GOOD SCHOOLS, GOOD CITIZENS

Do Independent Schools Contribute to Civic Formation?

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June 2021

A Cardus Research Report

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How to cite: Berner, Ashley Rogers. "Good Schools, Good Citizens: Do Independent Schools Contribute to Civic Formation?" Cardus, 2021. https://www.cardus.ca/research/education/reports/good-schools-good-citizens/.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The heart of democratic education lies in preparing the next generation to join the community of citizens. Indeed, state-funded public education developed out of the imperative to inculcate the civic knowledge, skills, and attachment necessary for democratic governance.

But what is the role of independent schools in the process of civic formation and social cohesion? Do they help or hinder the development of democratic citizenship? What oversight should governments exercise over them? And should governments fund such schools as part of public education writ large?

In all modern cases of which we are aware, explicit civic formation is seen as seminal to social cohesion. It is important, however, to understand that the goal in most cases is not to reinforce cultural homogeneity, but rather to create the conditions in which a heterogeneous population might negotiate their political differences through democratic processes and institutions.

This coincides with how most democracies understand public education. In this light, all forms of education remain within the public's interest and concern, as other people's children's lives (including workforce participation and social well-being) and political involvement (understanding democratic institutions, analyzing legislation, and voting) shape ours. This is the long-established justification for taxpayer-funded education and mandatory school attendance. For this reason, independent schools are often included in modern democracies' understanding of public education—and why their independent schools

receive state funding and are held to common academic benchmarks alongside state schools.

The vast majority of democracies have pluralist education systems: where the state, individuals, and civil society play equally important roles in democratic education. The goal of such educational pluralism is to maximize the freedom of schools to create their own organic communities with a common ethos and distinctive practices, while assuring the public of academic and civic quality with respect to outcomes.

Is there evidence that this balance leads to success? Individually and collectively, the preponderance of findings on independent-school attendance after controlling for family background illustrate that the fear of independent schools' negative impact on civic life remains misplaced. For example, a recent analysis of thirty-four quantitative studies on the effects of independent and state schools on civic outcomes yielded eighty-six separate statistically significant findings; fifty showed a clear independent-school advantage, thirty-three found neutral effects, and only three showed a state-school advantage.

Independent schools can offer substantial benefits to civic formation. They do not inherently harm social cohesion as some critics fear; indeed, on almost every measure, independent-school attendance enhances civic outcomes. Thus, democratic policy-makers can have confidence that expanding access to independent schools while ensuring their quality is likely to enhance the civic capabilities of young people and lead, eventually, to a more civically integrated and politically engaged public.

Democracies are fragile. Each generation must prepare the next to take up the rights and responsibilities of citizens; schools bear an outsized burden in this process. Independent schools, in particular, play a positive role in inculcating the knowledge, skills, and habits that animate lifelong democratic participation. The key is honouring religious, philosophical, and pedagogical beliefs of families and students while ensuring robust knowledge-building for all.

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INTRODUCTION

"[Civic formation] means helping students develop relevant knowledge and understanding, and form positive attitudes toward being a citizen [of the nation] and participating in activities related to civic and citizenship education."[1]

The heart of education in modern democracies lies in preparing the next generation to join the community of *citizens.* Democratic theories present different pictures of citizenship—of what it consists, how it is developed, which social institutions play which roles—but all of them see the nation's schools as key enabling institutions in the process. Indeed, state-funded public education developed out of the imperative to inculcate the civic knowledge, skills, and attachment necessary for democratic governance.

The purpose of this paper is to address the role of independent schools in the process of civic formation and social cohesion. Do private schools help or hinder the development of democratic citizenship? What oversight should governments exercise over their teaching and learning? And should governments *fund* such schools as part of public education writ large?

Definitions of "independent" schools vary by national and provincial context. In some democracies, such as the United States, the majority of private schools operate with minimal state regulations and *without public funding*. Even in states such as Indiana and Florida that provide public funds to non-district schools, these are still considered "private" and thus distinct from the public sector. In other democracies, such as England, Indonesia, and the Netherlands, which publicly fund a wide variety of school types, there are few completely independent schools. Rather, in such countries the majority of private schools—religiously, philosophically, and pedagogically distinct from one another—receive state funding in exchange for state accountability, and thus are considered part of "public education." In still other democratic school systems—such as Ontario—agreements hammered out before the current federal structure allow funding for a separate Catholic school system.

For the sake of clarity, I refer in this paper to private schools (whether state-funded or not) as "independent schools," and to schools operated directly by the state as "state schools." I also use the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) general definition of "civic formation," cited above, and refer specifically to four key measures of civic outcomes used repeatedly in the research: political knowledge, political skills, civil tolerance, and the habit of community involvement.[2] The IEA's research is helpful in discerning *in-school predictors* of long-term civic outcomes; the four indicators are useful in assessing the school effect on *post-secondary civic outcomes*.

Below, I set out (1) the inherent link between public education and citizenship formation; (2) key theoretical debates about the proper role of the state vis-à-vis independent

1 W. Schulz et al., *ICCS 2009 International Report: Civic Knowledge, Attitudes, and Engagement among Lower-Secondary School Students in 38 Countries* (Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2010), 15, https://www.iea.nl/sites/default/files/2019-04/ICCS_2009_International_Report.pdf .

2 W.A. Galston, "Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001): 217–34; D. Campbell, "The Civic Side of School Choice: An Empirical Analysis of Civic Education in Public and Private Schools," *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2 (2008): 487–524.

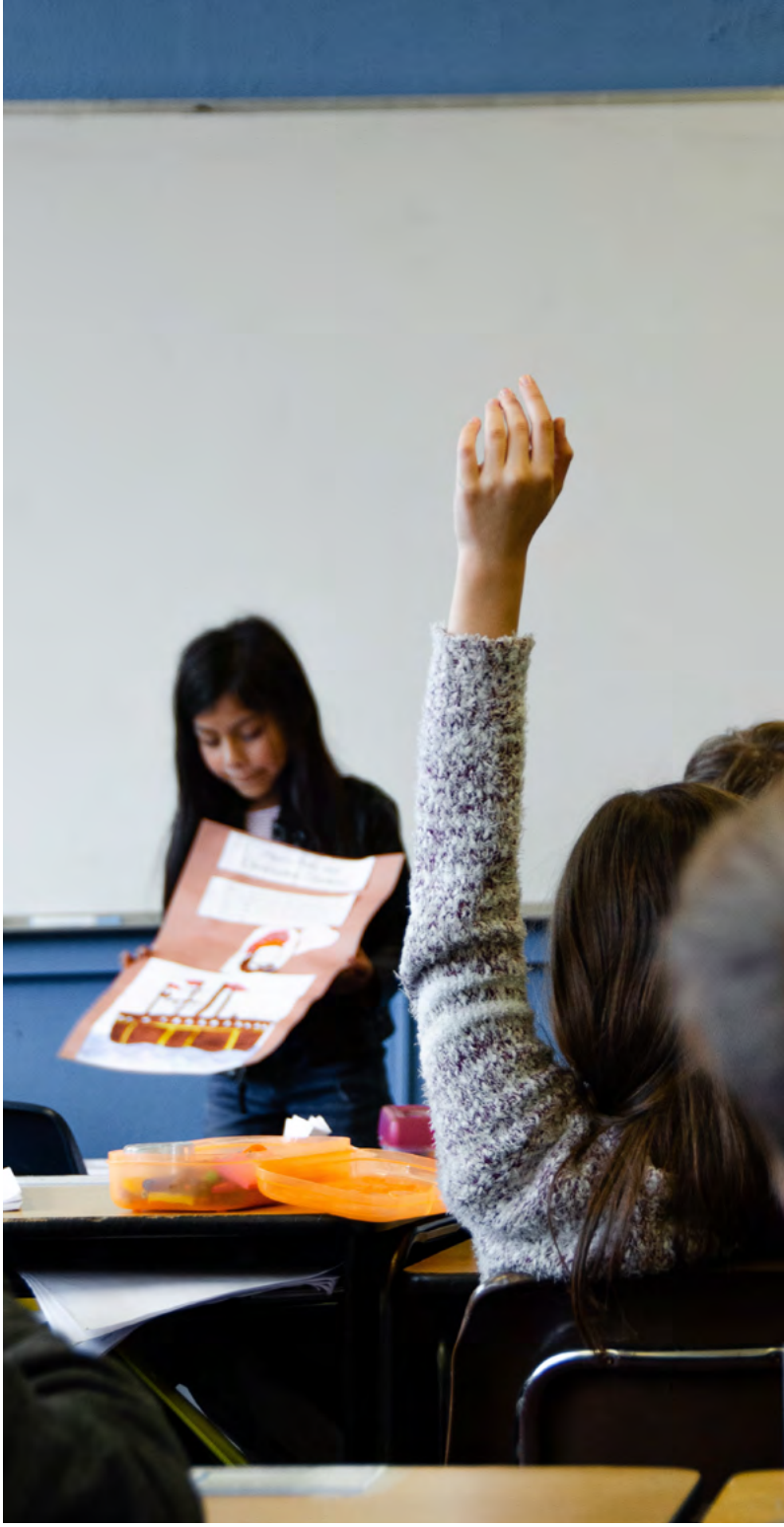
schools; (3) research on the civic outcomes of independent schools; and (4) policy guidelines for independent schools within a democratic education system.

DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND SCHOOLS

Why should taxpayers support the education of other people's children? In democracies, the answer comes down to this: other people's children's lives (including workforce participation and social well-being) and political involvement (understanding democratic institutions, analyzing legislation, and voting) shape ours. Since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, governments have rested their case for public education here. It is not surprising that the imperative to expand the general public's knowledge and know-how coincided with the expansion of the right to vote.

For instance, in 1833, Member of (England's) Parliament J.A. Roebuck referenced social well-being and the expansion of voting rights when he introduced England's first national resolution for government funding for "national education":

"I would first solicit the attention of the House to the more prominent benefits to be obtained by a general education of the people. Secondly, I would endeavour to show why the Government should itself supply this education [in addition to the religious institutions and factory owners that already did so]; and, lastly, I shall attempt to trace a rude outline of a plan by which every inhabitant of this empire might receive the instruction requisite for the well-being of society."[3]



Roebuck went on to specify the social and political benefits of an educated populace,

3 J.A. Roebuck, "National Education," *Hansard* § vol. 20 (1833), http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1833/jul/30/national-education.

including the possibility of reasoned debate rather than "a stack-burning peasantry or sturdy pauper population," and "a people industrious, honest, tolerant, and happy." Furthermore, he argued, "The business of Government is not, and can no longer be, the affair of a few. The multitude—the hitherto inert and submissive multitude—are filled with a new spirit—their attention is intently directed towards the affairs of the State—they take an active part in their own social concern."[4]

In the United States, then-governor Thomas Jefferson made the same argument in 1779 when he proposed that the state of Virginia enact the Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge. Publicly funded education for all (white, male) children, he explained, would protect the new Republic from tyranny:

"Certain forms of government are better calculated than others to protect individuals in the free exercise of their natural rights. . . . Yet experience hath shewn that those entrusted with power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny; and it is believed that *the most effectual means of preventing this would be, to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large* . . . they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes."[5]

Publicly funded education, he argued, would contravene the aristocratic principle and enable a meritocracy such that "those persons, whom nature hath endowed with genius and virtue" could be "rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens, and that *they should be called to that charge without regard to wealth, birth or other accidental condition or circumstance*."[6] His proposed legislation did not pass; Virginia established a system of public education only after the US Civil War (1861–65).[7] Even in public education's absence, one sees the connection between the rights and privileges of citizens and a democratic education: the Southern states had viewed enslaved Americans as non-citizens and thus left the provision of education to whites who could afford home-based, private tutoring.

In Canada, a publicly funded system of education developed in the mid-nineteenth century in the presence of long-standing tensions between Upper Canada (settled by the British) and Lower Canada (originally settled by the French), between Protestants and Catholics, and between "responsible [i.e., local] government" and the British Crown.[8] There were legislative precursors, but the (unified) province of Canada passed its first mandate to fund public education in 1841, specifying the

4 Roebuck, "National Education."

5 T. Jefferson, A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, June 18, 1779, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-02-02-0132-0004-0079.

6 Jefferson, Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge (emphasis added).

7 M. Julienne and B. Tarter, "Establishment of the Public School System in Virginia," *Virginia Humanities*, https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/public-school-system-in-virginia-establishment-of-the/.

8 J. Bowden, "1841: The Year of Responsible Government?," SSRN Scholarly Paper, Social Science Research Network, December 22, 2016, https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2889033; K. Robson, *Sociology of Education in Canada* (Montreal: Open Library Pressbooks, 2019), chap. 3, https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/robsonsoced/.

conditions under which property taxes would be levied for schools and teacher training institutes; common textbooks; examinations; and government inspections (amended in 1846).[9] As in England and the United States, adherents of public funding cited the need for the "diffusion of knowledge" needed to create one people out of heterogeneous groups via the "Common School."[10] Accommodation was given for Catholic and Protestant schools to receive funding under the general public-school provisions—an accommodation that some provinces in Canada have expanded to additional school types.[11]

The justification for the public funding of education, therefore, lies primarily not in the individual good that may accrue to the participants, but rather in the social and political goods that accompany democratic citizenship. For this reason, most governments do not allow even *non-funded* independent schools to remain completely outside the regulatory reach of the state. For instance, in 1976 the Supreme Court of the United States struck down an independent school's racially discriminatory admissions policy.[12]

Similarly, Canadian provinces require independent schools to adhere to curricular norms that promote democratic citizenship, even when those schools remain outside the sphere of government funding. Quebec's Loyola High School, fully independent, was still required to follow the provincial curriculum, with state-approved modifications that would enable it to deliver the same material within Catholic social teachings. This practice was tested in 2008, when a new government required strict adherence to an Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC) course based on a "normative pluralism" that viewed religious beliefs through a secular lens. Several lawsuits ensued, the most famous of which, *Loyola High School and John Zucchi v. Michelle Courchesne and Her Ministry*, ended up at the Supreme Court of Canada.[13] In *Loyola*, the plaintiffs agreed with the ERC's aims of "recognition of others, pursuit of the common good . . . and an informed understanding of religion," but did

9 R.M. Stamp, *The Historical Background to Separate Schools in Ontario* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1985), https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED273563.pdf; W. Nelson, "The 'Guerre des Éteignoirs': School Reform and Popular Resistance in Lower Canada, 1841–1859" (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1989), https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/56372141.pdf.

10 An Act for the Better Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada, 1846, http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/education/common-school-act-01.aspx; Robson, *Sociology of Education in Canada*, chap. 3.

11 A. von Heyking, "Alberta, Canada: How Curriculum and Assessments Work in a Plural School System," Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy, June 2019, https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/62962/alberta-brief.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

12 Norwood v. Harrison, 413 U.S. 455, 1973; Bob Jones Univ. v. United States, 461 U.S. 574, 1983.

13 D. Farrow, "On the Ethics and Religious Culture Program, Expert Testimony, Re: Loyola High School et John Zucchi c. Michelle Courchesne, en Sa Qualité de Ministre de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. Cour Supérieure, District de Montréal, N. 500-17-045278-085" (Montreal: Superior Court, Canada, Province of Quebec, District of Montreal, June 2009). *Loyola High School and John Zucchi, Plaintiffs, v. Michelle Courchesne, in her Capacity as Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports*, Superior Court, Canada, Province of Quebec, District of Montreal, June 18, 2010.

not accept a secular framework in which to do so.[14] Many Jewish schools[15] and a substantial majority (75 percent) of Québécois agreed.[16] In 2015, the Court sided with Loyola High School, and freed dissenting schools from the obligation to teach the curriculum from the state's distinctive viewpoint.[17] Note, however, that the right of the province to establish the course of study was not in dispute.

Of course, the citizens of democracies argue about the very meaning of "civic formation." The traditional understanding is to support political knowledge (history, geography, government), civic skills (interpretation, debate, community engagement), and affiliation (attachment to, and identity with, the nation as a whole).[18] Feminist, cultural, reconstructionist/Marxist, and queer versions of citizenship focus on power structures within society that need to be overturned.[19] Yet another approach, "transnational citizenship," emphasizes the complicated, overlapping nature of loyalty and aims to inspire "citizens of the world" rather than of the nation.[20] Critical citizenship guides students to resist patriarchal, Anglo/white, capitalist, and/or heteronormative institutions.[21] In the United States, a growing awareness of the persistence of racist systems, originating in the murder of African Americans George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in spring and summer 2020, has accelerated the presence of critical citizenship in the nation's schools.[22] Although precise understandings of citizenship differ, democracies expect their schools to develop an attachment to country and to inculcate the capacity to exercise citizenship in adult life.[23]

And many democracies are expanding their efforts to boost civic capacities and civic integration.[24] Citizenship "has been

14 *Loyola High School and John Zucchi, Plaintiffs, v. Michelle Courchesne*, 8.

15 J. Arnold, "Frum Schools Balk at New Religious Culture Course," *Canadian Jewish News*, September 17, 2008, http://www.cjnews.com/node/81794.

16 "Éthique et Culture Religieuse—Sondage Léger Marketing—Plus des Trois Quarts des Québécois Pour le Libre Choix," News Wire, Coalition pour la liberté en éducation, May 26, 2009.

17 CBC News, "Supreme Court Rules Quebec Infringed on Loyola High School's Religious Freedom," March 19, 2015, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/supreme-court-rules-quebec-infringed-on-loyola-high-school-s-religious-freedom-1.3000724.

18 K.K. Abowitz and J. Harnish, "Contemporary Discourses of Citizenship," *Review of Educational Research* 76, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 653–90.

19 Abowitz and Harnish, "Contemporary Discourses of Citizenship," 666–74.

20 Abowitz and Harnish, "Contemporary Discourses of Citizenship," 675.

21 P. McLaren, *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education*, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: Pearson, 2006), xviii, 39.

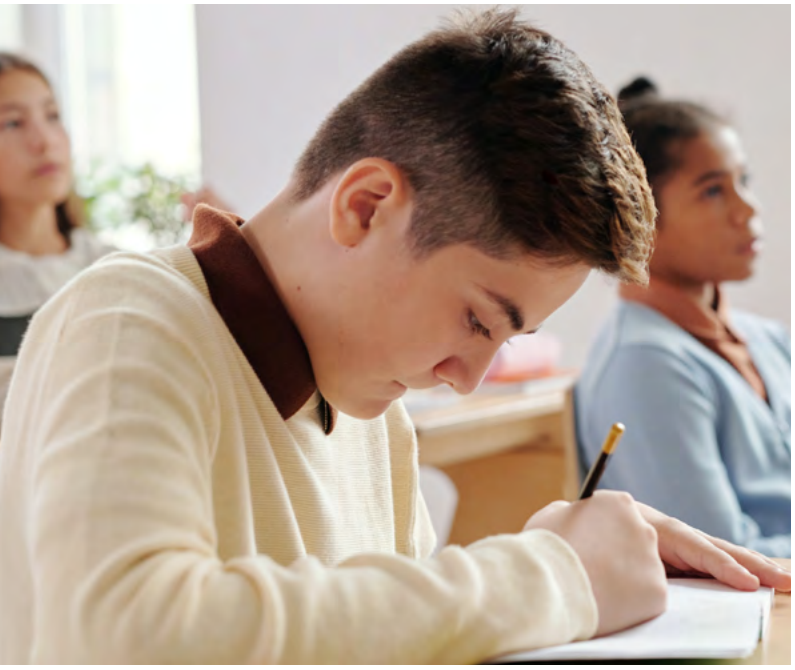
22 *New York Times Magazine*, "Introduction: The 1619 Project," August 14, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html; V. Bynum, "A Historian's Critique of the 1619 Project," *World Socialist Website* (blog), December 22, 2019, https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2019/12/21/bynu-d22.html.

23 Abowitz and Harnish, "Contemporary Discourses of Citizenship"; M. Evans, "Educating for Citizenship: What Teachers Say and What Teachers Do," *Canadian Journal of Education* 29, no. 2 (2006): 410–35.

24 S.W. Goodman, "Fortifying Citizenship: Policy Strategies for Civic Integration in Western Europe," *World Politics* 64, no. 4 (2012): 665, 667, 659–61.

introduced in the curriculum of almost every European country, the United States, Canada, and Australia."[25] Studying the role of schools in aiding civic integration has become a "preoccupation" in political theory from Europe[26] to Asia.[27] In all modern cases of which we are aware, *explicit civic formation is seen as seminal to social cohesion*. The goal is not to reinforce cultural homogeneity, but rather to create the conditions in which a heterogeneous population might negotiate their political differences through democratic processes and institutions.

The question to consider next is whether independent schools help or hinder this seminal goal.



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS: THEORY AND PRACTICE

When democratic citizens debate the structure and content of their nation's education, they engage with three very different strands of political thought that can be characterized as follows:

- *Position 1:* Only the state can deliver democratic education effectively.
- *Position 2:* Only individuals can determine the parameters of their education.
- *Position 3:* State, individuals, and civil society play equally important roles in democratic education.

Each position is democratically defensible, and each must assign the roles played by the critical policy levers of educational *structure, funding, accountability,* and *content.*

POSITION 1: UNIFORMIST VIEW

This view argues for *exclusive state delivery of democratic education*. Adherents of position 1 may grant individual families the freedom to attend non-state schools, but these schools are seen as different in kind and in democratic capabilities. Why?

25 G. ten Dam et al., "Measuring Young People's Citizenship Competences," *European Journal of Education* 46, no. 3 (September 1, 2011): 354–72 (here 354), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-3435.2011.01485.x.

26 Goodman, "Fortifying Citizenship," 660.

27 J.B.-Y. Sim, "Social Studies and Citizenship for Participation in Singapore: How One State Seeks to Influence Its Citizens," *Oxford Review of Education* 37, no. 6 (2011): 743–61; and J.B.-Y. Sim and M. Print, "Citizenship Education in Singapore: Controlling or Empowering Teacher Understanding and Practice?," *Oxford Review of Education* 35, no. 6 (2009): 705–23.

Position 1 views minority belief systems, especially religious ones, as inherently divisive to democratic life.[28] Indeed, the argument for a "common-school" model, in which the state provides funding for only one kind of school for all, began as a strategy to manage religious diversity.[29] Canadian scholars Jocelyn Maclure and Charles Taylor call this approach "republican secularism,"[30] and their neighbours to the south call it "civic republicanism."[31] The priority here is unity over difference and national over personal interest.[32] The expectation is that the public square, and individuals representing the state, should reflect non-particularist values,[33] and public debate should be conducted in secular terms that match the secular state.[34] In this view, those who hold minority viewpoints should learn to be politically and culturally bilingual: faith may be the language of the home, but the language of the public needs to reflect the values-neutrality of the state.[35]

In this model, only schools that are operated, regulated, and funded by the government are legitimate carriers of public education. The pedagogical content derives from the state's authority as well, but democracies may differ on which level of government (federal? State/provincial? Municipalities?) chooses the curriculum. Again, most position 1 theorists accept the *existence* of independent schools per

28 As explained later, positions 2 and 3 view a secularist worldview as particularist.

29 The classic book on this subject is C.L. Glenn, *The Myth of the Common School* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

30 J. Maclure and C. Taylor, *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience*, trans. J.M. Todd (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

31 This is not to be confused with the civic republicanism (or civic humanism) described and debated by J.G.A. Pocock and Thomas Pangle. J.G.A. Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); T.L. Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of Locke* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). It is, rather the civic republicanism promoted by Benjamin Rush and George Washington—a common and nondenominational piety that sought public virtue, as described in J. Witte Jr. and J.A. Nichols, *Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), esp. 36–42.

32 Abowitz and Harnish, "Contemporary Discourses of Citizenship," 657–59.

33 One must note, of course, that "non-particularist" is still particularist. In nineteenth-century America, the Protestant majority thought of itself as non-particularist; today, many secular elites think of themselves the same way.

34 I explore this tension in chap. 6, in the context of religious schools and Quebec's provincial curriculum, in A. Berner, *Pluralism and American Public Education: No One Way to School* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017).

35 Amy Gutmann calls this "democratic deliberation," and state schools are tasked with cultivating this skill.

se, but vehemently oppose their being funded through public dollars. A minority of position 1 theorists argue that independent schools should be disallowed entirely.[36]

Democracies that favour position 1—or educational uniformity, in which only one type of school counts as "public"—include Brazil, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Mexico.[37]

POSITION 2: INDIVIDUALIST VIEW

This view is the polar opposite of position 1. Its adherents favour a laissez-faire approach to education, have faith in government institutions only insofar as they prevent harm, and rely on individual families' judgments to determine the educational form and content best for their children. Position 2 considers education to be an individual rather than a social good. It follows that, because individual needs and beliefs differ in a pluralist society, state regulations should be minimal.

There is a spectrum within position 2 with respect to the acceptable amount of state funding and state oversight. The English House of Lords, for instance, defeated an initial bill to raise taxes for public education (1807) on the grounds that parents and the voluntary sector should be in charge.[38] They also noted the inevitability of "funding error" (code word for the Anglican view of Catholic theology). Some twentieth- and twenty-first-century libertarians agreed and agree.[39] The majority accept *some* government oversight—such as for safety and fire codes—and argue for full government funding, while rejecting state accountability over quality.

I have not been able to identify a truly laissez-faire school system in a modern-day democracy; it appears to be easier to argue than to enact. Such a system would provide state funding to families to pursue their own version of education, but without academic, fiscal, or civic reporting or outcome requirements.

36 See, for instance, the difference on this point between Amy Gutmann and Meira Levinson, two US political theorists, explored in A. Berner, "Educational Pluralism: Distinctive Schools and Academic Accountability," in *Religious Liberty and Education: A Case Study of Yeshivas vs. New York*, ed. J. Greene, J. Bedrick, and M. Lee (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 15–30.

37 N. Ranieri, "Brazil," in *Balancing Freedom, Autonomy, and Accountability in Education*, ed. C. Glenn and J. De Groof (Tilburg, Netherlands: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2012), 3:61–78; C. Glenn, "Bulgaria," in Glenn and De Groof, *Balancing Freedom*, 2:55–68; E. Danovskis, "Latvia," in Glenn and De Groof, *Balancing Freedom*, 2:277–88; J.M. Agüero and T. Beleche, "Test-Mex: Estimating the Effects of School Year Length on Student Performance in Mexico," *Journal of Development Economics* 103 (July 2013): 353–61, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2013.03.008; European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, ed., *Vocational Education and Training in Denmark: Short Description* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012).

38 J. Murphy, *Church, State and Schools in Britain, 1800–1970* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 4.

39 K. Currie-Knight, *Education in the Marketplace: An Intellectual History of Pro-market Libertarian Visions for Education in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). See Berner, *Pluralism and American Public Education*, 145–46.

POSITION 3: PLURALIST VIEW

The pluralist position supports state funding and oversight, but not the exclusive state delivery, of public education. The pluralist sees risk in assigning exclusive responsibility to either the individual or the state. On the position 1 side, the pluralist argues, the prerogative of the state too easily oppresses cultural minorities; on the position 2 side, individual choices that are neither academically nor civically robust risk undermining democracy itself.

Better, say pluralists, to honour individual orthodoxies and collective citizenship at the same time. Pluralist systems accomplish this by funding a wide array of school types (from Catholic and Islamic to Montessori and secular), and holding them all to the same standard of academic performance and civic quality. After all, democracies assume the presence of distinctive, even diametrically opposed, views of the good life. The goal is not to create homogeneity but, rather, to help us live together in peace with our heterogeneity, to cultivate what Rabbi Jonathan Sacks called "the dignity of difference."[40]

The mechanism by which plural systems attempt to honour individuals' values and the common good is by distinguishing between the ethos of a school (its religious, philosophical, or pedagogical distinctiveness) and the academic requirements of the nation, province, or state. Plural systems promote the distinctive values of different schools, and also require the impartation of publicly shared academic standards through the schools—or what Charles Glenn calls "education and instruction":

"The good school that engages with settled intention to provide both effective instruction and character-forming education to the pupils entrusted to it by their parents is thus accountable both to society in general and to families though along different dimensions of its mission. Society, through government, has every right to require adequate instructional outcomes so as to ensure that every child has a fair opportunity in life. It is not society's right, however, to prescribe the *educational* dimensions of the school's mission: how it shapes the character and convictions of its pupils. That, in a pluralistic democracy, is for parents to determine by their choice of schools."[41]

Put differently, educational pluralism attempts to maximize the freedom of schools to create their own organic communities with a common ethos and distinctive practices—and also to assure the public of academic and civic quality with respect to outcomes. The balance between individualism on the one hand and statism on the other is key to success.[42]

40 Many of Sacks's books call on the principles of liberal pluralism. See, for instance, J. Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (London: Continuum, 2003); Sacks, *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (London: Continuum, 2008); Sacks, *Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times* (London: Basic Books, 2020).

41 C.L. Glenn, "Structural Pluralism in Education: Can We Stop Fighting Over Schools?," *Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy* (blog), December 15, 2017, https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/62989.

42 Note that this does not imply that the state must on principle fund "all comers." The limits of state funding must be calibrated to national contexts. I spent substantial time exploring this key issue in depth in chap. 6, "The Limits of Educational Pluralism and How to Address Them," in Berner, *Pluralism and American Public Education*; A. Berner, "The Case for a Pluralist Education System in the U.S.," Manhattan Institute, July 11, 2019, 8–9, https://www.manhattan-institute.org/educational-pluralism-in-united-states; and A. Berner, "Psychological Harm and School Choice," *The Flypaper at Thomas B. Fordham Institute* (blog), August 15, 2017, https://edexcellence.net/articles/psychological-harm-and-school-choice.

The vast majority of democracies choose position 3, or educational pluralism. Examples include the following:

Australia. Australian education operates at the provincial rather than the federal level. Despite this, in recent years, Australia's federal government has become the top funder of non-state schools, because of those schools' capacity to close the achievement gaps between high- and low-income students. Half of the independent-school students in Australia are from the lowest economic quartile of the population.[43]

Indonesia. A secular nation with a majority-Muslim population, Indonesia supports non-sectarian, Catholic, and Protestant schools that must follow 100 percent of the national curriculum. The government also funds Islamic schools, which are required to follow only 70 percent of the national curriculum and may spend the remaining 30 percent of the schedule on religious studies.[44]

The Netherlands. The Netherlands' constitution guarantees the right to educational freedom. As a result, the state funds thirty-six different kinds of schools on equal footing, from Montessori and secular to Jewish reform, Catholic, Islamic, and anthroposophic. All schools must teach the national curriculum, and all students must undertake content-specific assessments in addition to their schools' unique, worldview-driven ones.[45]

Israel. The nation of Israel funds the majority of schools of many types within its public education system: Arabic-language, Hebrew-language, religious, secular. Even independent schools outside of these options—especially the Haredi, run by the ultra-orthodox and expanding as a percentage of pupils—receive some funding from the state.[46]

Singapore. Singapore is a multi-ethnic, multilingual society with a high-performing school system. The state funds a wide range of schools to reflect its diverse population, including multiple denominations of Christian (Anglican, Methodist, Catholic), Islamic, and Buddhist. At the same time, funded schools must adhere to open admission policies, the national curriculum, and common academic

43 C. Glenn, "What the United States Can Learn from Other Countries," in *What Americans Can Learn from School Choice in Other Countries*, ed. J. Tooley and D. Salisbury (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2005), 79–90; K. Donnelly, "Regulation and Funding of Independent Schools: Lessons from Australia," Fraser Institute, January 10, 2017, https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/regulation-and-funding-of-independent-schools-lessons-from-australia.pdf.

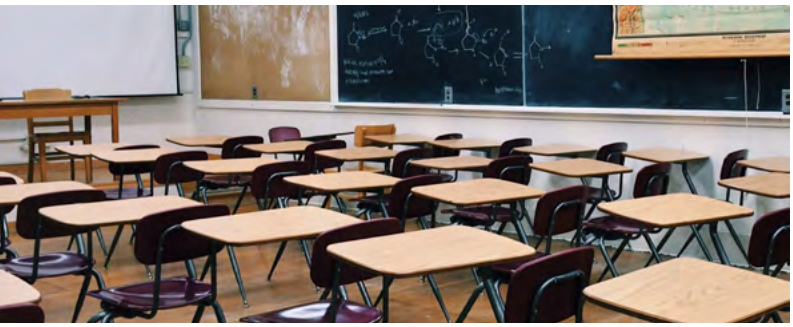
44 A.F. Ibrahim, "Indonesia," in Glenn and De Groof, *Balancing Freedom*, 4:109–20, https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/63048/profile-indonesia-v4.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

45 P.J.J. Zoontjens and C.L. Glenn, "The Netherlands," in Glenn and De Groof, *Balancing Freedom*, 2:333–62; C. Glenn, *Contrasting Models of State and School: A Comparative Historical Study of Parental Choice and State Control* (London: Continuum, 2011).

46 M. Cohen-Eliya and A. Zehavi, "Israel," in *Balancing Freedom, Autonomy, and Accountability in Education*, ed. C. Glenn and J. De Groof, vol. 3 (Tilburg, Netherlands: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2012), 229–42.

examinations. Additionally, schools must teach in the English language, which also serves as a unifying factor.[47]

Educational pluralism is the majority form chosen by democracies, and many other examples exist. For instance, Sweden and Poland allow per-capita funding to follow children to their schools of choice; Hyderabad, India, is experimenting with vouchers for low-income children; Denmark funds 85 percent of the operations of non-state schools.[48] Public accountability takes many forms, but the most common are curricular requirements and common assessments.[49] Additionally, many OECD nations require inspections that encompass many more measures, including school culture, classroom instruction, and parent satisfaction surveys. England and the Netherlands are considered the most robust; both systems respond to negative findings with tiered interventions, including the most dire (school closure).[50]



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS AND THE COMMON GOOD?

As the above section establishes, it is common for democracies to fund both independent and state schools, and also to require common academic benchmarks for all of them. Whether funded or not, do independent schools support the primary goal of civic formation, or do they detract from it? Are they demonstrably capable of forming citizens?

To answer these questions, we can compare the in-school predictors of civic formation within plural and uniform school systems. We can also investigate the civic outcomes of individual independent schools versus their national norms (the "school effect").

47 M.K. The and S.M. Chia, "Singapore," in *Balancing Freedom, Autonomy, and Accountability in Education*, ed. C.L. Glenn, J. De Groof, and C. Candal, vol. 4 (Tilburg, Netherlands: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2012), 227–38, https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/63040/profile-singapore-v4.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

48 The resources in this field are considerable. The most extensive come from an ongoing project of the European Association of Education Law and Policy. See, for instance, J. De Groof and C. Glenn, eds., *Balancing Freedom, Autonomy, and Accountability*, 4 vols. (Tilburg, Netherlands: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2012).

49 A. Berner, "Funding Schools," in Glenn and De Groof, *Balancing Freedom*, 1:115–29.

50 A. Berner, "Would School Inspections Work in the United States?," *Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy* (blog), September 14, 2017, http://edpolicy.education.jhu.edu/would-school-inspections-work-in-the-united-states/.

A caveat: there is an inherent time lag between research and publication and, in the case of alumni surveys, between participants' education and their survey responses. It is possible that national contexts and school sectors change appreciably along the way. The studies below reflect specific points in time rather than universal truths. Furthermore, aggregate findings can occlude substantial variation within nations and school sectors.[51]

The key post-secondary outcomes of interest are as follows:

- Political knowledge (knowing history, geography, national political processes and structures);
- Civic skills (ability to analyze legislation, write elected officials);
- Civic engagement (voting, volunteering, philanthropic giving); and
- Political tolerance (respect for the civil liberties and opinions of others).[52]

Political knowledge, skills, and habits are interrelated, and all of them are learned rather than innate. Civil tolerance in particular does not come naturally and must be cultivated by families and schools. The (US) Brookings Institution's William Galston put it this way in *Anti-pluralism: The Populist Threat to Liberal Democracy* (2018): "The desire to suppress speech and behavior one finds offensive is instinctive. Restraining oneself from doing so goes against the grain and requires training and indoctrination."[53]

A straight comparison of the civic capacity-building that is present within uniform and plural school systems is not possible; no methodology could adequately consider the multiple variables at play. These include such in-school factors as financial resources, teacher quality (and preparation), disciplinary atmosphere, and curricular rigour, and such non-school factors as the percentage of non-native-language speakers, broader social-welfare supports, and national income disparities.[54]

The most extensive study of young people's civic knowledge and civic affect comes from the International Civics and Citizenship Education Survey, which the IEA fields every four to seven years. The IEA's surveys are designed by country-specific experts to ensure commensurability between and within countries. The survey questions are extensive and include items on civic knowledge, civic principles, civic participation, and civic identity and attachment.[55] The results are scored on three levels, indicating general to advanced understanding of the facts and theories of governance.[56]

51 W. Schulz et al., *Becoming Citizens in a Changing World: IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016 International Report* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018), v, https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-73963-2.

52 Campbell, "The Civic Side of School Choice," 489–90.

53 W. Galston, *Anti-pluralism: The Populist Threat to Liberal Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018).

54 OECD, *PISA 2012 Results: Excellence Through Equity: Giving Every Student the Chance to Succeed* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2013), 2:91, 104.

55 Schulz et al., *ICCS 2009 International Report*, 60.

56 Schulz et al., *ICCS 2009 International Report*, 61.

In the 2009 data set from thirty-six countries, six of the top-scoring ten countries had plural systems.[57] There were no discernible differences between uniform and plural systems when it came to students' attitudes toward equal rights for men and women, ethnic and racial minorities, and immigrants; their trust in civic institutions; or their interest in political issues.[58]

The IEA's 2016 data represented responses from 94,000 students in more than 3,800 schools across twenty-four countries. Students' responses were augmented by contextual knowledge from 37,000 teachers, as well as from school principals and country-level research teams.[59] There was variability in how these countries delivered civic education: eleven taught civics as a specific subject, while eleven "had integrated civic and citizenship education into all subjects in the school," and in a total of fifteen of the twenty-four, "civic and citizenship education was also considered part of the school experience as a whole." Finally, "every country reported having civic and citizenship education as part of teacher training for teachers of [related] subjects."[60]

Plural systems performed quite well in 2016, as they had in 2009. The 2016 data show, for instance, that the highest-performing countries with respect to civic knowledge were plural (Sweden, Denmark, Taiwan, and Finland). The study also found that some uniform systems had improved since 2009 (Mexico, Colombia).[61] The IEA's study does not allow us to fully compare entire national systems. At the very least, though, it is safe to claim that *there does not seem to be an inherent civic disadvantage to plural systems*.

What about when we turn from a systems approach to school sector analysis—namely, evaluating independent schools' capacity to nurture engaged citizens, over and against their national norms?

Some historically plural countries, such as the Netherlands and England, eschew school-sector comparisons altogether. Their focus, rather, is on evaluating individual schools and providing research-based support where improvement is necessary.[62] Therefore, detailed analyses of independent schools tend to arise within uniform school systems, and often when those systems are under pressure to diversify. One consequence of a norm of uniformity is that alternative models (e.g., charters or private-school scholarship programs) must justify their legitimacy on the basis of superior outcomes. This competitive approach leaves much to be

57 Schulz et al., *ICCS 2009 International Report*, 79. Canada, Australia, and the United States did not participate in this survey. The Netherlands, whose results would have been important, did not reach a statistically significant sample of students and thus was disqualified from the analysis.

58 Schulz et al., *ICCS 2009 International Report*, 254–55.

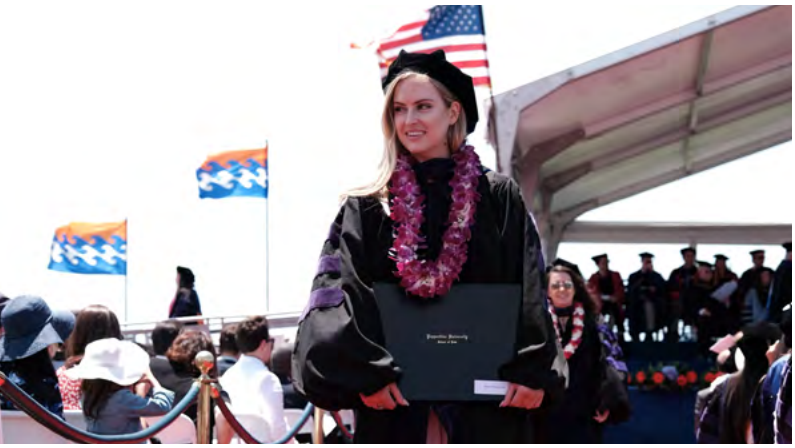
59 Schulz et al., *Becoming Citizens in a Changing World*, xv.

60 Schulz et al., *Becoming Citizens in a Changing World*, xvi.

61 Schulz et al., *Becoming Citizens in a Changing World*, 58, 62.

62 We do note, however, that in seven European countries with plural systems, after controlling for family background, students in religious schools outperformed those in non-religious state schools (academically), and with less funding. J. Dronkers, "Do Public and Religious Schools Really Differ? Assessing the European Evidence," in *Educating Citizens: International Perspectives on Civic Values and School Choice*, ed. P.J. Wolf and S. Macedo (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2004), 306–7.

desired, but it has generated robust research studies of the "school effect," which in turn offer insights that can create better policies. The civic research below comes, first, from the United States, which began to pluralize its school systems several decades ago. Second, I cite a study of independent schools' civic outcomes in Canada. Finally, voucher and per-capita funding structures in Chile and Sweden offer modest but critical insights into the civic-building capacities of independent schools.



UNITED STATES

In 2007, education researcher Patrick Wolf analyzed twenty-one quantitative studies on the effects of independent and state schools on civic outcomes, yielding fifty-nine discrete findings and controlling for family background.[63] Most of the findings (fifty-six out of fifty-nine) showed a neutral-to-positive effect of independent schools on civic outcomes. Only three of fifty-nine findings were negative: "Evangelical Protestant schools reduce political tolerance, secular private schools decrease voluntarism, and private schooling of any sort may diminish a particularly passionate form of patriotism."[64] Among the most rigorous subset of studies, *only one of twenty-two findings* indicated a state-school advantage: heightened patriotism.[65]

In 2020, Wolf updated his 2007 review to include thirty-four studies with eighty-six separate findings. Because these studies aim at the core of the argument against independent schools (namely, that they undermine democratic citizenship), they are worth exploring in depth.

First, Wolf's definitions. He classified findings ("public school advantage, neutral, private advantage") using the "minimum level of statistical significance the original researchers employed, which was either 90 percent or 95 percent confidence that the difference is real and not merely a product of statistical noise."[66]

Of the eighty-six statistically significant findings, fifty showed a clear independent-school advantage, thirty-three found neutral effects, and only three showed a state-school advantage.[67] When we break those findings down into "conceptual groupings," the same patterns persist. In terms of political tolerance—defined as supporting the free-speech rights and civil liberties of those with whom you most strongly disagree—thirteen show that independent schools do a better

63 P.J. Wolf, "Civics Exam: Schools of Choice Boost Civic Values," *Education Next* 7, no. 3 (2007): 67–72, 67–68.

64 Wolf, "Civics Exam," 71. Note: it is appropriate to question whether "a particularly passionate form of patriotism" constitutes an unqualified good.

65 Wolf, "Civics Exam," 68.

66 P. Wolf, "Myth: Public Schools Are Necessary for a Stable Democracy," in *School Choice Myths: Setting the Record Straight on Education Freedom*, ed. C.A. DeAngelis and N.P. McCluskey (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2020), 46–68, 55.

67 Wolf, "Myth," 56.

job; ten show "no significant difference"; and one shows a state-school advantage.[68] In political participation: again, an independent-school advantage (none show a state-school advantage).[69] In imparting civic knowledge and skills, not one single study showed a state-school advantage, but ten found that independent-school attendance had a clear advantage (six findings showed no difference between the two sectors).[70] It is no surprise that Wolf calls the view that "public schools are necessary for a stable democracy" a myth.[71]

One of the studies included in Wolf's 2020 analysis highlights the public-spiritedness aspect of independent-school attendance and is pulled out here: a 2017 analysis indicates that independent high schools exert a long-term positive influence on adult civic engagement, for example, volunteering and philanthropic giving. The researchers summarized,

"Catholic school graduates are over 50 percent more likely than public school graduates to volunteer for organizations that fight poverty, according to data in the Panel Study of Income Dynamics—the world's longest active panel study of households and family. The same data show graduates of Evangelical Protestant and other non-Catholic religious schools are about 40 percent more likely to volunteer in general as adults than their public school counterparts are."[72]

The study also found that "even after accounting for differences in socioeconomic status, American graduates of Catholic as well as Evangelical or other non-Catholic religious schools are more likely than public school graduates to make charitable donations."[73] This study draws on the longest-running database on this subject in the world.[74] Individually and collectively, therefore, the preponderance of findings on independent-school attendance, *after controlling for family background*, illustrate that the fear of independent schools' negative impact on civic life remains misplaced.

While they do not address civic outcomes per se, another set of studies finds that independent-school attendance benefits society in terms of social well-being. One 2011 alumni study that controlled for family background and isolated the school effect suggests that graduates of Catholic and Protestant schools were active participants in their communities rather than isolationists; volunteering and civic engagement remain high in adulthood.[75] A second finds lower rates of criminal behaviour among graduates of a private-school-choice program in Milwaukee. A third study, using

68 Wolf, "Myth," 59.

69 Wolf, "Myth," 60.

70 Wolf, "Myth," 60.

71 This is the title of his book chapter.

72 D. Sikkink and J. Schwartz, "The Lasting Impact of High School on Giving and Volunteering in the U.S." (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University—Cardus Religious Schools Initiative, February 2017), https://www.cardus.ca/research/education/reports/the-lasting-impact-of-high-school-on-giving-and-volunteering-in-the-u-s/.

73 Sikkink and Schwartz, "The Lasting Impact of High School on Giving and Volunteering in the U.S."

74 Michigan Institute for Social Research, "Panel Survey of Income Dynamics," Panel Survey of Income Dynamics, current 1968, https://psidonline.isr.umich.edu.

75 R. Pennings et al., "Cardus Education Survey 2011," Cardus, 2011. https://www.cardus.ca/research/education/reports/cardus-education-survey-phase-i-report-2011/.

data from the Bureau of Labor National Survey of Youth, cohort 1997, and the Understanding America Survey administered by the Center for Economic and Social Research at the University of Southern California, finds higher rates of intact marriage, lower rates of non-marital childbearing, and lower rates of divorce, associated with independent-school attendance. While these outcomes are not "civic goods" per se, they do speak to the positive influence of independent schools on society and civil society.[76]

Finally, a 2019 analysis of alumni of Democracy Prep, a charter-school network, found that "Democracy Prep has large positive effects on civic participation, increasing its students' voter-registration rates by about 16 percentage points and their voting rates by about 12 percentage points. Given the low registration and voting rates of young adults nationally, these are substantial impacts."[77] Charter schools are not, strictly speaking, independent schools. They are, rather, schools that are funded and regulated but not operated by the state. As such, they are similar in kind to independent schools in plural systems.

CANADA

There are fewer research studies on the civic outcomes of independent schools in Canada than in the United States. However, an analysis of Alberta's civics curriculum and scores on students' exit exams, published in 2004, indicated that publicly funded religious-school students performed at the top of the exit exam charts:

"According to test scores made available by Alberta's department of education, 88 percent of students in Alberta's private schools met the "acceptable" standard on the ninth-grade social studies exam, compared with 81 percent of secular public school students and 82 percent of Catholic school students. Twenty-six percent of private school students met the "standard of excellence," compared with 18 percent of public school students and 19 percent of students in the Catholic system. Students in other alternatives to the public schools also came out well. One hundred percent of home-schooled students met the acceptable standard, while 15 percent achieved excellence. Ninety-two percent of students in Alberta's charter schools had an acceptable score; 27 percent scored in the excellence range."[78]

The author attributes the overall high scores in part, at least, to the province's high-quality curriculum and assessments, as well as to their support for unique school cultures. For instance, the provincial instruction guide explained social studies in rich terms:

"The ultimate goal of social studies is responsible citizenship. The responsible citizen is one who is knowledgeable, purposeful

76 A. Cheng et al., "The Protestant Family Ethic: What Do Protestant, Catholic, Private, and Public Schooling Have to Do with Marriage, Divorce, and Non-Marital Childbearing?," Institute for Family Studies, American Enterprise Institute, 2020, https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/FINAL-IFS-ProtestantFamilyEthicReport-1.pdf?x91208.

77 B.P. Gill et al., "A Life Lesson in Civics: How Democracy Prep Charter Schools Boost Student Voting," *Education Next* 19, no. 3 (2019), https://www.educationnext.org/life-lesson-civics-how-democracy-prep-charter-schools-boost-student-voting/.

78 D.E. Campbell, "The Civic Implications of Canada's Education System," in *Educating Citizens*, ed. P. Wolf et al. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2004), 186–220 (here 207).

and makes responsible choices. Basic to the goal of responsible citizenship is the development of critical thinking. The inquiry process, communication, participation, and technological skills are emphasized in order to foster critical thinking. Citizenship education is based on an understanding of history, geography, economics, other social sciences and the humanities as they affect the Canadian community and the world. Current affairs add considerably to the relevance, interest and immediacy of the material and help to foster lifelong learning skills."[79]

Furthermore, Alberta expected schools to differentiate their framework for citizenship, which likely contributed to the robust outcomes. The publicly funded Catholic sector, for instance, supplemented the social studies guide with concepts drawn from Catholic social teaching that included stewardship of the earth and the dignity of the human person. As in the United States studies, the data show that independent schools seem to provide a robust preparation for civic life—at least intellectually.

For instance, on Alberta's social studies exams, previously mentioned, independent-school students outperformed state-school students.[80] But note that the test scores are not akin to skills-based tests in reading. Rather, they reflect the expectation that specific knowledge about the province, the nation, and the world is critical to students' political knowledge and thus to more-informed civic judgments as they enter adulthood.

More recently, descriptive studies of independent schools in Canada indicate that teachers and principals in such schools intend to nurture civic engagement, and that parents who choose independent schools are themselves active in serving their communities.[81] While these studies do not control for family background, they do however offer promising data points about independent schools' capacity to impart the knowledge-building and rationales necessary for democratic participation, and to provide role models of adult engagement with service to community.

CHILE AND SWEDEN

Studies of the outcomes from Chile's voucher program and Sweden's per-capita funding model, both of which expanded access to independent schools, address general academic rather than civic outcomes. Academic achievement covers only one of the four key civic outcomes of interest, but the studies are included here to make a different point: *policy design matters*.

For instance, Chile's initial voucher program (1981) allowed schools to admit students based on a parent interview and students'

79 Campbell, "Civic Implications," 205.

80 Campbell, "Civic Implications," 207.

81 H. van Brummelen and R. Koole, "'Have They Learned to Swim Around in the Big Puddle?': Cultural Awareness and Engagement of Christian High School Students," *Journal of School Choice* 6, no. 1 (2012): 40–61; D. Hunt and R. Leistra, "Who Chooses Alberta Independent Schools and Why?," Cardus, September 2020, https://www.cardus.ca/research/education/reports/who-chooses-alberta-independent-schools-and-why/; D. Hunt and D. Van Pelt, "Who Chooses Independent Schools in British Columbia and Why?," Cardus, August 2019, https://www.cardus.ca/research/education/reports/who-chooses-independent-schools-in-british-columbia-and-why/; D. Van Pelt, D. Hunt, and J. Wolfert. "Who Chooses Ontario Independent Schools and Why?," Cardus, September 2019, https://www.cardus.ca/research/education/reports/who-chooses-ontario-independent-schools-and-why/.

academic record; both measures correlate to middle-class socioeconomic status. Academic benefits accrued therefore to students whose families had already placed them on a strong trajectory. Therefore, in 1994, the government disallowed selection based on class proxies (with the exception of some selective high schools). The program now serves 40 percent of Chile's young people and shows academic acceleration for those who attend voucher-funded independent schools—especially those within high-functioning networks of independent schools.[82]

Sweden's move to per-capita funding for school systems that wished to pluralize took care not to duplicate the exclusionary policies of Chile's first program; participating schools were not permitted to conduct interviews or require report cards for admission, with a few exceptions for selective high schools. While the initial academic outcomes were neutral to positive for independent schools compared to their state peers,[83] the nation's PISA scores plummeted concurrently. The reasons for the decline are contested.[84] The simultaneous change from the national, content-rich curriculum to a skills-based approach likely played a role. A process-oriented pedagogical shift accounts for similar declines in national standings elsewhere.[85]

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMON GOOD

The implications of the above studies are that independent schools offer substantial benefits to civic formation.[86] To achieve this end, policy-makers must take care to ensure that independent schools meet important measures of quality and comport with national standards of equality. The former come through mastery of common academic content and positive school cultures. The latter will reflect contextual history. In the United States, no school of any type may enact racially discriminatory admissions policies; in Indonesia, no school of any type may teach communist ideology; in Azerbaijan, 80 percent of the staff of every school must be Azerbaijani; in South Africa, no

82 G. Elacqua, D. Contreras, and F. Salazar, "Scaling Up in Chile: Networks of Schools Facilitate Higher Student Achievement," *Education Next* 8, no. 3 (2008): 62–68.

83 A. Böhlmark and M. Lindahl, *Independent Schools and Long-Run Educational Outcomes: Evidence from Sweden's Large-Scale Voucher Reform.* (Munich: CESifo, 2012), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2618127.

84 G. Sahlgren, "Regulation and Funding of Independent Schools: Lessons from Sweden," Fraser Institute, November 15, 2016, http://bit.ly/2fSWTLE.

85 T. Sanandaji, "Sweden Has an Education Crisis, but It Wasn't Caused by School Choice," *National Review*, July 21, 2014, http://www.nationalreview.com/agenda/383304/sweden-has-education-crisis-it-wasnt-caused-school-choice-tino-sanandaji; E.D. Hirsch, *Why Knowledge Matters: Rescuing Our Children from Failed Educational Theories* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2016), 131–47.

86 While this paper does not examine academic impacts as such, mastery of important civic-building content is one of the four key outcomes of interest and is thus mentioned in research on Chile and Sweden.

school may participate in racial segregation.[87] The former—measures of quality—come down, most simply, to strong and positive school cultures and challenging, high-quality curricula that are shared across the system. At the highest level, then, policies surrounding independent schools should exercise limited oversight of the ethos of schools while maintaining high expectations for the academic quality those schools deliver. A well-designed educational pluralism meets both criteria.

In sum, school culture matters. Plural systems emphasize the distinctiveness of schools' individual missions, by design.[88] Bryk, Lee, and Holland attribute Catholic schools' academic and civic success to their "thick community," described as forming a "communal" framework that encompasses all areas of school life.[89] Scott Seider found the same organic continuum from mission to practice in the high-performing charter schools he studied in Boston.[90] This principle seems to hold around the world. As one researcher put it after studying international research: "Distinctive educational communities in which pupils and teachers share a common *ethos*" vastly increases the odds of acquiring academic and civic knowledge, skills, and sensibilities.[91] Charles Glenn puts it this way: "Schools with a distinctive identity . . . offer educational advantages deriving from their clarity of focus."[92] Shared mission and purpose are foundational elements of effective educational institutions; they work in service of democratic outcomes, not against them.

Academic content mastery matters too. A common characteristic of academically high-performing school systems is access to a shared, challenging curriculum; mastery of rich subject matter boosts academic achievement overall and closes achievement gaps between wealthy and low-income students.[93] Shared content also creates shared concepts and conversations, which are critical for the exercise of democratic citizenship. One of the foremost scholars of the

87 Berner, "Psychological Harm and School Choice"; Ibrahim, "Balancing Freedom and Accountability in Education"; R. Joubert et al., "South Africa," in *Balancing Freedom, Autonomy, and Accountability in Education*, ed. C. Glenn and J. De Groof, vol. 3 (Tilburg, Netherlands: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2012), 319–46; V. Huseynov, "Azerbaijan," in *Balancing Freedom, Autonomy and Accountability in Education*, ed. C. Glenn and J. De Groof, vol. 4 (Tilburg, Netherlands: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2012), 7–22.

88 See, for instance, the Ministry of Education's requirement for public posting of mission. Department for Education, "What Maintained Schools Must Publish Online—GOV.UK," Gov.Uk, 2018, https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online.

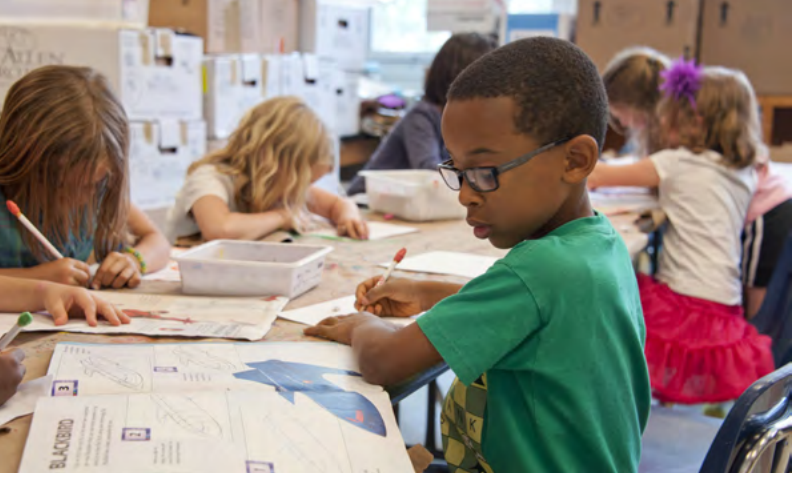
89 A.S. Bryk, V.E. Lee, and P.B. Holland, *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 144, 145, 245.

90 S. Seider, *Character Compass: How Powerful School Culture Can Point Students Toward Success* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2012).

91 S. Macedo and P. Wolf, "Introduction: School Choice, Civic Values, and Problems of Policy Comparison," in *Educating Citizens: International Perspectives on Civic Values and School Choice*, ed. S. Macedo and P. Wolf (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2004), 12.

92 Glenn, "What the United States Can Learn from Other Countries," 80, 83.

93 Common Core, "Why We're Behind: What Top Nations Teach Their Students but We Don't," Common Core, 2009; OECD, *PISA 2012 Results*; IEA, "Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students Who Are Academically Successful: Examining Academic Resilience Cross-Nationally," Policy Brief, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, March 2015, https://www.iea.nl/publications/series-journals/policy-brief/march-2015-socioeconomically-disadvantaged-students-who.



international curriculum, E.D. Hirsch, sums it up in his most recent publication:

"A nation's reading scores are highly predictive not only of its competence, but also of its cohesion, for they indicate whether communication among adults in a nation is effective and widespread. The lower scores reflect a decline in our social, economic, and political competence."[94]

Hirsch notes, "Language specialists use the term 'speech community' to describe a group of people who share a set of language norms that allow them to interact, share interests, and participate in a healthy community."[95] A population may include numerous linguistic communities and even parallel school systems based on language. This does not touch Hirsch's point. He is speaking, rather, of a "common intellectual currency" in terms of shared academic content that all students—whatever their race, religion, or native language—understand. By contrast, when only some students (usually the wealthiest) have access to robust knowledge about the world, citizenship formation suffers. It contributes to the balkanization of a democratic society.[96] Maintaining access to common "conversations" allows participation in civil society across socioeconomic and cultural divides—hence the importance of a shared curriculum. The Netherlands allows each funded school to provide an equivalent, but not necessarily identical, curriculum. Austria does the same. Israel allows its Arabic-language schools to modify the national curriculum in consultation with governmental advisors.[97] Note that these governments fund a great number of independent schools; they simply require all of them to teach common content. This report focuses exclusively on its civic benefits, but a high intellectual bar matters for academic outcomes and lifetime opportunity too.

Expanding access to independent schools through state funding is particularly difficult to navigate when uniform systems begin to diversity the models they fund. During the period of pluralization, low levels of funding for independent schools can mean that the most disadvantaged students cannot participate, and misplaced animus against non-state schools acts as a damper on an equitable funding model.[98] Historically plural countries, such as

94 E.D. Hirsch, *How to Educate a Citizen: The Power of Shared Knowledge to Unify a Nation* (New York: Harper, 2020), 24.

95 Hirsch, *How to Education a Citizen*, 7, 11.

96 Hirsch, *Why Knowledge Matters*, 131–47. Here, Hirsch shows the negative academic consequences of the loss of shared content in France.

97 For more detail, see W. Berka and C. Glenn, "Austria," in Glenn and De Groof, *Balancing Freedom*, 2:1–13; Cohen-Eliya and Zehavi, "Israel."

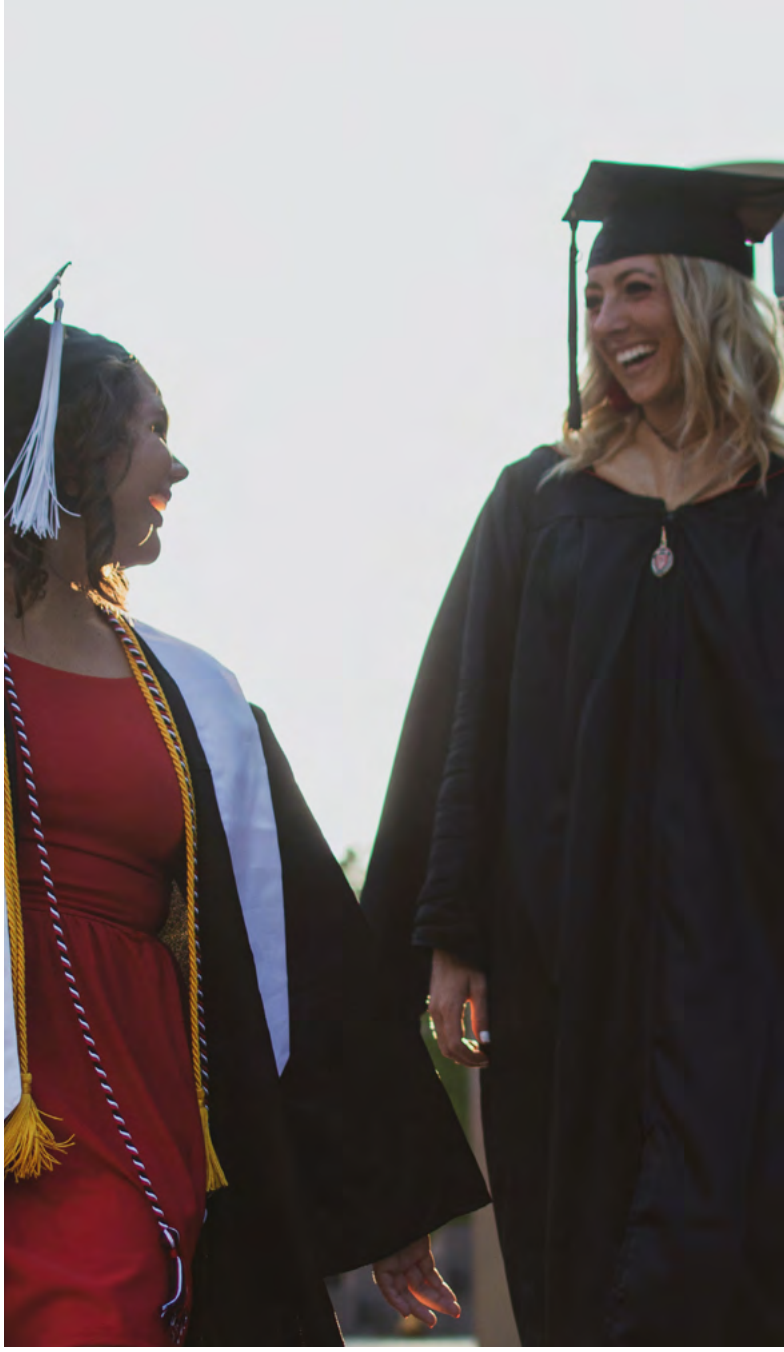
98 As an example, in a nationally representative sample of participants in the (US) Children's Scholarship Fund, only one third of the students who had been offered a scholarship, took it—because the parents of the other students could not afford the gap between the scholarship amount and the tuition. W.G. Howell et al., "School Vouchers and Academic Performance: Results from Three Randomized Field Trials," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 21, no. 2 (March 1, 2002): 191–217, https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.10023.

Belgium, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, seldom face the whole-cloth disparagements of state and non-state schools that is common in more uniform systems.[99]

CONCLUSION

We have established that independent schools do not harm social cohesion and, on almost every measure, enhance it. Thus, democratic policy-makers can have confidence that expanding access to independent schools and ensuring their quality is likely to enhance the civic capabilities of young people and lead, eventually, to a more civically integrated and politically engaged public.

Democracies are fragile. Each generation must prepare the next to take up the rights and responsibilities of citizens; schools bear an outsized burden in this process. Do independent schools play a positive role in inculcating the knowledge, skills, and habits that animate lifelong democratic participation? They can, and they do, when they honour religious, philosophical, and pedagogical beliefs of families and students while ensuring robust knowledge-building for all.



99 See, for instance, the growth of the UK's Jewish day-school sector, thanks to the operating and capital cost contributions of the Ministry of Education. H. Miller, "Meeting the Challenge: The Jewish Schooling Phenomenon in the UK," *Oxford Review of Education* 27, no. 4 (2001): 501–13. But this statement is not an absolute. Even the United Kingdom faces occasional anti-religious-school movements. To date, these have not been successful. See R. McNamara, "Debate on Denominational Schools," House of Parliament, United Kingdom, July 20, 2004.

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