils... I think this behaviour is more apparent in Asian societies. We work more as a community rather than focus on individualism or personal freedom. (NIE/10/Oth/24/F)

Respondents' perceptions of Singapore as an imagined community (Anderson, 2006) contrasts sharply with their seemingly concurrent rejection of practised egoism and individuality in the city-state. Despite this strong grounding of Singapore's society in Confucian values, the before-mentioned duality of tradition and modernity becomes problematic when reflecting on the daily factors underpinning the explicit and implicit societal expectations of society (Cornbleth, 2002). Interview participants emphasised a lack of traditional norms lived by younger generations, thereby reiterating the official mantra of the erosion of Singapore's social fabric (McLaughlin, 2000) and a predominantly materialistic youth (see 2.12).

I think we are seeing it now. The younger generation pins success on material wealth; what is visible: owning a car or a nice house. (NIE/4/Ch/31/M)

The environment you are in impacts on your goals. In my family it is very important to earn big bucks. (NIE/8/Ch/23/F)

Economic underpinnings of common identification processes in Singapore's society were stressed by most respondents (cf. objective 2), which highlights

the significance of financial reasoning in everyday life of consumer-orientated citizen subjects in Singapore (Peters, 2011).

I don't think this is a direction for the future. Until now, everything is pretty much focused on our economic growth. (NIE/10/Oth/24/F)

Singaporeans value university subjects that have an economic value that bring in money. It is all about money. (NIE/1/Ch/24/F)

While most interviewees appreciated the economic success and materialistic wealth as an underscoring element of Singapore's society and rationalised it to some extent, they rejected the problematic functional economic meaning of citizens prevalent in society (Peters, 2011; see also 2.9). In other words, the constitution of *economic* subject positions (Isopahhkala-Bouret, 2010) was seen as a major disadvantage of Singapore's society.

They value people not for their intrinsic value but for their functional value. I really don't think they value people as a human being at all. (NUS/31/Ch/24/M)

They don't value their employees. That is something that I have realised. They should see you as a person and not a machine that generates profit. (NUS/26/Ch/23/M)

Besides the incorporation of official values into society there are other aspects of conformity and rules that were expected to be followed by the citizenry. In the subsequent section, it will be illustrated that a particular code of conduct is treasured and reiterated by Singapore's society at large and that interviewee responses reiterate these common perceptions of good citizen behaviour.

Societal Prestige

An important aspect of societal prestige ingrained into Singapore's value system is the socially produced category of appreciation (Bourdieu, 1990b), which manifests in the paramount reputation of particular professions in society. School subjects related to these professions can be seen as highly important by parents and society at large. Traditionally, science and mathematics dominated the school curricula with arts and humanities as

'supporting actors'. Although recent adjustments in secondary education now require a mixture of all these subjects, the prevalence of science as the most valued subject area was still visible among participants' statements.

If you study an arts degree then you can't find a job. In Singapore, when you are in school, all you learn is science. Science has always been a compulsory subject where humanities are not. (NUS/19/Ch/21/F)

Interviewees stressed the most prestigious degrees to obtain were in the subject areas of medicine, engineering, but also economics⁷ and law, as these were perceived to offer both a good reputation and being of value for Singapore's society. This supports arguments that Singapore's neoliberal government forges conditions that make certain choices desirable (Read, 2009), thereby shifting the responsibility of success from society to the individual (Chen, 2013; see also 2.6 and 2.7). Consequently, the arts and social sciences faculties were considered by respondents as a 'dumping ground' for students who cannot 'make it' in science or similar subject areas. The individual career choices individuals make determine success or failure, but repudiate any room for change at the systemic level of neoliberalism (Walkerline & Bansel, 2010). Therefore, *losers* simply made the wrong choices in life (Chen, 2013):

We managed to survive, created plenty of jobs for people. And I think we managed to get our people educated. We equip them with the ability to work and to earn money. But I think the rules are strict, are very strict. So it is kind of making everyone follow a certain path. In a way there is a lack of choices. Like, for example, in secondary school you can only go to arts or science. Why can't I do both? I still have to choose. (NIE/1/Ch/24/F)

This sense of self-responsibility in a neoliberal sense (B. Davies et al., 2005) can be seen as being deeply embedded into Singapore's value system. Arts are regarded as a 'hobby' but not a career, leading to the perception among participants that only certain types of (fine) arts, which follow the normative path provided by the state (Chen, 2013), are worth promoting (see 2.7). In

⁷ The NUS Department of Economics is situated in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) and a degree in Economics is highly valued in Singapore's society.

this regard, society was seen to be interested in the economic aspects rather than the creative value of the arts (cf. objective 2).

Look how they are promoting the arts. It is a very selective type of arts. It is not painting and drawing, it is more like producing a kind of entertainment industry. Ultimately, the financial concern is the most important thing to the typical Singaporean. (NUS/22/Ch/22/F)

Somewhat unexpected was the fact that the majority of participants stated their parents did not, or only slightly, tried to influence their choice of subject matter to study at university level. Despite the competitive labour market in Singapore, respondents stressed that their parents respected their decisions and supported their personal choices:

I was quite fortunate. My parents gave me full autonomy to choose what I like. I just chose the subject I like. (NIE/1/Ch/24/F)

My parents actually give me free reign. Whatever I wanted to do, they trusted it was the best for me. (NIE/13/Ch/23/F)

Statements were different regarding the choices of occupations. Even though the decision about what to study were made primarily by the students, their parents strongly influenced their decisions about which career to pursue. Issues of practicality and remuneration were the most common and relevant aspects here, leading to differing perceptions of certain careers (see. 2.6).

When I tell my relatives that I am pursuing sociology, most don't even know what that is; or they would ask me why I do this. In their eyes, I could have pursued something that is more practical and beneficial, like economics. (NUS/29/InCh/22/F)

They just want to know what my future will be like, what kind of job I am going to do. I just gave them the easy answer, the easy way out for me. I said I want to be a teacher. That is a good job in their eyes. (NUS/24/Ch/22/F)

I got a call from MOE, telling me that I have gotten the teaching award. Great, that is exactly what I wanted to do. I accepted it and they told me to come down with my parents to sign the agreement. World War broke out in my house! My dad said: What's wrong with you? And my mum added: No, I am not going to sign it! (NIE/10/Oth/24/F)

The dominance of economic reasoning (cf. objective 2) as common values treasured by Singapore's society is illustrated by the following quote, which highlights both the prevalence of economic reasoning as well as the rationale of threat and fear:

I think we are brainwashed. We are brought up to believe that we are always on a survival instinct kind of thing. We always feel that, in order to survive in the society, we have to be somebody. That being somebody will come in all kinds of forms. You have to have a good career, a good house, and you need to be rich. People do respect you for that. These kinds of values are very deeply rooted in society. (NIE/8/Ch/23/F)

Another aspect deeply rooted in society, at least according to official rhetoric, is the idea of Singapore as a modern cosmopolitan nation. The following section investigates the concept of cosmopolitanism to illustrate its impact on participants' perceptions of society.

Cosmopolitanism

The official rhetoric communicated in Social Studies is that of Singapore as a modern multi-cultural and cosmopolitan nation. The city-state was imagined by interview participants as a diverse and multi-faceted community which is perceived to have cultural similarities in common with major cities such as London, New York, or Hong Kong (see Chapter One).

We are very cosmopolitan in Singapore. We are more like Hong Kong, London, or New York maybe; busy, crowded, and multi-cultural. (NUS/25/Ch/22/F)

The cosmopolitan worldview and imagined cultural diversity of Singapore seemingly permeate both the individuals' perceptions as well as the officially

constructed discourses of the good citizen mobilised through Social Studies textbooks (cf. objective 1):

The cultural mix in Singapore is good. We become a cosmopolitan society, the same as everyone else. I don't think it is that good, but I think it is inevitable. It relates to our worldview. We are very small compared to other countries. Our mind-set is quite different from others.
(NUS/30/MaCh/22/F)

Notably, Singapore's perceived 'superiority' distinguishes it from its neighbours, in particular Indonesia and Malaysia. Regarding a harmonious society, however, other nations in Southeast Asia were imagined to be more personal, less isolating and less materialistic than Singapore, thereby contesting classifications of the city-state as a post-material nation (Inglehart, 1997). An image of Southeast Asia as warm, friendly, and contented was evoked by interviewees with several emphasising a lack of these elements in Singapore:

People in Thailand are more down to earth and not so consumerist, not so capitalistic. They are always smiling and friendly. In a sense the people in Singapore are much colder. (NIE/13/Ch/23/F)

Small elements of comfort and warmth were perceived to exist only in people's use of Singlish⁸ and in Singapore's vibrant food culture. While the official rhetoric around Singapore's bilingualism is based on the combination of English and mother tongue taught in school (see Chapter Five), a strong personal identification with Singlish was prevalent among some respondents:

I think that is what makes us unique. And you want to be unique. I think we shouldn't say it is less than Standard English but embrace Singlish instead. (NIE/17/In/23/F)

The unique character of Singapore's society was also highlighted by reference to its rich food culture. A distinctive mix of regional flavours, a fusion of Chinese, Malaysian, Indian, and other cuisine, results in a food experience unique to Singapore. One could even say that despite on-going racial

⁸ Singlish is a variety of English spoken in Singapore, incorporating elements of Chinese and Malay.

tensions in the city-state a harmonious blend of multiple cultures was achieved (at least) in the kitchen.

I think food is one important way of how people connect and maintain social ties with each other in Singapore. (NUS/29/InCh/22/F)

Fostering and maintaining social ties between youth and society have been deemed as poorly developed in Singapore, with officials demanding a stronger promotion of civic engagement and active citizenry among young people in the city-state (cf. Print & Milner, 2009). The following section illustrates the participants' perceptions of youths' civic engagement.

6.6 Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is deemed crucial by many scholars to foster active citizens (Biesta et al., 2009; ten Dam, 2011). Despite claiming the constitution of active citizens to be an important aim in Social Studies curricula, the diverse cultural backgrounds of Singapore's society members seem to hamper such efforts. Moreover, related to the *Kiasu* mentality mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, another cultural peculiarity, the *Kiasi* mentality impedes the development of an active and critical citizenry.

Kiasi Mentality

The term *Kiasi*, which means 'being afraid of dying', has a major and far-ranging impact on everyday life in the city-state by instilling a general feeling of anxiety into society (Chen, 2013; cf. objective 3). In discussing the *Kiasi* mentality, interviewees referred to a number of different issues here. The term was seen by most as having multiple meanings and consequences depending on the context in which it is used.

You can be scared of the government. You can be scared financially. You can be scared to express your opinion. That is all considered Kiasi. (NUS/26/Ch/23/M)

In general, when referring to the *Kiasi* mentality interviewees stressed that they were afraid of doing something which might be perceived as opposed to above mentioned social norms (see 2.10). It was evident by their responses

that most interviewees adopted the role of a docile rather than active citizen, at least partly, and follow the normative line of a dutiful citizen (N. Rose, 1999) to avoid potential repercussions resulting from any anti-governmental behaviour. The comments suggest it was not society's judgement they were afraid of, but rather the strict policies of the Singaporean government.

You are afraid of doing something. I think because of... we are almost like a police state. We are really governed so tightly and strictly, so we are afraid of so many things. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

For participants, governance through fear (Berlant, 2005) led to a deep feeling of anxiety when they dealt with official institutions, for example the Singaporean Police (cf. objective 3). The city-state's strict policies shape people's conduct towards particular ends (Cashmore et al., 2013) by constituting an official rhetoric around the necessity of everyone's conformity with regulations and the severe consequences of disobedience. Interviewees stressed the everyday requirement of performing the dutiful good citizen, thereby illustrating their own self-governance in a political climate enabled by the state (Chen, 2013):

There was this world protest on globalisation and we were supposed to do that, but no one showed up. The police made clear it is an illegal gathering and everyone will be arrested if they do this. So no one showed up. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

Rather than being an active citizen and speaking up in public, silent forms of resistance and compliance can be seen as distinct forms of protest embedded in the *Kiasi* mentality. This suggests participants' submission to the system (Bourdieu, 2010). Respondents recalled feelings of powerlessness towards the state regarding multiple aspects of everyday life (see 2.11). Thus, the common practice of articulating discontent and resentments was not the open expression of anxieties or concerns, the display of active citizenship, but the silent complaining about the government in private:

All what we do now is complaining. We became a complain nation. We can't do anything in action so we do it with our mouths in private. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

When it comes to politics, and we know that something is not supposed to be that way, we complain. We complain, but when we are asked to do something about it, everyone keeps quiet. We are too afraid of repercussions. (NIE/9/Ch/23/F)

The strong identification of interview participants with both *Kiasu* and *Kiasi* mentalities confirms contradictions inherent in Social Studies as identified earlier in this thesis. On one hand, Social Studies articulate an aspired to citizenry which critically engages with society (Sim, 2010) and functions in a socially responsible manner (W. Lee & Fouts, 2005). On the other hand, Singapore's repressive forms of governance create a docile and passive citizenry (Best, 2003). Moreover, the internalisation of the *Kiasi* mentality supports the findings of research that the state may explore a rationale of threat and fear to achieve the political goals of conformity and also to justify Singapore's strong government approach (cf. objective 3).

An example which highlights the obedient character of Singapore's society is the desire for order and conformity. A set of unspoken rules guides everyday life, thereby reinforcing the official norms in which citizens should act and think (Skelton, 2000a) to regulate their behaviour (see 2.7). This is demonstrated in a number of ways including the practices of queuing. There was a strong consensus among interview participants that queuing is a typical behaviour, which is performed to perfection by most Singaporeans:

Whenever I have been to other countries, I don't see people queue for toilets. I think it is common-sense that you have to queue for the toilet. It is like people don't think. People just go inside and I am stupidly waiting. I think Singaporeans are all very orderly. If you see anyone queuing in another country it is a Singaporean. (NIE/5/Ch/23/F)

Most respondents rationalised queuing as a necessity and understood it as common-sense (Tupper & Capello, 2012). Frustration about extreme forms of this queuing habitus (Bourdieu, 1991) was expressed by some respondents particularly in regards to the *Kiasu* mentality. Interviewees reported that the fear of losing out causes some to *overdo* the otherwise positive practice of

queuing, which results in an over-performance of the *Kiasu*-conforming subject:

People are willing to queue over-night for this gadget, which can be gotten easily in a few more months if they are willing to wait. However, everybody has to have it at that point in time and not a single day later.
(NUS/19/Ch/21/F)

The following section considers the extent to which Singapore can be considered materialist or post-materialist (Inglehart, 1997) by discussing the future lifetime goals of interview participants (see 2.9).

Future Aspirations

Four major themes emerged when interviewees were asked about their goals and aspirations in life: education, career, family and material wealth. Priority was given by most participants to formal education, which was considered as the most important aspect and the main foundation to achieve one's goals in life. The high appreciation for a university degree was mutually held among all participants, which at least partly demonstrates the importance of higher education in Singapore's society. At the same time, it is an example of the 'over-education phenomenon' prevalent in many modern (Asian) societies (Robinson, 2011).

I want to do a PhD. That is one of my boxes to tick. Beyond that, I am not really sure what is going to happen. I kind of see what happens.
(NUS/20/Ch/22/F)

I am typical Singaporean. When I finish my degree, I plan to work for a year only and then probably do my masters. (NUS/21/Ma/21/F)

I try to pursue my education to the highest level possible.
(NUS/29/InCh/22/F)

Interviewees emphasised the importance of establishing a good career after completing their higher education. However, there was an unexpected vagueness in their specific career plans. One reason for the lack of focus given by respondents was the perceived lack of knowledge and information

about potential career pathways, especially after obtaining an 'inferior soft science degree' (see 2.6).

I might try civil service. They value your social science degree. Sometimes, it might be a bit difficult to go into the private sector, because you don't really know what the jobs are about.
(NUS/23/Ch/22/F)

Another trend that emerged from the interviews was a strongly expressed desire among some participants to pursue an entrepreneurial activity in the future. Such aspirations emphasised the importance of self-reliance and family obligations, which reiterates the neoliberal mantra of self-responsibility (B. Davies et al., 2005; see also 2.6). Respondents' aspirations for autonomy through entrepreneurship could be seen, at least partly, as being grounded in Social Studies' overall economic rationale (cf. objective 2), which encourages peoples' venturing on entrepreneurial endeavours. Participants' imagined significance of increased entrepreneurial activity for Singapore's economy repeats official rhetoric and suggests the successful internalisation of Social Studies discourses by interview participants.

When it comes to making money, we always talk about starting our own business. I am not sure why, but my family always says that we should do it. A lot of my family members have gone into their own businesses. Everyone ventures into owning some business. (NIE/6/In/23/F)

I believe that the system in itself advocates self-reliance. It does indirectly infuse that you are on your own. YOU have to do things and make sure you do things right. (NIE/8/Ch/23/F)

I eventually want to help my father with our family business. He built it from scratch, so I wouldn't want it to go to waste. In Chinese business many fathers are unable to pass it down to their sons and I see how hard my father works. (NUS/31/Ch/24/M)

Though the socialisation effects of families are not focus of this thesis, it should be noted that the last statement demonstrates the interviewee's desire to follow in the footsteps of a family member. This confirms the impact of aspirational habitus (cf. Baker & Brown 2008) on possible positions of

particular occupations as a rational choice, based not on economic choice but on family practices (Pimlott-Wilson, 2011).

Approximately half of the participants involved in this research were planning to pursue a career in education. They articulated a broad variety of different motivations steering their aspirations. The most prevalent driving force was the perceived need for change and adjustment to reform the inequalities and weaknesses of Singapore's education system. Such stimulus can be generated through the opposition of official discourses experienced by interviewees during their own schooling (see 2.14). However, due to structural effects of the education system (Dunn, 2010) such acts of resistance and aspirations for change can only take place at a later stage in life when students have left these social institutions (Bourdieu, 1991).

I want to teach. I want to infiltrate the system to see how it is, to know how it actually works to be a teacher. At the same time, I want to see whether I can make some changes. (NIE/3/Ch/30/F)

I want to go into policy. I think it sucks. I realised policies affect how teachers teach. If I want to change it, I have to start from where it all began. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

I want to try curriculum planning. I think there is a lot the Social Studies syllabus has to offer, a lot of potential. But I am a bit irritated with the pro-government stance in our textbooks. I mean I understand why it needs to be pro-government, but it hinders a person's growth. (NIE/17/In/23/F)

This last statement in particular illustrates the domination and subversion to good citizen discourses (Hodgson, 2005) and the paradox of resistance and submission taking place at the same time (Butler, 1995a; see also 2.14). Issues of societal prestige and valuation (see above) re-emerged when respondents stressed multiple obstacles inherent in the education system that affect students' abilities to pursue their dreams. These were particularly evident when students' aspirations did not comply with common societal expectations:

My interest is in cosmetics. But I can't do it. I can't pursue it, because in Singapore this is a job without a future. You have to study, to get good grades, and get into NUS or NTU. Because they don't offer cosmetic courses, you have to adapt yourself to the courses they offer. Then again, you must choose a course so you can find a job easily. From young age, it depends on what courses they offer. This will shape your life! That is how I feel. (NIE/5/Ch/23/F)

Dreams are only for people who have achieved what they need to achieve. Then, you can go and achieve your dreams. That is what I've been told by everyone. No one actually supported me to pursue my dreams. (NIE/6/In/23/F)

I am aiming for the stereotype good professions: government jobs, doctors, and lawyers. They don't ask you to wipe out your dreams. It is just that you put your dreams on hold. Once you are successful and earn enough money, you can pursue your dream. (NIE/5/Ch/23/F)

These statements highlight potential effects of Social Studies discourses on everyday life in Singapore with individuals focused on economic and security aspects of future career pathways. Their inability to see and act beyond such a narrow perspective of success could suggest the internalisation of the two rationales prevalent in Social Studies syllabi: an overall economic reasoning and the exploitation of threat and fear (cf. objectives 2 and 3).

Another significant aspect of future aspirations emerged from the interviews was that of family-related values and goals. Responses revealed a dichotomy between traditional and modern perspectives on family with the majority of students making statements that conform to traditional family concepts. For these cases emphasis was given to the importance of having a family as one major goal in their life:

A career is important but I value family more. So if it is financially OK and I don't need a job to survive, I don't mind quitting. (NIE/8/Ch/23/F)

I am rather normal. I want to have a family. I want to have a stable life and work not too hard. Kids, I definitely want to have kids. (NUS/24/Ch/22/F)

Maybe it is a gender thing. I think for me family is the number one.
(NUS/31/Ch/24/M)

For respondents whose comments conformed to a modern independent and self-reliant (neoliberal?) perspective the idea of having a family was of minor significance and perceived as secondary to their personal fulfilment, which was highly treasured:

I don't want children. I mean, when it happens then it happens, but it is not my priority. (NUS/18/Ch/21/F)

Why would I want to get married? You study so much just to get married? I know that my parents want me to start a family, but I don't really want to. There are more things I want to do with my life and marriage and family would just interfere with that. (NIE/5/Ch/23/F)

These examples represent instances of ambivalence, where some students' views are consistent with official discourses on family while others' highlight counter-discursive choices in everyday life (see 2.14). Ultimately, however, the strong focus on material and financial aspects of future aspirations was evident in all responses, which could indicate an internalisation of the economic reasoning rationale infused in official Social Studies discourses:

I want a house, a stable career – a fulfilling one – and good health. The healthcare system is so expensive in Singapore. These are the areas we are looking at. My family, my job, and a house. (NIE/1/Ch/24/F)

I cannot stay in a HDB flat. I have to stay in my private property, where I own the land and the house is mine. I don't want to stay in a HDB flat. About private property, it is not very easy to own private property, but my ultimate goal is to be able to live in a bungalow. (NIE/5/Ch/23/F)

I'm not going to lie. I hope I can make a lot of money. I have been exposed to all these things, like consumption and all that stuff. Sadly, I need to say, I am pretty high-maintenance in that sense. I want to do really well. That is very important for me. (NUS/31/Ch/24/M)

This materialistic focus, however, was considered by some respondents as something negative, which they needed to apologise for. Nevertheless,

despite emphasising the negative perceptions associated with a materialistic foundation of society, resistance to the economic reasoning of everyday life by interviewees was much weaker than towards other official discourses, for example traditional family values (see above). This could be interpreted to some extent as an internalisation of the economic reasoning rationale (cf. objective 2), despite criticism towards youths' material obsession in Singapore was expressed by some interviewees:

This is actually an issue I am struggling with. When I had my attachment with teaching, I realised that I need to channel my material desires into something else; getting fulfilment from other things. (NIE/10/Oth/24/F)

I can already start to see the difference in character of my four children. I can see they value things differently. How they going to turn out when they are going to university? I think either way is fine as long as they are not obsessed with material success. That is my greatest fear. That is my greatest fear. As long as they are not obsessed with material success I am fine. (NIE/4/Ch/31/M)

The strong materialism in Singapore's society notwithstanding, the majority of interview participants emphasised they were proud to be Singaporean, yet, as will be demonstrated below, predominantly because of economic reasons.

6.7 National Belonging

The emergence of a national belonging and the sense of national pride, as individual sentiments of pride directed toward the nation-state (Hjerm, 1998), are of particular interest for this study since numerous efforts have been made in formal education to foster such identification among the people in Singapore's multi-ethnic society (cf. overall research question). When confronted with the question whether interviewees were proud to be Singaporean, all respondents, without exception, agreed, thereby indicating a successful inculcation of patriotism into the participants (Callan, 2004). Moreover, the educational objective of Social Studies to 'Love Singapore' was frequently articulated by interview participants. Respondents deploying official speech can be interpreted as an instance of the successful reiteration

of affective citizenship dimensions (Fortier, 2010) communicated in Social Studies (see 2.12):

I am very proud of being Singaporean. I kind of love Singapore.
(NIE/13/Ch/23/F)

I love Singapore. I really like Singapore. (NIE/16/Ch/23/F)

*If you ask me whether I am proud to be Singaporean, I say yes, why not?
It's a good country. In comparison to many other countries, we are OK.
Yes, I am proud of what we have.* (NIE/5/Ch/23/F)

At the same time, however, some participants expressed their concern that the strong economic and functional aspect of Singapore's society impacts on their feeling of pride and belonging to the city-state. Singaporeans' social bonding to the city-state was perceived as resembling a company code of conduct rather than an emotional sense of belonging (see 2.6). Such sentiments highlight the realities of real and lived citizenship (E. Jones & Gaventa, 2002).

I don't feel much attached to the country. I have no sense of belonging. It feels like, if you don't do well – like in a company – you are fired; that kind of feeling. (NIE/8/Ch/23/F)

We are well known for being very efficient, getting things done. And we are well educated. But I just don't really feel that the culture here is something that I'm proud of. Singapore is very pragmatic. I just feel it's cold. It's scary that this is how we have accustomed our thinking.
(NUS/20/Ch/22/F)

Our country is really bad in terms of social grace. Everything is so pragmatic. Obviously, there are friendly people around, but I think everything is so functional and how well someone treats you is really how much advantage you can give them in a sense. (NUS/31/Ch/24/M)

Despite this pragmatic or utilitarian perspective on Singapore's society, many respondents were proud of Singapore especially its economic achievements and functionality (cf. objective 2). The developments since independence

were well appreciated by interviewees, at the same time however, the 'price' every individual has to pay for the accomplishments was seemingly ignored.

I am proud of our economic development. We are in a region of significant poverty. I am proud that we have actually risen among the ranks. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

We managed to survive, being so small in the world. We managed to survive and created plenty of jobs for the people. We have managed to get our people educated, equipped them with the ability to work and to earn money. (NIE/1/Ch/24/F)

Singapore really achieved a lot in a very short time. At various points in our life we contribute to the growth and the stability of the country. (NIE/4/Ch/31/M)

I think Singaporeans are particular proud of the cleanliness and how our city works and functions: its effectiveness and efficiency. I think we are an Asian country, which breaks the orientalist perspective. We are much better than all of you. (NUS/30/MaCh/22/F)

One aspect where negative sentiments of Singapore became visible was its current form of governance. The discourse of good governance infused into Social Studies seemed to be questioned by most interview participants who perceived Singapore's government as focussing on self-serving interests rather than on the common good:

I am proud to be Singaporean and I am proud of Singapore. Even though people might not agree with the way it is governed, but I feel that a lot of Singaporeans take what we have here for granted. (NIE/14/MaCh/26/M)

I always feel that a lot of the policies, especially education policies that have been implemented, are actually for the survival of the party, the PAP. Somehow it is naturally linked to the survival of the country. That is the impression I get. (NIE/3/Ch/30/F)

This links to the argument made in Chapter Five that Social Studies create the impression that the nation's future is inevitably linked to the wellbeing of the ruling PAP. Singapore's survival and development can be seen as tied to

the current political status quo of the country, which emphasises the duty and responsibility of each individual citizen to maintain this condition (see 2.5). Citizenship conceptualised as duties to the state (Lagassé, 2000) rather than a form of civil society (Alexander, 2006) became evident here (see 2.3).

Another duty or obligation deeply rooted in Asian societies (see Chapter Five) is the respect for elders in general and Singapore's forefathers in particular. This is complemented by an expected gratefulness for their achievements in the past. Singapore's developments are an important source of national pride with most participants emphasising past economic and security achievements:

I am thankful to have been given the chance to grow up in Singapore. This is one of the best places in the world to grow up in. It is really safe and our crime-rates are very low. I don't feel scared when I walk home alone. (NIE/10/Oth/24/F)

Our forefathers have given us the opportunity to live in a safe and well to do place. That is something that I don't think we see anywhere else, safety especially. Singapore is one of the safest places on earth. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

I am really proud to be Singaporean, because I understand that we are very lucky to have a good life. I would think my life is really good. I look at some other people in the world and I feel that I am very happy to live a good comfortable life in a safe country. (NUS/31/Ch/24/M)

Most participants stated that their feelings of national pride are deepest when they are overseas (cf. Chapter One). The majority emphasised a stronger emotional bonding with Singapore when being out of the country. Such an external perspective, thus, helps to open up new spaces of perception that are potentially hidden by everyday experiences inside the city-state:

I am proud to be Singaporean when I am abroad. When I'm here, I see myself just as Singaporean." (NIE/3/Ch/30/F)

When I came back to Singapore, when the plane comes in and you see the lights, there is just this rush-off. I guess because of all the memories. No matter how much I complain about the government, the law, whatever, this is where I belong. (NIE/7/Ch/23/F)

When the plane touches Changi Airport, you feel that you are home. Maybe that is some warped idea of nationalism, but I am very happy when I come to Changi Airport. (NIE/17/In/23/F)

Another important context of national pride is the public performances at the annual National Day Parade, which occurs on Singapore's Independence Day (see 2.2). The parade was seen by all participants as an important yearly experience, but at the same time their comments suggest the declining importance and diminishing influence of the event on their individual perceptions of national pride and belonging.

I guess National Day is just a day off, a break. (NUS/18/Ch/21/F)

I watch the parade on TV, because you are forced to. All the channels cast only the parade. My mum always switches from channel to channel, but it is still the parade. (NUS/24/Ch/22/F)

I really don't like the National Day with all this passion. I mean how stupid is that? It gets very repetitive after a while. You see the whole multiculturalism again and again. I think the entertainment value is really low. (NUS/21/Ma/21/F)

One aspect of the decline in national pride associated with the National Day festivities was the fact that most Singaporeans nowadays watch the parade on TV rather than experience the event in person. Participants emphasised the positive impact of the atmosphere and the strong emotional feeling of such experience on their identification with the city-state (see 2.3):

Nowadays we don't really watch the parade on TV anymore. I mean there are occasions when I have been at the stadium. I think that the atmosphere is really nice and I enjoy watching the National Day Parade there. (NIE/12/Ch/23/F)

I like to watch the parade. If I have company, I would go there. This year I went, because, when we are there, the feeling of patriotism is stronger. There are a lot of people who actively went to watch it, rather than just staying at home. There is more enthusiasm. (NUS/23/Ch/22/F)

I am still proud of Singapore when it comes to National Day. I will still attend. I think during that period you feel 'prouder' to be Singaporean before you go back to your same life again. (NIE/9/Ch/23/F)

It has been argued elsewhere that the routine of raising national flags and other forms of official symbols of nationalism are associated with the expression of national pride (Billig, 1995). The perceived triviality of these performances among interviewees, however, could indicate that practices of banal nationalism are of minor significance to interview participants. This was supported, for example, by the low relevance respondents assigned to the flag-raising procedures on National Day:

We used to [hang the flag] when I was younger. Now we don't anymore. Actually, come to think of it, when we were kids there were more flags around. I think nowadays no one does that anymore. (NIE/15/Ch/23/F)

Hanging the flag, my mum says, is stupid. There is no incentive to hang the flag, but there is a penalty if you hang it after National Day. So she says no. Why should we hang the flag? She wants to avoid trouble, I guess. (NUS/25/Ch/22/F)

The re-emergence of the *Kiasi* mentality could support the internalisation of the threat and fear rationale, which is demonstrated by an omnipresent *angst* articulated by a majority of interview participants (cf. objective 3). Potential repercussions generated by non-conformist social behaviour in relation to official norms and policies, for example, incorrect flag-raising, confirm this argument.

Citizenship

An important manifestation of national identity is the sense of identification with one's citizenship status, a legal membership materialised in the form of a national passport (Weber, 2008). When confronted with the possibility of

giving up their passport for any other in the world, a multitude of perceptions regarding the importance of the Singaporean citizenship became visible among interviewees (see 2.3). These differing perceptions illustrate the multiple meanings of citizenship in people's lives (T. Hall & Williamson, 1999). However, two dominant perceptions associated with the Singaporean passport emerged. The first was the feeling of security linked to the passport and the social status of being a Singaporean:

I think safety is one of the factors [to keep my Singaporean passport]. I can always come back to Singapore and I know I have my degree and I still can pursue a job in the end. (NUS/24/Ch/22/F)

At this point in time I still stick to my Singaporean passport. I was brought up to think that I should hold on to my Singaporean passport, no matter what happens. It is always a really secure place. That is what my dad always said. No matter what, do not give up your Singaporean citizenship! (NIE/2/In/23/F)

The second perception reflects the omnipresent economic reasoning for most aspects of everyday life in Singapore. Both views on citizenship support the idea of citizenship as a set of rights and duties rather than an emotional belonging to a specific community (Lagassé, 2000; Kerr, 2003). The strong economic impetus to maintain a Singaporean citizenship out of pragmatic rather than emotional reasons was apparent in most responses (cf. objective 2):

There is some prestige associated with the Singaporean passport, compared to other Asian passports. (NIE/10/Oth/24/F)

It is a really good passport. You can go to many places without a visa and usually you don't have to pay. Being a Singaporean citizen gives you a lot of benefits. (NIE/11/MaCh/23/F)

I guess practically it is more useful to maintain the Singaporean passport. Think of all the people who want to get the Singaporean passport. You don't have to apply for a visa. You can go anywhere. (NUS/25/Ch/22/F)

It is a very pragmatic reason [too keep my passport]. I think a lot of people are getting the Singaporean passport for pragmatic purposes. Some people use it as a stepping-stone to get US citizenship.
(NUS/18/Ch/21/F)

The pragmatic and materialistic character of Singaporean citizenship became evident when interviewees were asked to reflect on economic developments and global trends impacting on the 'value' of their passport. Respondents' perceptions of the Singaporean passport highlighted predominantly economic aspects of citizenship, which could be seen as an effect of Social Studies' overall economic rationale infused into Singapore's nation-building process:

In the past I wanted to go to UK, but now I don't really want to, because they are in a bad shape. Things are shifting to Asia, so it makes more sense for me to stay in Asia. (NUS/20/Ch/22/F)

For now, I would still keep my Singaporean passport, because America and Europe are not doing well. It seems safer to keep my passport for now. (NUS/28/Ma/21/F)

While emotional aspects are also evident in perceptions of citizenship, most interviewees confirmed the dominance of economic and security reasoning over such affective aspects. These findings suggest an interpretation of citizenship as a formal status (Kerr, 2003) rather than one as member of a community (Kerr, 1999a, 1999b). In several instances interviewees refused the idea of giving up the Singaporean passport; not based on their emotional attachment to the nation, but on their family ties with the city-state.

The Singaporean passport has many advantages, but I tend not to think like that. I would not give up the Singapore citizenship easily, because of the experiences, because of the memories I have of this place.
(NIE/4/Ch/31/M)

I will definitely keep the Singaporean one, because I am very rooted here and I really see this as my home. Even if I would be given the choice to give it up, I would keep it. (NIE/6/In/23/F)

I am too closely connected to my family. I need my family to be around. I could not go anywhere alone, no. Unless, my family goes with me together, then maybe I would consider. I feel that being rooted in Singapore is because of my friends and family. (NIE/16/Ch/23/F)

In addition to articulating the multiple perceptions of citizenship, interview participants also commented on the issue of national identity more specifically. By stressing the multitude of identities constituting a person in different contexts and at different points in time, interviewees expressed a concept of identity which affirms the theoretical assumptions of multi-faceted and malleable identities (Conversi, 2002; Splitter, 2007; see also 2.3). This is discussed further below.

Multiple Identities

When confronted directly with the term identity most interview participants expressed what seemed to be an uncertain understanding of it. Nonetheless, a perceived duality between common and individual identities constituting the individual was evinced by the majority of interviewees, who emphasised different facets of identity in certain contexts (Splitter, 2007):

There are different layers of identity in Singapore. You want to reconcile your national identity, and then you have your own ethnic cultural identity, and you try to bring them together, and that is what the government tries. (NIE/3/Ch/30/F)

When we talk about identities, I think they are very hard to define. They are multi-faceted. I am more concerned with my own individual identity rather than my official national identity. (NIE/4/Ch/31/M)

Individual identities, however, were seen to be somewhat detached from official attempts to construct a common group-identification among citizens (see 2.2). Nevertheless, most participants noted particular effects of ethnicity on one's individual identity perception and, at the same time, emphasised the multi-faceted character of identity, which encompasses more than 'just' ethnicity:

I don't think I identify myself through my ethnicity or my nationality, unless someone really points it out. (NUS/29/InCh/22/F)

I don't like to go to Chinatown. It reminds me of how not Chinese I am. At the same time, I feel more Chinese than Singaporean, even though I wouldn't say that I am Chinese. (NUS/22/Ch/22/F)

The Chinese identity is more... It is a very intimate identity. But you also identify yourself as Singaporean. Different identities come into play more dominantly during different situations. (NIE/9/Ch/23/F)

When directly confronted with the concept of individual identity, the majority of participants expressed a civic rather than ethnic perception of personal belonging. Importantly, though, individual imaginings of personal belonging represent only *one* facet of the complex interplay of manifold identity manifestations at play (Conversi, 2002; Splitter, 2007; see also 2.2).

I am a human being, a woman. (NUS/18/Ch/21/F)

I think there is no dominant one. Sure, I am a Singaporean, but I don't think I identify with any dominant identity. I am just a person. (NUS/25/Ch/22/F)

That is difficult to describe. I definitely see myself as a woman. Yes, I just see myself as an individual. (NUS/29/InCh/22/F)

The gender-based aspects of individual identification, expressed above, offer valuable insights into the complex and entangled character of the always and ever-changing character of individual identities, which can comprise a broad variety of differing facets at different points in time.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter investigated how official discourses of good citizenship 'play out' in everyday practises of 'being' among young Singaporeans. Multiple facets of good citizenship expressed by participants were examined in comparison to official discourses communicated in Social Studies textbooks and syllabi.

Six themes of good citizenship were identified in the interviews: Meritocracy; Formal Education; Multiculturalism; Society Values; Civic Engagement; and, National Belonging. The dominant perspective on the concept of meritocracy was illustrated to be generally positive among participants. An important factor for this was grounded in the 'lived' *Kiasu* mentality, which urges individuals to work hard and strive for the best. Although the discourse of meritocracy seemed to be successfully instilled into youths, imperfections arose in everyday life. Socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds were shown to impact on career opportunities, with the official support given to foreign talents perceived as leading to disadvantages among Singapore's citizens. Both examples were shown to challenge the official discourse of meritocracy and evinced everyday contradictions of the concept.

Further contradictions in official aspired-to educational goals and the lived experiences of Singapore's youth were revealed regarding the city-state's education system. The findings distinguished Singapore's education system as highly competitive and premised on individual merit. Despite official statements to develop critical thinking skills, the approach taken in Social Studies failed to develop these skills. Participants stressed the fact that critical thinking was not stimulated but discouraged by the system. In addition, the practices of streaming reinforced ethnic and socio-economic disadvantages and are geared towards neoliberal market policies by creating a highly structured workforce which aligns well with Singapore's economic needs. The overall economic rationale instilled into the education system was emphasised in multiple contexts within this chapter.

The official concept of multi-culturalism (including ethnic, racial, and religious aspects) was rejected by the majority of respondents in this research. Racial tolerance rather than harmony was suggested as the more accurate way to conceptualise Singapore's society. The research highlighted the strong negative perceptions of foreigners among the participants, in particular towards Chinese and Indians, as well as the cultural predominance of Singapore's ethnic-Chinese majority. Confucian values of communitarianism were illustrated to be infused into Singapore's overall norm and value system. The inculcation of these 'Chinese' values questions the multi-cultural

approach taken in the city-state and demonstrates the many system-inherent ambivalences and contradictions. The prevalence of economic thinking, which permeates the official norm and value system, was also stressed in this chapter, thereby indicating an overall economic reasoning as underlying rationale in society.

Research suggests the *Kiasi* mentality obstructs the development of an engaged and critical citizenry and contradicts efforts to constitute active participating citizens. By drawing on emotional aspects of citizenship, it was highlighted that a docile and passive citizen rather than the officially aspired active citizenry is constituted through Singapore's current education system, which illustrated the ambivalence of the good citizenship concept. The impact of fears and anxieties on everyday good citizenship was illustrated as an underlying rationale in Social Studies being internalised by the majority of participants.

National pride was demonstrated to be commonly instilled into pupils, even though it was mainly the economic achievements of the past people felt connected with. Such economic reasoning found support in the perceptions of citizenship in general and the Singaporean passport in particular. Pragmatic reasoning and economic benefits were shown to dominate the perceptions of citizenship among respondents, which contradicted official aspirations of citizens' emotional belonging to the nation communicated in Social Studies. The good citizen as one facet of multiple identities obtained by individuals was presented as the common perception among the interviewees, which supports the concept of a multi-faceted identity put forward in this research project.

The final chapter in this thesis synthesizes the empirical findings of Chapter Four to Six and offers last conclusions about this research project. The ambivalences and contradictions between the official concept of the good citizen communicated in Social Studies and the dissimilar lived experiences of interview participants who have being exposed to citizenship education will be investigated. In addition, the mutually constitutive processes of subjection and resistance to official discourses will be critically evaluated. The last

chapter contributes to the theoretical debates of national identity, citizenship education, and youth studies to develop a better conceptualisation and understanding of the complexities and ambivalences of youth citizenship.

7. Multiple Meanings of Good Citizenship

7.1 Introduction

This project was concerned with analysing the social construction of a common national identity—the good citizen—through everyday identification processes in Singapore. The central goal of the thesis was to give youth a voice and to offer a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted character of (youth) citizenship. More specifically, Singapore was used as a case study to test assumptions about how national identities are constituted and performed with particular attention given to everyday practices and processes of internalising and resisting the good citizen ideal communicated in citizenship education. In this final chapter the findings of the discourse analyses executed in Chapters Four to Six will be synthesised by reflecting on the aims and objectives of this thesis. Subsequently, the key contributions of this project on debates over citizenship education, the impact of formal schooling on identity construction, and the power of the state will be highlighted. The chapter closes by suggesting some possible directions for future research.

7.2 Retracing the Aims and Objectives of the Study

As introduced in Chapter One and expanded upon in Chapter Two, very little is known about what youth-citizenship means to individuals in everyday life and how citizenship education affects these meanings (E. Jones & Gaventa, 2002). To enable a better understanding of how youth-citizenship might be imagined, portrayed, and represented within the cultural sphere, and what influence this has on young people themselves, this thesis has drawn on four different research fields encompassing theories of habitus and performativity, neoliberalism, governance, and education. It was argued in Chapter One that the intersection of the four theoretical fields provides new insights and better understandings of the complex and ‘messy’ web of interconnected motivations, instruments, and processes of modern citizenship education.

The interactions between resistance and subjection to official discourses of good citizenship communicated in Social Studies were the focus of this research to suggest that, rather than constructing a false dichotomy of

subjection and resistance, both processes take place at the same time. It was illustrated in Chapter Two that although theories of performativity and habitus made valuable contributions to debates of discourse, agency and power neither theory satisfactorily explains if or why official discourses of good citizenship are internalised by youths in the Singaporean context. It was suggested that structural and structuring *effects* of education obstruct unrestricted resistance to official discourses communicated through citizenship education. As outlined in Chapter Two, common displays of good citizenship resemble pragmatic compliance with societal norms and expectations rather than necessarily demonstrating individuals' submission to discourse. Pragmatic compliance can cover deep resentments which cannot always be openly expressed, as this would lead to punishment and blame of the subject.

In addition, it was illustrated in Chapter Two that, within the neoliberal agenda, individuals have choice that is framed by a specific neoliberal repertoire of subject positions. It was emphasised, however, that neoliberal theory does not sufficiently address the gap between what is expressed verbally, and (relatively) consciously, and what the body says. It was argued, therefore, that the good citizen subject is performed rather than always internalised by Singapore's youth. Subsequently, it was stressed that risk theories have identified the presence of an omnipresent language of fear in society (Furedi, 2002). Governing through risk, therefore, means exploiting the fears subjects may have and to some extent deceiving them to distort their sense of balance between perceived and real dangers. This was shown to leave individuals in the condition of insecurity and emphasised emotional aspects of governance. At the same time, it was argued in Chapter Two that a fearful population is easier to govern as their conduct is based on anxieties and fear (Inglehart, 2008).

This approach informed the overall research question of this thesis, as stated in Chapter One:

- *How does citizenship education affect everyday meanings of good citizenship among Singapore's youth?*

The underlying objectives were:

5. to examine the complex and multifaceted character of youth citizenship and explore processes of subjection and resistance to official discourses of good citizenship;
6. to investigate the underlying economic rationale of good citizenship discourses and explore the interaction between responsibilities/duties towards the state and affective belonging to society;
7. to investigate how emotions of fear and insecurity affect efforts to inculcate behaviour and conduct into Singapore's youth; and,
8. to explore resentments and prejudices among Singapore's youth towards foreigners and identify the degree of consideration for social and cultural differences;

To achieve these aims, this thesis employed the methodological framework of qualitative discourse analysis. This involved the investigation of both Social Studies syllabi and mandatory textbooks to illustrate the ideal character of the good citizen communicated in citizenship education. By scrutinising different discourses of good citizenship, the research outlined the main norms and expectations which constitute the subject position of a good citizen in Singapore. This was followed by the examination of 31 semi-structured interviews conducted with youths in the city-state to reveal how citizenship education affected their common perceptions and meanings of citizenship as a form of national identification.

7.3 Reflection upon Aims and Objectives of the Thesis

The first objective of the thesis was to examine the complex and multifaceted character of youth citizenship and to understand processes of subjection and resistance to official discourses of good citizenship among young people.

To understand the internalisation and contestation of official discourses that are mobilised through citizenship education in Singapore, appearances of subjection and resistance to good citizenship discourses were investigated through discourse analysis of Social Studies textbooks and semi-structured interviews. The findings demonstrated that Social Studies not only echoes

norms and expectations of Singapore's society but can also be seen as an instrument for governing citizen subjects by aiming to enact specific subjectivities of good citizenship among them. While Social Studies were illustrated in Chapter Five to seek the continuity of society's status quo, the research did not confirm the assumption that the nation's official views on values and behaviour were uncritically internalised by youth. Instead, it was demonstrated that the dissemination of official knowledge through education does not always inculcate the status quo of society onto the next generation.

The results of the analyses in Chapters Five and Six suggested a more complex and multi-faceted interplay between processes of subjection and resistance to discourses of good citizenship. While some aspects of good citizenship were reproduced by youths according to the ideals articulated in the textbooks, findings in Chapter Six revealed that other aspects of the same discourse were rejected and in some cases alternative perspectives enacted. This acknowledges Butler's (1990, 1993, 1997b, 2004b) concept of performativity which successfully theorises both processes of reiteration and transformation of discourses. The findings suggest further that the expressed compliance with some aspects of a discourse were not completely internalised but rather performed to create the impression of an uncritical subjection to the good citizen ideal, thereby supporting the argument made in this thesis that neither approach (performativity or habitus) is sufficient to satisfactorily explain why official discourses of good citizenship are seemingly internalised relatively uncritically by youths in Singapore. Bourdieu's theorisation (1991) fails to recognise that both the bodily and the habitual are equivocal and may cover deep resentments. At the same time, Butler (1997a) seems to over-interpret the fissure between verbal utterances and the bodily expressed. The demonstration of compliance to norms, thus, can conceal deep resentments. The research confirms a notion of pragmatic compliance as partially resisted and partially internalised *effects* of discourses mobilised through education out of pragmatic reasons and concurs with Butler's (2004a) concept of discursive effects of the performative. These effects of official discourses on youth's perceptions and identifications in everyday life were demonstrated in Chapter Six, for example, by students' pragmatic reasoning to maintain their

Singaporean citizenship, and can be exhibited further by the following examples of parallel acts of internalisation and rejection.

Meritocracy

The analysis performed on the interview data revealed the predominant perspective on the concept of meritocracy was generally positive among participants. Notwithstanding inequalities in society based on power and status, meritocracy was regarded to benefit particularly the lower-income groups in the city-state. This inculcation of *true* statements (Foucault, 2007a) regarding equal economic benefits in a just society communicated in the textbooks could be an example of the socialising effects of Social Studies. This could support both Bourdieu's (1990a) concept of habitus as unconscious socialisation effect and Butler's (1997a) theory of successful reiteration. The research evidence, therefore, could suggest the discourse of meritocracy has affected youths, whose statements were almost identical to those made in Social Studies textbooks regarding rewards for hard work and the fairness of the meritocratic system in Singapore. Through the internalisation of these truths individuals adopt particular subject positions (Foucault, 1990; Mackey, 1999). At the same time, Singapore's education system was perceived by respondents as an example where societal fairness based on meritocratic principles seems to be compromised. Socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds were understood to impact significantly on youth's educational opportunities and achievements. Racial inequality regarding the participation of ethnic minorities in education and the void between rich and poor deeply embedded in Singapore's society were seen by interviewees as leading to disadvantage and inequality for certain groups in society. Such statements are somewhat contradictory to the discourse of Singapore's meritocratic mantra and suggest that the discourse of meritocracy may not be internalised as assumed but performed to create the impression of conformity. This confirms Lovell's (2003) argument that evidence of compliance can be found in most oppositional acts just as elements of resistance in numerous acts of habitual subjection.

Racial Harmony

Some interviewees were shown to contest the official discourse of racial harmony. These youth reflexively analysed the official discourse (Foucault, 2005) which resulted in its (unconscious) transformation (Butler, 2004b). Rather than internalising the discourse of racial *harmony* respondents emphasised racial *tolerance* instead as being prevalent among different ethnic groups in the city-state, thereby supporting a performative reading of their actions (Butler, 1997a). At the same time, the project also revealed that Singapore was perceived by most participants as being a just and harmonious place to live, with everyone treated the same regardless of race or religion. It was demonstrated in Chapter Six that for students, textbook-conforming statements which draw on the notion of ethnic equality were highly instructive in terms of performing the good Singaporean identity. Although this suggests the internalisation of the racial harmony discourse, findings in Chapter Six evinced respondents' conformity can be seen to be performed in this context to conceal deep resentments expressed more openly by other participants (see above).

Asian Values in Society

The concept of Asian Values propagated by Singapore's government was shown—at least on the surface—to influence interviewees' perceptions of acceptable norms and behaviour in society (see Chapter Six). At the same time, the *Kiasu* mentality contradicted such communitarian drift in society. The research showed that the shift in responsibilities from society to the individual (Chen, 2013) reflects the ideology of neoliberalism with its focus on individual competition and self-responsibility rather than communitarian values (Cavanagh, 2002; Jencks, 1988; K. P. Tan, 2008). This neoliberal sense of self-responsibility appears deeply inculcated into Singapore's value system, and reflects some of the contradictions inherent in Social Studies textbooks where citizenship is conceptualised as individual duties and responsibilities to the state (Lagassé, 2000), rather than citizenship as a form of civil society (Alexander, 2006). The findings in Chapter Six suggest the coexistence of subjection and resistance to the official discourse of Community before Self within Singapore's value system. According to Butler (1995a), these contradictions, inherent in the parallel acts of resistance and

submission, are at the heart of becoming a subject. Participants articulated Asian Values as the officially expected norms of behaviour they should and need to comply with, thereby creating the impression of discourse internalisation: the performance of good citizenship. At the same time, they emphasised the individualistic characteristics and focus on a market economy of good citizenship, which reveals the inherent contradictions of the discourse of Community before Self.

Civic Engagement

The research suggests that the cultivation of critical thinking skills in young people is not actively pursued by the government and exposes the contradiction between what is articulated in Social Studies textbooks as a desired citizen and what is experienced by youths in everyday life. The dominant view on critical thinking among participants was that the current system does not encourage or allow for it. Moreover, the findings showed that the current approach to citizenship education conceals the actual neoliberal ideal of a good citizen infused into the Social Studies subject; one that stresses the patriotic duty of citizens to follow the normative line rather than criticising it (N. Rose, 1999), thereby confirming the concept of citizenship as set of rights, duties, and identities linking citizens to the nation-state (Conover, Crewe, & Searing, 1991; Koopmans, Statham, Giugni and Passey, 2005; Theiss-Morse, 1993). Consequently, young people are conceptualised as adults in becoming, which illustrates a narrow perspective on adolescence by its focus on duties and self-responsibilities as main characteristics of adulthood (Forbrig, 2005; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Harris, Wyn, & Younes, 2010; Twenge, 2006). In Chapter Six, the *Kiasi* mentality was shown to impede the development of an active and critical citizenry. The findings showed interviewees adopted the subject position of a docile rather than an active citizen, which suggests the rejection of the official discourse of civic engagement. Moreover, as claimed in Chapter Two, such an alternative reading of Isin's (2004) neurotic citizen thesis as the governance *through* fear exploits citizens' anxieties and leaves them in a state of insecurity. The strong identification of participants with the *Kiasi* mentality illustrated an inherent contradiction within Social Studies. Although an active citizenry that critically engages with society and functions in a socially responsible manner

(W. Lee & Fouts, 2005, Sim, 2010) is aspired to in Social Studies, Singapore's repressive form of governance creates a docile and passive citizenry (Best, 2003). The findings in Chapters Five and Six suggest the Singapore government does not (desire to) enable students to resist official discourses and utilises fears and anxieties that are deeply inculcated into society. This supports the claim made by Inglehart's (2008) post-material thesis that instilled emotions of insecurity can prevent a challenge of official discourses and an elite-challenging public (Nevitte, 1996).

National Belonging

Evidence of pride in Singapore and its achievements suggests the successful inculcation of patriotism into respondents (Callan, 2004). Singaporeans' social bonding to the city-state, however, was demonstrated to resemble a company code of conduct rather than an emotional sense of belonging. This concurs with Ong's (2006a) critical examinations of neoliberalism as exception. When implemented in authoritarian systems, neoliberalism can lead to frequently ambivalent conditions of belonging for the free, independent, and self-responsible citizen subjects. Regardless of the pragmatic and utilitarian character of Singapore's society, respondents were proud of Singapore and especially its economic achievements. National pride as an aspect of good citizenship communicated in Social Studies appeared to be the only instance where an internalisation was expressed in a sincere and convincing way. This suggests that pride in Singapore is not only performed to pragmatically comply with the subject position of the good citizen, but is actually lived by the participants. Peoples' yearning for emotional recognition could be seen as an important obstruction to resistance of official discourses (Butler, 2004b) stressing emotions as vital elements of one's existence (Anderson & Smith, 2001).

The sense of identification with one's citizenship status was also explored by asking students about their perceptions of national passports. There were two dominant views associated with the Singaporean passport. The first one was the feeling of security linked to the passport and the social status of being a Singaporean citizen. The second perception reflected the omnipresent economic reasoning in everyday life. Both views support the argument of

citizenship as a set of rights and duties rather than emotional belonging to a specific community (Lagassé, 2000; Kerr, 2003). The strong economic impetus to maintain a Singaporean citizenship out of pragmatic rather than emotional reasons was apparent in most respondents' statements, which indicates the potential rejection of emotional aspects of the discourse of national belonging and could challenge the positive connection to emotional recognition made above.

Overall the findings demonstrate that subjection and resistance to official discourses are co-constitutive rather than mutually exclusive. This confirms the argument made by Butler (1997b) that submission and mastery take place simultaneously, and this paradoxical simultaneity constitutes the ambivalence of subjection. The different discourses of good citizenship examined in this study were all simultaneously internalised and resisted with the aspect of pride (discourse of National Belonging) being the only exception. Although the discourse of Meritocracy was shown to be internalised by the participants, the findings suggest the compliance with this discourse resembles a performance of good citizenship rather than its adoption. Participants were shown to perform aspects of the discourse of Racial Harmony such as ethnic equity in schools, but to also openly resist other aspects, which resulted in the discourse transformation to Racial Tolerance. The analysis of the discourses demonstrated that both subjection and resistance can manifest itself in the form of pragmatic compliance. In the case of Asian Values, the discourse was shown to be rejected out of pragmatic reasons originated in students' differing daily life experiences; their resistance, thus, was performed as pragmatic compliance. The research suggests that the internalisation of discourses is resisted when personal value systems collide with common or official norms and societal expectations. This illustrates the strong effects of norm and value inculcation as mechanisms of emotional interdependencies (Anderson & Smith, 2001). Most discourses were shown to be both resisted and internalised at the same time, which confirms the notion of pragmatic compliance and demonstrates that the *effects* of discourses mobilised through education can be partially resisted and partially internalised out of pragmatic reasons (see above). Different elements of one discourse, then, can perform different effects among young

people leading to a multi-faceted and complex youth-citizen identity (Brewer, 1999; Conversi, 2002; Levinson, 1999; Sim & Low, 2012).

7.4 Citizenship as Materialistic Cognition

The second objective of this project was to investigate the underlying economic rationale of good citizenship discourses and to explore the interaction between responsibilities/duties towards the state and affective belonging to society.

The research illustrated that economic factors impact considerably on youths' everyday life in Singapore. The adoption of market principles and values, as well as market practices and strategies, resulted in a market-driven approach to (educational) governance and the marketization of citizenship (Fairclough, 2010). Some interviewees expressed a positive perception of the economic and materialistic emphasis in Singapore's society in general. They perceived the construction of good citizenship that is premised on economic rationalities and a utilitarian perspective on the workforce as a driver of economic growth, however, as highly problematic. Consequently, the subject position of a competitive, self-responsible individual conceptualised in Singapore's market economy was rejected (Brown, 2005; B. Davies & Bansel, 2005; N. Rose, 1999). The strong focus on economic aspects of potential career pathways and society's rejection of visions beyond this narrow perspective of success could suggest the successful internalisation of an overall economic reasoning as articulated by respondents. Notwithstanding the negative perceptions associated with the materialistic foundation of society at large, individuals' own materialistic reasoning was not rejected by interviewees, which could elucidate why resistance to the economic reasoning of everyday life was weaker among participants than other official discourses. This supports the assumption of a high internalisation rate of the economic reasoning rationale, although criticism towards the perceived overall material obsession in society has been expressed by some interviewees. It could also indicate that individuals in Singapore see their only chance of neutralising the system's most negative effects on themselves in their submission to the system in order to make use of it (Bourdieu, 2010).

The sense of belonging to Singapore was shown to be strongly connected to the economic sphere which results in an *economic* pride. In addition, the perception of economic benefits and the advantages of Singaporean citizenship were demonstrated by participants' appreciation for their passport. Respondents' pragmatic reasoning primarily emphasised material wealth and societal prestige as sources of pride. The findings, thus, evinced participants' conceptualisations of good citizenship to be deeply grounded in pragmatic economic reasoning. While some spiritual and emotional stimuli were also subject to citizenship perceptions, most interviewees confirmed the dominance of economic reasoning over affective aspects, thereby supporting some claims made by Inglehart's (2008) post-materialism theory. Post-material, non-economic values (Davies, 2010) tend to arise in societies as these achieve relative economic security and political stability (de Graaf & Evans, 1996; Inglehart, 1977, 1997). Perceived conditions of insecurity (Delhey, 2010), however, could prevent the development of a post-material orientation and clarify the predominance of material values in Singapore's society.

7.5 Governance through Emotions: Risk and Fear

The third objective of the thesis was to investigate how emotions of fear and insecurity affect processes of official behaviour and conduct inculcation into Singapore's youth.

The *Kiasu* mentality or deeply rooted fear of being disadvantaged was evident among participants. Responses from interviewees evinced an internalisation of the threat and fear rationale, thereby demonstrating not only the docile character of Singapore's youth (Print & Milner, 2007, Sim, 2010) but also the official constitution of an omnipresent *angst* among participants by constantly emphasising threats and dangers to Singapore, which are instilled into Social Studies education. Such governance through fear was shown to affect youths' conduct on the basis of their insecurities (Isin, 2004) which simultaneously reinforced feelings of helplessness (Inglehart, 2008) embedded, for example, in the debate around foreign talent and the highly competitive labour market.

In addition, the research emphasised the internalisation of the *Kiasi* mentality among most respondents which demonstrated the government's successful exploration of the threat and fear rationale to achieve their political goal of conformity (Mythen & Walklate, 2006). A deep anxiety when dealing with official institutions was embodied by respondents, which suggests governance through fear rather than good governance (O'Malley, 1992, 1996, 1999; Petersen, 1996; N. Rose, 1996a; B. Turner, 1997b; Parton, 1998; Bennett, 1999). Interviewees stressed the necessity of everyday performances of the dutiful good citizen, which suggests their subjection to self-governance in a political climate enabled by the state (Chen, 2013). For interviewees, an active citizen was perceived as someone who speaks up in public; however, silent forms of resistance and complaint were the distinct forms of protest embedded in the *Kiasi* mentality, which demonstrates individuals' submission to the system (Bourdieu, 2010). Regarding the discourse of racial harmony even highly restrictive governmental interventions were perceived by interviewees as positive and necessary in order to maintain Singapore's imagined racial harmony. As suggested by Inglehart's (1997, 2008) post-materialism theorem, intrusions into individual space and rights were generally seen as problematic and unacceptable; however, the official justification for the limitation of personal freedom was seemingly internalised by participants. This demonstrates their submission to authority under Singapore's officially constituted condition of permanent insecurity.

7.6 National Cohesion in Exclusive Societies

The last objective of this thesis was to explore resentments and prejudices among youth towards foreigners and to identify the degree of consideration for social and cultural differences.

As explained in Chapter Three, foreign talents were communicated in Social Studies as highly educated and capable individuals compared to their local counterparts. The general internalisation of the foreign talent justification communicated in Social Studies was evident in the findings of this study. There were, however, some indications of resistance—imperfect reiterations (Gregson & Rose, 2000)—articulated by participants. Strong sentiments were expressed regarding the lack of equity and fairness between local and foreign

talent in Singapore's job market, which points to the strong explanatory power of Ong's (2006a) neoliberalism as exception concept. Understanding neoliberal practices in Asia as exceptions to traditional political activity, which would potentially privilege members of the local society (cf. highly racialised politics in Malaysia), helps to explain the preferential status of foreigners constructed through market-driven policies in Singapore. Most respondents emphasised the state's traditional obligation to cater for its own citizens first before facilitating the immigration and integration of foreign talent. Accordingly, perceptions of foreigners were inflected with negative stereotypes and prejudices, despite the majority of respondents agreeing with the necessity of foreign labour. This negative interrelation between in-group identification and tolerance towards out-group members (see Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Licata & Klein, 2002; Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) holds valuable evidence about society's norm systems (Licata & Klein, 2002; Luchtenberg, 1998; Soysal, 1994; Van Peer, 2006; Wells & Watson, 2005). Official imaginations of foreign nationals were shown to affect norm systems of Singapore's youth in a potentially negative way.

Another facet of the imagined impacts of foreign influx on Singapore's identity is the othering (Browning, 2003) of foreigners through the reiteration of common prejudices and xenophobia in everyday life (Soysal, 1994). The findings suggest Singapore's multi-ethnic society is under considerable pressure from inside. The negative perceptions relating to the influx of foreign migrants constitute a real challenge to stability and harmony in the city-state. The *threat* to Singapore's racial harmony was not perceived to be originated within society but rather to be initiated by the group of foreign migrants who are 'subjected to' strong negative prejudices and sentiments and were seen to lack the will and ability to successfully integrate into Singapore's society. The strong demand for cultural integration and assimilation as well as respect for Singapore's values and norms were visible in this study and suggest an exclusive form of national identification propagated in the city-state (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005; Gijsberts, Hagendoorn, & Scheepers, 2004; Licata & Klein, 2002; Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

7.7 Conclusion

The main research question of this thesis was: *how does citizenship education affect everyday meanings of good citizenship among Singapore's youth?*

The most significant findings of this thesis are related to the complex and mutually constitutive processes of subjection and resistance to official discourses of good citizenship. The findings from the research emphasise citizen identity as multi-faceted, always changing, and encompassing a wide range of facets that draw on traditional norms and values based on culture, race/ethnicity, a sense of family, and history, and facets that are constituted by non-traditional norms of economic prosperity and personal security (Gordon-Zolov & Rogers, 2010; Lagassé, 2000; Simpson & Weiner, 1989). Rather than suggesting identities are constituted through either traditional or non-traditional elements, the findings demonstrate the fluidity of citizen identities and the multiple perceptions held by individuals in relation to good citizenship (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston & McDermott, 2009; Dwyer, 2000; S. Hall, 1996; T. Hall & Williamson, 1999; L. Harris & Alatout, 2010; Splitter, 2011; Wodak, 2012). The project draws attention to the complex and intertwined character of collective identities and how these are constantly created, shaped and challenged by society (Gregson & Rose, 2000).

Four strands of theory were utilised in this project to investigate the multi-faceted and complex character of youth-citizenship in Singapore. First, the theoretical tools of performativity and habitus were employed to demonstrate that neither of the two theories could satisfactorily explain why some official discourses were internalised in a seemingly uncritical way while others were the object of radical opposition. Despite this, the project concurs with Butler's (1997b) argument that attempts to oppose subordination necessarily presupposes and reinvokes such attempts. The unrestricted potential for resistance inherent in performativity theories, however, was refuted in this project as it has been in others (Collinson, 1994; Cresswell, 1996; Ettliger, 2011; Fleming & Sewell, 2002; Kondo, 1990; Valentine & Skelton, 2003a). Similarly, the theory of habitus was criticised for its denial of individuals' agency and the notion of social fields as delimiting structures of habitus

operation (Jenkins, 1992; Nash, 2003). Instead, it was argued that it is the structuring effects of the educational field that, at least partially, explain why youths cannot escape the seductive qualities of subject positions offered by citizenship education.

In addition, neoliberal conceptions of good citizen subjects were scrutinised in this project which emphasise individuality and competitiveness and allow for personal choice as form of active self-governance, however, within the limiting neoliberal repertoire of acceptable subject positions. The thesis concurred with the argument that this form of self-governance prevents or obstructs resistance to the neoliberal citizen subject by moving responsibilities from society or the state to the individual, ultimately leaving no room but to resist only oneself (Bondi, 2005; B. Davies et al., 2005; Keil, 2002; Lawrence, 2005; Mitchell, 2003; Skeggs, 2004; Walkerdine, 2003). At the same time, the inevitable character of neoliberalism deeply instilled in Singaporean society was shown to prevent any *undesirable* resistances on the systemic level (Walkerdine & Bansel, 2010).

This is strongly related to issues of governance and conduct, which constitute the third theoretical area this project was framed by. It was illustrated that official discourses construct certain subject positions of good citizenship and have the potential to shape the beliefs and conducts of individuals towards particular ends (Cashmore et al., 2013; Dunn, 2010; Foucault, 2002). Citizenship education was demonstrated to try to mould citizens into a way of thinking that is geared suitably to the political status quo (Apple, 2003; W. Lee, 2012a). Consistent with this way of thinking, the government emphasised economic benefits to appeal to citizens' pragmatic reasoning. In addition, it was demonstrated that governmentality strategies enframe Singapore's youth in an apparatus of *insecurity* with the language of fear being omnipresent in everyday life (Delhey, 2010; Furedi, 2002; Furedi, 2007; Isin, 2004; Johnson, 2010). The project illustrated that governance through fear which draws on affective and emotional facets of good citizenship aims to achieve youths' everyday conduct grounded—at least partially—in their anxieties and fears (Furedi, 2002; Inglehart, 1997, 2008; Isin, 2004; Nevitte, 1996). This suggests that Singapore's government

deliberately maintains the *perceived* conditions of insecurity among its youth to preserve their affection and loyalty towards the nation.

Last, theories of formal education and of citizenship education in particular were deployed to address the main objective of this study. It was demonstrated that schools communicate a certain desired set of qualities to pupils with the aim to create *appropriate* citizens. Similar to neoliberal theories, these good citizen subject positions were made available to the students along with a repertoire of possible acts and roles accepted in society (Hanson-Thiem, 2009; Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2012; Mitchell, 2003; Roberts, 2009). It was also shown that the framing of the good citizen was produced through elite actions in the form of a highly centralised education sector dominated by the Ministry of Education in Singapore, which oversees not only the actual teaching of citizenship studies, but also the conception and development of both the subject's syllabi and instruction materials (textbooks) (Han, 2009; Kennedy, 2010; Nevitte, 1996; Pykett et al., 2010). This study has also illustrated how citizenship education in Singapore is not only geared towards the socialisation of pupils to current norms and expectation, pushing for their uncritical acceptance, but how it is also conceptualised towards the passive consumption of knowledge rather than stressing critical reflections of even those explicit and implicit societal expectations, constraints and rules conveyed by Social Studies (M. Davis, 2003; I. Davies, Gorard, & McGuinn, 2005; Duus, 2011; Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004). This official knowledge imparted to youth defines how individuals should engage in society as citizens disguised as common-sense knowledge and determined by those who exercise power over institutions, for instance, the Ministry of Education (Apple, 2004; Fairclough, 2001; Kumashiro, 2004; Orłowski, 2011; Tupper & Cappello, 2008, Tupper et al., 2010). Youths were demonstrated to be equipped with necessary skills to engage with social problems without challenging the immanent structures of society: the status quo.

Notwithstanding the appearance of a (mostly unconscious) adoption of citizen identities the research has suggested that compliance with official discourses of good citizenship is performed to create the impression of subjection and

are not truly internalised by youths. Findings revealed that the structural effects of educational institutions in many cases prevent the open resistance to official knowledge communicated through citizenship education (Ball et al., 2002; Blackman, 1998; B. Davies et al., 2001; Dunn, 2010; Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2011; Rasmussen & Harwood, 2003). The social authority of schools gives legitimacy to the good citizen model. The prevalence of the good citizen model and its legitimacy is intensified by the absence of an alternative conceptualisation of citizenship in Singapore's education system (Dean, 2010; Gordon, 1980; Kemshall, 2006; Mackey, 1999; Sears & Hughes, 2006). Moreover, implicit and explicit threats in Social Studies were demonstrated to impact significantly on the feasibility of rejecting common-sense truths in an educational setting, which suggest that youths' acts of pragmatic compliance with official discourses could be seen as one form of indirect resistance.

Citizenship education can be seen as both successful and ineffective in constituting the good citizen: it depends on what is officially aspired to be achieved. Citizenship education in Singapore can be seen as successful when it is assumed that a critical and reflexive youth is aimed for in Social Studies (as stated in the curriculum). It can be deemed ineffective, though, if the intention of Social Studies is targeted at the mostly uncritical internalisation of official discourses without room for critical thought. Seeing good citizenship as performed rather than an internalised set of discourses, then, helped to obtain a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted character of youth citizenship.

7.8 Future Research

There are a number of research directions which this research did not pursue, but that would be useful to consider in future research. One question which emerged within this study is that of how individuals' subject positioning influences their capacity to transform and challenge broader societal processes and representations? Investigating this issue would help to uncover the ways in which socio-economic and cultural backgrounds affect subject positions and ultimately broader societal processes and representations. Such

research necessitates the comparison of perceptions, practices, and power-relations amongst policy makers, educators and learners.

The research findings also suggest that the role of citizenship education in an increasingly connected world in which national borders have become porous and fluid, and where global connections are more frequent, deserves further elaboration. Questions arise in relation to the values and beliefs instilled by family life and portrayed in mass-media and how these need to be compared with findings of this research study to scrutinise the importance of students' everyday educational experiences in shaping their norms and value systems and ultimately their identities. The socialisation effects of families, for example, in creating the desire to follow in the footsteps of a family member could be investigated in more detail, with concepts such as aspirational habitus (Baker & Brown 2008) as one possible theoretical pathway to follow.

Lastly, on a more general note, this research project suggests that there is scope for developing geographies of education and citizenship further in ways that incorporate different cultural contexts, global landscapes of education, and comparative perspectives. The sub-disciplines' low profile in education and citizenship studies exemplifies the need for future research in these areas and emphasises the inevitability of an assertive position towards the other (established) disciplines in this research field.

Appendices

Appendix A

Participant Interview Schedule

Singapore

When you think of Singapore or Singaporeans, what comes up to your mind?

What is unique about the city and its people?

What are the differences and similarities of Singapore and its neighbours?

Individual/Family

Are you born in Singapore?

Do you have a Singaporean passport?

How about your parents? Where are they from?

Could you tell me your parents' ethnicity?

Where does your family live? Is it an HDB or private property?

Education

Did you go through the whole education system in Singapore?

Did you have Social Studies in high school?

Which stream have you been in?

Was that a neighbourhood school or another one?

What is your opinion on streaming in schools? Do you support the idea?

How about the so-called grading obsession in school? Tell me about that.

Have you had private tuition in secondary school? Why?

Which mother tongues were offered at your school; all three?

How about the ethnic mix of your class? Were all ethnicities represented?

Critical thinking is high on the agenda in school. What do you think about it? The Education Minister suggested bringing moral education back into schools. What are your thoughts on this?

Talking about university now: How did you decide on your subject?

Where your parents involved in this process?

Meritocracy

How important is it to graduate from a 'good' school in Singapore?

Singapore champions its meritocratic system. Do you think meritocracy works?

Did meritocracy help Singapore to achieve so much in the past?

How about people's socio-economic background? Does this have any impact on the opportunities you have in Singapore; keeping in mind meritocracy?

Are there any differences because of one's ethnicity? Does that have an impact?

Foreign Talent

What is your opinion on foreigners working/living in Singapore? What picture do you have in mind when talking about foreigners in Singapore?

Are there any issues regarding foreign talents coming to Singapore?

How about foreign workers? Do you think they are needed here?

People say foreigners take away jobs from Singaporeans. What do you think?

How about housing or public transport? Do you see any problems there?

Norms and Values

Do you see any foreign influx on your identity as a Singaporean?

Should foreigners blend in, adjust to Singaporean customs? How about their own culture and customs? Do they need to give those up when coming here?

What are your thoughts on racial harmony? Does it exist in Singapore?

What are 'Asian Values' for you? Are there any specific ones in Singapore?

National Belonging

Are you proud to be Singaporean? What are the things you feel proud of?

Are there also things you feel ashamed of; a side of Singapore you don't like?

Do you celebrate National Day? Are you going to the parade etc.?

What meaning do cultural festivities have for you and your family? Are those more important than National Day?

Citizenship

If you could pick any citizenship (dual-citizenship is not an option), would you consider giving up your passport and which one would you take instead? Why?

Is the Singaporean passport a good one to have? Why?

Do you plans to emigrate from Singapore in the future? Where would you go?

What are the aspects you consider when deciding if/where to go?

Future Aspirations

Are there certain things you want to do or achieve in your life?

What are your dreams and hopes for your personal future?

What role do your parents play in this? Do they 'push' you in a certain direction?

If you would be Prime Minister of Singapore and could do whatever you want, is there anything you would like to change to make it a better place to live?

(Additional questions for NIE participants)

Why have you decided to become a teacher?

Did you get a scholarship or teaching award from MOE?

Have you completed a degree somewhere else before coming to NIE? Where was that? Which degree do you have; in which subject?

What are the subjects you will be teaching in school?

If you could change the education system, what would you want to be different?

Have I missed out on anything? Any last comments?

Appendix B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (NUS)

Project: Construction of National and Regional Identities in Southeast Asia

Principal Investigator: PhD Candidate Roger Baars

My name is Roger Baars. I am a PhD Candidate at the School of Environment, University of Auckland, New Zealand. I am conducting a research project about perspectives on national and regional identities in Singapore and the wider Southeast Asian region.

I would like to invite you to participate in this project to share your thoughts and opinions. This information sheet provides you with information about the research. I will also describe this research to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to take part or stop the interview at any time.

The aim of this research project is to explore the interaction and construction of national and regional identities. As part of this project a comprehensive textual analysis of Social Studies Secondary School Books was conducted and builds the foundation for this interview. I am interested in your identification with and attachment to Singapore as well as to the region of Southeast Asia and how issues of ethnic roots, culture and religion impact on your perceptions. In other words, I try to elaborate the complex and multi-faceted identity of Singaporean citizens and their views on a wider attachment to Asia in general.

The interview will take around 1 hour of your time and will take place on campus at a time that fits with your schedule. The interview will be recorded on a digital audio recorder. The recorder may be turned off at any time if you wish. You may withdraw from the project and withdraw your authorisation to use the information you have provided up to 8 weeks following the completion of your interview. The information from you and others will be used for my PhD thesis and other academic publications and presentations. In addition, data obtained will be used to inform the development of future academic research projects.

I will ensure that information provided by you is kept confidential at all times and will be presented in a manner that protects your anonymity. This may include the use of pseudonyms or coding data in a manner such that individuals' information cannot be identified. The data collected during this research project will be kept in storage in a locked cabinet at the University of Auckland for six (6) years after which time it will be destroyed. Electronic data will also be kept for six (6) years before it is destroyed.

Further information

Thank you very much for your time and help in making this study possible. This research project is valuable and will support a better understanding of the complex identities in Singapore and the Southeast Asian region. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me (the principal investigator) or my supervisor.

Important contact details are provided below.

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APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 03/08/2011 for three years from 03/08/2011 to 03/08/2014, Reference Number 2011/381

Appendix C

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (NIE)

Project: Construction of National and Regional Identities in Southeast Asia

Principal Investigator: PhD Candidate Roger Baars

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The aim of this research project is to explore the interaction and construction of national and regional identities. As part of this project a comprehensive textual analysis of Social Studies Secondary School Books was conducted and builds the foundation for this interview. I am interested in your identification with and attachment to Singapore as well as to the region of Southeast Asia and how issues of ethnic roots, culture and religion impact on your perceptions. In other words, I try to elaborate the complex and multi-faceted identity of Singaporean citizens and their views on a wider attachment to Asia in general.

The interview will take around 1 hour of your time and will take place on campus at a time that fits with your schedule. The interview will be recorded on a digital audio recorder. The recorder may be turned off at any time if you wish. You may withdraw from the project and withdraw your authorisation to use the information you have provided up to 8 weeks following the completion of your interview. The information from you and others will be used for my PhD thesis and other academic publications and presentations. In addition, data obtained will be used to inform the development of future academic research projects.

I will ensure that information provided by you is kept confidential at all times and will be presented in a manner that protects your anonymity. This may include the use of pseudonyms or coding data in a manner such that individuals' information cannot be identified. The data collected during this research project will be kept in storage in a locked cabinet at the University of Auckland for six (6) years after which time it will be destroyed. Electronic data will also be kept for six (6) years before it is destroyed.

Further information

Thank you very much for your time and help in making this study possible. This research project is valuable and will support a better understanding of the complex identities in Singapore and the Southeast Asian region. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me (the principal investigator) or my supervisor.

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APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 03/08/2011 for three years from 03/08/2011 to 03/08/2014, Reference Number 2011/381

Appendix D

CONSENT FORM

THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Title: Constructions and Interactions of National and Regional Identities in Southeast Asia

Researcher: Roger Baars, School of Environment, University of Auckland, New Zealand

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I agree/do not agree (please delete one) to be audio taped and understand that, even if I agree, I may choose to have the recorder turned off at any time.
- I understand that although the University will be clearly identified in this research, my identity is strictly confidential and will not be disclosed either directly or indirectly.
- I understand that if the information provided from this interview is reported or published it will identify the organization but will not identify the individuals as the source of the information.
- I understand that the data collected during this research project will be kept for six (6) years after which time it will be destroyed.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw any of the information/data I have provided up to 8 weeks following the completion of the interview.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date:

(Please print clearly)

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