UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

THE LIFE EXPERIENCES AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF CHILDREN AS CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

by

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August 2007

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University of Pretoria

THE LIFE EXPERIENCES AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF CHILDREN AS CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

in

LEARNING SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

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SOUTH AFRICA
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2007

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DEDICATION

For my own children and for the children of South Africa.

Different faces
Many races
Different people
Many places
The past behind us
The future and freedom in front of us

For children of Africa
We stand together
In these troubled times
We stand together
We come from one land but we are so different
Yet, we stand together.

Stephen-John Martin (in Smuts, 2001:15)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was a challenging and demanding journey, but I did not travel it alone; I was supported along the way by God, people and support systems. I wish to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to:

The nine-year-old learners who participated enthusiastically in sharing their experiences, and provided data that formed the basis and thrust of this research. The principal of the school and teachers of the Foundation Phase, especially the Head of Department – Foundation Phase, who gave their support and cooperation.

Liesel Ebersöhn and Irma Eloff who supervised this work by providing academic input, intellectual stimulus and technical guidance, each in their own unique way. Their scholarly leadership assisted me at times when I felt confused by the excess of information and data and did not recognize emerging insights.

Jonathan Jansen, Theo Möller and Marilise Lombard who acted as critical readers and gave thought-provoking criticism. Rinelle Evans who gave initial direction through stimulating questions.

Annalie Botha who acted as research assistant and took time to engage with my research endeavours and uncertainties and provided meaningful contributions. She also shared my excitement during the data collection phase when the participating children inspired with their passion for life. Retha van Wyk and Jaco Joubert assisted with the drama technique and gave a special dimension of youthful energy and unique approach to the research. Karin Scrooby assisted with information searches.

Elsabé Olivier who acted as information specialist and who offered her professional expertise.

The University of Pretoria for financial support in the form of a bursary.

Susan Fourie who assisted with the transcriptions, Hester van der Walt for her meticulous editing and Johan Slabbert for assistance in compiling the compact disc.

My husband Jaco who assisted by photographing data for the compact disc, my children Kristien and husband Rooies, Louise and husband Louis, Jaco (jr) and Barry for their encouragement, patience and support. My family, friends and colleagues for their prayers, motivation and interest.

Soli Deo Gloria!

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ABSTRACT

This inquiry is the exploration and understanding of a case study: the nine-year-old learners of an inner-city school in South Africa and their experiences of democratic South Africa as citizens. Their expressions informed me on how they perceived their democratic identities and their understandings of their citizenship. From the acquired understandings and identities I sought to extend the current conceptions of citizenship education. This study was informed by the interpretivist paradigm and guided by a conceptual framework.

The literature on citizenship and citizenship education concerning the young child highlighted associated concepts and theories. I employed Dewey's theory on building a learning community and Waghid's expansion of compassion and imaginative action. Theories used concerning young children and their construction of citizenship were the postcolonial and transforming society theory, informing that children as young as nine years can engage in notions such as citizenship and democracy. From the literature, I identified the knowledge, skills and values needed for a child to participate as an active and accountable citizen; content also offered by the South African national curriculum. This curriculum envisages the future citizen as the responsible citizen who will embrace democratic values in their everyday lives and contribute to nation-building. The data collection methods and data collection instruments were designed in a child-centred way to facilitate self-expression. The constructivist grounded theory analysis assisted in generating significant insights.

The nine-year-old learners expressed their identification with the South African democracy and its values such as social justice, which aligned with the South African ideal of social cohesion and nation-building. However, they expressed little knowledge about and no active participation in democratic processes. They expressed concern about their unsafe neighbourhood and the social injustices they encountered in their community. The young learners expressed the desire for change to transform South Africa into a 'better nation' to secure their and other citizens' future.

Key findings confirmed statements made by scholars in this field: citizenship education has to acknowledge the life experiences of children in order to be meaningful (thus contextualize citizenship) and to assist young children to contribute to democracy. However, the democracy can only be sustained and strengthened if the learners are knowledgeable about democratic processes and possible threats to these processes. In addition, young children need to be participants in the democracy and not only observers. The nine-year-old learners expressed the passion to do what is expected of them but seemingly lacked the participatory skills and opportunities they needed.

KEYWORDS: **Young South African children’s citizenship experiences, democratic identity, citizenship education, democratic values, Dewey's building a learning community, Waghid's compassion and imaginative action, postcolonial theory, transforming society theory, high social awareness, lack of participation, lack of democratic knowledge**

CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW OF THE INQUIRY:

Children, citizenship and citizenship education in the global and South African context

1.1 Introduction

Are children citizens? Should they be? Do they understand complicated and abstract concepts of a political nature? What possible contribution to issues related to politics can children make? These are a few of the questions I encountered when discussing the topic of children and citizenship with people in general. Contradictory to these questions, politicians and educationalists maintain that the youth can play a role in sustaining the new South African democracy (Scholtz, 1999; Department of Education, 2001a). There is a growing realization that nation-states require their citizens to adopt a shared sense of nationhood as a prerequisite for the democratic and successful functioning of their state (Wilde, 2005:7-11). This is especially relevant for the newly democratised, multicultural South African state. The developing legitimacy for South Africa is dependent on the subjective sense of shared group membership among citizens for the establishment of effective democratic governance and civil stability (Eaton, 2002). Consequently, I started to think about the young children themselves in relation to 'citizenship' and deliberated on the following questions: How do young children experience the new democratic dispensation of South Africa? How do they experience and perceive their citizenship? How do they understand their identity in the South African democracy? The opposing perceptions on children's status and their role as citizens in democratic South Africa against the voices of the children themselves became the academic puzzle of this research project.

This study addresses the subject of children's citizenship and citizenship education in democratic South Africa by examining the life experiences of young children as citizens in the new democratic

South Africa. The statement made by Howard and Gill (2000:357), that children will only be able to appreciate the values and principles of a democracy as part of citizenship education if adults, politicians and educationalists in particular understand their life experiences, influenced my line of inquiry. The children's life experiences informed me on how they understood their citizenship in the context of democratic South Africa. The study drew on the findings of a case study of nine-year-old children as learners and citizens in and beyond the classroom to enlighten the research focus.

Chapter 1 offers an overview of the inquiry. I commence with a section describing the research purpose and rationale. I then contextualise the inquiry within the theoretical domain of citizenship, citizenship education and the historicity of citizenship education. Thereafter, I narrow the focus to citizenship education in South Africa. In the following section I define certain key terms and the context in which I employ them. The chapter concludes with a description of the nine-year-old learners as the unit of analysis and reference to the research design and methodology. In the conclusion of the chapter, I acknowledge anticipated limitations and outline the organization of the study.

1.2 Rationale

I have been working with very young children all my professional life and I have empathized with their being in a paradoxical position in society. The youth of South Africa can be seen as one of the largest groups in the South African community, yet seems to be marginalized (Lindström, 2004). This situation correlates with the position of children in other parts of the world (Stoken, 2005; Hart in Holden & Clough, 2000:27). Galeano (in Vally, 2005:31) writes about the abomination confronting children today, saying, ‘almost never are [children] listened to, never understood’. In addition, Lindström (2004) agrees that the 9 to 12 age group is a very strong force in the marketplace on national and international level, but according to Holden (2000) and Stoken (2005) their voices about *hard questions* of a political nature are marginalized. According to Knutsson (1997) and Cohen (2005:22), children's political status leaves much to be desired; they cite children's limited ability to act in the capacity of citizens (for example in paying taxes) as a possible reason.

In spite of children's position as a marginalised group in the South African society, Asmal (in Department of Education, 2002a:8) views children as the hope for securing and sustaining the new

South African democracy. Children are regarded as agents for transforming South Africa into a peaceful and prosperous nation in which citizens will see themselves as members of the ‘imagined community’ that coincides with the boundaries of South Africa (Anderson in Eaton, 2002:46). Eaton (2002:46) explains the view that the youth have to be proud of that membership and should perceive themselves to be members of a national collectivity, and be willing to make sacrifices for the good of the 'nation', for instance through paying taxes and preventing diverse societies from being torn apart by conflict of interest.

The academic rationale for this study, which evolved from my personal interest and a survey of the literature, was to investigate and document young children's voices in a political or governmental context. There is evidence that children's voices are not often heard in research projects concerning the political, civic or governmental affairs of a nation (John in Holden & Clough, 2000). A reason for this apparent lack of research may be adults' perception that the notion of children's autonomy or participation in decision-making is a threat to their own rights (Bennett Woodhouse, 1999). A further motivation for this study was my interest in citizenship education as preparation for citizenship is a core task of state education systems (Osler & Starkey, 2005b).

I intended listening to children by exploring their expressions and perceptions about living in democratic South Africa and to understand how their experiences shaped their understandings of their citizenship. In addition I wanted to inquire how their everyday life experiences formed their democratic identity. Strengthening my mode of inquiry was research done by Howard and Gill (2000:357) and their insight that children's understandings of their citizenship is influenced by their interpretation of their surrounding world, whether in a democracy, autocracy or any other form of political dispensation. I anticipated that children's life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation of South Africa would inform me and others in extending current conceptions of citizenship education.

Citizenship education includes aspects such as participation and empowerment of the young child, features of the national curriculum as well as the role of the teacher and the social institutions that assume responsibility for the civic education of children: school, families and communities, and civil society. Brown and Harrison (in Holden & Clough, 2000:27) argue that children's personal experiences are a powerful force in learning about citizenship. How do children perceive themselves and others as citizens? What do they currently understand about the abstract notions of democracy and the South African nation? What do young children need to participate successfully in the development of self-efficacy; enabling them to express their opinions and make informed decisions in the democracy? What knowledge, skills and values do they need to attain to achieve their full potential as citizens in order to meet potential challenges and threats to the democracy? Can young children be taught abstract values such as equality and respect? What are the principles and strategies underpinning the broader vision of the citizenship curriculum for the young child in general and in the South African context? Is citizenship education a means for the South African government to exercise peaceful authority over its citizens or is the government interested in the development of critical and participative citizens? For further clarification of my rationale for this study it is important to take cognizance of the subsequent background information.

In both new and long established democracies there has recently been a growing emphasis on the role citizenship education has to play in helping to secure peace and human rights in the modern world (Martin, 2003:2; Holden & Clough, 2000:13). Education for citizenship is crucial for the maintenance and enhancement of the skills, understanding, knowledge and the values presupposed in the democratic structures of civil society (Pring, 2001:81). The Council of Europe (in Holden & Clough, 2000:13) emphasizes that within the broader European context there are calls for young children to be educated in democratic processes and values owing to the groundswell of xenophobia and racism. At a global level the Council of Europe provides evidence of movements to involve children in actions to address issues of social injustice and environmental degradation. To fulfil the role of an active and responsible citizen, children have to be educated from a very early age in citizenship (Ministry of Education, 2001:3; Mahomed, 2003:118) and in the South African context, through a new national curriculum (Graham & Meyer, 2001).

Democratic South Africa was officially established in 1994 with the first democratic elections. With this new democracy a dream was born, a South African dream of one nation uniting people of diverse origins, cultures and languages. This dream became an articulated idea when Nelson Mandela signed the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996. The Constitution calls all South Africans, including young children, to build a just and free democratic society, reconstruct the inheritance of apartheid by nurturing the democratic values of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996). Developing and sustaining our newfound democracy are important matters that need to be addressed. In the words of the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, ‘we need to educate our young people not only for the marketplace, but for responsible citizenship; young people who will embrace the democratic values in their everyday lives'; and 'learners with knowledge, skills and values that will enable meaningful participation in society … as good citizens' (Ministry of Education, 2001:10). The view taken by President Thabo Mbeki, was that if learners took pride in the values that led to democracy, they would come to what Mbeki called 'The New Patriotism' (Ministry of Education, 2001:9). See **Addendum 1** for a summary of the democratic values as described in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001).

For children to construct a democratic identity and acknowledge patriotism seems a complicated process, especially to educators who play an important role in shaping the citizens of tomorrow (Hicks & Holden, 1995). Concepts such as a civic and democratic identity linked to related rights and responsibilities have emerged in the literature (Eaton, 2002; Vawda, 2006). Young people's participation in casting their votes, as a civic responsibility, has often been a topic of discussion since the first elections in South Africa. Before the second general election apprehension was expressed in the daily newspapers about the fact that our young democracy could only be strengthened if the concept of democracy lived in the heart of its people, old and young (Scholtz, 1999).

Youth leaders, on the one hand, accepted their responsibility as being the 'foundation of our democratic society' at the Youth Congress at Muizenberg in December 2002 (Die Burger, 2002). On the other hand, in an article by Malan (Rapport, 2004) the youth was hardly mentioned in President Mbeki's speeches in the time before the 2004 election. According to Floris (Beeld, 2004b), who interviewed students on four different campuses during that time, students commented that no political party strove for the interest of the youth. Malan (Rapport, 2004) argues that general and official interest in the youth declined since 1994 when the National Youth Commission and a youth policy were established.

Ten years after the establishment of democracy, two young South Africans wrote some telling comments. Their views are reflected here.

> To all adults in South Africa[1]
>
> There are three things I want to tell you. Firstly, please stop sports issues, which you over-emphasise. Secondly, please stop the race-issues. I am a White South African schoolchild and am friends with children of all races who go to school with me. I think it is the government who intimidates us with racial issues. … Thirdly, our country has money for other nations like Zimbabwe, but not for our own people who suffer from HIV/AIDS. I am proud of my own language and my music. I know that young people like me are the future of our country, but I shall most definitely go overseas after completing school – not of my own free will but because of the alarming and negative example we get. Please secure our future!

A nine-year-old child (Participant 2 of Class 2 – data from my case study) wrote:

> If I were Mr. Mbeki, I would change the world. I will take care of our country.

Both messages signify children's perceptions of some political roles and responsibilities and from these extracts I take it that children seem to feel that adults build a future, which the younger generation inherits and has to live with long after the older generation has passed on. I relate both messages to aspects associated with children and their contribution as citizens of the country. On the one hand, empirical studies indicate that young children (9 to 12 years) are concerned about environmental destruction, crime, violence, and social inequalities (Wood in Holden & Clough, 2000:35; Smith, 2005). Children wish to be active in working towards effective change to ensure improved environmental and social conditions (Hicks & Holden in Holden & Clough, 2000:15). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (Articles 12 and 13) gives children the right to seek information, to express their thoughts and feelings, to have these listened to, and to partake in decisions affecting them.

On the other hand, the literature indicates that paternalistic policies dictate that children be represented politically by their parents, leaving them vulnerable. In this regard Cohen (2005:221) comments:

---

[1] The letter was written anonymously and in Afrikaans (Beeld, 1 November 2005). The content has been translated and summarised.

> … lacking independent representation or a voice in politics, children and their interests often fail to be understood because the adults who do represent them conflate, or substitute, their own views for those of children. … Until democratic societies establish a better-defined and comprehensive citizenship for children, along with methods for representation that are sensitive to the special political circumstances faced by children, young people will remain ill-governed and neglected by democratic politics.

However, new emphasis has been placed on citizenship education by international organizations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe taking the lead on proposing initiatives in human rights and citizenship education (Osler, 2005:3). In 1989 the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, which acknowledged the freedom of children to express opinions and to have a say in matters affecting their own lives (Fountain, 1993:2-3).

Comprehensive research on citizenship and the young child and on citizenship education in general exists, mostly descriptive of nature (Bennett Woodhouse, 1999; Vally, 2005; Astiz, 2007). However, I found a small amount of literature of an exploratory nature related to the different facets of citizenship and citizenship education related to young children. Therefore, a South African-based inquiry may enrich the body of research related to citizenship and the young child, focusing mainly on the children's voices as citizens. I thus propose my critical research questions as follows:

- How do nine-year-old learners, born in the first year of democracy, experience the democratic dispensation in South Africa as citizens?

From insights gained from the learners' life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation, I hope to answer the following questions:

- How do learners perceive their democratic identities?
- How do learners understand their citizenship?
- How can the acquired understandings and identities extend generally held current conceptions of citizenship education?

As an interpretivist, I explored the life experiences of the nine-year-old learners as citizens living in democratic South Africa through their expressions, without predetermined ideas about their experiences. However, from the experiences I gained conducting two pilot studies and information I gained from literature on citizenship and citizenship education related to young children, I was guided by underlying assumptions. One assumption was that nine-year-old learners do have a voice about the political world in which they live. Another assumption was that the political community and its everyday practices of discourse and communication provide a context for the developing cognitions and identities of the young child in a democracy. Thus, citizenship is not only about adults teaching young children topics like rights and responsibilities, nor is citizenship about adults prescribing to children how they must act in a democracy or adhere to democratic values. Citizenship is about young children constructing their own understandings of citizenship and a democratic identity in a democracy that offers a constructive life world and an educational system that will meet the needs of both child and society. This study focuses on the domain of citizenship and citizenship education related to the experiences of the participating nine-year-old learners of my case study against the background of a new national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c).

With this research project I aimed to explore and present the voices of the nine-year-old learners as a marginalized group of citizens within the South African population. I chose the nine-year-old learners of an inner-city school in Sunnyside, in the City of Pretoria, in the metropolitan area of Tshwane (authentic geographical data) as the unit of analysis since the school reflected the diverse South African population. Furthermore, I used various data collection methods to ensure validity of my data in my attempt to reflect the children's voices. I constructed a conceptual framework, which guided my understanding. The postcolonial theorists, who believe that children as young as seven years could engage in deeper levels of meaning (Tobin in Viruru, 2005; Mac Naughton, 2003), guided me when interpreting and understanding the learners' voices.

What have I learned from this study? I learned that children are able to create their own understandings of their social and political worlds as citizens. Furthermore, I found that children are compassionate and want to make a contribution to society, especially in working towards social justice. I gained insight that the young children were deeply patriotic and identified with the South African democracy. They understood abstract concepts like democracy and the rights and responsibilities of the citizen. They demonstrated critical thought and problem-solving skills concerning democratic processes. They acknowledged the diverseness of the South African population and committed themselves to enhance unity by living democratic values such as democracy, social justice, equality, *ubuntu* (human dignity), accountability, the rule of law and respect.

I further learned that the young children were discouraged by examples of non-democratic processes and principles they encountered such as their unsafe neighbourhood and the social injustices regarding vulnerable people in their community. They viewed the political leaders as responsible for rectifying the lack of social security. These young children expressed a desire for change which would transform South Africa by securing their as well as other citizens' future.

The nine-year-old learners revealed that they were committed to being active and responsible citizens who wished to participate in the democratic dispensation of South Africa to make 'a better nation' (Participant 7 of Class 3). However, the learners expressed their participation only in an imaginative way for there was no evidence of authentic democratic participation involving them; neither did they express ample knowledge (relevant to their age group) of a political nature. If the young learners are perceived as the citizen of the future who has to sustain the democracy for further generations (Jeffreys, 2006), these nine-year-old children expressed the passion to do so but seemingly lacked the participatory skills they might need.

1.3 Contextualising this study

A review of the literature indicated that citizenship education and notions of the 'ideal' or 'good' citizen have been understood and practiced in different ways over the centuries and over the past few decades (Waghid, 2005:323). From a Western philosophical point of view, the education of citizenship of young children can be traced back from very early times to post-modernism (Dunne, 2005). Thus, citizenship has to be studied against the context of constant change of the political and social circumstances in specific societies and countries.

In the following section I outline the historicity of citizenship and citizenship education. This overview will place the South African citizenship issue in the context of time. I then provide a purposeful summary of citizenship education in selected long and recently established democracies like South Africa, to assist my understanding of the complexity of citizenship and citizenship education.

1.3.1 Historicity of citizenship education

In the time of the ancient Greeks, philosophers such as Aristotle (384-322 BC) wrote about the importance of educating responsible citizens for the survival of the city-state (translated by Sinclair, 1966). Aristotle referred to the 'good citizen' living a 'happy and full life' (Magee, 2001:39). In the time of the Roman Empire, Cicero [106-43 BC] wrote about 'civic training' where the citizen has to acknowledge ethical and legal responsibilities and rights to uphold the 'moral community' (Heater, 1990). Citizenship in its modern form goes back to the American and French Revolutions of the late 18th century, which replaced the hereditary king with the sovereign will of the people, who were recognized as active citizens (Castles, 2004). The precondition for this change was the older notion of the sovereignty of the modern state, as enshrined by the 1648 Peace of Westphalia. The context for the evolution of citizenship to the system of economic and social inclusion of all, irrespective of class and gender, was the rise of industrial capitalism. The role of the state was to create the conditions for participation. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) linked the idea of the ideal citizen and citizenship education with nationalism (translated by Cole, 1978).

By the early 20th century the modern state was established in Europe and North America with the following core characteristics: state sovereignty over a specific territory; state autonomy in controlling the economy, culture, environment and society within the bounded territory, and state control over its boarders (including people) (Castles, 2004). At this time Dewey argued that education was central in shaping a democratic nation, in the constitution of moral citizen-subjects who worked for equal opportunities and the moral justification of the democracy (in Ong, 2004:51; in Shklar, 1969; in Power 1970). Marshall (in Bulmer & Rees, 1996:4-5) contributed to the progression of civil, political and social rights of citizenship and the institutions most associated with the establishment of these rights. He regarded civil rights as rights necessary for individual freedom and political rights as the right to participate in an exercise of political power or political authority as an elector. Institutions concerning the establishment of these rights are the civil and criminal courts of justice. Marshall described social rights from a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to live the life of a full-civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society. The institutions associated with it are the educational systems and social services. According to Power (1970), education contributed to the shaping of a middle-class citizenry that was generally aligned according to basic values, attitudes, and competencies considered desirable in citizens during the nineteenth century. As a result ideological-social citizenship was attained by all middle classes, but economic-social citizenship remained minimal throughout this century (Marshall in Bulmer & Rees, 1996:12).

The modern state became the nation-state as a result of the successful struggle of the economically powerful middle class against absolutist forms of government, and the resulting emergence of democracy. The history of citizenship education in South Africa is linked to the rise of the modern nation-state. In the nation-states the emphasis was on educating the citizen as a virtuous member of society (Ross, 1984, Benson, 1987, Berman, 1997, UNESCO'S International Conference on Education, 2001). See **Addendum 2** for a description of the characteristics of a modern nation-state. Table 1.1 gives an overview of citizenship education over time.

Table 1.1: Citizenship education through time

Time frame	Aim of citizenship education
Ancient Greece	Educating responsible citizens for the survival of the city-state
Roman Empire	Civic training of the citizen to acknowledge ethical and legal responsibilities and rights to uphold the moral community
American and French Revolutions	Citizenship education linked to nationalism and the political and social freedom of the individual
Modern democratic nation	Citizenship education central in the formation of moral citizen-subjects to morally justify the democracy
Nation-state	Educating the citizen as a virtuous member of society. Through colonialism, natives and other people in the colonies were seen as subjects. In South Africa, during the British occupation, the aim of citizenship education was to assimilate all non-British people to their language and culture
Period after World War II and the migration of ethnic minorities into the nation-states during the 1960s and 1970s	Citizenship education delivered through one of the following approaches: • *assimilation* aimed at immigrant communities attaining citizenship and at the dream of the nation-state to have all groups sharing one dominant mainstream culture • *differential exclusion* meant to exclude minority groups from citizenship education • *multiculturalism* aims to recognize members of minority groups as having equal rights in all spheres of society, without giving up their diversity
Globalization	Through the approach of *transnationalism*, there are claims for citizenship education to acknowledge different identities for the promotion of peace, in local and global contexts

If one could deal simplistically with a complex matter such as citizenship education, it is evident from the timeline that throughout the centuries, citizenship was a given (Grobler, 2005, personal communication). From the time of the ancient Greeks up to post-modern times citizenship education was the instrument for preserving peace and upholding the society and democracy, although not inclusive for all citizens. In recent times citizenship is again seen as the medium to secure democracy through being responsive to diversity needs. The overarching aim of citizenship education is to sustain peace in local communities, in the bigger realm of the nation and in the global context. If this is the universal aim of citizenship education – why then the unrest, why September 11 and the conflicts in the Middle East and in Africa? Mahomed (2003:120) quotes Alvin Toffler in *Powershift:* 'tomorrow's flashpoints, the conflicts we face as the new civilization of violence, wealth and knowledge collides with the entrenched forces of the old fading industrial civilization' and 'the use of violence, wealth and knowledge as sources of power will not soon disappear'. Other philosophers like Rossouw (2005) warn of a bloody 21st century if democrats do not intervene. The youth of South Africa has to be equipped through citizenship education for living and participating in this century.

1.3.2 South Africa and citizenship education

For further illumination of my study I need to describe citizenship education in South Africa in the context of time. With the acknowledgement that the history of South Africa started many decades ago and cannot be described in a simplistic way, I chose the model of Kymlicka (2004) for his acknowledgement of historical negation of previous established citizenship models in South Africa. He commences with the Dutch, who later intermarried with Germans and Huguenot settlers and colonized South Africa. The descendants of this ethnically mixed population are Afrikaners. They became the dominant group in South Africa and through the creation of apartheid categorized the population into three racial groups – White, Black or African and Coloured. Apartheid became the official racial ideology and practice in South Africa, which on the one hand became the most racially oppressive and on the other hand the wealthiest nation in Africa (Kymlicka, 2004:157; Dorward, 2000).

The challenges to citizenship education in post-apartheid South Africa are unique. Moodley and Adam (2004:159-181) identify a sense of displacement rather than enjoying equal rights in the sub consciousness of many South Africans. With the establishment of a new constitution and the search for truth and reconciliation, South Africa is making steps to establish a democratic society. Aspects that complicate the implementation of democratic citizenship education are the fact that

'… government blatantly contradicts the lessons taught at school' (Moodley & Adam, 2004:172). Well-intentioned educational initiatives like the so-called Values Project (Department of Education, 2002a) are overshadowed by contrary government practices such as policies on HIV/AIDS, and the non-delivery of employment, safety, housing and other preconditions of a normal life that is consigned to the privileged elite (Jansen in Moodley & Adam, 2004). The constitutional values are also undermined by a political culture that often practices the opposite of what it allegedly promotes in civic education. Essential democratic values, like accountability, free debate, non-racism and non-sexism are often disregarded by political leaders. This hidden agenda or public curriculum contrasts with the new National Curriculum Statement, Grades R – 9 (Schools) (Department of Education, 2002c) and triggers alienation from politics instead of active engagement (see summary of sections of the national curriculum relevant to this study in **Addendum 3**).

Nation-building is seen by Moodley and Adam (2004) as a goal for citizenship education in South Africa to reconcile the still racially divided and unequal South African society. Fundamental to the language of nation-building are the official notions of political literacy, moral education and the teaching of democracy. Consensus that emerged from the South African debate since 1994 promotes the official notion of political literacy, which has to 'produce' active and participatory citizens that can act both as cosmopolitan internationalists and as locally effective reformers. The core values identified from the new Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) are promoted to be the foundation of nation-building by determining the quality of national character (Department of Education, 2002c). Moodley and Adam (2004) state that citizenship education in South Africa mainly means advocating the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

There is, however, current debate as to how far the national projects should go in promoting aspects of nation-building and a democratic identity. Projects like the promotion of English as a national language are launched at the expense of minority languages (Moodley & Adam, 2004). The recent debate about Afrikaans as medium of instruction in schools and universities illustrates Moodley and Adam's (2004) argument. For some, Afrikaans is their constitutional right in terms of teaching and learning and others argue that the promotion of Afrikaans is being used for marginalisation (Van Rheede, 2005; Du Toit, 2005). Degenaar (in Moodley & Adam, 2004:168) advises promoting democratic values rather than insisting on a national consensus, assisted by English as a common language. Jansen (in Moodley & Adam, 2004:172) asserts that it was never the intention of the government led by the African National Congress (ANC) to implement democratic education and that the syllabus revision was mainly about establishing legitimacy for the new government, under criticism for its failure to deliver in education.

In South Africa the influence of civic associations like the United Democratic Front (UDF) played an important role since the early 1980’s in mobilizing people of all ages and at all levels of society against apartheid (Moodley & Adam, 2004). South Africa has acquired all the ingredients of a formal democracy with periodic free elections in a multiparty system, but the content, quality, and extent of citizens' participation seems problematic. Mattes (in Moodley & Adam, 2004:176) states that South Africa now has one of the most passive citizenries in southern Africa. Ironically, previous state repression almost guaranteed a vigorous South African civil society and the new ‘soft incorporation is inadvertently destroying the political culture of once lively grassroots association’ (p 177). Based on recent qualitative research on political passivity, Moodley and Adam (2004:176) found, in line with global trends, that concerns about private lifestyle and consumerist interests have replaced political interests. Added to these concerns, some of the trends in modern South Africa are (Moodley & Adam, 2004):

- Socialization into democratic behaviour is under threat. People want to transform pressing local conditions rather than strive for the strengthening of the democracy. Democracy is evaluated in terms of economic delivery of which people in some areas see little of. During 2005 there were revolts and violence in many local communities against government's decisions concerning new structures of municipality regions (October & La Grange, 2005). This trend is linked to the role of voluntary civic associations in South Africa, which act as the voice of entire communities instead of offering people experience of democratic behaviour (Friedman in Moodley & Adam, 2004:178-179);

- Vigilance justice still occurs, no longer institutionalized, but spontaneously as a result of distrust in police competences. Examples of this distrust made highlights in the South African news during 2005. In one case police negligence led to the death of a five-year-old and community members took the law in own hands (Swart, 2005);

- A political culture of civic engagement is no longer fostered by the present government itself as a result of having party congresses only every five years and the fact that debate on controversial issues like the macroeconomic policy is not encouraged within the ANC parliament caucus itself. The Leninist legacy of democratic centralism, cherished partly as dogma and partly as necessity in the ANC period of exile, is still carried over. The opposition, based in ethnic minorities, seems powerless and no threat to the ruling majority party (Moodley & Adam, 2004:179);

- ‘The South African discourse is person-focused and narrowly conformist, not issue oriented’ (Moodley & Adam, 2004:180). Identification with leaders or organizations goes with lack of knowledge about the policies that these persons or institutions pursue. This is evident in the recent debate between Mbeki and Zuma in which even the youth were involved (Sparks, 2005; Du Plessis, 2005). ‘People attach themselves to celebrities, regardless of the content of their fame’ (Moodley & Adam, 2004:180). According to surveys (Opinion 99 poll, HSRC surveys in Moodley & Adam, 2004:179) issues that are widely reported by the media and politicians are rarely cited by voters. An example is the issue of corruption. South Africa is rated 46th in Transparency International's 2005 Corruption Perception Index (Momberg, 2005). The four issues that do concern voters most are, in order of priority, jobs, crime, housing, and education. In South Africa unemployment stands at 45% and the income gap between highest and lowest earners is the third widest in the world (after Brazil and Guatemala) (Mahomed, 2003);

- As education is a major concern of this study, the following needs to be highlighted: Although huge progress is being made to address inequalities and the integration of all races in schools, Rademeyer quotes Jansen (2005), who argues that to make a real difference, teachers' knowledge base has to be expanded, textbooks have to be distributed equally and instruction time has to be better utilized. Duncan Hindle, Director-General of Education, reported on growth in delivery systems but announced that there were still nearly 4000 schools without running water and 3000 schools without basic sanitation (Joubert, 2005a). According to a nationwide audit, of the estimated 6,4 million South African children in the 0-7 age group, only slightly over one million are enrolled in ECD sites (Department of Education, 2001b). About 4,5 million children of school going age are not in school (Mahomed, 2003). Recent research done in alliance with UNESCO shows that primary school performance is lower than in some other African countries (O'Connor, 2005). Sixty percent of learners in rural areas have limited access to libraries and performance in Mathematics and Science is very low (TIMMS report). Most cases of reported racism were recorded in the education sector (Mahomed, 2003). Racism in schools has to be seen against the frequent flare-ups of racism in other sectors of society, as was the case with racism and judges of the High Court in the Western Cape (Jeffreys, 2005) and Afrikaans-speaking students wearing t-shirts with discriminatory slogans (Joubert, 2005b);

- The ANC Freedom Charter of 1955, the inspiring precursor of the post-apartheid constitution, pronounced, 'The people shall govern!' After the euphoria of the first democratic elections in 1994, the disenchantment with politics and with the promise that the ordinary person would have a say in his/her future after apartheid resulted in much lower 1999 election participation (Moodley & Adam, 2004);

- Growing xenophobia towards the estimated 1 to 5 million illegal immigrants in South Africa, coming from the rest of Africa (although based on the competition for scarce employment, still an alarming trend) (Moodley & Adam, 2004);

- Giliomee and Simkins (in Moodley & Adam, 2004:177) theorize that South Africa is a 'one-party dominant state' and not a one-party state. According to Moodley and Adam (2004:180), movements towards authoritarianism in South Africa are evident. These trends do not originate from overwhelming governance but from the widespread crisis of authority and the inability to enforce order.

Moodley and Adam (2004) state that a fragile civil society in South Africa, held together by an interdependent economy and a weak sense of solidarity, is no guarantee that democracy will succeed. To support the abstract virtues of democracy, effective citizenship education requires concrete contextual analysis. Only by critical analyses of how a democracy functions in the everyday reality of the political community in which learners live, by comparing the ideals with the practice, can learners be motivated to become active and engaged citizens. According to Moodley and Adam (2004:172), little political education takes place and the little that does, is a decontextualized teaching of citizenship through the institutions of democracy. Nevertheless, they believe that South Africa's Constitution and culture of human rights provide the framework for the creation of a democratic and just society. They (2004:181) 'hope that a deeper democracy education for active citizenship of a new generation will preserve the noble ideals of one of the most inspiring constitutions in the world' – a Constitution that 'we admire', in the words of Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein leader of Northern Ireland, during a visit to South Africa (De Lange, 2005b).

The goals set by Moodley and Adam (2004) are especially difficult within a nation-state in which democracy is in its infancy (Kymlicka, 2004). Democratic citizenship education must be aimed at all groups in South Africa. Gerwel, a political analyst (radio interview, 2005) sees the future of South Africa as depending on the balance between unity and diversity.

If this is the situation of citizenship education in modern South Africa, what are the current issues of citizenship education in old and established democracies and new or recently established democracies? What can we learn from this knowledge? I do not intend to give an in-depth examination of citizenship issues in these countries, but only to touch on major issues in a comparative way. Table 1.2 gives a comparative overview of these issues.

Table 1.2: Comparison of recent issues of citizenship education in selected democracies

Country	Old/new democracy (according to year of establishment)	Current issues related to citizenship education
United States of America (USA)	Old	Social cohesion as conservative ideology is becoming institutionalized. The aim is to integrate minorities into the mainstream. Citizenship education at present is outdated (Ladson-Billings, 2004:99-126).
United Kingdom (Britain)	Old	British society is characterised by deep diversity (class, region, age, gender, ethnicity) and inequalities among minorities. There is a concern with national identity and the tightening of immigration rules. A new citizenship education is being introduced (Figueroa, 2004:219-244).
Germany	Old	Germany attempts to maintain 'ethnic purity'. Political education was introduced with little evidence of educating children for critical thinking. Luchtenberg (2004:245-271) believes in reforming citizenship education to detect and prevent xenophobia.
South Africa	New	A new negotiated Constitution and democratic values have to transform the still deeply divided South Africa. Nation-building is seen as a goal for citizenship education through a new curriculum (based on democratic values), which promotes citizenship education in an integrated way (Moodley & Adam, 2004: 159-184).

Country	Old/new democracy (according to year of establishment)	Current issues related to citizenship education
Brazil	New	Citizenship education is addressed by the constitution and by national education. However, the institutionalized myth of a 'racial democracy' contradicts it. Indigenous people (Blacks and Indians) and former slaves are excluded from participation in society. Working for social justice and equality forms the basis of citizenship education (Gonçalves e Silva, 2004:185-214).
Namibia	New	A policy of national reconciliation for the creation of a culture of peace was adapted in the diverse Namibia. A programme for Human Rights and Democracy is taught from the primary levels, and key teachers are trained. Student teachers are involved in pre-service and in-service training. The aim is nation-building and the belief that citizenship education starts at home (Sampson, 2003:83-89).

In all these countries there is proof of citizenship education being influenced by ethnic diversity. In countries like England and Namibia there is evidence of distinct citizenship education, reflected in their new education policies. Namibia is the only country with clear aims for training teachers in citizenship education. In South Africa, citizenship education is included in the new curriculum, but in an integrated way (sees **Addendum 3**). In Namibia and South Africa (both new democracies) the emphasis of citizenship education is on nation-building. In the USA citizenship education has to be adapted to include the policy of social cohesion and the inclusion of minority groups. In Brazil citizenship education is written in the constitution and educational policy but is hardly implemented in practice. Here, citizenship education has to be adapted to include modern-day diversity needs and to rectify the deep-rooted divisions in the Brazilian society. In Germany there is political education but no distinct evidence of citizenship education aiming at critical thinking or including children of minority and ethnic groups.

To summarise my insights from the comparison in Table 1.2: The age of a democracy does not seem to make a large difference on citizenship education, except that the new democracies, like South Africa, accentuate nation-building in the pursuit of sustaining the new democracy. A common aspect of citizenship education illuminated by the comparison is the feature of diversity and unity, which emerged as a crucial feature in the expressions of the participating learners of my case study.

1.4 Explanation of core concepts

From the previous sections it is clear that there are various theories, concepts, issues and trends related to my research topic. This section clarifies the key concepts of the research topic and my interpretation thereof for application in this study. These concepts are the life experiences and understandings of children, children as citizens and democratic South Africa. In Chapter 2 I elaborate further on the core and related concepts as well as the theories associated with this study.

1.4.1 The life experiences and understandings of children

The study of the life experiences and understandings of children was done through the life-course perspective held by sociologists as described by Elder (in Hopkins, 2005:508-510). The life-course principles most relevant for this study are the emphasis that individuals are agents constructing their own understandings from participating in everyday life. Life is described as the existence and experiences of individuals; both the historical context and developmental age must be taken into account in understanding individuals' expressions about their lives (Elder in Hopkins, 2005:508-510). I studied the nine-year-old children as learners in and beyond the classroom and took cognizance of their developmental stage and the associated theories most applicable to the learners of my study, viz. building a learning community; compassion and imaginative action; postcolonial theory and the transforming society theory. I elaborate on the theories in Chapter 2 of this study. I interpreted the self-reporting of the nine-year-old learners through their own verbal articulation of ideas and their artefacts like drawings and letters as to what they have heard, saw, noticed, assumed, made sense of, interpreted, understood and apprehended as children living their lives. Therefore, I focused on the participating learners of my case study as citizens who attempted to shape and construct their own lives in the context of the contemporary democratic dispensation of South Africa.

1.4.2 Children as citizens

In the context of this study I perceived children as citizens, as 'child citizens'. Leaman has already used the concept 'citizen child' in 1994. To perceive children as citizens is a recent concept, according to Wood (in Holden & Clough, 2000:31) and De Freitas (2005:122). Children are citizens in their own right, and their relative immaturity and inexperience should not be regarded as incompetence. This study places the focus on the political status of children born in democratic South Africa, each with the right to a South African identity. I acknowledge children as subjects in the Republic of South Africa not only as an ever-present segment of the South African civil society but also as powerful thinkers, active citizens and capable of learning about their rights and responsibilities. Citizenship in a legal sense is anchored in the rights and responsibilities deriving from sovereign nation-states (Osler & Starkey, 2005b). Therefore, I see children as citizens living their daily lives and not only as citizens of the future. Cohen (2005:221) argues that democracies tend to see children through adult representation, which results in children and their interest not being heard or understood. The concepts citizen and citizenship are elucidated in Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), as follows: 'There is a common South African citizenship. All citizens are a. equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship; and b. equally subject to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship'.

Accordingly, I maintain that while children need opportunities and time to be children, they do also need an education, especially citizenship education, focused on their current state of being, as well as their process of becoming. According to Marshall and Bottomore (1996), the right to education is a social right of citizenship, because the aim of education during childhood is to shape the future adult. Through citizenship education children should be encouraged to become independent and autonomous learners, able to think creatively and critically, make decisions and participate responsibly and actively in their daily experiences (Hahn, 2005:24). Pring (2001:81) states that education for citizenship is crucial to the maintenance and enhancement of the skills, understandings and knowledge presupposed in the democratic structures of society. In addition, Johnson (2006) argues that citizenship education should entail a new value system when laying the foundations for a new democratic local and global citizenship.

1.4.3 Democratic South Africa

In a democratic nation-state (like South Africa) the concepts of citizen, citizenship and democracy are interrelated. I focused on the relations between the concepts citizenship and democracy by referring to the liberal vision of the Member States of the Council of Europe that foresees societies that are 'free, tolerant and just'; and such societies can only be established on the basis of democracy (Starkey, 2005:25). In a democracy, freedom, pluralism, human rights and the rule of law are enhanced and Member States in particular are expected to have effective legislation in place to promote equality of rights in diverse societies (Starkey, 2005:25; Banks, 2004; Kymlicka, 2004). The liberal vision of democracy is the true democracy, according to Steyn, De Klerk and Du Plessis (2006). In addition, a democracy requires the commitment of ordinary people who understand both the characteristics of a democratic way of life and the consequences of its potential loss (Steyn *et al.*, 2006). The performing of the citizen's responsibility relates to the civic republican vision of democracy (Osler, 2005). In any democracy, the government has a responsibility towards its citizens in terms of equal provision of services and protection as well as the enhancement of a democratic culture. There is a growing realization that a culture of democracy and 'human-centred values' can be achieved through education (Starkey, 2005:24; Ochieng (1972) in Department of Education, 2002a:11). This study places the nine-year-old participating learners of my case study as citizens in the new South African democracy where they are entitled to the rights proclaimed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), subjected to the responsibilities as proclaimed by the Constitution (1996). In Chapter 2 I elaborate further on the core and related concepts to democracy and citizenship.

1.5 Unit of analysis

This research project concentrated on one single case study, namely the nine-year-old learners in Grade 3 at one school, in order to explore their life experiences and understandings as citizens of democratic South Africa. I chose an inner-city primary school in the City of Pretoria for the study. The school is a governmental school, situated in a central-city neighbourhood consisting mostly of apartments. The population of this neighbourhood became more diverse after 1994 with families from Africa and the globe, e.g. Mozambique, Rwanda, Zambia and China, living there. Most of the school's children live in these apartments. Sunnyside is known for its crime and there are many homeless children living on the streets. In a Centenary booklet on the school the principal of the school said the following about the community:

The community we serve can be seen in one of two different ways:

- The sinister, dark dirty and negative side of crime, drugs and lawlessness; or
- The vibrant, throbbing society where true friends are made and where our school is charged to produce people who will be inspired to become leaders of tomorrow.

A further reason for choosing this school was that it reflected most of the diverse population of the residents of any mid-city in South Africa. The language of instruction of the school is English, which immediately implies in the South African context, that many but not all language groups (there are 11 official languages) were represented in the Grade 3 group. I focused on the nine-year-old learners, for they were in the last year of the first phase of school (Foundation Phase), thus being the mature group of the very young learners. There were 142 learners and four teachers in the Grade 3 group. When collecting data I was involved with the learners of a class for the last 30 minutes of every school day during a period of six weeks.

Another reason for choosing nine-year-old learners as partakers in the study was that these learners (who turned nine years old in 2004), were born in the first decade of the young South African democracy. Since they had been taught citizenship through the new national curriculum for the preceding two years, I assumed that the expressions of these learners as citizens of the new democracy could reveal valuable experiences and understandings of their citizenship and their democratic identity. By reporting my understandings I hope to extend the current conceptions of citizenship education held by others.

In exploring the nine-year-old learners' experiences of the democratic dispensation of South Africa as citizens, I was confronted with their conceptualisation of the abstract concepts of citizenship and democracy. Although these learners were in the final year of the first phase of school (Foundation Phase) and therefore supposed to have achieved a certain level of maturity, I still needed to know at what age learners possibly engage with the concepts related to my topic. According to Piaget (in Gordon & Browne, 2000:138; Morrison, 2006:277), the child in the age group 6-12 years cannot apply abstract reasoning as it only comes later, in the formal operational stage during adolescence. In addition, Piaget and Kohlberg are the leading proponents of a developmental stage theory of children's moral growth (Morrison, 2006:277-278). Piaget states that through exchanging viewpoints, Grade 3 children determine what is good/bad and what is right/wrong and according to Kohlberg children (ages 4-10 and at moral stage 2) are motivated to make moral decisions when their needs are satisfied (Morrison, 2006:278). Are Piaget's cognitive and moral developmental theories and Kohlberg's moral development theory applicable to the nine-year-old learner in the South African context or is the postcolonial theory most relevant to my respondents in relation to learning and teaching of citizenship? In Chapter 2 I studied theories related to my research topic to address these questions.

To enable myself to answer the research questions, I focused my research primarily on the nine-year-old learners' voices as citizens on their life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation of South Africa against the background of current curriculum developments. I explored citizenship education in the global as well as in the South African context. This steered my investigation to study recent literature on citizenship education in general and as related to the young child. I scrutinized literature of empirical as well as theoretical nature. Consequently, as citizenship is a fluid and highly contextualised issue, I used popular media like newspapers, television and the radio as resources. In addition, I used a comparative approach. I compared citizenship education as presented in other democratic contexts, which gave me a richer insight into citizenship education in South Africa. Although the role of the teacher is decisive for the nature and quality of learners' experiences in enabling and empowering them as citizens, I chose not to study this area in depth as it seemed to be a research focus on its own. For the same reason I also chose to exclude other role players crucial to citizenship education like policy makers, the family and relevant social institutions such as the community and civil society although I acknowledged their influence on the experiences of the participating learners of my case study.

1.6 Research design and methodology

I chose to study the research problems via the epistemological perspective of the interpretivist paradigm. The search for understanding is relevant for this study as I attempted to interpret, understand and reconstruct nine-year-old learners' life experiences and understandings as citizens of the democratic dispensation in South Africa from their point of view (Verma & Mallick, 1999; Merriam, 1998). This paradigm is characterized by a 'concern to understand the other' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:2), a concern for the individual and an effort to understand from within the context and perspective of human experience (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:398; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:149).

The interpretivist paradigm further posits that no single social reality exists when attempting to understand human behaviour (Merriam, 1998:4; Stake in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:440) as there are too many factors that affect or cause an outcome, which is unpredictable. This view of reality also influences my stance on the way knowledge is internalized and I admit to an inquiry that is qualitative and subjective in nature. With the lenses of the interpretive paradigm I assumed that children's subjective experiences and understandings are real and should be taken seriously; that I can 'make sense of' by interacting with them and listening to their voices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:3; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:123). I therefore rendered the children's voices as clearly as print permits in order to enhance my understanding of their experiences as citizens (Evans, 2005:15).

I made use of an instrumental case study to assist my inquiry: to understand and reconstruct nine-year-old learners' life experiences and understandings as citizens of the democratic dispensation in South Africa. I selected the nine-year-old learners of one school as a clearly defined unit of analysis. I used the instrumental case study both as process and as product of the inquiry (Stake, 1995:4-12; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:437). The instrumental case study emphasises the evolving nature of qualitative research that corresponds to the exploratory and descriptive approaches and the inductive and deductive interpretation. The purpose of the instrumental case study is to maximise understanding of the one case to provide greater insights into an issue or to improve a theoretical explanation. In an instrumental case study, some cases would 'do a better job' than others (Stake, 2000:4) but I found that the participating learners from my case enlightened my understanding of their life experiences as citizens beyond my imagination.

My case study allowed for primary data in large quantities from the 142 learners, which gave impressive insights and answers to my research questions. Through the instrumental case study I reflected complex relationships voiced by the children as learners. It allowed me to document the voices of learners at the young age of nine years, regarded by many adults as a minority and insignificant group in civil society. In addition, it allowed me to experiment with distinctive data collection methods. The documentation of the life experiences of the participating learners of my case study is a unique research result in the South African and international academic paradigm.

Since researching children's experiences, I described different perspectives of researchers within the sociology of childhood in Chapter 3. In Chapter 3 I justify my choices of data collection methods, acknowledge the strengths and limitations of my choices and comment on my actions to deal with these challenges. In the following sections I give an overview of the methodological choices and strategies, outlined in Table 1.3, deal with the anticipated research constraints or limitations of the study and provide an outline of the organization of the inquiry.

Table 1.3: Summary of methodological choices and strategies

Data collection methods	Instruments assisting data collection	Means of documentation as textual data	Means of data analysis	Trail of evidence
Observation	Informal observations	Field notes	Constructivist grounded theory analysis	Addendum 5
Focused interviews (group & focus group) for participatory conversations	Drawings	Photographs		Addendum 8
	Flag activity	Authentic product coded and categorised		Addendum 8
	Written role-play activities	Authentic product coded and categorised		Addendum 8
	Hot chair drama technique	Video and transcriptions		Addendum 8
	Slogans for posters	Photographs		Addendum 8
	Letters	Photographs and authentic product coded and categorised		Addendum 8
	Activity on children's rights and responsibilities	Audio tape and transcriptions		Addendum 8
	Discussions during group and focus group interviews	Audio tape and transcriptions		Addendum 8
			Summary & Citizenship Context Diagram	Addendum 10, 11

1.6.1 Data collection methods and instruments

The data from the two pilot studies indicated that I needed the expressions of many learners to understand their life experiences as citizens of democratic South Africa and consequently provide valid and trustworthy answers to my research questions. Therefore, I decided to use various data collection methods (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:127). I employed interviews as the primary mode for data collection where I used instruments or task-based activities, designed to be child-centred to facilitate self-expression (Mouton, 2001:99; Boyden & Ennew, 1996). The focused interviews allowed for participatory conversations where self-reporting empowered the learners as participants and also guided me in understanding their voices as comprehensively as possible (Mouton, 2001). Through self-expression the learners were able to construct their life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation in a creative and developmentally appropriative way. A detailed description of the design and application of the methods and instruments follows in Chapter 3.

The following instruments were employed for primary data collection in this research project:

- Drawings and interpretations of their drawings by nine-year-old learners in Grade 3 about their images and experiences of living in South Africa as citizens.
- An activity about the flag of South Africa where the learners wrote sentences about the flag, interpreting the colours of the flag.
- Two written role-play activities: one where the learners completed the sentence *If I were Mr. Mbeki I would …* and the other where learners completed the sentence *If I were the president I would ….*
- The Hot chair or Hot seating (Goodwin, 2006:16) drama technique with a large group of children.
- Slogans designed for posters, meant for peers living in their neighbourhood, on how they should live as citizens in South Africa.
- A letter written by individual nine-year-old learners to the former president of South Africa describing their experiences of living in South Africa. They also made drawings in their letters, which served as data.
- An activity on children's rights and responsibilities where learners contributed through

expressions (group interview).

- Group and focus group interviews.

I documented all self-expressions as textual data in the following ways:

- Drawings and writings were coded, categorised and photographed.
- The drama activity (hot chair) was recorded on video and transcribed.
- Transcriptions of the group and focus group interviews were made.
- Activity on rights and responsibilities resulted from a group interview were audio taped and transcribed.
- A narrative schedule was based on observation and presented as field notes.

I offered the textual data as a trail of evidence in the format of addenda presented on a DVD compact disc.

The different data collection methods and data collection instruments enhanced validity and reliability of data. In several cases I verified learners' self-reporting by talking to them individually. From this I learned about their interpretations of their drawings or sentences, which I wrote on their contributions (see **Addendum 8** for examples).

I studied a corpus of texts (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004:117-118) relevant to citizenship and citizenship education to assist me in my understandings of the perceptions of the learners about their understandings of their citizenship. The literature revealed that knowledge, concepts and theories on citizenship related to the young child (Verma & Mallick, 1999:19) have mainly been derived from disciplines in the social and political sciences. The literature revealed significant numbers of legal documents, since citizenship relates to rights and responsibilities. I studied the following documents:

- ➢ The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and other relevant documents such as the Bill of Rights and the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001).

- International documents like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), documents by the Council for Education in World Citizenship, and UNICEF, to name a few.
- The Revised National Curriculum Statement for the Foundation Phase (Department of Education, 2002c). In the Learning Area: Life Orientation (Department of Education, 2002b) the SAQA Critical Outcomes and the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards include aspects directly related to citizenship. The new national curriculum was implemented in the Foundation Phase in 2004 for Grades R-3 (Grade 3 – nine-year-old learners). The new curriculum was part of the restructuring of education after the dismantling of the earlier separatist policy in South Africa, directed at initiating fundamental transformation in the character and content of the learners and the education system (Evans, 2005:30).

1.6.2 Data analysis

As an interpretivist, I used both inductive and deductive data analysis approaches. I applied the systematic guidelines of constructivist grounded theory analysis as described by Charmaz (2000:509-535) in the analysis phase of my study (see Table 1.3). As a constructivist, grounded theory analysis assisted me in assuming the relativism of multiple social realities. This relativism concerned the learners of my case when recognising the mutual creation of knowledge by me, the viewer, and by the learners; the viewed; thus constructing meaning. In addition, grounded theory analysis strategies assisted me in identifying concepts from different perspectives (Charmaz, 2000:513), specifically from the perspective of citizenship. Concepts emerged in themes and relevant categories, which I have chosen for their applicability and usefulness in an attempt to answer my research questions (Merriam, 1998:156; Connelly & Clandinin in Merriam, 1998:157).
I employed several levels of data analysis:

- I interpreted and classified the learners' experiences in an inductive approach into four themes and relevant categories (see phases of data analysis and the Citizenship Context Diagram in **Addenda 10** and **11**).
- I presented the data collected in a narrative and descriptive way to present a holistic interpretation of the life experiences and understandings of the nine-year-old learners as citizens of the democratic dispensation in South Africa. I then interpreted the learners'

messages, across data sources and through inductive and deductive approaches, for final analyses where I answered my research questions.

1.7 Anticipated research constraints

Anticipated limitations of this study were clustered around the research design, issues about myself as researcher and quality criteria, which included my endeavours to enhance the trustworthiness of my research. My main concern related to the Grade 3 participating learners. As young children are regarded a ‘vulnerable’ group, I kept in mind that a common error was that the learners could easily be influenced by an adult, and the possibility that they could aim to please me with their responses instead of giving their own opinions and experiences (Mouton, 2001:107). I collected data over a short period of time, managed to build rapport with the learners but realized that a more sustained interaction with the learners, over a longer period, might have added to my insights.

Added to these limitations were others related to the choice of the instrumental case study that lacked generalizability of results with non-standardization of measurement (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:439; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:164; Mouton, 2001:149-150). However, the research design was planned according to my intention to focus entirely on exploring, understanding and explaining what learners have to say about their democratic experiences as child citizens and not to generalize my findings to other cases. I did not study other role players that may have contributed to the learners' construction of their citizenship such as policy makers, teachers and parents. That could inspire further research endeavours. Although a characteristic of a case study tends to be low transferability, I gave a rich description of the case studied for applicability of findings to other known cases (Seale, 1999). Therefore I do hope that some guidelines for citizenship education may be derived from it. The employment of a case study may also be detrimental to issues on quality criteria (Mouton, 2001), which I counteracted constructively by using multiple data collection instruments to enhance authenticity, reliability and the validity of findings. Although I researched nine-year-old learners' self-expressions, I was challenged to present this study on an adequate standard of research (Tertoolen, Bokhorst & Bosch, 2006). Relevant publications of high quality in the field of early childhood education (Holden & Clough, 2000; Viruru, 2005) guided me as to academic standards.

As the researcher I understood my position as being that of a biographically situated researcher who went to young children with my own subjective background and perspectives to get what I visualised when working in my study, far away from the lives of these children (Merriam, 1998:153). Bearing this in mind, I acknowledged that I interpreted data from a Eurocentric point of view. I also recognised the fact that I, as an adult, had lived in and experienced the time before the establishment of democracy in South Africa in 1994 while the learners were born in the new democracy; this could have affected my interpretation of the data. Being conscious of the above, I used more than one method to collect empirical data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:4, 19). I became a participant observer and fed participants' comments and my observations into field notes to trace ideas as they developed over time and to shape the data collection and analysis. In addition, I aimed to continuously and purposefully rethink, revise, and verify my own practices and impressions during the research process and verified my findings with the learners themselves and the class teachers. These strategies enhanced the trustworthiness and authenticity of my study.

At the outset, I shared my stance about children, regarding them as noteworthy child-citizens and competent participants in the research process. However, I had to address the unequal power relationship between the child subjects and myself as adult researcher during the research process (Flewitt, 2005:1). I realized that I had to form a relationship with the learners and gain their trust (Punch, 2002:328) and one way was by knowing their names. As an outsider to the school environment I did not know the names of the learners. This situation was a significant challenge, which could have influenced my management of the learners in class and the data collection process. However, I managed to build excellent rapport with the children and their teachers by asking their names before I addressed each learner. In each class I commended both the learners and their teacher, which helped me to build trust. Most learners could speak and write in English and my anticipation that if children should have a problem with English, I would have to get a home language speaker to assist me, was unnecessary.

Recognising the vulnerability of children related to research, I conducted the research in a negotiated, ethical manner (Merriam, 1998; Johnson, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Flewitt, 2005) (see **Addendum 4** for official and legal documentation and procedures). In addition, I adhered to the following ethical principles throughout all stages of the research process (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004:111-113; Flewitt, 2005):

- *voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants are competent and confident enough (Flewitt, 2005:3) to withdraw from the research at any time by choice.
- *informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the ongoing research.
- *safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents must not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children like the nine-year-olds of my case study.
- *privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents must be protected at all times.
- *trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

1.8 Outline and organization of the inquiry

This study focused on a single unit of analysis: the exploring and understanding of nine-year-old learners' experiences of democratic South Africa as child citizens. The study examined the research questions through the interpretive paradigm. By exploring the experiences of the young children of my case, I anticipated appreciation of their understandings of their democratic identity and their citizenship; an approach aligned with those of Howard and Gill (2000:357) and Smith (2005). In Chapter 1 I have given an overview of citizenship and citizenship education related to young children to contextualise this study. I did this by explaining the core concepts, the historical background of citizenship as well as the situation of citizenship education in South Africa. In Chapter 2 I present a review of existing empirical literature in the domain of citizenship education, in particular young children of South Africa. I explored the concepts and theories related to the topic of this study in order to construct a conceptual framework for justifying and understanding. In Chapter 3 I explain and justify the choice of my qualitative research design and outline the methodological strategies used to accomplish this study. This included a detailed discussion of my data collection methods and instruments as well as strategies for enhancing the validity of my investigation. Chapter 4 is a presentation of my data analysis by employing the constructivist grounded theory analysis. In this chapter I give an interpretive commentary resulting from the understanding of the self-expressed experiences of the learners. Chapter 5 offers the answers to my research questions, which I have aligned with statements and arguments made in the literature. In

Chapter 6 I provide a summary of conclusions arrived at through synthesis of the inquiry and a review of the literature. In this chapter I also offer my contribution.

As indicated by the research title, this study was set against the political context of the newly founded South African democracy and the implementation of a new national curriculum to which the Constitution is foundational. I have indicated the significance and the limitations of the study. I also invited scholars to further investigate this field by proposing possible lines of inquiry. All addenda and transcripts have been captured on a compact disc, which has been included as part of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review:

Young children, citizenship and citizenship education

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1 I gave an overview of citizenship and citizenship education in order to contextualise my inquiry. In Chapter 2, I first offer a literature review, which provides a summary of empirical studies related to aspects of citizenship, citizenship education, democratic identity and young children. I comment on the possible meaning, the potential issues and tensions and the strengths and weaknesses that arise from existing studies (Boote & Beile, 2005), relevant to this study. I also comment on some of the current debates concerning citizenship education to young learners in the global and South African context.

In the next sections I outline theories related to the core and associated concepts of this research topic as well as the participants of my study and discuss their relatedness. I employ my understanding of these concepts and theories as part of a research framework, culminating in the construction of a conceptual framework (Lester, 2005:457). The information presented in the conceptual framework assisted me to direct my study and guided the interpretation of data, which enabled me to explore and interpret the life experiences and understandings of the nine-year-old learners as citizens of the democratic dispensation of South Africa. The learners' life experiences and understandings informed me on their democratic identities and their citizenship. The acquired understandings and identities assisted me in extending my own conceptions of citizenship education.

A formidable body of theoretical knowledge exists on concepts like citizenship, education for democratic citizenship, national identity and related issues such as human rights and citizenship as well as diversity and citizenship. Accessible studies also deal with the historicity of citizenship education as I already did in Chapter 1. In my search for information to answer my research questions, I began to suspect that the existing literature might lack empirical validity, especially with the focus on citizenship and citizenship education related to the young child. The more I understood the complexity of the multiple concepts and their interrelatedness, the more I found literature on issues of citizenship, democratic identity and citizenship education. However, most of this literature focuses mainly on citizenship issues in general and not on empirical research relevant to nine-year-old learners' life experiences and understandings of their citizenship in the context of a democracy, and specifically in the context of the South African democracy.

I have limited the review to the domain of citizenship and citizenship education as defined in Chapter 1 and have highlighted issues directly applicable to my case study. Having extensively reviewed the relevant literature, I indicate what has been accomplished by my inquiry and what still remains to be done in terms of gaps I found, thus indicating how this study will address such gaps (see Chapter 6.4). In the next section I give an account of significant empirical literature.

2.2 Young children, citizenship and citizenship education

Currently, widespread interest in citizenship education exists on an international level and research has been published on children as citizens (Wilde, 2005). John (2000:9) reports that most of the research done relates to the achievements of the aims of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and resulted in the *Children in Charge* series, which includes the following volumes: *Children in Charge, Children in Our Charge, A Charge Against Society* and *The Participation Rights of the Child.* The series is based on a world conference held in 1992 on the theme ‘Children in Charge’. The series is deliberately called *Children in Charge*, in order to emphasise the stance that children are important role players in society. *The Participation Rights of the Child* is based on the participation, provision and protection aspects of the child, viz. the aims of the Convention.

According to John (2000) many researchers and practitioners around the world have focused on the participation aspect of citizenship. Against this background it is noteworthy that the most current addition to the series is *Children as Citizens. Education for Participation,* edited by Holden and Clough (2000). This work concentrates on the primary and secondary school child's educational experiences in terms of citizenship, largely in European settings. It demonstrates, through a variety of approaches, the ways in which children are being facilitated in developing a sense of individual freedom, balancing this against their responsibilities as citizens in a democracy. In the subsequent two sections I give a brief summary of recent research projects done in the global and local contexts, highlighted for their relatedness to issues of citizenship and citizenship education as well as identity issues related to citizenship. I commence with a discussion of studies in the global context.

2.2.1 Studies on citizenship in the global context

A study done in Britain on Jewish primary schools (Short & Lenga, 2002:52) highlighted the aspects of the diversity dimensions of citizenship education in Britain. From the study it was clear that in these sample Jewish schools, the emphasis of citizenship education was on teaching learners to respect other people as a challenge to racism. This finding is of significance, for racism also occurs in South Africa as a result of distrust between young people (Scholtz, 2005). This study emphasises the fact that citizenship is a complicated matter, especially in a diverse society.

In Scotland, education for citizenship is not regarded as a separate subject but is integrated in a cross-curricular way. The objective is that education for citizenship will be a curriculum component for learners of all ages. Cowan and Maitles (2002) studied the example of the Holocaust Memorial Day and its impact on the teaching of Holocaust issues in the primary schools in a local authority in Scotland. Their research showed that remembering the Holocaust is seen as a powerful way of writing its lessons into Britain’s national conscience in a time in which victimization, racism and intolerance continue. The researchers’ intention was to convince the Scottish Executive to encourage teachers and schools to introduce Holocaust education and to learn from Britain’s experiences. According to Cowan and Maitles (2002:377-378), there is significant evidence from their study that where the Holocaust was more centrally placed on the educational agenda of schools, it had an important impact on the development of an educated citizenry. Is there a lesson for us in South Africa to learn from this study? Do all schools use our national Youth Day as an opportunity to inculcate the principles and values of our democracy, as we are also a diverse nation with citizens subjected to intolerance?

The 15th annual conference of the European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA), held at Dublin in 2005, adopted the theme: ‘Young Children as Citizens: Identity, Belonging, Participation’. Delegates from 36 countries attended and many research projects were presented. Early Childhood Education focuses on the age group 0-9 years. The themes that emerged from the presentations, related to my topic, are: the influence of politics, policy, and governance on young children as citizens, young children's experiences of democracy, equity, rights and responsibilities, and the place of values in early childhood education. Other themes were innovative teaching approaches to facilitate active citizenship, including participation and belonging, and aspects of citizenship and identity such as the construction of the identity of the European citizen and the identity of young children crossing borders. In most cases there is evidence of empirical research and methods used, for instance interviews with children and child-generated artefacts, observation of children's behaviour and the recording of children's narratives. Although it is interesting to take note of the research methodology and the confirmation of the core concepts and themes already identified, none of the research addressed the issue of exploring young children's experiences as citizens, especially those of nine-year-old children. To my mind these presentations confirmed what I already know, viz. that the concepts related to children, democratic identity and citizenship education are many and intertwined.

In Australia a civic and citizenship education curriculum was introduced in all Australian schools in an attempt to prepare their young children for effective participation in the complex, evolving society of Australia in the 21st century (Howard & Gill, 2000). Howard and Gill (2000) conducted an empirical study that investigated the perceptions of young children regarding their constructions of power and politics. Resulting from this study, the authors argue that children’s lived experiences as members of families, schools and the wider society provide understandings that must be taken into account if children are expected to really appreciate the principles and purposes that underpin democratic practices. This insight became the thrust of my research approach. Howard and Gill concluded that children do not only need a citizenship curriculum that is predominantly knowledge-based with information about the structures and processes of government. They need opportunities to consider issues of rights and responsibilities, fairness and justice and the mediation of competing claims. They need to investigate what power is, who has power, why they have it and how they got it. Adults should use every opportunity in the classroom, school and at home to help children understand democratic principles and purposes. In this way children will develop social skills, an essential quality for a participatory and a truly civil society. Like South Africa, Australia is also a relatively young democracy with a diverse society; however, there is a difference regarding citizenship education. In Australia civic courses had already been introduced in primary schools as early as 1904. Despite this, the Aboriginal people as a minority cultural group have struggled for years to obtain full citizenship rights. What can we as South Africans learn from the Australian example regarding citizenship education?

The following internationally conducted study relates closely to my topic, although the unit of analysis was 14-year-old children in 24 countries and my case study is the nine-year-old learners in the South African context. I give a brief discussion of this study. During 1999 the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), conducted a large-scale empirical Civic Education Study in 24 member countries. The IEA Civic Study involved 90 000 14-year-old students in *old* and *new* democracies in a comparative framework with the rationale to research the growth of civic knowledge and attitudes of 14-year-old students. The main focus of the research was on their civic knowledge, civic engagement and civic attitudes to obtain a picture of how young people are initiated into the various levels and types of political community in which they are likely to become members (Torney-Purta, 2001:281). The IEA study revealed a relatively positive picture of the average 14-year-old across the countries as someone who has considerable knowledge about basic democratic principles and moderate skills in analyzing civic-relevant information, subscribes to the basic ‘narrative of democracy’, intends to vote, believes that other activities traditionally associated with adult citizenship are less important than environmental or community group participation and is already a member of a political culture shared with adults in the country (Torney-Purta, 2001:290).

Australia participated in the international IEA Civic Education Study of Fourteen-year-olds, and published a report titled *Citizenship and Democracy. Australian Students’ Knowledge and Beliefs* (Mellor, Kennedy & Greenwood**,** 2002). According to this report four in five Australian students believe it is important to be a good citizen and value helping others. However, while they supported the notion of democracy they reported to be somewhat disengaged from the more conventional forms of civic participation. The report reveals insights into the recent developments of civics and citizenship education initiatives in Australia. Academics like Woods, Macintyre and Lepani (in Mellor *et al.*, 2002:8) describe the life of future citizens as characterised by profound changes at the core of people’s existence. This would seem to call for citizens who are active and participative in all of society’s processes, committed and knowledge-rich. Underpinning the process of citizenship would be common values that provide meaning and purposefulness in a changing environment. These writers see the challenge for civics education as the preparation of young people to constantly transform the world so that it is personally meaningful and socially beneficial. The Australian government and academics see civics and citizenship education as one way to prepare their young people to contribute to the future in a positive way, a future vision for Australia as an affluent nation. As proof of the sincerity of the policy makers towards civic education in the state of Victoria, the Education Department of this state contributed 35 million dollars for the implementation of a values programme in all schools in 2004 (Tudball, 2003, personal communication).

The topics of the Student Questionnaire of the IEA were based on the three broad domains as representative of the knowledge base of civic education. They were democracy and citizenship, national identity (including democratic identity) and international relations, and social cohesion and diversity. Underpinning this study was a conception that civic education is a complex activity involving a variety of cognitive, conceptual and attitudinal strands. According to Mellor *et al.* (2002) it is the theoretical underpinning of the project, rooted in the research literature that best reveals the images of civic education. For the IEA Civic Education Study, civic education is entrenched in the 'public discourse and practices of the society' (Mellor *et al.*, 2002:10). Drawing on ecological developmental psychology (Bronfenbrenner in Mellor *et al.*, 2002) and situated cognition (Lave & Wegner in Mellor *et al.*, 2002), the project constructed a model of civic context in which the student is at the centre, influenced by both micro and macro systems.

The significance of the model as given by Mellor *et al.* (2002:10-11), is summarised as follows. At the micro level influence is exerted by 'carriers' or 'agents' with whom individuals come into contact – family, schools, peers, neighbours but also by elements in the broader society such as the media. The IEA study was primarily interested in two carriers – school and peers. At the macro level, which is represented by the outer part dimensions of the model, are the institutional influences – the symbols, stories and values of national and local importance, including the international position of the country. There is an important interaction between the carriers and these outer dimensions of the model – carriers both participate in and also help to construct the public discourse around these dimensions. They then become significant mediators of the discourse for the individual students. The theoretical framework that underpins this model is constructivism, as citizens are seen as constructors of different discourses of citizenship; and out of this participation emerges their own particular view of themselves as citizen (Mellor *et al.*, 2002:11).

The significance of the IEA Civic Education Study is a rich set of data revealed by the 24 case studies and published as *New Paradigms and Recurring Paradoxes in Education for Citizenship: An International Comparison,* edited by Steiner-Khamsi, Torney-Purta and Schwille (2002). Research findings are that citizenship education is potentially everywhere in schools; learning civic knowledge, extracurricular activities, hidden curricula, peers and relations between teacher and children. From a policy perspective, five key policy areas were identified where comprehensive civic reform is needed. They are the curriculum, pedagogy and learner participation, school organization and learners' rights, school response to factors outside the school and systemic reform (p17). Key areas which may be relevant to my study are curriculum, pedagogy, learner participation and learners' rights.

The fact that South Africa is not a member of the IEA and was therefore not used as a case study in the IEA research project, makes the IEA revise of note as background to my research. Regardless of the fact that South Africa is not a member of the IEA, the following questions came to mind: Would the 14-year-old students in the South African context construct citizenship differently and what would account for this? How would South Africa’s scores compare with those of long-established democracies and with those of recently established democracies similar to South Africa? The IEA Civic Education Model seems to be a useful model but can we, as South Africans, apply the IEA model and its theoretical framework in our context without the knowledge of how our learners see themselves as citizens? If I compared the findings from the experiences of the 14-year-old learners to those from the experiences of the nine-year-old learners – what would I learn? The developmental age of the learners of my case study directed me to appropriate methods of data collection that differed from the multiple-choice questions used in the IEA study. Subsequent to the IEA study, many other publications saw the light, such as those by Kerr (2004) and Wilde (2005).

Another study which related to my research project was undertaken by Hine (2004) in Britain. Hine (2004) published a report on exploring children's understanding of the three dimensions of citizenship identified by the report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship (DfEE, 1988) under the leadership of Crick; it is generally referred to as the Crick Report (in Hine, 2004:5). The three dimensions are social and moral responsibility, community involvement, and political literacy. This research project was conducted as a complementary research to the national Evaluation of the *On Track* pilot project, which was funded by Britain's Home Office Research. This project aimed for the provision of early and multiple interventions for children and families in areas of high deprivation and high crime in England and Wales to deliver services with the intention of reducing the risk of children's becoming involved in anti-social and criminal behaviour. According to Hine (2004) the policy context of citizenship in Britain was that a Commission on Citizenship was established in 1988 by the Conservative Government, which adopted as its starting point an understanding of 'active citizenship' as defined by Marshall (in Hine, 2004:3). The Commission reported that welfare should be widened to include what people could do for each other in their local community and what they could expect from the State, and emphasized volunteering as a civic virtue. The report also recommended the incorporation of citizenship in all programmes of education in schools, adult education and professional education. In 2001 the Active Community Unit within the Home Office introduced a biennial survey on the idea of 'active citizenship' (Hine, 2004:3). This survey brought the concept of citizenship to the attention of the government, which was interested in active citizenship concerning electoral participation and youth crime. Research showed that young people are becoming increasingly uninterested in politics and less inclined to view voting as a civic obligation (Hine, 2004:3).

Hine (2004:7) states concern about the little evidence of research on the three elements of citizenship and the distinct lack of research around these themes in relation to younger children in particular. The Home Office research involved 269 children aged between seven and fifteen and was conducted in seven pilot areas. The methodological approach of this project was to perceive children as 'people' and 'citizens' in their own right and therefore the researchers used focus groups to present the children's voices. The results showed that young children have sophisticated reasoning and understandings of complex issues (including political issues), with their biggest complaint that they are not listened to. The children indicated that they complied with rules and detected unfairness easily. They reported very limited involvement in formal voluntary activity, yet undertook informal 'helping' activities in the community on a much larger scale. In addition, the children showed interest in and unexpectedly high levels of knowledge of political issues and how government works, although much of it was tinged with cynicism related to national and local politics (Hine, 2004:iv). Insights gained from this research project were the knowledge that citizenship education has been at the heart of a major debate and policy review in England over the past decade (*see also* http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/citizenship/) and similarities of the context of this project to the commentary of politicians and educationalists about the South African child and his citizenship. In addition, I learned about the methodology employed by Hine (2005) and the way in which the learners' voices are represented in an attempt to provide a proper reflection of the variety of their views and responses. The participants of my case study are also young learners and I too employed focus group interviews and aimed to present the learners' understandings of their citizenship as clearly as possible. In the next section, I examine empirical research on citizenship in the local context.

2.2.2 Studies on citizenship in the local context

I found limited empirical-based research on the topics of citizenship, citizenship education and democratic identity related to young children in the South African context. In 2002 a school-based report was published on research done on exploring the way educators, learners and parents think and talk about values in education (Department of Education, 2002a). The research was commissioned by the Department of Education and served as an important resource for the implementation of the new national curriculum, which included values and citizenship. Values are an important component of citizenship and citizenship education in the global and South African context. Very young children (5 to 6 years) were included as participants of this research. A key finding of the research was that values are changed by dialogue and critical engagement, rather than by prescription. In addition the research findings emphasised that human rights and democracy in classrooms are important components of the new curriculum. With the report on this research initiative the hope was expressed that it would contribute to the growth of democracy and peace in South Africa (Department of Education, 2002a). The significance this research report has for my study is the finding that young children understood abstract values and that they regarded values as important.

In an article ‘Citizenship and children's education rights in South Africa’, Vally (2005) attempts to understand citizenship and children's human rights in the context of poverty and inequality in South African society. It reviews some of the policy texts pertinent to Early Childhood Development, particularly Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education and White Paper 6 on Special Education. The article deals with the discrepancy between the existing normative framework of society and its reality. It seeks to do this through a discussion of the 'glossy rhetoric' of education policies and legislation informed by human rights, social justice and a democratic citizenship discourse. According to Berry and Guthri (in Vally, 2005:31) nearly 60% (11 million) of all children in South Africa live in poverty on less than R200 per month. Vally (2005:32) states that for these children, the part of the South African Constitution that proclaims that every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care and social services, is often only a hollow promise. Many stakeholders of Early Childhood Development perceived that Education White Paper 5 and White Paper 6 heralded a new dawn for young children in South Africa. However, they did not implement models that could effectively uplift the education and the socio-economic situation of young children (Vally, 2005:35-36).

Against the given background, Vally (2005:36-43) examines citizenship in South Africa through a legislative and policy approach by investigating the relationship between citizenship and the Constitution of South Africa (1996) as well as human rights and democratic citizenship. A founding principle of the Constitution is common citizenship and the equal enjoyment of rights including freedom of belief, religion and opinion, expression, assembly and association. A range of socio-economic rights including education and the rights of children are emphasized. One year after the first democratic elections the White Paper on Education and Training announced a new curriculum for South Africa emphasizing a ‘common citizenship’ and the objective of educating ‘responsible citizens in a culturally diverse, democratic society’. A specific outcome of this new curriculum is active participation in the promotion of a democratic, equitable and just society. Another outcome is that learners will be guided to exercise their responsibilities and rights as citizens. Also relevant to the preparation for citizenship was the initiative of the Values in Education document in 2000 and the publication of the ‘Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy’ (already reported on), which articulates a framework for values in education, which is both attentive to citizenship and strongly focused on the Constitution.

From a human rights approach, Vally (2005:41) observes the link between the right to education and other human rights as well as the interrelationship between education and democratic citizenship. At the most basic level, economic and social rights have both direct and indirect effects on democratic citizenship in that they ensure necessary conditions for citizens to exercise their civil and political rights. Although there is enthusiasm for education amongst the poor, various social and economic relations and factors influence and prevent the overcoming of deprivation, despite progressive legislation and our Constitution that guarantees the right to basic education and democratic citizenship. These factors, according to Vally (2005), are issues of human rights violation at schools and the understanding that protecting human rights should take into account that the most pervasive and chronic forms of distress are a consequence of economic, social and political structural circumstances that affect groups as well as individuals. This view of collective rights is opposed to the liberal conception of rights based on the notion that those who succeed in society do so because of their own individual attributes and those who fail to do so because of their deficits and weaknesses. This view is possible because the philosophical foundations of the dominant human rights discourse sees human beings as individuals instead of social beings (Vally, 2005).

In the article Vally (2005:43-44) reports on a recent children's participatory process facilitated by the Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security (ACESS) where children's voices were collected. The ACESS established that the most common concerns of vulnerable children are hunger and the inability to pay school fees. In conclusion Vally (2005:45) argues for the establishment of a strong social movement to co-ordinate the struggle against the inconsistency between policy and the reality of the South African society related to the young child. Although the empirical component of the article lacks clarity concerning the methodology employed, like the description of the case and the questions put to the children, the article is relevant. It describes a similar context pertinent to my study with the aim of understanding the life world of the children of South Africa. I also studied the new national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) against the background of the Constitution (1966) and human rights in my attempt to understand the experiences of the participating nine-year-old learners of my case study.

Another study related to the South African context was presented at the Childhoods conference in 2005 in Oslo. At this conference Smith (2005) reported on the results from a cross-cultural study conducted by the Research Forum on Children's views of Citizenship, which involved children from South Africa. The rationale for the study was to explore children's perspectives about what constitutes good citizenship and influences nation-building. It was part of an international study of six societies in various stages of democratic development, who each face a variety of economic, social and political challenges: Australia, Brazil, New Zealand, Norway, Palestine, and South Africa. The study aimed to explore children and young people's understandings of citizenship, rights and responsibilities in their own countries and in an imagined country. Researchers from Childwatch International worked on the project and collected the data in 2004. Samples of a hundred children and young people were recruited in these countries from schools and marginalized groups and included two age groups (8-9 years and 14-15 years), equal numbers of boys and girls as well as children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. With a focus group protocol, the children were motivated to share their understanding and experience related to citizenship in a spontaneous way, using prompts from skilled focus group leaders. The researchers explored with the participants in the focus groups, how they understood citizenship, rights and responsibilities and what it meant to be a 'good' citizen in their country. Secondly the focus groups asked the children to think about life and being a citizen in an imaginary country.

According to Smith (2005:7-8) children in this international study showed a lack of understanding of the abstract concepts related to citizenship and especially of the concept citizenship itself. The children nevertheless showed deeper understanding of what symbols on a flag meant for an imaginary country (Smith, 2005:7-8). Results from this study showed that children from South Africa had difficulty in differentiating between rights and responsibilities. They perceived responsibilities to be being obedient to authority in home, school and community. Smith (2005:7) states that the concern ‘to do as adults tell them to’ is very likely an issue in an African culture, which has a different view of the role of children in families and society. Another result from the South African children was their wish to be protected against dangers like rape and criminal violence. A further significance of the research reported by Smith (2005) is the results and the description of the methodology employed. In my study I also utilized the idea of the learners' imagination through the role-play data collection 'instruments' such as *If I were the president…,* and *If I were Mr. Mbeki…* . In addition, I found focus group discussions informative in terms of self-reporting when collecting data.

In the following sections I identify theories from a range of theoretical sources relevant to the key concepts as determined by my research perspective to construct a conceptual framework. I present the interrelatedness of theories and concepts as well as their relationship to my research problems in a conceptual framework, which assisted me in developing a deep understanding of my research topic and justifying my theory-making process. I report on contributions made by scholars to citizenship and citizenship education in general and in specific relation to young children. Then I discuss significant theories focusing mostly on the facilitation of citizenship to young learners in a democracy. Subsequently, I elicit a theory to assist me in viewing the young child as a learner and a child citizen. With each section I offer my employment of the concepts and theories.

2.3 The conceptual framework: A tool for explanation and justification

The previous sections demonstrated my understandings that myriads of theories, concepts, abstractions and relationships associated with citizenship and citizenship education and the young child exist. From the literature it is evident that there is a lack of some kind of universal language, pedagogically and politically, in describing terminology like *citizenship*, *education for citizenship, democratic citizenship education, education for democratic citizenship, learning democracy and democratic identity*. Martin (2003:2) agrees with this observation. In addition, there are many theories on how children might gain insight in the abstract notions of citizenship and democracy.

I commence by describing the concepts and theories foundational to my research project. The concepts are citizenship, democratic identity, citizenship and democracy, citizenship education and global dimensions of citizenship education. The core concepts of my research title are discussed in Chapter 1.4. The theories I employ are: Dewey's theory on building a learning community, the theory of compassion and imaginative action as reported by Waghid, the postcolonial and the transforming society theory; each informs the focus of this study in a unique way.

2.3.1 Citizenship

Banks (2004:1) characterizes citizenship as a ‘fluid, complex, dynamic, and contested concept in the nation-state’ related to the ‘citizen's own identity, especially in a diverse society, which is multiple, open, and dynamic’ (Figueroa, 2004:226). Savage and Armstrong (2004:8-9) identify two different perspectives regarding the definition of citizenship. One perspective is the 'transmission of cultural heritage' as the inculcation of certain shared values such as a commitment to democracy, respect for authority, and the acceptance of political responsibility. Children have to learn a common core of knowledge and the shared knowledge and values will hold society together. Almost the opposite of the cultural transmission perspective is the 'informed social criticism' perspective and individuals who hold this perspective view citizenship as assisting individuals examine and critique current and past traditions. They believe that the improvement of society depends on citizens who are willing to confront injustice and the tensions that accompany a pluralistic society.

Views of citizenship depend on the abstract relationship between citizenship and the nation-state that differs from country to country (Castles, 2004) and on the relationship between citizenship and society as a whole (Figueroa, 2004:223). To Green (2005:viii), citizenship is not assumed or enacted by an individual in isolation. It is about how we relate to other individuals, to groups within our society and to other societies. Citizenship is essentially about belonging and feeling secure and about exercising one's rights and responsibilities.

Osler (2005:12-13) regards citizenship as status, feeling and practice. The legal status of a citizen is currently determined as relating to a particular nation-state and the legal rights mostly associated with citizenship are those of living, working and voting in a particular country. The citizen is protected by the state through laws and policing and in return the citizen contributes to the costs of collective benefits by paying taxes. Citizenship as feeling involves the degree to which individuals feel they belong (Osler, 2005:12-13); however, the degree to which they identify with a particular state may vary. Although governments and communities promote feelings of national identity to promote nation-building, through national holidays and sporting events, individuals are likely to vary in the degree to which they feel part of the nation. If individuals feel that they are not accessing services on the basis of equality they may feel excluded and the sense of belonging, which is a prerequisite for participative citizenship, is missing. Based on research with young people aged 10 to 18 years in the city of Leicester (Osler & Starkey, 2005b), it was noted that often the feeling of identity and citizenship in this diversely populated city is situated in local communities. Yet, according to their research, teachers and students were reluctant to endorse the use of the national symbols, such as the flag in school contexts. For many, these symbols were perceived with discredited imperialism, an exclusive nationalism or uncritical patriotism (Osler, 2005:12-15). A ‘Flag for every school’ project was launched in South Africa during 2005, but the idea was rejected by Non-governmental organisations. Citizenship is also practice (Osler, 2005:16). The research done at Leicester showed that young people more willingly participated in campaigning activities or fund-raising activities concerning people in their neighbourhoods or people in other parts of the world than in formal politics. With these kinds of activities the youth of Leicester felt they could make a difference.

Osler (2005:17) identifies two traditions of citizenship. The liberal tradition of citizenship stresses the rights of citizens. The civic republican tradition stresses the obligations of citizens to participate by undertaking service to the state or standing for office. Efforts have been made to bridge the often seen tension between the two traditions in a coherent synthesis. One effort may be an inclusive approach to citizenship – not only status and practice but also the feeling, the affective dimension that will enable us to engage young learners in understanding citizenship.

Waghid (2005:323, 2003), a philosopher at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, expands

Osler's ideas and distinguishes between a liberal and a communitarian understanding of what it means to be a citizen. According to Waghid (2005) a liberal conception interprets citizenship as entailing a set of rights and corresponding obligations or duties enjoyed by people as equal citizens of a political community on the one hand. On the other hand people are obligated to uphold the rule of law and not to interfere with others' enjoyment of their rights. Waghid's critique of this understanding of liberal citizenship is that the teacher and the learner cannot be equal, for there is a difference in authority between them. According to Waghid, the communitarian conception of citizenship is about citizens working (participating) together in shaping the future society, which aligns with the perception of Parry (in Bulmer & Rees, 1996:23) on citizenship. Parry associated his ideas on citizenship with the philosophy of Marshall, when he describes citizenship as depending on the welfare of the community and therefore a mutual relationship between citizen and community exist. Delanty (in Waghid, 2005:324-325) developed a schema from which Waghid highlights three strands of the communitarian concept of citizenship participation.

The first strand of this theory, based on work done by Taylor (in Waghid, 2005:324), is not just about participation in the political community, but also about the recognition of minority groups' cultural identities by the dominant cultural community. For the minority to participate they need to become citizens of the dominant culture and in the pursuit of achieving this goal may risk becoming marginalized. The second strand is a conservative communitarian view of citizenship and concerned with creating a sense of responsibility, identity, and participation at micro levels of society, such as within the family, in schools, and in enforcing laws. This conception of citizenship stresses participation and social regeneration as a civic responsibility. Waghid's critique of this view is that the state is excused from the responsibility for society and the establishment of conditions for citizenship education. The third strand is civic republicanism as a communitarian view of participation that emphasizes the associational character of citizenship. It involves commitment to and participation in public life above the social struggles of individuals.

According to Waghid (2005:325), Kymlicka's vision of 'communitarian democracy' has given the idea of civic republicanism a more concrete form. This conception of citizenship promotes the values of commitment, tolerance, responsibility, accountability, and public participation (values that allow a democracy to flourish). However, it denies what is personal and private (Waghid, 2005:325). For Waghid, this conception also creates a culture of consensus as a prerequisite for public participation. Waghid believes that this conception of citizenship frames the education in

South Africa, which means for example, consensus on what counts as good or not so good education. Such an understanding of education would mute different opinions and undermine educational disagreement and challenge. In Section 2.3.5.2 of this chapter I elaborate on Waghid's theory of compassion and imaginative action as the answer to citizenship education, which attempts to compensate for the limitations of a communitarian conception of citizenship.

In this research project I employed citizenship according to the liberal conception of citizenship as a set of rights and corresponding responsibilities or duties enjoyed by children as equal citizens of a political community on the one hand (The Constitution, 1996; Martin, 2003). The rights of children include their legal status as citizens, their right to identify with the South African democracy and their right to feel secure and safe. On the other hand I employed the communitarian concept of citizenship in the sense that children have to practice citizenship by participating as a specific social group in the political community, through participation within the family, the school and the community. I perceived the associational character of citizenship, but not above the social struggles of individual children. In *Children as Citizens, Education for Participation*, Holden and Clough (2000) argue that children want to participate in making the world a better place. Furthermore, I perceived children as citizens within the democratic and diverse nation-state of South Africa who have to endorse and maintain the democratic ideals or values such as justice and equality in sustaining the democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001). However, I employed facilitation and the search for knowledge about general politics, including political processes and policies as well as critical thinking skills to enable each individual citizen to meet real and potential threats to the democracy (Wilde, 2005:50). Child citizens need to be facilitated not only to participate for the good of the community but also to uphold democratic principles and processes. In addition, I regarded the state responsible for the well-being of the child in the broader society and the institution of conditions for participation and meaningful citizenship education, a prerequisite for citizenship already identified in the 18th century (Castles, 2004).

Banks (2004:4-5) discusses citizenship from the perspective of citizenship in plural societies. He refers to scholars such as Kymlicka (2004) and Ong (2004) who state that citizens within democratic and diverse nation-states endorse the broad ideals of the nation-state. These ideals are justice and equality, and citizens are committed to the maintenance of these ideals by acting against practices that violate these ideals such as social, racial, cultural, and economic inequalities. For Griffith (in Holden & Clough, 2000:16) the core of citizenship is communal responsibility manifesting through a moral concern for social justice. Yet, Murphy-Shigematsu (2004:303-329) argues that becoming a legal citizen in a diverse nation-state like Japan does not necessarily mean inclusion into the mainstream of society and its institutions. The racial, cultural, language and religious characteristics of a citizen often influence the acceptance by the dominant group. Osler (2005:13) recommends that citizenship based on universal human rights as included in the key text of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, can be foundational to inclusivity and identity in a diverse society. Ladson-Billings (2004:100-120) and Castles (2004:17) agree with Banks' (2008:4) perception that citizenship in a diverse nation-state is about the complexity, interactivity, and contextuality of the cultural, national and global identification of the individual. According to Banks (2004:8), there is a need for a balance between these identifications and attachments (see Figure 2.1).

The identification of a citizen with a nation relates to the concept of feeling (Osler, 2005). Jones and Gaventa (2002:17) refer to citizenship as a master political identity. Statements such as 'children have to develop a new South African and democratic identity' (Ministry of Education, 2001) and 'learn about the "new" patriotism' (Ministry of Education, 2001) can be an indication that the new curriculum may overemphasise the aim to inculcate patriotism. On the other hand, learners will only participate in transforming South Africa into a prosperous and peaceful nation if they experience the feeling of belonging. I employed Bank's observation that the identity of learners is complex and has to be nurtured in a balanced way through citizenship education. In addition, I have employed the concept of the identification of the citizen in a diverse democratic nation-state in an attempt to answer my research question focusing on how the learners of my case study perceived their democratic identities. I have illustrated the concepts and their interrelatedness to democratic identity graphically in Figure 2.1 (adapted from Banks, 2004:8).

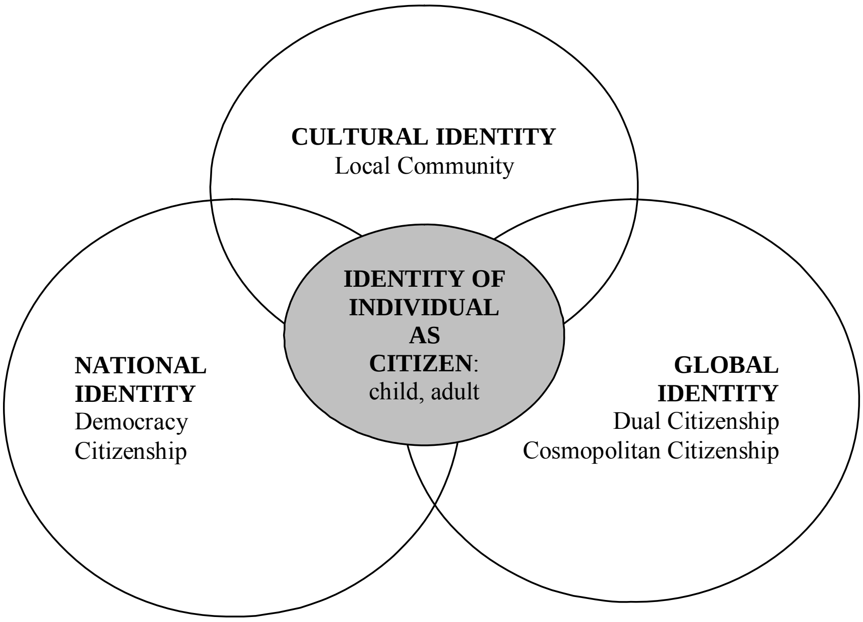

Figure 2.1: Interrelatedness of concepts regarding democratic identity

2.3.2 Citizenship and democracy

In a democratic nation-state the concepts of citizen, citizenship and democracy are interconnected, as revealed in titles such as *Learning Democracy and Citizenship. International Experiences* (Schweisfurth, Davies & Harber, 2002). Without participating in the discourse that democracy is recently under threat (Osler, 2005; Starkey, 2005), I focused on the links between the concepts of citizenship and democracy by referring to the liberal vision of the Member States of the Council of Europe that foresees societies that are 'free, tolerant and just' and that such societies can only be established on the basis of democracy (Starkey, 2005:25). Dewey (in Covaleskie, 1994) also endorsed this view as 'there is no social life that can allow for greater human development than democracy'. In a democracy 'freedom, pluralism, human rights and the rule of the law' are enhanced and Member States in particular are expected to have effective legislation in place to promote equality of rights. However, Vandenberg (2000:3) considers the concepts democracy and citizenship essentially controversial and put 'contestedness' at the core of these concepts as a post-liberal argument. He refers to long-standing processes of exclusion and secrecy in democratic governments.

Despite the declaration of the 'new democratic order' in South Africa in 1994, one has to note that South Africa is not a country with a long-standing democratic tradition or a democratic culture. Although there are achievements of the 'new' South African democracy, the high levels of violence, the lack of tolerance, and the limited mutual respect and understanding of different groups for each other, are still part of daily life. A democratic culture can only be successfully established on the precondition that the hearts and minds of South Africans are won over to the case for a true democracy (Steyn, De Klerk & Du Plessis, 2006:2). A true South African democracy built on democratic values was foreseen at the Saamtrek conference in 2001 (Ministry of Education, 2001).

Democracy requires the commitment of all its citizens to sustaining the democratic way of life, and that citizens should understand the costs of its potential loss. Accordingly, democracy has a responsibility towards its citizens in terms of equal provision of services and protection. As the culture of democracy can be achieved through education (Starkey, 2005:24), many governments are putting school programmes for education for democratic citizenship in place, which Gomes and Hofisso (2003:55-64) refer to as Democracy Education. According to Starkey (2005:26), education for democratic citizenship contributes to the construction of a free, tolerant and peaceful world and also promotes action and participation against the forces undermining democratic institutions. Education for democratic citizenship includes human rights education, which places particular emphasis on the rights of women and children and forms the democratic basis for social interaction (Gomes & Hofisso, 2003:56; Osler, 2005).

In this research project I perceived the citizenship of the nine-year-old learners of my case study to be constructed only in a democratic dispensation. In the South African democracy there is evidence of democratic values to sustain the young learners' commitment to the democratic ideals of justice and equality (Ministry of Education, 2001; Department of Education, 2002c). However, there is also evidence that in the South African democracy there is unequal provision of services and protection of its citizens, including the children. This situation may jeopardize the learners' perception of their citizenship and commitment to democracy and all it stands for.

2.3.3 Citizenship education

Since the mid-1990s growing numbers of individuals and organizations have been participating in debating citizenship education to introduce citizenship, using broad statements to describe citizenship education. Earlier writers such as Wringe (1984) describe citizenship education and political education as synonyms. Other writers see political education as part of citizenship education (Alexander, 2002; Moodley & Adam, 2004). In Northern Ireland citizenship education is promoted as Education for Mutual Understanding through the teaching of History (McIver, 2003). History is one subject that can help children to acquire a historical consciousness (promoted by Foucault in Rossouw, 2005a) that allows for thinking about changing the world to a better place (Ministry of Education, 2001:40-42); hence a feature of citizenship. Citizenship education in diverse democratic nation-states is referred to as education for democratic citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2005a) or as democratic citizenship education (Waghid, 2005; Banks, 2004). These concepts are being used alternatively in the literature. In the context of my study I prefer to apply the concept *citizenship education*, which includes education for democratic citizenship, as I am working with children in the milieu of the school in democratic South Africa when exploring their experiences as child citizens.

Current debates on citizenship education are focused on the tensions between diversity (the need of an individual) and the education of democratic ideals (the need of the nation-state). Kymlicka (2004:xiv) agrees that any desirable form of education has to have two strands: a ‘recognition of diversity’ dimension that acknowledges the positive contribution of each group's identity, language and culture; and a ‘social equality’ dimension, focusing on equal opportunities, in part by acknowledging and rectifying historic injustices. However, Kymlicka (2004) expresses the concern that the politics of recognizing the diversity may erode the politics of the redistribution of economic welfare to minority groups. Ong (2004:53) elaborates on Kymlicka's contribution and states that the assimilationist notions of citizenship education are challenged by the demands of diversity. The demands for cultural acceptance and the affirmative action mechanisms to increase demographic diversity in major institutions and areas of public life have shifted the focus of citizenship from the political practice based on shared civic rights and responsibilities to a protection of cultural difference in many nation-states like South Africa. This approach of protecting cultural differences is strengthened by new waves of immigrants coming into countries. Banks (2004:3) argues for a balance between unity and diversity. Only in this way can marginalized, ethnic, cultural, and language groups acquire commitments to the overarching values of the democratic nation-state.

Citizenship education needs to address young learners' *identities*. The aspect of the different identities of a citizen has already been discussed in 2.3.1 of this chapter. Banks (2004:6) describes the identity of an individual in a diverse nation-state as multiple. Richardson (2005) relates identity to concepts of equality and diversity. Ladson-Billings (2004:7) adds to the identity debate by arguing that learners from diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic groups have to understand their own cultural identities to function in cultural communities other than their own. The recent unrest in France where mostly young people from minority groups rose up against the assimilationist approach to citizenship education is a manifestation of the complexity, interactivity and contextuality of the issue of identification (De Lange, 2005a). In the South African context there is a discourse that identity has to be scrutinized away from the terminology based on ethnicity and divisions of 'black' and 'white' or 'we' and 'they' to an all-inclusive 'we'. I concur with Malan (2005) and Jansen (2005) who suggest that this change has to start at school.

Stubbs (1995:1-5) sees attitudes and values as having a central place in citizenship education. These values have to be developed over time and through discourse to consider what constitutes a nation's character or identity. The chosen values will assist in educating 'a good citizen' in 'a good society, through active participation in working towards a just and democratic society in a healthy environment.' In order to participate, citizens need to develop certain skills like critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving and cooperation when working with reliable, valid and relevant knowledge and understandings in the context of real experiences. For Stubbs (1995) this has to be implemented through a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning. Knowledge and understandings, skills, attitudes and values need to be integrated through classroom programmes and participation in class, school and community organization, projects and events.

Banks (2005:4) recognises the knowledge, skills and attitudes children need to make reflective decisions, to communicate and to participate as citizen actors in making their nation-states more democratic and just. Children need to master social science knowledge, to clarify their moral commitments, to identify alternative courses of action, and to act in ways according to democratic values. In contradiction to this, Banks (2004:10) sees citizenship education facing a dilemma in nation-states worldwide because the lessons taught in school about democratic values such as justice, equality, and human rights are contradicted by social practices such as institutional racism and inequalities. He refers to South Africa as 'one of the most striking examples of this phenomenon'. What effect does this statement have on my study? I have to take cognisance of Bank's perception when analysing the learner's experiences of the democratic dispensation in South Africa.

Associated to citizenship education are the concepts of responsible citizenship and active participation. Holden and Clough (2000:13-28) promote a curriculum for participatory citizenship education to assist children to become active citizens in a democracy. Holden and Clough (2000:19-20) refer to Hart's (1992) model of the various levels of participation teachers and others can use when working with young children and in providing authentic efforts in encouraging participation. A respect for democratic processes is a basic principle underpinning Hart's approach, because he argues that teachers cannot teach about democracy if their classrooms are models of autocracy (Holden & Clough, 2000:20). Education for participation involves a values-based framework, such as assisting children in acquiring the skills necessary for making responsible decisions and responses. Such a values framework is endorsed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989 – Articles 12 and 13) where children are given the right to seek and impart information, to express their thoughts and feelings, to have these listened to, and to partake in decisions affecting them. The principles underpinning the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) include learning about social justice and global responsibility. Education for participation thus becomes 'education for values-based participation' (Holden & Clough, 2000:13-28). Revell (2005:44-45) promotes the idea of active citizenship as the most distinctive feature of citizenship education. Revell (2005) states that it is not education about citizenship, but a commitment towards fostering active citizenship that is at stake. Being an active citizen implies that young children will exercise their rights, will know how to participate and will indeed participate. In the primary classroom active citizenship means that children should be given every opportunity to participate, not just in the work they are set but in the running of a democratic classroom like deciding on class rules and forming agendas for a school council.

According to Revell (2005:44-45), 'it is impossible to deal with citizenship education without dealing with controversial issues'. These are political and social issues like racism, asylum seekers, human rights and political activism. If children are given the opportunity to explore such issues they will be far better prepared to deal with them when they are older. By dealing with the issues in an open and calm manner the teacher is providing a safe environment for these issues to be discussed. In this way they will learn the skills of objectivity. Children will have a forum in which they can talk and discuss global events of their concern. To what extent do we deal with issues of concern and controversy in our schools and with young children? Green (2005:viii) identifies teamwork, leadership, negotiating, critical reflection and presentation skills as the skills needed for responsible citizenship and active participation. Dialogue, interaction, understanding and the ability to adopt complex approaches to difficult issues go hand in hand with reading, listening, writing and speaking, viz. the basic language skills young learners have to master.

The concepts democracy and education are coupled with citizenship education through statements made by various scholars as already discussed in Section 2.3.2 of this chapter. Gutmann (2004:79-80) argues that civic equality (excluding stereotyping), toleration and recognition are essential characteristics of a democratic approach to education in diverse nation-states, but argues that it can never be entirely realized. Gonçalves e Silva (2004:206-207) states that all citizens in diverse democratic societies must work for the betterment of the whole society, and not just for the rights of their own racial, social, or cultural group. She stresses the point that education must play an important role in facilitating the development of civic consciousness. John (2000:10) argues for an educational system that, through its policies, practices and materials, recognizes children as full participants in the process of an education which perceives values, emotions, identity, gender differences and an informed consciousness about rights, as interlocking issues. This curriculum has to include children's moral and social development to produce competent citizens in a democracy.

Wood (2000:31-45) brought the dimension of change to active participation. She advocates an early years curriculum where children are assisted to attain essential social and interpersonal skills, including skills of conflict resolution, skills of collaboration and negotiation. In enabling children to make choices and decisions they have to be able to consider the influence of their decisions on others (adults and peers) and to carry out their choices and decisions. Children have to be able to listen, understand, participate and accept differences. Accordingly, they have to act through negotiation and cooperation and learn to compromise, because these skills are needed in a democratic community. Through action they can work for change and future perspective. They can participate in school councils and community projects where they learn skills of participation in the context of controversial environmental issues (Holden, 2000:46-62; Clough, 2000:63-77). Comparing the implications of citizenship education reported on in this section to the descriptions of education, especially the statement made by Gartrell (2004:69) as, 'education is about learning to live together in peace and solving problems cooperatively and creatively', there seems to be no difference between the two concepts.

In this study I will explore the experiences of the nine-year-old learners of my case study as citizens against the background of my employment of citizenship education. In order to prepare the child citizen for citizenship in South Africa as a diverse, democratic nation, citizenship education has to focus on the following components:

- Knowledge that will assist the learners in understanding themselves and other citizens in the present political context of the South African democracy, including the Constitution, which is foundational to the South African democracy (1996). The knowledge relates to the dimension of political literacy as identified by the Crick Report (in Hine, 2004:4-5). Political literacy encompasses social, economic and cultural literacies coupled with the capacity for participation in all aspects of society: political, economic, social and cultural (Hunter & Phillips, 2002:iv).
- Skills to participate actively and responsibly as citizens in a diverse nation-state like South Africa. These skills include critical reflection, leadership, negotiating, skills in dialogue, collaboration, interaction, understanding and the ability to adopt complex approaches to difficult issues. These skills go hand in hand with reading, listening, writing and speaking as the basic language skills. In addition, child citizens need skills such as the ability to identify alternative courses of action and to act according to democratic values.
- The attitudes and values child citizens need are a moral commitment to the democratic ideals and values as embedded in the Constitution (1996) and described in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001). These values are foundational to the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) and relate to the dimensions of moral and social responsibility as well as community involvement as identified by the Crick Report (in Hine, 2004:4-5). To have a democratic identity is prerequisite to a commitment to the democratic values.

Knowledge, skills, values and attitudes are the thrust of the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002c) as a product of the 'new' democratic dispensation of South Africa. The relationship between the identified components of citizenship education and the inclusion of these components in the national curriculum of South Africa substantiate my rationale that all education has to be citizenship education to sustain democratic South Africa.

Supplementary to the statements about and descriptions of citizenship education, citizenship education has to be seen within the global context. In 2002 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, representing over 40 member states, recommended that European governments ‘make education for democratic citizenship a priority objective of educational policy-making and reforms’ (Council of Europe, 2002:2 in Starkey, 2005:25). In the subsequent section I elaborate on the relationship between citizenship education and globalization and comment on the relevance of global citizenship for this study.

2.3.4 Citizenship education and globalization

Since the late 20th century processes of globalization have affected all nation-states (Fazal, 2000; Waghid, 2001; UNESCO, 2003). World migration and the political and economic aspects of globalization are challenging nation-states and national borders. Globalization threatens to undermine the key characteristics of the nation-state, already dealt with in Section 1.4 of Chapter 1. Where there are diverse and mobile populations with affiliations in more than one state, the crucial link between the nation and the citizen may be undermined (Castles, 2004:19-21). Kymlicka (2004:xv) states that the legal acceptance of the idea of dual citizenship by immigrants that wish to maintain strong links with their country of origin are accepted in many Western democracies, but are opposed by people who are concerned that it may displace the search for a more just and inclusive nation-state.

Ong (2004:49-70) argues that the cosmopolitan citizen (transnational individuals) sees education as an instrument for achieving economic goals and not as being for the benefit of national citizenship and learning about the disadvantaged minorities within the nation-state. The willingness of USA institutions of Higher Education to enrol foreign students of Asian elites when pursuing international degrees, challenges traditional Western liberal values and norms such as democracy, equality, and pluralism. Ong sees citizenship education as being replaced or supplemented by the focus on enhancing skills of individuals and not as ‘preserving democratic ideals’ of the nation-state.

Osler (2005:3) sees education for national citizenship as inadequate for the flexible and changing world, for the dual and cosmopolitan citizen, especially in classrooms where there are recently arrived children from other parts of the world. In the classes where I did my research there were newly arrived children who could not speak any of the 11 official languages of South Africa. Osler (2005:4) proposes the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship as a useful framework for developing new programmes for citizenship education. She promotes global education as the answer to education policy-makers' response to the challenges of globalisation. Young and Commins (2002) promote global citizenship as an acknowledgement of our responsibilities to both each other and to the Earth itself.

How does global citizenship relate to the nine-year-old children of my case study? I encountered a few learners who had just arrived from countries in Africa but could not communicate with them since they only started to learn English. Some of the other learners had never travelled beyond Pretoria, but they were indirectly influenced by global trends through mass media such as television.

Apart from the theories associated with the concept of citizenship education already discussed, there are distinct theories related to the facilitation of citizenship education to enhance democratic citizenship. In the following section I report on the theories promoted by Dewey and Waghid and comment on their relevance to this study.

2.3.5 Theories promoted by Dewey and Waghid related to citizenship education

The theories of Dewey and Waghid are foundational to my research project. This section discusses Dewey's theory on building a learning community, and the theory of compassion and imaginative action as reported by Waghid. Each informs the focus of this study in a unique way.

2.3.5.1 Dewey's theory on ‘building a learning community’

John Dewey (1859-1952) promoted ‘Learning communities and Democratic schooling’ (in Mac Naughton & Williams, 2004:225-238; Saltmarsh, 1996). As a philosophical pragmatist, Dewey called for a democratic, child-centred, and social reform-oriented education in the USA (Covaleski, 1994) and stated that schools had an obligation to train good citizens for a democratic community, a society where school and society are aligned in terms of aims and practices (Dewey in Handlin, 1959:23; Dewey in Mooney, 2000:1-19; Dewey in Palmer, 2001:179-181). According to Mac Naughton and Williams (2004), Dewey argued in his *School and Society* (1899) and *Democracy and Education* (1916) that education and democracy are closely linked and that education should be used for progressive social change. He insisted that the child's own experiences must form the basis for the curriculum and not the routinization, memorization, and recitation of the classical curriculum. In his laboratory school established at the University of Chicago (USA), the development of a democratic social community in the school was core with the articulation of and commitment to participatory democracy. Central to this capacity of building a democratic community of learners is communication. Through communication meaning is created and shared. Through communication it is possible to understand how others think about and understand the world in order to build a shared understanding of what is valued and valuable for a group. He promotes a curriculum based on life itself, on such human characteristics as socialising, constructing, inquiring, and creating. Scholars like Saltmarsh (1996), Retallick, Cocklin and Coombe (1998) and Smith (1999) employed Dewey's theory and his notions of democracy in their work. Gartrell, in his latest publication on teaching social-emotional skills (2004:68-69), sees the goals of guidance as democratic life skills.

Alexander extended Dewey's theory of building a learning community with his concept of 'Citizenship schools' (2002). Alexander advocates citizenship schools in Britain in his book *Citizenship Schools. A practical guide to education for citizenship and personal development* (2002) as the foundations of a learning society. The concept citizenship schools provides a whole school and lifelong learning approach, based on building a learning community where citizenship is experienced as well as taught. In citizenship schools young people are treated as citizens in a democratic learning community with the emphasis on active citizenship. In this type of school, children are equipped with more power over their own lives by valuing their own abilities, learning to participate effectively in collective decision-making processes. According to Alexander (2000), this will lead to a more positive and powerful influence on society and on the future and result in a positive relationship between education, society and the democracy.

Alexander (2002) argues that constitutional changes to the way in which decisions are made at all levels, such as education, society and politics, will be inevitable. Citizenship schools will help children to develop skills to cope with the aftermath of the twentieth century, in the form of global climate change, multiple environmental crises, population growth, global inequality, mass migration and families under stress. These schools cannot be based on a rigid blueprint, but must be developed by members of the school community (parents included) working together in a spirit of co-operation, participation and mutual respect. Alexander (2002) identifies essential elements of a citizenship school as a democratic constitution and ethos, an empowering curriculum, active participation in decision-making at all levels, and a new learning culture based on a democratic constitution with the support of local education authorities and central government.

Dewey's association of democracy and education relates to my view that citizenship education can only flourish in a democracy. His ideas, elaborated by Alexander (2000), that a democratic social community in the school is core where learners are perceived as citizens, relate to the ideas of scholars like Holden and Clough (2000) who argue for a citizenship education that will provide authentic efforts in encouraging citizenship. Revell (2005) too perceives that learners have to practice citizenship in the everyday management of a school. Dewey's argument that children's own experiences must form the basis for the curriculum is noteworthy. Dewey emphasises communication and Alexander active citizenship as important skills, which link to the skills of dialogue and participation, already identified as concepts for employment in this study.

Dewey's perceptions that democracy and education are related, that education should be used for social change and his commitment to building a learning community relates to statements made by Banks (2004) and to a ‘reforming society’ position on early childhood (0-9-years) curriculum, mainly influenced by Freire (in Mac Naughton, 2003:176-180). Mac Naughton (2003:176-180) argues that a reforming society position focuses on the individual child and conservative cultural values based on diversity and ethnocentricity. Each child has to be observed with an anti-bias lens. The reforming society position asks for a changing of practices to create a more democratic society so that children develop who they are and know how they fit in the world. For the purpose of my study I recognize the possible influence of the reforming society position on early childhood, as children (living in the era of the 'new' South African democracy) are regarded as agents of reform (Department of Education, 2002a).

Although I commend the contributions of Dewey and of Alexander to citizenship education, their theories were constructed for the American and British contexts. A theory that relates to citizenship and citizenship education of the young child in the South African context is the theory of compassion and imaginative action, elaborated by Waghid (2005). I report on this theory and how it relates to my study in the subsequent section.

2.3.5.2 Waghid's expansion of ‘compassion and imaginative action’

Waghid (2005:323-342), a professor of philosophy at a South African university, expands the communitarian concept of citizenship participation through the notion of compassion and imaginative action. He states that the lack of recognition of voices and differences in a diverse society is central to the debate about democratic citizenship education. In South African schools, learners from different backgrounds are beginning to deliberate about matters of public concern such as crime, homelessness, unemployment, poverty, lack of food, absence of good prospects and job discrimination. These deliberations require young people to deal with the issues in public and private life and to make practical judgments based on their perceptions of others' distress, sufferings and injustices. Waghid argues towards a radicalisation of democratic citizenship by making an argument for compassionate and imaginative action, especially in the South African context. This theory will produce active democratic citizens who can one day enter and play a meaningful role in the public realm. Waghid (2005:331) explores the idea of compassionate and imaginative action having the potential to extend some of the fundamental dimensions of democratic citizenship education, by reshaping our understanding of deliberative argumentation (dialogue) and the sensitive recognition of differences and otherness (listening and responding).

In his article, Waghid (2005) refers to the work of Nussbaum and Arendt and their promotion of the need in education to give voice to those who are different and vulnerable, as well as to the work of Habermas and Young on dialogical action. His argument (2005:331) evolves around the different concepts of citizenship education, already dealt with in Chapter 1. According to Waghid, a democratic conception of citizenship education makes it possible for students at university to engage in deliberative conversation and to articulate their personal stories. The recognition of difference and inner voice has to take into account that the circumstances and conditions in which a person lives and who the person is will have an effect on the narratives. I apply these ideas to nine-year-old children because they are a vulnerable group of citizens of the South African populace.

According to Waghid (2005), students at university and learners at school cannot only be taught the conventional modes of deliberative argumentation and sensitivity for differences. They have to be taught what it means to act with compassion and imagination. Waghid deliberates on how to teach understanding for compassionate and imaginative action: One has to be willing to forgive, which means some respect for the other person including a kind of friendship, a closeness, a compassion for the other. Compassion can be the condition for acting upon and deliberating about matters like recognizing each other's vulnerabilities and treating others in a just and humane manner.

An emotion like compassion is the most important emotion to cultivate in preparing young people to engage in deliberation and just action in public and private life. Waghid quotes Nussbaum

(2005:334) who understands compassion as painful emotional judgment that has at least two cognitive requirements: the belief that the suffering of others is serious and not trivial and that people do not deserve to suffer; and that the possibilities of the person who experiences the emotion are similar to those of the sufferer. Students and teachers ought to go beyond moments of deliberative engagement like greeting, rhetoric and narratives. They have to deliberate rationally about the two requirements while at the same time acting compassionately by cultivating a concern to be just and humane.

Waghid (2005) suggests strategies to engender compassionate and imaginative action. One is to cultivate an ability to imagine the experiences of others and to participate in their suffering. Another strategy is to introduce young learners (at elementary level) to stories, rhymes, songs and imagination (like thinking about life without people). However, according to Waghid (2005), how can historically privileged White persons imagine the unbearable circumstances of an informal settlement? Give up their homes? Similarly, Black students can be exposed to the inner voices of White students if they want to tell their experiences, but White students might not want to be considered as bearing the responsibility for racist discrimination legislated by a past government that promoted White minority rule.

Waghid acknowledges these as difficult demands and states that compassionate action will only succeed if learners ‘know’ the reasons why they have to reconcile. He refers to Greene (2005:338) for the answer. Imaginative action (as distinct from compassionate action) as a strategy may be helpful if students at school look at things imaginatively. Imaginative action awakens an awareness of the many voices and multiple realities of others. Imaginative action is a mode of philosophical activity that requires students to engage thoughtfully with the other to make independent, interpretive judgments in the end. This imaginative (dialogical) action creates the potential for connection to the lives of others who might be suffering without requiring that they must take part in the suffering. The idea is that students must question and search for possibilities of social justice and equality and act upon values.

An additional strategy is to cultivate an awareness of cultural differences in order to engender respect for one another, for mutual respect is an essential under pinning for compassionate action (Waghid, 2005:338). This focus needs to begin very early and as soon as a child engages in story telling about other nations and countries, different traditions, religions, and ways of thinking. He suggests teaching primary children about the African myths and folktales and teaches them about the injustices perpetrated against Africans (p. 338) as part of a theme in life skills. They should study this in the context of the broader South African society, which is becoming increasingly diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, social class and religious differences and sectarianism (Waghid, 2005:338-339). Students can be provided with an intellectual awareness of the causes and effects of structured inequalities and exclusion based on prejudice in the South African society. They can be facilitated to expand their ability to think critically and ask questions about controversial issues that stem from race, gender, class, ethnic and different religions in the South African society and to challenge what they have been taught.

Waghid promotes imaginative action for civic reconciliation in South African schools and universities after decades of apartheid rule: ‘Focusing on imaginative action in education may pave the way to a more expansive theory of democratic citizenship education’ (Waghid, 2005:338). It means to act in a caring, just and trustworthy manner and engage imaginatively in dialogues. This approach will need teachers to develop their learners' capacity of listening to one another no matter how unimportant a particular point of view may seem. Learners need to understand others' reasons and to act justly on this understanding. Added to learners' capacity teachers have to teach the formal rules of dialogue and logical reasoning. In cases where logical reasoning does not fit well with the religious, genealogical, and mythic claims told by post-graduate students from South African countries like Lesotho and Namibia, the lecturer must build trust in the university classroom. Trust must be established between speaker and listener for civic reconciliation to take place.

For the purpose of this study I employed the theory of compassion and imaginative action with minor revision. Waghid refers mostly to the older learner, especially the student at university whereas the participants of my case study are nine-year-old learners. Waghid focuses on reconciliation as an outcome of compassion and imaginative action. The learners of my case study were born in the democratic dispensation of South Africa and therefore do not have the historical background of an older student. However, I acknowledged the influence of parents and other adult family members on the lives of the nine-year-old learners concerning the previous political dispensation and its effect on the lives of many people. In addition, the social world of the learners still reflects the past before the establishment of democracy in many ways and in this context reconciliation in a diverse nation will be a present factor of citizenship and citizenship education.

According to Waghid (2005) teaching compassionate and imaginative action to young learners may contribute to a different and more promising agenda for the education of democratic citizenship in South Africa. My insights are that compassion and imaginative action can be added to the repertoire of skills the child citizen needs for active participation in the South African democracy. Waghid's transforming of teaching and learning to compassionate and imaginative action links to the position of transforming society on early childhood education (Mac Naughton, 2003). A transforming society position on early childhood curriculum rests on the belief that educators can work with children and their families to create a better world (Mac Naughton, 2003:182-212). In this position, education can transform the individual into a morally, intellectually and politically engaged actor and transform society and its values to extend the possibilities for justice in public life (Giroux in Mac Naughton, 2003:182). Within this position, early childhood equips children with the knowledge to recognize and confront injustice and to resist oppressive ways of becoming. This position is underpinned by the ideological stance of critically confronting and engaging the world and by challenging power relations.

I have acknowledged the relationship between citizenship, citizenship education and the transforming society position on early childhood. Dewey, Alexander and Waghid identified the association between citizenship, citizenship education and the transforming of the democratic society. Other scholars in the domain of citizenship and citizenship education, like Wood (2000), also emphasize this association when stating that young children have to bring about change and future perspective through action and participation. I need to state yet again that the philosophical paradigm of this study is interpretivism with the main focus on understanding and interpreting the nine-year-old learners' experiences as citizens of democratic South Africa although tangent points with the critical education theory emerged throughout this study. Critical education theory is built on the following assumptions about education (various authors in Mac Naughton, 2003): education is historically located, education is a social activity with social consequences and therefore concerns individuals and social outcomes, education is a political activity affecting the lives of people and education is fundamentally problematic. Critical educational theory focuses on challenging the socio-political and economic structures that prevent a more just society in which the notion of difference is respected. These socio-political structures include aspects such as race, class, gender and ability, as well as the effects of globalization and capitalism on these structures. Critical educators are therefore concerned with discrimination, oppression, marginalization and their diminishing effects on the possibilities of a child's becoming and the role critical knowledge can play in challenging these structures (Mac Naughton, 2003:184-185).

In the previous section I have studied theories and concepts to come to some understanding of citizenship and citizenship education as well as theories concerning the facilitation of citizenship education of the young child citizen. As the concepts of citizenship, democracy and democratic identity are abstract notions and the learners of my case study are only nine years old, I questioned my assumptions and ideas such as: Will the nine-year-old learners of my case study be able to express their experiences about their citizenship since it is an abstract idea? What are the different perceptions about the young child and their 'learning' of citizenship? How do I perceive the young South African child in relation to their citizenship?

2.3.6 Theories related to the young child and citizenship education

A review of the literature indicated various theories relating to the perception of young children and their ability to 'learn' or construct their citizenship. The research project conducted by Johnson (2006) was underpinned by the cultural-historical and activity theory of Vygotsky (1978), which offers an interdisciplinary lens on human cultural and psychological activity. The study done by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) (Mellor *et al.*, 2002) relied on the theories of constructivism. The cross-cultural research project executed by Smith (2005) employed the theory of the Zone of Proximal Development by Vygotsky. The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001) reflected on Kohlberg's theory of moral development. As citizenship is an abstract concept including cognitive skills I studied Piaget's cognitive theory (in Gordon & Brown, 2000). In the next section I report on my employment of the postcolonial theory as the most suitable theory for this research, focusing on the child and describe how the postcolonial theory is related to the transforming of society theory.

2.3.6.1 Citizenship education and postcolonial theory

The postcolonial theory as part of the new sociology of childhood recently started to investigate images of the child and presents a view of the child from an African perspective (Mac Naughton, 2003). The postcolonial theory originated in three southern continents, namely Africa, Asia and Latin America, with the purpose of addressing the legacy of colonialism. As my case is situated in Africa I took note of this theory. A key concept in postcolonial theory that focuses on the unmasking of power structures, ‘that essentializes the diverse ways of viewing and living in the world’, is related to the field of early childhood education (Viruru, 2005:7-29). Most postcolonialists view the child as part of a diverse society as one universal form. Drawing on the work of Young (2001), Cannella (1997) and other scholars, Viruru (2005) argues that adopting an activist position that seeks ways of recreating early childhood in ways that are more socially just and representative of diverse forms of knowing, is a powerful idea and relevant to the lives of young children. Mac Naughton (2005:5-6) agrees with activism in education and relates to Paulo Freire's [1921-97] work on developing a critical consciousness, a consciousness to transform reality towards action for social justice and equity.

However, postcolonial thought has had minimal impact on the field of early childhood education (Mac Naughton, 2005). For Viruru (2005:13-14), the discourse that continues to dominate the field of early childhood education and that has become another of colonialism's truths imposed on people around the world for their own good, is the idea that children develop in an universal, linear sequence. This means that all children undergo the linear sequence to achieve maturity and that appropriate intellectual and social behaviours are standardized, as promoted by the developmental theories. For Viruru (2005:13) these ideas make no room for seven- and eight-year-old children to engage in deeper levels of meaning as Tobin (in Viruru, 2005) has found in his research.

2.3.6.2 Citizenship education and the transforming society theory

Associated with the postcolonial theory is the theory of transforming society. A transforming society position on early childhood links the concept of citizenship education with the belief that educators can work with young children and their families to create a better world (Mac Naughton, 2003:182-212). In this position, education can transform the individual into a morally, intellectually and politically engaged actor and transform society and its values to extend the possibilities for justice in public life (Giroux in Mac Naughton, 2003:182). Within this position, early childhood (0-9-year-old children) can be equipped with the knowledge to recognize and confront injustice and to resist oppressive ways of becoming. This position is underpinned by the ideological stance of confronting and engaging the world critically. In the South African context, Asmal (in Department of Education, 2002a) regards children as able to act as agents for transforming South Africa into a non-violent democracy. The transforming society position on early childhood links the concepts of citizenship and citizenship education with the theories of Dewey, Waghid and the postcolonial theory as presented in the conceptual framework that guided my understanding of the research topic. In Figure 2.2, I present the conceptual framework that directed this study. Figure 2.2 is a visual representation of my arguments based on concepts and theories and their relationship as dealt with in chapters one and two.

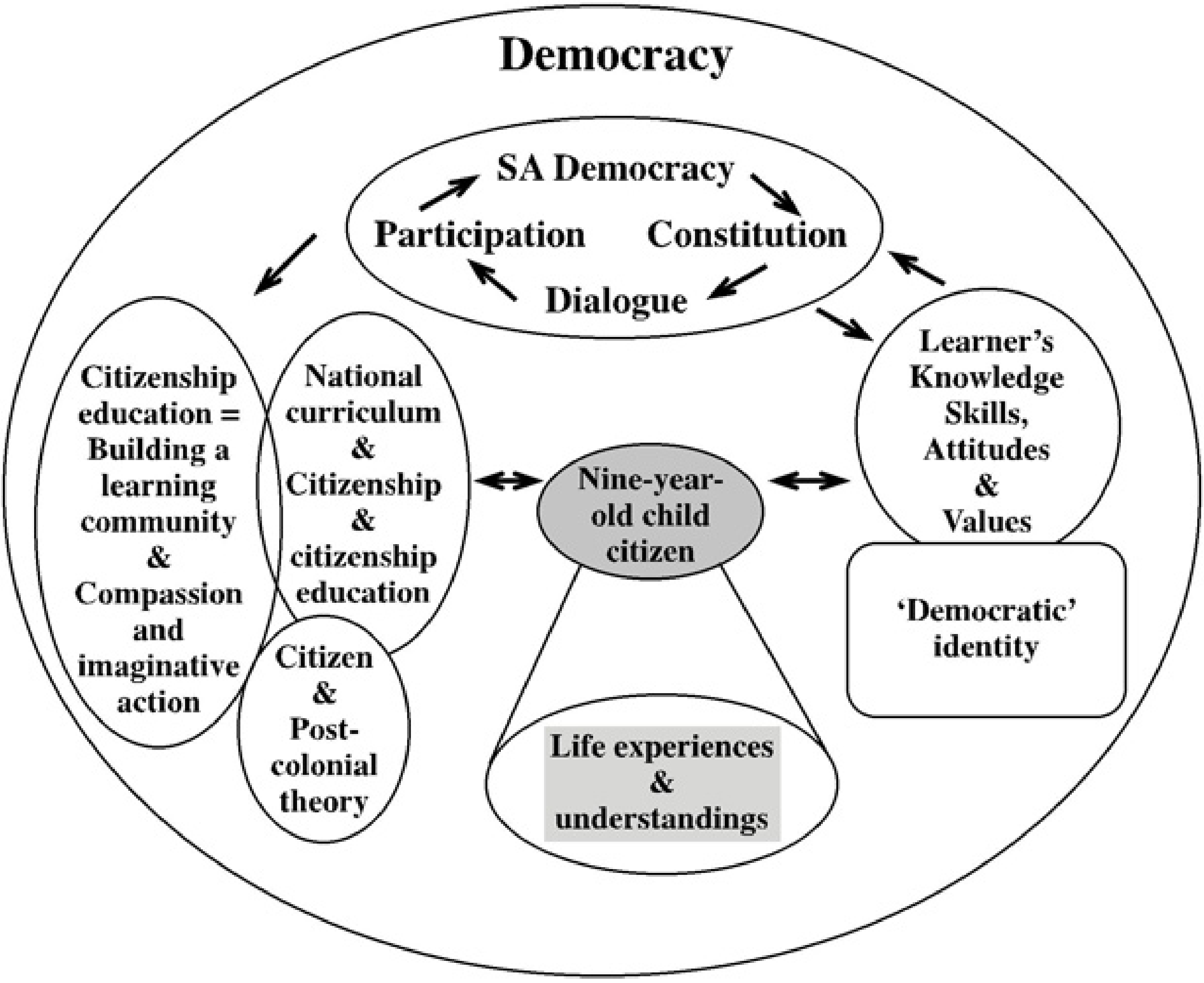
Democracy
SA Democracy
Participation
Constitution
Dialogue
Citizenship education = Building a learning community & Compassion and imaginative action
National curriculum & Citizenship & citizenship education
Citizen & Post-colonial theory
Nine-year-old child citizen
Learner's Knowledge Skills, Attitudes & Values
'Democratic' identity
Life experiences & understandings

Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework

2.4 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I gave a review of relevant concepts and research on citizenship and citizenship education related to the young child. I described learning and teaching theories, thus how children learn about citizenship and theories on teaching citizenship in a democracy. I related my case throughout to the information and theories given to motivate the stance I hold. I showed how my investigation could help to understand the experiences of the children of my case and could possibly contribute to existing thinking about young children's voices on citizenship. In the next chapter I discuss the methodological process of my inquiry and explain how I dealt with the research questions in an empirical manner.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:

Participatory into data gathering

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 explains the research design and I justify the methods selected for data collection and data capturing to assist the learners of my case study in self-expression about their experiences as citizens in democratic South Africa and to enhance my exploration thereof. I begin by explaining the paradigmatic considerations of this study, introducing it within the interpretive paradigm and confining it as a case study. Next, I present an overview of the probing stages of the research, moving on to the prearranged and structured (formal) phase where I then document observation and interviews employed as methods for data collection. I also explain the data capturing process. The chapter concludes with a description of the strategies and methods used for enhancing the validity of the study and the identification of its limitations and constraints.

3.2 Paradigmatic considerations

3.2.1 Qualitative paradigm

Since experiences of young children, specifically as citizens in the South African democracy and as learners in the classroom situation, and by implication human interaction and social relationships, are the focus of the inquiry I employed qualitative research framed within the interpretivist tradition. A central theory of the qualitative paradigm is to contest the existence of an objective and neutral reality, in accordance with a statement made by Denzin and Lincoln (2000:5): ‘Objective reality can never be captured’. The assumption underlying qualitative research, that reality can never fully be declared or understood, implies that knowledge creation or research can only discover an approximation of the truth, or provide perspective rather than truth (Patton, 2002). This stance of qualitative research together with the difficulty researchers have to agree on any essential definition of this field, provide opportunity for resistances to qualitative studies and the critique of its practice as 'soft scholarship' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:8). Advocates of quantitative research maintain that social science inquiry should be objective; and Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:14-26) argue for a mixed methods research, which frequently results in what they call 'superior research'. However, it is the multiple perspectives of realities in the social and educational sciences that enable the qualitative researcher to a closer and 'greater depth of understanding' (Berg, 1989:2) of everyday life. These different points of view secure a rich and thick (emphatic) description of its representation as applied by established scholars in the social and educational sciences in the international and national field, e.g. Lankshear and Knobel (2004), De Vos (2002), Babbie and Mouton (2001), Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Silverman (2000), Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) as well as Berg (1989).

3.2.2 Interpretative paradigm

In the exploration of learners' experiences of citizenship and how their acquired 'democratic' identities can extend the current conceptions of citizenship education, I was confronted by various research and philosophical orientations (Merriam, 1998:3). As citizenship is a social and educational issue, I had to deal with several research approaches for the construction and the development of knowledge from the outset of my research. Carr and Kemmis (in Adendorff, 2004:99) distinguish the positivist, the interpretivist and the critical approaches. In the following paragraph I relate my research project to each of these approaches to justify the choice I made.

Citizenship can be studied from the positivist approach where knowledge gained is objective and quantitative. Since children's experiences are personal and subjective in nature, I decided against this approach. Citizenship can also be studied through the ideological critique of power, privilege and oppression, which frames critical research. I could employ the critical educational theory as my study relates to empowering young children to recreate their world (Thomas & Holdsworth in Johnson, 2004). In addition, I could easily link my research to the ideas of Foucault (1926-1984) (in Mac Naughton, 2005) in seeking social justice and equity for the learners of my case study. Researchers employing the critical research approach often associate the concepts education, citizenship and social justice against the backdrop of power or racialized discourses or political ideology (SAGE Publications Journal, 2006). However, I chose to focus on interpreting and understanding the learners' voices on their experiences as citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa, in and beyond the classroom, as best option to answer my research questions. The reconstruction of the learners' voices as multiple social realities implicates a relativist reality (ontology) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:21) and I therefore position this research study within the interpretivist framework and justify my stance as follows:

- I perceived the learners as participants in my research endeavours and not as objects of the research project. As interpretivist, I tried to find meaning in the actions and expressions of the participants of my case study by acquiring an ‘inside’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:10) understanding. By becoming a participant observer (Mouton, 2001:105) I sought to understand the social world from the point of view of the child living in it (Greig & Taylor, 1999:43).
- I aimed to reconstruct the core of the ‘intersubjective communication’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:21) of the learners in their social life-world to deepen my knowledge about their beliefs, practices, understandings and interpretations of their citizenship. I therefore used a personal and interactive mode of data collection. The learners' expressions were collected through an interactive process of talking and listening, reading and writing, interpreting and drawing.
- The study is set in a particular context that relies heavily on the personal insight of the researcher as co-creator of meaning. As researcher, I became an interpreter who aimed to remain unaffected by and external to the interpretive process (Schwandt, 2000:191-194). Therefore, I described the findings systematically and in detail but not in a prescriptive framework. In this process my natural inclination to reflective thinking enabled me to gain an understanding of the interactions and perceptions of the participants of my case study, as reflexivity is a central part of the research process with young children (Punch, 2002:323).

3.2.3 Participatory principles in methodology

This study emphasizes experiences and perspectives of young children who, as learners are part of a wider, though contested, international trend to strengthen children's participatory rights, a view promoted by Hill (1997:172), nearly a decade ago. Scholars in early childhood education such as

Greig and Taylor (1999:81) as well as Mac Naughton, Rolfe and Siraj-Blatchford (2001) also support this research focus in recent publications. I involved children directly as active participants who have the ability and the right to have a voice about their lives through a ‘sharing approach’ (Flewitt, 2005:11). All children involved in research are vulnerable and therefore I addressed the ethical issues related to their involvement pro-actively and appropriately.

Children as research participants are seen as similar to or different from adults (James *et al.*, in Punch, 2002:324). Researchers within the new sociology of childhood agree that children are special, but can also perform as independent actors (Johnson, 2004:2). These contradictory perspectives are derived from the way in which researchers perceive childhood and the status of children in society (Punch, 2002:321). I therefore agree with Johnson (2004:338) that research with children cannot simplistically be considered either the same as or different from that with adults. It should be seen on a continuum where the way that research with children is perceived moves back and forth along the continuum according to a variety of factors which influence development and behaviour: individual children, their age, the social context, the questions asked, the research context and the attitudes and conduct of the researcher.

The nature of childhood in adult society indicates that children are used to having to please adults for fear of adults’ reactions to what they say or because they want to impress (Punch, 2002). To counteract this unequal power relationship between child participants and adult researchers, the adult has to form a relationship with the children and gain their trust (Punch, 2002:328). I attempted to redress the power difference between the learners and myself as adult in several ways. I addressed the learners not as an adult coming to impose ideas on them but to learn from them. I informed them of my belief that they were the experts on their lives and by asking them to assent to participation. In addition, I informed them that there would be no right or wrong answers and that each learner's contribution would be valued. From this stance I tried to gain their trust.

Participatory principles informed the data collection methodology to enable learners to become active participants in 'speaking' for themselves about their experiences as citizens and to enable me to observe 'live' data from 'live' situations (Cohen *et al*., 2000:305). I employed data collection methods and instruments based on these factors, bearing in mind the perceived competence of the nine-year-old children. The instruments were designed and employed to assist learners in self-expression during the interviews. The children themselves initiated some of the instruments, thus confirming Eisner's statement (in Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:149), that qualitative research methods are the least prescriptive. It is from this theoretical position that I present an explanation of the methodological process.

3.3 Research design

Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:3), of which I used a case study (Stake, 1995; Stake, 2000; Merriam, 1998). I purposely selected a case as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which I was interested and *considered* to contain the most characteristic of the population (Strydom & Venter, 2002:198-209). Yin (in Evans, 2005) suggests that a case study is the preferred strategy to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions and when the focus of the study is on a contemporary phenomenon of which little is known. I chose the instrumental case study as described by Mark (in Fouché, 2002:275) and Stake (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 237) to illustrate my interest in exploring and understanding citizenship related to young children as a social issue, an issue not as yet explored in depth.

I studied Grade 3 learners (nine years old) of one school in an effort to understand some facet of the population, by implication their experiences as citizens. I chose this case in a specific context and time frame referred to as a ‘bounded system’ by Creswell (1998:61; 2003:14). The participants of the unit of analysis were born in the first year of the democratic dispensation of South Africa. My intention was therefore not to generalise findings, but to understand. Although there are many role players who could possibly influence the learners' experiences of their citizenship and the shaping of their democratic identities, I focused only on the learners for an in-depth exploration and analysis of their point of view.

3.4 Participants and research site

As already described in Chapter 1.5, the unit of analysis is an inner-city primary school in the City of Pretoria, a capital of the 'new democratic South Africa', where there were 142 Grade 3 (nine-year-old) learners with four class teachers. The school is located in Sunnyside, a central-city neighbourhood consisting mostly of apartments, where the majority of the school's children live. Sunnyside is known for its crime and many homeless children live on the streets. However, in an interview with the principal of the school, I learned about the significant and positive role of the school in the lives of the learners and the community. The expression of the learners' experiences had to be studied against the background of citizenship education in both the global and the South Africa context, already dealt with in Chapters 1 and 2. In addition, I chose to study their voices against the background of recent curriculum developments (Department of Education, 2002c), which involved citizenship education.

3.5 Research process

In this section I present an account of the informal, explorative phase of my data collection and then describe the formal phase where I employed the data collection strategies (Evans, 2005:51-52). A preliminary literature review on citizenship education indicated that extensive research exists on citizenship as a general body of knowledge (Wringe, 1984; Kerr, 2003; British Council Seminars, 2005). However, the literature review confirmed the existence of minimal research on citizenship and young children. In this regard, I struggled to find evidence on international or national level of research done on citizenship education and nine-year-old children's experiences of the democratic dispensation in their countries. I started to investigate data sources and possible methods suitable for the research project. At first my choice of research design was made on intuitive judgment based only on the developmental stage of the children, but after reading texts on research with children in general (Greig & Taylor, 1999), I was convinced that a qualitative study was an appropriate choice for the reasons already stated.

Although I had previous experience of educating nine-year-old learners, I was still indecisive about the employment of the interviews and the level of difficulty to assist learners in self-expression in providing data to answer my research questions. After consulting literature on citizenship and the young child, I constructed an interview schedule and decided to initiate a pilot study to detect any ‘peculiar deficiency’ (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:166).

3.5.1 Informal data collection strategies

I performed two pilot investigations on which I shall report, commencing with the first pilot study.

First pilot study

With the first pilot study I decided to do an investigatory data collection activity by interviewing a nine-year-old boy at his home in order to establish if a nine-year-old child could reasonably comment on the abstract notion of 'citizenship'. The reason for choosing this child was that I knew him and his parents very well so I knew I would definitely have rapport with the child and consent from his parents for conducting the interview. I used the planned interview schedule (see **Addendum 7**) in the child's home language, which is Afrikaans. I assumed that the child would be comfortable with responding to my questions in his home language. The duration of the interview was thirty minutes and I documented his responses to each question. Lessons learned from this experience were:

- Tentative ideas resulted, namely that a nine-year-old child could answer the structured questions on citizenship in a more mature level than I anticipated. Although I expected the interview with the boy to be personalised and private as described by Hill (1997:175), the situation was not favourable for authentic data collection in this regard. The parents got involved when I asked a question and they tried to guide the boy when giving answers. In my opinion the boy was eager to participate but became nervous when his parents intervened.
- The method was time-consuming considering the telephone calls made for the appointment and the fact that I had to spend time with the parents after the interview on a social level. After this experience I realised I needed to work with more than one child at a time in another environment and with anonymous participants to gather ample data. I then started to identify other possibilities for the selection of cases.

I needed guidance and interviewed Doctor Liesel Ebersöhn (2004), an educational psychologist and researcher at the University of Pretoria (who later became my supervisor). She facilitated my understandings of classroom-based research, participative processes and appropriate methods or instruments for data collection from young children. With her help we identified a school and task-based methods like drawings. For the first time I felt at ease as our decisions corresponded with literature on research with young children, especially in the field of child interviewing (Candel, Mercklebach, Houben & Vandyck, 2004; Cugmas, 2004; Barlow, Jolley, White, & Galbraith, 2003). Recent research conducted with children on social and medical issues suggests that it is experience and not age, which is a precondition for children expressing themselves (Alderson in Johnson, 2004). Resulting from experiences and insights gained during the first pilot study, I conducted a second pilot study with two children in my office to implement a task- or activity-based instrument to facilitate an interview.

Second pilot study

I arranged with a colleague to interview her five- and nine-year-old Afrikaans-speaking nieces in my office one afternoon. Since they were visiting my colleague, it was convenient for me to interview them as participants whom I did not know. I received oral consent from their parents to interview them. I provided them with an A3-size sheet of paper and asked them to draw how they felt about living in South Africa as citizens. During the discussion of their drawings, I was amazed at their meaningful expressions of their life-worlds as citizens (see **Addendum 7**). The results from the two pilot sessions (although modest in scope), helped me to identify and shape early assumptions, namely:

- very young children can and want to share their voices on experiences as citizens in a democratic South Africa;
- their voices may be of interest to the adult community;
- I needed to construct and employ data collection methods that would be child-centred or child-friendly; and
- data collection instruments or 'modes' of facilitation were needed to mediate self-expression.

3.5.2 Formal data collection strategies

The data collected from the pilot endeavours offered me valuable insight into viewer profile. Regardless of the experiences I gained from the pilot study sessions, I was still troubled by uncertainties relating to how learners in a classroom context would be willing or able to express their experiences and concerns to a total stranger. I assumed that children's voices about their experiences as citizens existed but could only be accessed and understood with suitable data collection methods (Mouton, 2001:99). Practical and methodological considerations thus influenced my decision to collect data from observation and interviews to allow for an in-depth understanding of my research topic (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:149-150).

I decided to use interviews as the main data collection method and different instruments to mediate self-expression to obtain authentic and extensive primary data that is ‘rich in context’ from each learner (Fouché in De Vos, 2000:275) during the interview sessions. This approach correlates with Punch (2002:322, 337-338) who suggests that one way of researching a diversity of childhoods is taking into account children's varied social competencies and life experiences. The combination of instruments such as drawings, letters and a drama could enable the data-generating process to be fun and interesting for the learners as well as effective in generating useful and relevant data. In addition, various instruments helped to prevent boredom and sustained interest while enhancing the validity of the data.

As part of the formal data collection strategies, I obtained official clearance to perform the research. The Gauteng Department of Education granted permission as part of the official ethical protocol for working with minors in classroom-based research (Mouton, 2001:100) (see official documentation in **Addendum 4**). I decided that the particular inner-city primary school as my case study would ‘offer opportunity to learn’, was most accessible and the one I could spend the most time with (Stake in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:446). I went to see the principal and the head of the Foundation Phase Department of the school. They agreed to assist me and approved my letter of consent to the parents of the Grade 3 learners. After a short discussion with the principal, I extended my explanation of my research topic with the head of the Foundation Phase. She suggested that, with the agreement of the principal, I could use the last forty minutes of each day in a Grade 3 class because during that time a few learners went out for special classes like extra reading, and the remaining learners did self-study. I saw this as an ideal opportunity, which would give me time to spend with the Grade 3 learners. During a meeting with the four Grade 3 teachers, chaired by the head of the Foundation Phase, they agreed to this arrangement and the schedule for visiting their classes (see research diary in **Addendum 5**). After this meeting I started with my field notes (see **Addendum 5**) to capture all impressions and observations that could assist me in exploring and understanding my case study.

3.5.3 Personal role in research process

My relationship with the primary school dated back to the beginning of 2003 when I was appointed as a mentor-lecturer for two fourth-year B.Ed. students who had to do their practice teaching at the school. These visits gave me insight into the learner population and I became acquainted with the Head of the Foundation Phase Department as well as some of the other Foundation Phase teachers. What impressed me was that, in spite of big classes with about 40 learners, I could observe excellent teaching practices where learners participated interactively in learning. Aspects of citizenship education like posters of the national symbols and the South African flag against classroom walls were indicators of the facilitation of citizenship education as prescribed by the national curriculum statement (Department of Education, 2002c). At that time I already knew I had to identify a school for my fieldwork. I decided on this school as my sample on the basis of the diverse composition of the learners in Grade 3 as well as for favourable logistics.

The learners were predominantly black and representative of most of the eleven language groups in South Africa. I learned that there were a few immigrant children from countries in Africa who could not speak one of the local languages or English. There were also a few learners who spoke Portuguese and Afrikaans. Despite this multi-lingual situation the language proficiency of the learners in English was good since it was an additional language for most of the learners, facilitated to them over the past three years. The multicultural composition of the Grade 3 group made me to consider my background as a white female researcher from an Afrikaans-speaking background. However I did not feel uncomfortable with the situation because I have been teaching in multi-cultural and multi-lingual contexts for many years. Therefore, I could establish rapport while facilitating the research process.

During the process of designing the data collection methods and instruments I consulted with my supervisors, especially for guidance on the use of drawings as instrument. I obtained official permission and adhered to ethical research principles although working with young children proved to be challenging concerning ethical principles. For instance, they wanted to write their names on all their drawings despite my instruction not to do so. As part of my data I kept field notes, which primarily documented my observations, comments and reactions from learners throughout the project (see **Addendum 5** for field notes). I analysed the audiotaped recordings of the classroom discussions and conversations as well as the videotaped recording of the drama project. I furthermore analysed all the drawings from the learners manually and in a systematic way.

During the classroom-based research I acted as facilitator and ‘participant observer’ (Patton, 2002:4). As facilitator I introduced the task-based activities as instruments or facilitation 'modes' in order to accomplish self-reporting by the learners during interviews. The role of participant observer allowed me to become involved in the activities and intervene when learners explained their drawings and writings to me in order to come to an in-depth understanding of their self-expressions as citizens in democratic South Africa. While working with nine-year-old learners, the role of participant observer also allowed me to be sensitive and personally engaged as a facilitator. I was thus emotionally involved, reacting on the learners' comments and reactions. I was critically reflective and constantly questioned my role as researcher and my relationship with the learners. The field notes assisted me in mediating this role. The time spent with each of the Grade 3 classes, although an enormous challenge was the highlight of my research endeavours.

Apart from analyzing the textual data, I comprehensively reviewed current literature and legal and policy documents related to citizenship and the young child. During this time I realized how broad the field of citizenship was and how many perspectives and domains of citizenship existed. Apart from my research report, I included information and data on a compact disc (see **Addenda 1-11**). This format enabled me to include learner's drawings, learner's writings and a video as rich visual data that enable a shared experience with the reader.

3.5.4 Data collection methods and instruments

In this study field notes, personal reflections and observations account for informal data collection (see **Addendum 5**). I observed the learners as a participant observer when they took part in the task-based activities introduced as instruments. During observations I was reflexive and I reflected critically and continuously on my role, on my assumptions, on the choices and application of data collection methods and instruments, on the learners' reactions and on my observations to support later analyses and findings of the data (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:138).

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3.5.4.1 Observation

I employed observation as an informal data collection method to enhance my exploration and understanding of the research topic (see Table 3.1). I observed the learners in their classroom as the 'natural field setting' (Merriam, 1998:94) without using an observation schedule. Observation assisted me as follows:

- I noticed insights as they occurred to me such as the classroom atmosphere and nonverbal communication of the learners;
- I observed the learners' emotions and reactions first-hand if and when they participated in the conversations and task-based activities, therefore experiencing real life emotions (Merriam, 1998:96) about the abstract notion of citizenship;
- I noticed their language use in expressing their thoughts and experiences verbally and in written format;
- I noticed the interrelationship and interactions between the diverse group of learners as part of social processes;
- I checked my own feelings and behaviour and as the conducting of observations is flexible (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:158), I could shift focus as new data came to light from the task-based activities; and
- I documented and interpreted my 'observer comments' (Merriam, 1998:98) in the form of descriptions and direct quotations as part of filed notes (see **Addendum 5**). Although I did not employ all variables observed such as the influence of gender in the analysis phase of this study, I used the field notes to explore my research topic and enhance my understanding of the learners' expressions about their citizenship.

Disadvantages of observation related to my study were my closeness as researcher to the learners since I realized that my observation could lead to subjectivity that could jeopardise the reliability and factualness of the data (Merriam, 1998:95). I undertook corrective measures to counteract these disadvantages such as my declaration of my bias noted in the field notes (see **Addendum 5**) and my references to the data collected from the learners (drawings, letters) as an audit trail to corroborate the reliability of the data (Adendorff, 2004:115).

In addition, I employed interviews as the formal data collection method, although there is often no distinct line between informal and formal data collection methods. Merriam (1998:94) states that informal interviews and conversations are often interwoven with observation.

3.5.4.2 Interviews

I employed interviews as a formal data collection method and instrument to assist in gathering data, each informing the research questions in a particular way (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:4). I used focused interviews as the ground method for data collection (Adendorff, 2004:122). The focused interviews comprised group interviews and focus group interviews where I facilitated various modes or instruments to enable the learners to participate in discussions and to self-express during interviews. In Table 3.1 I give an overview of the data collection methods and data collection instruments and in the following text I shall explain each of the aspects.

Table 3.1: Summary of data collection and data capturing methods

Method of data collection	**Type**	**Instruments assisting data collection**	**Prompt**	**Data capturing method: textual data**
Observation	Participant observer	Researcher observations	None. Used 'natural field setting'	Informal field notes
Focused interviews	Group interview	*'What I like and don't like about South Africa'*	Discussion about living in SA and their experiences as child citizens	A4 sheet divided in the centre (vertical) with the two sets of sentences and drawings in a comparison format
		The SA Flag	Display of the SA flag	Sentences and drawings on a template of the flag
		If I were Mr. Mbeki …	Discussion on role-playing Mr. Mbeki, the president of SA	The completed sentence and drawings
		If I were the president …	Discussion on role-playing the president of SA	The completed sentence and drawings
		Drama technique	Mask of Mr. Mandela and mediator	Audiovisual data in the form of a video and transcriptions thereof
		Slogans for posters meant for peers	Questions posed to learners on what were their messages for peers	Posters with slogans and drawings on A3 sheet
		Letters to Madiba	Discussion on what learners wanted to tell Mr. Mandela (Madiba)	Letters addressed to Madiba, commencing with *Dear Madiba*
		Children's rights and responsibilities	Class discussion on learners' rights and responsibilities	Transcriptions of discussion and sentences on topic in *Letters to Madiba* (class discussion)

Method of data collection	**Type**	**Instruments assisting data collection**	**Prompt**	**Data capturing method: textual data**
		Class discussions	Discussion on citizenship	Transcriptions of the interviews (class discussion)
	Focus group interviews	All of the above, a book made by the learners on SA, discussion on their homes, messages to fellow citizens	All of the above and *Let's make a book on SA*	All of the above, transcriptions of the interviews and the book on SA with sentences and drawings

I chose to employ focused interviews where participants were interviewed for a short period of time through data collection instruments aimed at collecting purposeful responses (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:159-160). As I was working with the learners in their different class groups, I focused on group interviews as well as focus group interviews (Adendorff, 2004:122). The group interviews involved interviewing the learners of a class for a short period of time (30 minutes), focusing on questions and responses between the participants and me. Pertinent to my research study, the questions and responses included 'child-centred activities' in the form of task-based activities, which I facilitated to mediate self-expression or ‘situated talk’ (Hydén & Bülow, 2003:305-320). I refer to these activities as instruments. Reasons for choosing focused interviews were to address the whole class group in one session. Most of the instruments were structured, although a few instruments were employed as a result of learners' comments and reactions to a certain instrument. Therefore, in some instances the focus group interviews became more semi-structured or open-ended as I reacted on the learners' responses and used cues from their responses to design some of the instruments.

The focused interviews were employed to confirm data collected from other sources like observations and as exploratory discussions to understand the 'what' and the 'how' of the research topic (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000:247-248). Data from the focused interviews was comparable in some way, which revealed in-depth insights into the learners' experiences and understandings of their citizenship. Disadvantages of the group interviews were the differences in responses, which made the analysis of the data time-consuming.

The focus group interviews, on the other hand, relied on insight and data produced by the interaction within the small group (Gibbs in Adendorff, 2004:123). The interaction was based on questions and task-based activities or data collection instruments supplied by the research assistant who acted as facilitator and moderator. In the case of the focus group, five learners of one class were involved as the teacher of the class selected four girls and one boy. The time spent with this group was a period of thirty minutes during each day of the week. Similar instruments were employed in the focus group interviews as in the group interviews, although some of the instruments were adapted according to the responses of the participants during some focus group interviews. Additional instruments used were for example a book made on South Africa, a discussion on the learners' homes and the construction of a message to fellow citizens. The reason for employing the focus group interviews was to gain additional informative data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:159) and to verify information gained through the group interviews.

Seemingly, as a result of the learners' young age, the focus group interviews did not reveal the interaction among the participants that was hoped for. Instead, the focus group interviews at times became more of a face-to-face interview with the facilitator addressing each individual learner in order to receive a response. Advantages of the face-to-face interview as a data collection method for this study were the rich data gathered through the words of the interviewee and new understandings were obtained as a result of the relationship the participants developed with the moderator. In a way the close relationship between the young interviewee and the moderator could become a disadvantage for using the face-to-face interviews. The facilitator's tone of voice or non-verbal behaviour could create bias in the sense that the interviewee could respond to the questions or activities in a way to please the moderator. To correct the possible bias of the 'face-to-face' interviews, information from these interviews was verified with the group interviews. In the subsequent section I describe the instruments and their employment (see Table 3.1).

3.5.4.3 Instruments

Employing the data collection instruments was a challenge, as I needed creative prompts to introduce the instrument to the young learners (see Table 3.1). Creative prompts motivated the learners to participate without 'putting words in their mouths' (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:160; Punch, 2002). Thus, learners were treated in the same way as adults in displaying their competencies (Punch, 2002:337). As a result, the open-ended questions and cues, which I used as prompts, yielded in-depth responses about the learners' perceptions, understandings, knowledge, and life-world experiences as child citizens. The instruments were 'child-friendly' since children tend to lack experience of communicating directly with unfamiliar adults (Punch, 2002:330). Most of the instruments required writings and drawings from the learners when self-expressing (see examples of completed activities in **Addendum 8**).

The learners' feelings and expressions about citizenship were visually presented through drawings. Sampson *et al*. (2003:21) state, ‘writing is one of the key avenues to self-expression of the young child’. Through their writing, learners preserved their thoughts about citizenship. Children's drawings are believed to reveal the child's inner mind (Greig & Taylor, 1999:79) and according to Haney, Russell and Bebell (2004), are used to inform and change education and learning. In this research project, drawing was used in an exploratory manner to discover what learners considered important aspects of their citizenship, avoiding the imposing of 'adult-centred' concerns (Sapkota & Sharma in Punch, 2002:331). Most of the learners, even those who lacked the artistic ability to draw, participated eagerly. It should be stated that drawing should not be assumed a simple, 'natural' method to use with children. Particularly older children are more inhibited by a lack of artistic competence and may not consider drawing to be a fun method (Punch, 2002:331). Using their own drawings, as visual text, the children were nevertheless able to represent ideas, conveyed their understandings and feelings, shared experiences and provided insights in their everyday lives (Johnson, 2004:4-5) – viz. their lives as citizens. Other advantages of using drawings were that drawings were creative, fun and encouraged learners to be more actively involved in the research. The use of drawings gives learners time to think about what they wish to portray, change and add to their images, thus having more control over their own expression (Punch, 2002:331).

I further employed a drama as another form of instrument, which was a challenge relating the anonymity principle of ethical research done with young children. I addressed this challenge by videotaping the learners from the back of the group in order to prevent their identity on the visual images (Flewitt, 2005:6). Sampson, Rasinski and Sampson (2003:7980) see dramatisation as a natural activity of children in the classroom. Educational drama or creative drama is practiced when facilitating social issues like citizenship to young children (Mc Naughton, 2006). According to Mc Naughton (2006), drama is a form of shared experiences, values, traditions and cultural activities through the story medium. All cultures are engaged in storytelling as a way of teaching, passing on information and enabling understanding of important events and issues. Because of the democratic nature of teaching in drama, the drama classroom may often model a well-balanced democratic society (McCaslin, 2006). In addition, ‘drama implies self-expression, hence the necessity of the participants' involvement beyond merely imitating an action’ (McCaslin, 2006:28). McCaslin was inspired by John Dewey whose theories, such as the use of the child's own experiences for learning, also informed my study. As creative drama offers unique characteristics, which I could align with my research topic, I employed a drama technique, called the Hot chair (Fletcher in Van Wyk, 2005; McCaslin, 2006:106-107). This technique assisted me in mediating the learners to reveal their understandings and experiences of citizenship through role-play. This drama technique assisted the learners to participate in simulated social situations to enable them to throw light upon their real-life experiences as citizens (Cohen *et al.,* 2000:370-379).

Instruments were designed in advance like Letters to Madiba (Mr. Nelson Mandela) as the former president, the completion of the two sentences where the learners role-played the position of the president through ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki…’ and ‘If I were the president I…’, and the hot chair drama technique. Other instruments were designed while discussing citizenship issues with the learners in the group interviews, thus resulting from the learners' reactions. The instruments were: Slogans for posters meant for peers; the activity on the South African Flag; the discussion on children's rights and responsibilities; and the activity on 'What I like and don't like about South Africa'.

The instruments provided nine opportunities for learners to self-express (see Table 4.2), which was captured in the format of transcriptions, audiovisual material, drawings, written texts such as letters and sentences. I report on this data in the following section as textual data (Mouton, 2001:108) also termed researcher-generated documents (Merriam, 1998:118).

3.5.4.4 Textual data

Data captured in this research project is presented as textual data (see Table 3.1). The different role players in this study constructed substantial and comprehensive textual data (352 individual texts), which offered 'multiple meanings' (Mouton, 2001:108). I captured my observations as field notes (see **Addendum 5**), being aware that seemingly unimportant events could turn out to be very important. I used verbatim quotations with sufficient context to be interpretable. The transcriptions of the focus interviews (group and focus group) were useful in assisting my unfolding analysis and reflections. The construction of the textual data was significant in the social world of the learners because the texts were self-expression means of communication (Mason, 2002:106-111). I interpreted the meaningful textual data in the context of how and why they were constructed by the learners in my attempt to understand the research questions. In the interest of triangulation, the different textual data served to corroborate evidence from different sources (Adendorff, 2004:115). Examples of the textual data are presented in **Addendum 8**.

The following textual data formed the basis of this research project:

- A comparison of what the learners liked and did not like about South Africa, expressed through sentences and drawings.
- Sentences and drawings by using a template of the South African flag.
- The completed sentence on the learners role-playing Mr. Mbeki as the president of South Africa. Sentences were illustrated by drawings.
- The completed sentence and drawings on role-playing the president of South Africa.
- Audiovisual data in the form of a video of the drama technique and transcriptions thereof.
- Posters with slogans and drawings on A3 and A4 sheets of paper.
- Transcriptions of the class discussion on children's rights and responsibilities as well as sentences on the topic in Letters to Madiba.
- Transcriptions of the group interviews (class discussions).
- Transcriptions of the focus group interviews.
- A book on South Africa with sentences and drawings, discussion on their homes and the construction of a message to other citizens.

Textual data is difficult to capture in a short time (Mouton, 2001:108). However, with the help of the research assistant, I completed the task in a period of four weeks. I managed to capture the textual data in a structured way by coding each text and by classifying the textual data in categories. I also transcribed and categorized the different interviews. The continuation of capturing the textual data in a structured way helped me to retrieve specific texts later when I needed to confirm my interpretations, understandings and findings. Although the textual data was restricted to my case study (Merriam, 1998:116), I did not perceive this aspect as a disadvantage, for my research intention was to explore and understand the learners' personal experiences and understandings of their citizenship. In the next section I report on the data gathering process, which extended over a period of four weeks, in a narrative description.

3.5.4.5 The data gathering process

First week of October 2004

It was my first day at the primary school in a Grade 3 class. I felt excited and prepared. I took media like a map of South Africa and pictures of the national symbols to use as introduction. I also took a flipchart stand and flipchart paper to document learners' comments as well as A3 sheets of paper for learners to write on and koki's for them to share. The plan was to ask each of them to write a letter to the president about his/her experiences as a citizen in democratic South Africa. The teacher asked them to gather on the carpet and introduced me. While looking at all the unfamiliar faces I realized that I would have to implement all my facilitation strategies and skills to keep the 38 learners' attention since I am an outsider to them and do not know their names. Fortunately they were well behaved; being introduced as ‘a teacher from the university’ granted me authority and I could prompt them with questions about South Africa. The learners were eager to answer questions and when one learner said ‘Mam, I don't like things in South Africa’, I saw his comment as an opportunity to obtain data from the learners. I deliberated on this aspect by asking the learners what they liked and disliked about South Africa and identified many aspects. I then asked them to fold the A3 sheet in half and write or draw 'things' that they liked about South Africa on the one side and on the other side 'things' about South Africa they disliked.

A few learners wanted to copy pictures from their textbooks but struggled to do so. I requested them to make their own drawings and write their own sentences, and they became engaged in the activity. I went around the class and assisted learners who asked for guidance in terms of the spelling of words or who wanted to show me their drawings. They did not finish in the given time period

First week of October 2004

allocated to me. I collected their work with the promise that they could complete the task during the following days. A few learners asked me for paper to make a book about South Africa at home. I was attentive to use only the learners' contribution done during class time and not work done at home since parents do contribute to learners' work. During this week I did not record the discussions but realised that it could have been valuable data. After the first week I was excited about the data collected but needed confirmation from my supervisors. I consulted my supervisors who agreed that the data seemed to be true and honest reflections and was of value for my topic.

Second week of October 2004

I reflected on the day and the data and because these learners also talked about the president of South Africa I decided to introduce a role-play activity. The creation of images is a powerful strategy for enhancing comprehension (Gunning, 2005:301). I asked the learners to close their eyes and think of themselves as the president of South Africa and to think about things that they would do or change in South Africa. I handed out paper with an incomplete sentence: 'If I were Mr. Mbeki I would …' (see **Addendum 8**). This seemed to capture their attention and I got excellent data. I decided to do something similar with the next class but as an improvement drew lines on the paper for the learners because it was time- consuming for the previous class to draw lines when completing the sentence. The learners completed the activity in one session and I had to think about another activity for the following day. I decided to talk about the flag of South Africa. Since learners referred to it in their sentences. I used a real flag for my introduction and could see that the learners were knowledgeable about the flag. I asked them to write about the flag on a pre-prepared page with a photocopy of a small drawing of the South African flag (see **Addendum 8**).

Third week of October 2004

At this stage a colleague, also in the Department of Early Childhood Education, assisted me. We planned a drama technique as a way of introducing the topic of citizenship to the learners of Class 3. We asked two students who were familiar with using drama as a teaching and learning technique to assist us. Beforehand I briefed the students on the research topic and on the outcomes I wanted to accomplish. My role as observer was to videotape the proceedings and the role of my colleague was to transcribe all questions, answers and comments made. Imagining a situation as part of drama, relating to their pre-knowledge, helped the learners to activate their imagination in making

Third week of October 2004

connections to create meaning about citizenship and their understandings thereof (Sampson *et al*., 2003:133-135).

We took this class to the school hall and did an adaptation of the hot chair drama technique (Fletcher in van Wyk, 2005) (see the video in **Addendum 8**). To be in the hot chair means putting oneself in the shoes of the main character, explaining actions and decisions taken, in other words being verbally accountable. Instead of putting each learner in the hot chair we decided to put Mr. Nelson Mandela in that position. The idea was that learners were to ask questions to Mr. Nelson Mandela being in the hot chair about issues on citizenship. When I interacted with the previous classes I observed that the learners could without doubt, relate to Mr. Nelson Mandela (they all wanted to meet him and it was as if they knew him personally).

The male student, Jaco, who was dressed in black and with a rubber mask of Mr. Mandela's face, was introduced to the learners as ‘Mister Mandela, our former president’ by the female student, Retha, who facilitated the session. At first the learners laughed at 'Mandela' but once he was seated and made eye contact the atmosphere changed and they started to interact in a meaningful way. This 'child-centred' method allowed for active participation and provided opportunities for thinking aloud. It proved to be a powerful tool for facilitating instructional conversation. The transcription gave good insight into the learners' critical thinking skills on citizenship issues and what they felt was important (see chapter 4.3.3.2). The videotaping as a means of collecting data as visual material appeared to be a challenge to the anonymity principle of research with minors. I tried to videotape them from behind or from the side but the learners kept looking into the camera.

We decided to conduct small focus group interviews with the learners of this class for the remaining days of the week. I discussed this method on the outset with the head of the Foundation Phase Department but had to ask the class teacher to assist in selecting the participants. We asked her to choose any five learners and she immediately reacted by calling learners' names. When we observed that they were all girls we had to ask her to choose a few boys. The selection process caused excitement and learners came eagerly to the front as volunteers. The teacher selected four girls and one boy. I informed them that they would go with my colleague and meet with her every day of the week in a meeting room close by their class. I stayed with the rest of the class. The learners in the

Third week of October 2004

focus group as well as those in the classroom had the same introduction on citizenship and we decided to employ similar instruments with both groups for confirmation purposes. My colleague undertook to have more in-depth discussions with her group on each activity (instrument) and to be open to unpredicted opportunities for data collection. She tape-recorded and transcribed all conversations. These transcriptions proved to convey valuable information.

- **Class activities to elicit self-expression**

The next day I asked the learners of Class 3 to write a letter to Mr. Nelson Mandela. I provided each learner with a letter frame starting with Dear Mr. Mandela and no lines on the paper. However, the learners wanted to draw lines since they felt comfortable to write on lines; this took up valuable time. The learners seemed to be stimulated by the previous day's activity and eagerly participated in writing sentences and illustrating them with drawings. Some learners completed their letters quickly and to keep learners actively involved I had to think of another activity. I discussed characteristics of a president with them. I then asked them to complete the sentence ‘If I were the president I will be…’. This activity elicited high-quality insights of their perspectives on the characteristics of a good president. As a result of a comment of one learner ‘to tell other children about citizenship’, I asked volunteers to make posters for their peers with a slogan about an aspect of citizenship, resulting in 36 posters.

- **Focus group interviews**

The interviews from the focus group revealed significant data on the group members' experiences as citizens and served as verification of the data collected from the group interviews. The learners of the focus group completed all designed instruments as well as additional activities (instruments), which my colleague (as co-fieldworker and researcher) carefully documented and tape-recorded. As a result of these activities 30 individual contributions with accompanying discussions were produced. She transcribed every day's interviews to inform me on about the content of their contributions. She also interacted with each of the learners and transcribed their interpretations of their own writings and drawings. They made drawings of their homes and family members living with them. These drawings revealed information about their community. Five of the learners lived in flats in Sunnyside where it is ‘not safe outside’, where ‘street kids and hoboes bother them, especially in the afternoons’, where ‘prostitutes live next door’ and where ‘people are moving in

Third week of October 2004

and out of the flats because of the crime'. They also wrote letters to Mr. Mandela and as a result of this activity my colleague engaged in an interactive writing process with the learners. They collaboratively composed a letter to Mr. Mandela. Each of them compiled a book on South Africa with writing on how they would make South Africa a better place. They also made posters with slogans on citizenship to their peers. They intended to place the posters against the traffic lights in Sunnyside. They discussed aspects of citizenship like voting, the role of government and our leaders. An insightful activity proved to be their reconstruction of the hot chair drama technique, with each one becoming Mandela by putting on the mask and answering the questions of my colleague and their peers (see **Addendum 8**).

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The final week in the fourth Grade 3 class proved to be a highlight. The children were eager to have their 'turn' since they have been hearing about my project from their peers for the past three weeks. I decided to ask them to write a letter to Mr. Nelson Mandela since the letters written to Mandela by the previous group contributed excellent and useful data. This time I made lines for them to write on. I introduced citizenship to them by prompting them about the leadership of the country and how it influenced all of its citizens by showing them an enlarged photo of Mr. Mandela against the background of the South African flag with the topic MADIBA. The learners contributed to this discussion by talking in the microphone of the tape recorder and aired their views about Madiba. In a natural diversion they started to talk about children's responsibilities, including the rights and responsibilities of each of them as citizens. When asked to write the letter they wanted to know if they could illustrate it and if I was going to send the letters to Madiba. I promised them to look into the matter, which motivated them to write one-page letters, which is a long letter for a Grade 3 learner. One girl came and whispered in my ear that I must please give Madiba this message: 'My auntie has a baby but no work and she doesn't have the money to buy Purity.' Her body language confirmed that she was serious. On another occasion during a post-data collection visit to the school she again came to me with the same request, which made me realize how involved she was with this matter. When I analyzed the letters from this class the 'rights and responsibilities' issue emerged as a prominent theme.

- **Corroboration or verification of initial findings**

As the fourth class was my final opportunity to work with the Grade 3 learners, I decided to

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corroborate my initial findings (from them as well as from the other classes) with them on the last day of my visit. I consulted with my supervisors, identified ten themes and then selected pictures to illustrate each theme, since nine-year-old learners understood visual images better than abstract explanations (Merriam, 1998:204). I explained the purpose of the activity to them and asked them to assist me in confirming what I had learned about citizenship from them. I used the role-play technique of an 'imaginary-performed' situation (Hamilton in Cohen *et al*., 2000:370) when asking them to be the teacher helping me, acting as the learner, to understand their experiences as citizens. Then I introduced each of the ten themes with a picture, which I put on the chalkboard (see **Addendum 9**).

I prompted them on each theme by asking questions and noted every comment made by the learners, judging it against my identified themes. For me this was a bold activity, for I had never done it before and I was not sure if the pictures I chose to represent each theme would be interpreted as such by the learners. The activity turned out to be reasonably successful in the sense that the learners mostly approved of my explanation of each theme and concentrated throughout. For example when I showed them a picture of different cultures singing together and linked it with their expressions of the 'rainbow nation' they said that the picture was showing ‘Black and white people now become friends’. From the activities in the four classes, the learners made 352 individual contributions.

3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis proceeded simultaneously and in progression of the data collection and data capturing processes. Analysis commenced from the first observation and after each set of data was collected to inform the construction of additional innovative data collection instruments to mediate the self-expressions of the nine-year-old participants of my case study.

In Chapter 4 I describe the employment of the constructivist grounded theory as my method of analysis and interpretation of the data generated and captured in this study. From an interpretivist paradigm, I constantly compared my findings with guiding ideas and expectations. I checked the correlation between the research findings and the textual data. I presented the findings of each instrument in relation to the research questions. With my final analysis and interpretation I presented the case study in a rational and coherent order and in an impressionistic style. In Chapter 5 I integrated these findings with the literature review in order to provide substantiation for evidence in answering the research questions. I consciously monitored my personal bias by using field notes (see **Addendum 5**) as I was emotionally and subjectively involved, in an attempt to report my research results as scientifically and accurately as possible. In this chapter I addressed negative implications of my research choices as well as the corrective measures I employed to ensure optimum validity of this research project. In the subsequent section I present a detailed description of trustworthy and authenticity issues to enhance the validity of this study.

3.6 Strategies for enhancing the validity of this study

In this section I address issues of validity as a standardised component of the process of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998:198-219). I employed two pilot studies to confirm my assumption that data collected from nine-year-old learners would be valuable and to inform me on possible instruments to assist learners in self-expression during the interviews. I used purposeful sampling resulting in the choice of an instrumental case study, which enabled an in-depth understanding of nine-year-old learners' experiences of the democratic dispensation in South Africa as citizens. I described the social context of the sample since the learners' voices are historically and socially embedded (Banks, 2001:179). With this sample I addressed my concerns about the acknowledgement and authenticity of children's voices as citizens during the collection, capturing and analysing stages.

Since I would be working with young children, I addressed the power relationship between the children and me, as the adult researcher. I initially admitted the fact that I was an outsider who did not know their names as a limitation but it proved to be more of strength since the learners were excited to work with me, being a 'new face'. Some learners even contributed more products (drawings and writings) than asked for. I anticipated my whiteness as a limitation since most of the learners were African. It is my contention, however, that the 'natural' setting of their classrooms created a safe environment, supported by the fact that they were used to white teachers – they had three in Grade 3. The learners gave me their full support and interacted spontaneously, which aided me to develop sufficient rapport to enhance active involvement of all learners, creating multiple texts, which enhanced chances of construct validity.

Children are a ‘vulnerable’ population group (Mouton, 2001:101; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004:101-113). Thus, while ensuring validity and reliability, I conducted this research project in an ethical manner by:

- involving the learners in the research processes and asking for their approval before engaging in the instruments; thus acknowledging their democratic rights (Farrell, 2006);
- applying for permission through the official channels, obtaining informed consent of all role players like the parents;
- offering access to my interview transcriptions to parents and the teachers who wanted to see them; and
- offering confidentiality when analysing and interpreting each learner’s contribution, coded and not by name.

Child-centred interviews provided the opportunity to collect data with the assistance of data collection instruments. In order to design data collection instruments that would provide authentic text, I relied on my pre-knowledge, the literature review and on my observations of the learners. I worked for a period of 3 hours and 33 minutes in each of the classes, which result in 13 hours and 33 minutes for the four classes. This period of contact time validated the observations that informed me in designing the instruments. In addition, I relied on the class teacher for member checking and peer review. Most of the time the class teacher was present, so I could 'member check' the content of my discussions with the learners, as well as the level of difficulty of the instruments. The teachers' insights were valuable since they already dealt with citizenship as part of the theme ‘My country’ and since they knew the learners very well. Given the relativism of the postmodern world with the difference of interpretation when it comes to educational practice and research conducted about it (Henning, Gravett & Van Rensburg, 2002:x), I employed an additional peer review. I showed some of the learners' writings and drawings to specialists in the Foundation Phase, who confirmed my initial evaluation of the viability of interpreting the learners' expressions.

To enable learners to self-express and reveal their lived experience as child citizens, I offered them 'child friendly' task-based activities as data collection instruments (Punch, 2002:330). In addition, I informed them that all their contributions were valuable. I offered the instruments in English. Although, for most of them English was their first additional language I realized it could be a limitation for some learners in expressing their experiences. To enhance the authenticity of expressions from the learners who struggled with English I motivated them to make drawings and to interpret their drawings verbally to me, which I captured on their drawings.

To ensure trustworthiness of the findings I employed different procedures during the analysis and interpretation phases of this study. I analysed all writing and drawing products of each learner to try and acquire a clear interpretation of their expressions and perceptions in an attempt to maximise authenticity. I enhanced my interpretation by looking at aspects such as the use of colour, and the technique and approach in which writings and drawings were created (Olivier, 1994). I was sensitive to the interactive process of data collection and analysis to strengthen my actions and interpretations. In addition, I compared the findings of certain instruments by requesting participant corroboration. Since children's drawings are susceptible to false interpretations (Greig & Taylor, 1999:79), I correlated drawings with a variety of other sources of information and operated in an open, exploratory manner with the learners on their drawings. Another procedure I used was triangulation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:150; Flick in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:5). I employed investigator triangulation when I shared findings with the research assistant. I used multiple data collection instruments to provide data in order to strengthen a crystallization process (Richardson in Adendorff, 2004:133). Data from the different sources assisted me in corroborating and validating evidence and findings. The rich textual data enhanced the crystallisation of meaning and interpretation resulting in the construction of a thick description of the learners' real-life experiences as citizens.

As the instruments assisted in the data collection process, provided the textual data, which was at the core of my research, I report on the limitations and constraints of the instruments and my corrective efforts to enrich validity in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Instruments, limitations and enrichment of validity

Instruments assisting data collection	**Limitation**	**Enrichment of validity**
Prompts used to motivate learners to participate	Imposing the researcher's own views and to hinder the learners' free expression of their perceptions.	*I built up a relationship of trust with the learners. *I aimed for clarity of language by using language they understood and by constantly rephrasing my instructions.
Drawings	*The ambiguity of the visual images and the possible 'multi interpretations' (Banks, 2001). *Time constraints in the sense that I could not spend as much time as necessary with each of the learners in interpreting their products.	*I acknowledged the fact that learners had different competencies. *Most learners were actively involved in analyzing and interpreting their own data. *I acted with integrity and acknowledged my limitations in processing the learners' experiences through my own view of the world.
Writings	*The imbalance of the power relationship influenced the learners not to reflect honestly but rather to impress the researcher. *Incorrect spelling blurred interpretation and time constraints hindered me to go back to the learner for confirmation as to the intended meaning. *Learners brought work, which seemed to be done by a parent, from home.	*I tried to build a relationship with the learners and gained their trust. *I did not use data if the meaning was unclear. An abundance of data was gathered, which assisted in the emerging of themes. *I distinguished the handwriting as well as the sentence formulation of the parent from that of the learner and disregarded these contributions.
Drama technique: Hot chair	*Learners are inhibited by adult researchers to 'act naturally'.	*The acting out of 'Madiba' was effective in creating an interactive scenario and the learners started to act 'natural'.
Role-play	*Learners are inhibited to participate.	*I gained their trust and they felt free and empowered in the roles they played.
Focus group interviews	*Unequal power relationship can inhibit learners to 'act' 'natural'. *Learners can be scared or too shy to participate. *The most verbal learner can take over the conversation.	*The co-field worker built a relationship of trust with the learners. *Learners were assured that they could make a special contribution. *Special attention was paid to each of the learners for their contributions, which were documented in their presence.

Although the lack of generalizability of results is a limitation of my research design (Mouton, 2001:151; Huberman & Miles, 2002:309) I gained an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences as child citizens of the democratic dispensation in South Africa and how their understandings of democratic practices shaped their 'democratic' identities and their citizenship. However, some data collection instruments can be replicated. The reader may also gain certain insights into the experiences of the learners as citizens, even while being aware of the a-typicality of the case in the sense of the primary school being situated in an inner-city environment with its uniqueness (Stake in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:439).

3.7 Conclusion

In reflection, the process of data collection proved to be time-consuming and challenging concerning the management of the process. I had to be on time and well organized in coding the data from each learner in the different classes in preparation for a systematic data analysis procedure. I also had to be well prepared but flexible in the designing of data collection strategies. However, the best part of this research study was the rapport I established with the learners. I enjoyed their spontaneous reactions to my questions and their honesty in expressing their feelings on their experiences as citizens. After the first session in each class, I could observe their excitement when I entered the class for they immediately packed away their books in order to be ready for my activity. I provided them with new koki pens and as many sheets of paper as they wanted, which enhanced their participation. At the end of each session a few of them would accompany me to the car and make small talk, which I enjoyed.

Participant observation allowed me to involve the learners as research participants as an integral part of my research design. I used instruments to collect data, which allowed for the interpretive paradigm on which this study is based. Through interpretation, I was able to understand the learners’ experiences of the democratic dispensation in South Africa. This methodology allowed for an inductive approach to conceptualisation since I did not impose any pre-set theory or explanation as to how the nine-year-old learners' understandings of democratic practices shaped their 'democratic' identities and citizenship. In this chapter I have summarized and described the methods, instruments and texts used in my inquiry. Chapter 4 presents an integrated discussion of the data analysis and results.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:

Voices of the participating children as citizens in democratic South Africa

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3 I described the research design and justified the choices made concerning sampling, methods selected for data collection and analytic decisions about data collection. In Chapter 4 I offer an interpretative account of the data. In this chapter I aim for ‘making sense’ (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:145) of the empirical evidence and to ‘focus on meaning’ (Charmaz, 2000:510). In my report I engage with the data provided by the various data collection 'instruments' in order to present results that will assist me in generating findings relevant to my research questions. I account for results concerning the nine-year-old learners' life experiences and understandings as citizens of the democratic dispensation in South Africa.

As an interpretivist, I used inductive and deductive approaches and applied the systematic guidelines of grounded theory analysis methods as described by Charmaz (2000:509-535) to investigate my data in constructing meaning. The development of analytical interpretations of the data directed me in focusing on further data collection (Merriam, 1998:161). Constructivist grounded theory analysis assisted me in assuming the relativism of multiple social realities concerning the learners of my case study and recognising the mutual creation of knowledge by me as the viewer, and by the learners as the viewed. In addition, constructivist grounded theory analysis strategies assisted me in sensitising concepts from different perspectives (Charmaz, 2000:513), specifically from the perspective of citizenship. Concepts emerged in themes and relevant categories, which I have chosen for their applicability and usefulness in an attempt to answer my research questions. Consequently I used thematic analysis within the analytic tradition of grounded theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006:78). In Table 4.1 I propose a summary of the themes and related categories that emerged.

Table 4.1:Summary of themes and related categories

Theme	**1. Learners' identification of themselves as child citizens**	**2. Learners living as child citizens in the local community**	**3. Learners living as child citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa**	**4. Learners' desire for change in securing their future**
Category	1.1 'I am proudly South African'	2.1 'Children should play [in the local community] without being afraid of being hurt or killed'	3.1 'South Africa is my best world'	4.1 'If I were Mr. Mbeki, I would make a better nation'
	1.2 'Children have the right to be heard'	2.2 'I don't want people to cry in our country'	3.2 'We [South Africa] are a free democracy'	4.2 'We [children] are the future'
	1.3 'Children have the responsibility to do what is right'	2.3 ' We [children] need services to build the country'	3.3 'We [South Africans] are called the rainbow nation'	
		2.4 'Education and learning will bring more people together'		

When I analysed the learners' life experiences, I referred to the meaning as well as the quantity of their expressions, which emerged from instruments in an attempt to indicate the significance of their expressions related to a particular theme. For example, Theme 4: Learners' desire for change in securing their future, emerged from the following instruments: 'If I were Mr. Mbeki…', 'Letters to Madiba' and the Focus group interviews; and particularly from the instrument 'If I were Mr. Mbeki…' (see examples in **Addendum 8**).

The following table, Table 4.2, illustrates the relationship between the data derived from each research 'instrument' and the four themes. I did the weighting of the data from each 'instrument', leading to the emerging of each theme according to the quantity of the data contributed by the learners. Cohen *et al.* (2000) referred to this process of educational research as correlational research. I indicated the weighting on a scale of 1-3 and visualized this by the icon of the South African flag 🇿🇦. One flag presents a small number of relevant data (two or three participants), two flags an average amount of representative data (three or more participants) and three flags a significant amount of recurring data (ten and more participants).

Table 4.2: The relationship between data from each data collection instrument and the themes

	Data collection methods and instruments									
	Focused interviews: *Group interviews									*Focus group interviews
Themes	1. What I like and don't like about SA	2. The SA Flag	3. If I were Mr. Mbeki …	4. If I were the president …	5. Hot chair drama technique	6. Slogans for posters meant for peers	7. Letters to Madiba	8. Children's rights and responsibilities	9. Class discussions	Instruments used with group interviews 1-9 and Book on SA
1. Learners' identification of themselves as child citizens	🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦
2. Learners living as child citizens in the local community	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦
3. Learners living as child citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa	🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦	🇿🇦 🇿🇦 🇿🇦
4. Learners' desire for change in securing their future			🇿🇦 🇿🇦				🇿🇦		🇿🇦	🇿🇦

In the following section I first explain the process I used for data analysis and then report the results. I offer an interpretative commentary on the results from the data. I present the data in this chapter as a distinct set of data with supporting quotes from the learners' expressions, including spelling mistakes, in an attempt to provide their authentic views and responses.

4.2 Explanation of data analysis process

Constructivist grounded theory analysis offered me strategies to reconstruct the life experiences of the learners (Charmaz, 2000:514-521). One such strategy was to code the multiple data sources. I used initial or open coding for my emerging analysis while interacting with and interpreting the data. The line-by-line coding assisted me in sensitizing concepts as a starting point in organizing and understanding the learners' life-experiences as citizens (see Phases of Data Analysis in

Addendum 10). What became important to analyse emerged from the data presented by the learners themselves (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:126-128). I kept the codes active to enable me to make systematic and constant comparisons of concepts in gaining insight into the learners' experiences.

As part of the coding strategy I then applied selective or focused coding by colour coding the identified and emerged concepts. Through this process I started to define and categorize the data in a matrix called a ‘conditional matrix’ by Strauss and Corbin (in Charmaz, 2000:516). The matrix, also referred to as an analytical diagram by Charmaz (2000:516), charts the range of conditions and consequences related to the focus of study. I constructed the Citizenship Context Diagram as a series of circles in which the outer rings represent those conditions most distant from actions and interactions of the learners and the inner rings presented those closest to actions and interactions concerning the learners. The Citizenship Context Diagram is given in **Addendum 11**, Figure 1 as a visual representation of the emerged themes and categories of the data analysis (see Summary of themes and categories in Table 4.1). I describe the construction and employment of the diagram as a technique, which assisted me in the process of 'making meaning' of the life experiences and understandings of the learners as citizens. I shall refer to the diagram in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

Another analysis strategy I followed was to write memos (as part of field notes) aimed at the construction of conceptual analyses (see the summary of the construction of the Citizenship Context Diagram in **Addendum 11**). This strategy assisted me in linking analytical interpretation with empirical reality as described by Charmaz (2000:517-519). I used the raw data constructed by the learners and collected via multiple instruments to assist me in comparing concepts, analyzing properties of categories and identifying patterns. In an attempt to refine my emerging theoretical ideas I also wrote about the learners’ unstated assumptions and implicit meanings and how these assumptions and meanings related to conditions in which themes emerged.

A further strategy I applied was theoretical sampling to refine ideas (Charmaz, 2000:519-520). Theoretical sampling facilitated the identification of conceptual boundaries and the relevance of my categories in developing them as theoretical constructs. In applying this strategy of theoretical sampling I found conceptual gaps in my data and I therefore went back to sample data on specific issues. For example, during the integrated data collection and analysis process I realized I needed more data about certain categories that emerged, like the category on leadership. In order to assist me in constructing the characteristics of the president of South Africa from the learners' point of view, as expressed in their data, I noticed that I needed more direct expressions from the learners about this topic. I therefore went back to the learners to collect data with the instrument 'If I were the president, I would be…'. I compared this data with the data of the learners' expressions about the character of the president already obtained from other instruments like 'If I were Mr. Mbeki…' and 'Letters to Madiba'. This interactive, cyclical process occurred several times so that I could refine ideas and concepts, which would present the voices of the children as learners and as citizens. With theoretical sampling I also compared the conditions under which the categories were linked to other categories; I discovered relationships between categories, relationships, which emerged between and across themes and categories for example the learners' social awareness, their feelings of patriotism and their desire for change.

4.3 Results of the theme analysis

I propose an integrated account of the life experiences and understandings of the nine-year-old learners as citizens of the democratic dispensation of South Africa based on my engagement with the data. The data provided by the various instruments presented results in terms of the themes and categories pertinent to my research questions. I reflected mostly on what was present in the learners' expressions of their life experiences as citizens in democratic South Africa and illuminated the significance thereof. In the following section, I provide evidence for the emergence of each of the four themes and relevant categories as visually depicted by the Citizenship Context Diagram (see Figure 1 in **Addendum 11**).

In the following sections, I provide inclusion criteria for presenting evidence, which emerged from the data and indicate, where relevant, exclusion criteria. In this study I focused on the experiences of the nine-year-old learners as participants of my case study against the background of the national curriculum and not on the experiences of the other important cornerstones of citizenship, namely teachers, parents, society and policy makers. I analyzed what emerged from the data and in a few instances I elicited exceptional contributions made by participating learners, which indicated extraordinary insight from learners or responses opposite to those of the majority of the learners. In addition, other exclusion criteria I applied were experiences of immigrant children and the differentiation of experiences by the different genders.

I described the nine-year-old learners' expressions about their life experiences and understandings as citizens in a democratic South Africa through the following themes:

- Learners' identification of themselves as child citizens
- Learners living as child citizens in the local community
- Learners living as child citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa and
- Learners' desire for change in securing their future.

I commence with Theme 1 and provide evidence for the emergence of the learners' identification of themselves as child citizens and the related categories that illuminate this identification in the context of citizenship.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Learners' identification of themselves as child citizens[2]

The nine-year-old participating learners of my case study identified themselves as **child citizens**, a distinctive group of citizens with distinctive qualities, living as citizens in democratic South Africa. As child citizens they required that they be respected, listened to and regarded as active role players in the democratic dispensation. As citizens they claimed their rights and acknowledged their responsibilities. Many learners saw themselves as morally and socially responsible citizens. Learners' expressions of their identities emerged throughout the following categories, constructed as: 'I am proudly South African', 'Children have the right to be heard' and 'Children have the responsibility to do what is right'. In the following section I discuss each of the categories relevant to Theme 1.

4.3.1.1 'I am proudly South African'

In the context of my study the identity of the citizen refers to a sense of **individual** as well as **national identity**. The identity of the individual can be described as 'the conscious of the acting self' and is constructed in a social context (Ross, Papoulia-Tzelepi & Hegstrup, 2005). As component of the social context, identity is part of the process of cultural change. A culture is a system of human values, which change over time and from group to group. Put another way: People understand themselves in relation to others and develop their identity, among others, through the national traditions and values to which they are exposed (Kymlicka in Ortloff, 2005).

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[2] Theme 1, visually depicted by the inner and red circle of the Citizenship Context Diagram (see Figure 1 in **Addendum 11**).

Each nation has its own culture of values, norms and habits and through a culturally determined curriculum aspires to influence the development of a child's individual and national identity, including behaviour, participation in the specific culture and citizenship. National identity refers to citizens who are required to construct a shared sense of nationhood as a prerequisite democratic and successful functioning of the state (Eaton, 2002:45-46). The state will not be able to exercise peaceful authority and legitimacy over its citizens unless they perceive themselves to be members of a national collectivity, and are willing to act for the good of the 'nation'. For a democracy to function, its citizens must accept the appropriateness of the demarcated territory, which bears that country's name. They must see themselves as members of that 'imagined community' and they must be proud of that membership and willing to support it (Mattes & Anderson in Eaton, 2002:46).

The concept of identity can be analysed through different perspectives, such as philosophy, the social sciences or neurology and educational science. For the purpose of this study I explore the developmental and educational aspects of the construction of the identity of the young child in terms of citizenship (Korhonen & Helenius, 2005:45), although I acknowledge the influence of politicians and political philosophers on the formation of both individual and national identities. In the category ‘I am proudly South African’ I have excluded the articulation of the teachers and the parents on the construction of the identity of the nine-year-old participating learners of my case study.

Kuščer and Prosen (2005) refer to a ‘collective identity’, a statement about the membership of a certain group of citizens who has (or is believed to have) some mutual characteristics. A person may belong to many groups simultaneously, thus having many collective identities. These identities can complement each other, be independent, or oppose each other. However, a diverse society poses challenges to the establishment of democracy and civil society (Kuščer & Prosen, 2005). Ortloff (2005:35) argues that citizens need to be able to internalize multiple levels of identity and embrace diversity. In the context of South Africa, understanding identity is complex as it is underpinned by national, sub-national, political, ethnic, economic and social diversity. Eaton (2002:47) refers to a hypothesis stated by Mattes, that the more strongly people identify with a sub-national identity group, the less likely they are to tolerate members of other groups, to participate in democratic politics, or to comply with rules made by the government. Therefore, for a newly democratised, multicultural state such as South Africa 'national legitimacy' and a sense of national identity among citizens is crucial for the establishment of effective democratic governance and civil stability. The value of ‘social honour’ was proposed as a key element of citizenship-in-the-making to instil a ‘sense of honour and identity as South Africans where individuals are comfortable with both a cultural identity and a national South African one’ (Ministry of Education, 2001:3).

The child's developing identity, individually as well as nationally, is a long-term outcome of citizenship education. In addition to children's identities, their relationships to others and their participation in a group are at stake (Fumat, 2005:77). Fumat (2005:77) refers to the concept of 'democratic personalities' and asks the question: ‘Do young children at an early stage of citizenship education have experiences which will prepare them for future citizenship in a democratic society?’ In a democratic society, children's socialization involves supporting their individualization, their autonomy and their social participation. Democratic societies aim to develop individual creativity and critical thinking and the socialization process is aimed for instilling a sense of belonging (living together in a democracy) as well as contributing to a democratic society (civic behaviour) (Fumat, 2005:77).

The nine-year-old learners expressed understandings of their identity in terms of citizenship in different ways. In the Focus group interview on compiling a book on South Africa, a learner said: ‘I am a South African’ (P2 – Class 3) and in *Letters to Madiba* (Madiba – a nickname for former president Nelson Mandela) learners wrote:

> ‘I am proudly South African’ (P11 – Class 3)
> ‘I am a South African’ (P45 – Class 3)
> ‘I was born South African’ (P19 – Class 3)

The participating learners of my case study seemed to **understand who they were** in terms of citizenship and their relationship to South Africa. They expressed their individual and national identity in an integrated way, which made it difficult to distinguish between the two identities. The nine-year-old learners seemingly identified themselves as **child citizens** as well as **South African citizens**. In terms of individual and national identity, I regard the first anecdote as exceptional evidence since Participant 11 identified herself in terms of her feelings for South Africa (pride). She portrayed herself as a 'product' of South Africa. ‘Proudly South African’ is used as a South African brand name for marketing the country’s own products. It is evident that the learners stated their identities as facts and not in an imaginative way as described by Korhonen and Helenius (2005:46). This may indicate a maturity of the learners' construction of their identities in terms of citizenship, maturity beyond the general perception I had as researcher about the nine-year-old learners' construction of their identities.

A further clarification of the learners' identification of themselves as child citizens was their **differentiation** between themselves as **child citizens** and **other citizens**. Participating learners of my case study referred to:

‘other people’ (P27 – Class 2 – ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki…’)
‘other people out there’ (P22 – Class 3 – ‘Slogans for posters meant for peers’)

The preceding anecdotes may indicate that participating learners have a collective identity as a **unique group of citizens** in the South African population. It seems as if the learners acknowledged other citizens but distinguished between them and child citizens.

In addition to their expressions about their identity, the participating learners of my case study regarded themselves as **significant citizens**. Many learners were central to most of their drawings as revealed in data from all the instruments (see examples of drawings in **Addendum 8**). Data from the instrument ‘What I like and don't like about South Africa’ revealed many drawings of learners in Class 1 that were titled ‘Me’ (P22) and ‘Myself’ (P29). In six instances learners stated directly how they perceived themselves when participating in the instrument ‘What I like and don't like about South Africa’.

‘I like myself’ (P21, P29 - Class 1)
‘I like me’ (P22, P37, P38, P42 – Class 1)

These expressions seem to verify previous indications that the learners identified themselves as important citizens. The anecdotes may also indicate that the learners possessed **high self-respect** and **self-worth**, which can be related to the learners' consideration of themselves as important child citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa.

Adding to the learners' identification of themselves as child citizens, are their views on their participative role in democratic South Africa. **Participation** includes the skills of collaboration and negotiation, which are components of the **democratic processes** and essential to **citizenship** (Wood in Holden & Clough, 2000). During the Focus group interview on a letter to Madiba, two learners of Class 3 expressed this belief by stating what they would like to do to improve the democratic dispensation of South Africa.

> ‘I belief that we as the youth can make a difference …by asking for no adult TV, by stopping poverty, by creating better and more jobs for all South Africans’ (P1)
>
> ‘Children [can] make South Africa a better place by stopping robbers, stop to killing animals and plants, love each other and love our country’ (P5)

My intention is not to elaborate on the different actions the learners indicated but on their expressions about **participation.** These expressions may be indicative that participating learners of my case study believed in themselves as **active** citizens and **role players**, **contributing to positive change** in **making a difference** to the democratic dispensation of South Africa through **responsible action**. At this stage their actions seemed to be more of an 'imaginary' participative role, which may indicate that they **did not experience meaningful roles in participation**. According to Hart's model (in Holden & Clough, 2000:19-20), children can be involved by people like teachers at various levels of participation. Hart's model starts with manipulation on level one, decoration on level two, tokenism on level 3; all non-participation levels. Active or real participation only starts at level four where children have meaningful and informed roles, rather than a decorative one. Hart describes level eight as the most participative level where children share their child-initiated decisions with adults. I argue that according to the levels of participation as described by Hart (in Holden & Clough, 2000:19-20) the level of participation of the participating learners of my case study seemed to be on the **non-participating levels**, thus indicating no participation in democratic processes. The question thus arises: Were the participating learners of my case study only being educated in theory to participate for 'one day' or were they involved in deliberative participation in matters concerning their political life or civil society? Through further analysis of all the themes and categories, I attempted to answer this question.

In the next section I expand on Theme 1: Learners identified themselves as child citizens through reporting on the other two recognized categories: ‘Children have the right to be heard’ and ‘Children have the responsibility to do what is right’. I provide the following evidence to support these categories.

4.3.1.2 ‘Children have the right to be heard’

Rights are 'things' you are entitled to: what 'we' can do, say or believe or what 'we' can have (Hine, 2004:5). Children have inalienable rights as members of the human family (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 12 and 13 of 1989) and both components related to rights, namely having rights and exercising these rights, are essential to citizenship (Green, 2005:viii). In the South African context, the Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) proclaims the rights of children in Article 28. On a poster published by the Department of Welfare (1997), the topic states *Children's Rights are Human Rights* and the following rights are given: Listen to me, Educate me, Respect me, Protect me and Care for me. During a class discussion learners of Class 4 expressed their appreciation of their rights (see transcription of discussion in **Addendum 8**). When participating in writing slogans for posters meant for peers, one learner wrote: ‘I have rights’ (P35 – Class 3) and in *Letters to Madiba* learners wrote:

> ‘we [children] have rights’ (P25, P54 – Class 4)
>
> ‘children have rights’ (P32, P67, P70 – Class 4)

These participating learners seemed to be knowledgeable of the fact that children have **individual rights** as child citizens as well as **collective rights** as a distinctive group of citizens.

John (in Holden & Clough, 2000:9) states that minority groups (like children) in democracies not only **exercise** their rights, but also **claim** their rights. Claiming rights, however, is a difficult task for it involves recognition, partners, partnerships, advocacy and full participation. When participating in the activity on ‘Children's rights and responsibilities’, one learner articulated the following:

> ‘We [the children] have a right to be heard’ (P47 – Class 4*)*

This statement may imply a **desire or need** for children's **voices to be acknowledged as child citizens**. However, from my point of view as the researcher who worked with the learners and who was sensitive to all their expressions, I interpret this anecdote as a **claim for rights**. Claiming their rights may also indicate a claim for being **respected** as important citizens, **equal to adult citizens; recognised** thus to the same extend as other citizens. Being **listened to** is the **right of a citizen;** and **public institutions having a responsibility to ensure that this happens.**

Inalienable rights guaranteed by the Constitution, Article 28 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) are to **be loved** and **cared for in a safe home with food**, **water** and **warm clothes**. In *Letters to Madiba* twenty-four participants commented on their needs. A learner in Class 4 wrote:

> ‘We [children] need homes that is safe to live in … some flats have no doors. We need love, food, clothes, water, blankets to sleep at night’ (P47, P67)
> ‘We [children] need a nice home …’ (P28)
> ‘Please help [my] auntie. She is not working and she needs food for the baby and a home and clothes for the baby’ (P30)

The participating learners of my case study seemingly expressed their **inalienable rights** in the form of a **need or plea**, which may be indicative of themselves or other people living in undesirable circumstances.

Learners expressed the right not only to be **loved** and **acknowledged** by immediate family but also by political leaders, especially former president Mr. Nelson Mandela, espoused for his love for children. In *Letters to Madiba* learners of Class 4 wrote:

> ‘Please love your children’ [reference to all children of South Africa] (P55)
>
> ‘Thank you for what you have done for us, love us also too. Bless you’ (P23)

The acclaimed right to be loved may indicate a **trust** from learners in the **leadership** of Mr. Nelson Mandela, indicating possibly that children as child citizens needed the political leaders to **acknowledge** them as child citizens and to **take care of them**, as stated in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

The right to ‘security of the person’ is written in the Constitution, Article 27 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and also declared by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). It is a right in jeopardy according to the statistics on crime in general and on crimes against children in South Africa. Raubenheimer (2006) reported that over four million children between the ages of twelve and twenty-two have been targets of crime in South Africa. Against this background it is understandable that many learners of Class 4 hold various opinions on their right for protection from harm.

> In *Letters to Madiba* learners wrote:
>
> ‘Make bad things go away like crime and killers’ (P69)
>
> ‘Stop abuse and do not kill children at night’ (P33)
>
> Participating in the activity on *Children's rights and responsibilities* learners said:
>
> ‘We have the right to say no to child abuse’ (P2, P35, P32, P38, P46, P67, P70)
>
> ‘We have the right to say no to sex’ (P29, P35)
>
> ‘We have the right to say no to strangers’ (P8, P35, P62)
>
> ‘We have the right to say no to bad people’ (P31)

These expressions may be indicative that the learners understood their **right to be protected by the state, especially against child abuse.** However, living in an unsafe environment as already described in Chapter 1 of this study, the participating learners seemed to be exposed to unsafe circumstances, which in some instances seem to be life-threatening. The participating learners of my case study appeared to experience a **contradiction between their rights such as to be**

protected and **the reality of an unsafe inner city environment**. This could promote **disbelief** amongst children in the principles, processes and values of the democratic dispensation.

The participating learners not only knew and claimed their rights but also expressed their responsibilities as child citizens. In the subsequent section I report on the learners' expressions about their responsibilities.

4.3.1.3 ‘Children have the responsibility to do what is right’

Responsibilities are actions and decisions for which 'we' are accountable: things 'we' feel 'we' ought to do (Hine, 2004:5). Crick (in Department for Education and Employment, 1998) defines the concept of responsibility as ‘care for others, premeditation and calculation about the effect actions are likely to have on others; and understanding and care for the consequences. **Citizenship and responsibility** are interrelated concepts since Holden and Clough (2000) describe a citizen as a person who can make informed and responsible decisions according to a values-based framework. This framework is based on **morality** and the principles underpinning the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Holden & Clough, 2000) and involves **values** such as: social justice, political equity, respect for differences, human rights, co-operation, civility, respect for the rule of law, and a commitment to negotiation and debate as the proper way to resolve disagreements over public policy (The Citizenship Foundation in Hine, 2004:4). In addition, Crick (in Hine, 2004:4) identifies **moral and social responsibilities as core components of citizenship.**

In the South African context, the national curriculum, based on the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), and aligned with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Department of Education, 2002c)**,** foresees the responsible citizen as one who would be able to ‘participate as responsible citizen in the life of local, national and global communities’. Most learners made statements about their responsibilities, which emerged generally as **moral** and **social responsibilities**. When participating in the activity *Children’s' rights and responsibilities,* many learners expressed their conceptualization of their moral responsibilities. I shall report on the learners' expressions concerning their social responsibilities later on in this category. The participating learners of my case study expressed various moral responsibilities.

> ‘I am responsible to protect myself’ (P28 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)
> ‘I am responsible to take care of myself’ (P29, P38, P48, P69 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)
> ‘Do not lie and cheat – be honest’ (P33, P37 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)
> ‘Stop hitting each other’ (P21 - Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)
> ‘Please – stop fighting at school’ (P20 - Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

As child citizens the participating learners seemed to acknowledge the **moral value** of being **responsible for their personal development**, an **essential precondition of citizenship.** Therefore, once children are responsible for themselves, they may be more inclined to be **responsible for others, the school, community, society and the state including those in authority.**

Learners' expressions about **moral responsibility** indicated that they distinguished between concepts and actions related to **good and bad** and **right and wrong**. One learner encapsulated this awareness with the expression ‘do what is right’ (P17 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*). When participating in the instrument *What I like and don’t like about South Africa* learners of Class 4 identified **positive actions**, thus **doing what is right.**

> ‘I like children playing together’ (P7, P12)
> ‘I like people loving each other’ (P4, P5, P13)
> ‘I like children listening to their parents and teachers’ (P15, P17, P22, P36)
> ‘I like children loving South Africa’ (P7, P18)

In confirming their judgment between **right and wrong** many participating learners of Class 3 indicated their opinions of 'what is wrong' by describing **negative actions** when writing *Letters to Madiba* such as:

> ‘bad people raping, killing, fighting, breaking in other people's houses and shooting each other’ (P65, P59, P61)
>
> ‘stop fighting, stop killing, stop abuse’(P47)
>
> ‘stop the thieves stealing and if they don't want to listen you [Madiba] must take them to jail’ (P57)

The participating learners of my case study indicated that they have already, at the age of nine years, developed a **sense of right and wrong**, an **intrinsic characteristic of moral development**.

Concerning the moral development of the participating learners it seemed that they were beyond the second stage of moral development as described by Kohlberg (Morrison, 2006:277-278). In addition to their sense of 'right' and 'wrong' learners demonstrated a strong awareness for the purpose of **rules in society**.

> ‘we [all South African citizens] must get more rules …people [who] don't obey rules, go to jail and get death penalty’ (P2, P3 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)
>
> ‘I don't like people who disobey rules and I don't know why [they don't obey rules]’ (P10 – Class1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

The expressions by the nine-year-old participating learners of my case study about rules may further indicate their conceptualization of their **moral responsibility**. Learners not only expressed the **need for rules** but also a strong awareness for the **consequences of disobeying rules**. In the first anecdote the learners' expression about ‘more rules’ may indicate their opinion that rules may be necessary for preventing the negative behaviour of other citizens. In the second anecdote the primary message of this learner was a plea for government to make laws and to impose them in order to protect law-abiding citizens from harm. This anecdote indicates disbelief that people do disobey rules. These expressions may also specify the learners' need for the enforcement of the rule of law by which the South African democracy is being governed (the Constitution, 1966).

Nolan (in Department of Education, 2001:9-10) drew on Kohlberg's definition of the levels and stages of moral development in the typical person, already explored in Chapter 2 of this study.

Kohlberg (in Hine, 2004:19; Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998) suggests that children of different ages will have different levels of understandings of right and wrong and present stages of moral development in a linear and progressive way. Stages 4 and 5 represent adolescents' and adults' acceptance of rules for the welfare of society. The ultimate aim (stage 6) of Kohlberg's levels of morality would then indicate that learners have internalized values and that a sense of duty has been replaced by a sense of personal responsibility. Nolan argues that people (including children) have to be educated in the spontaneous adoption of moral values. Education has to see to it that learners have a conscious choice of values based upon one's consciousness of 'who one is and what life is about'. Nolan suggested what education has to do is to take learners forward to these higher levels of moral judgment that will enrich the learner as well as the society. The results of this study suggested that participating nine-year-old learners could have some of these moral understandings on the highest level of moral development according to Kohlberg's model.

In addition, to further describe the moral and social responsibilities in terms of citizenship as expressed by the participating learners of my case study, I present the learners' report on the value of **respect** that emerged as eminent in all data. Paying respect to somebody or something or claiming respect is a value related to both moral and social responsibility. On the one hand respect is regarded as a democratic value (Ministry of Education, 2001) to be instilled in young learners as a responsibility. On the other hand nation-states have to respect the rights of a child as a precondition for the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989:3). When participating in the instrument *Children's rights and responsibilities* the learners of Class 4 referred 23 times to the word respect as a responsibility in different contexts. The following anecdotes provide the evidence.

> ‘Have respect for children’ (P33 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)
>
> ‘Respect children’ (P30 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers)*
>
> ‘Respect teachers’ (P26 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)
>
> ‘Respect people’ (P17, P19, P23, P27 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)
>
> ‘Have respect for older people’ (P28, P34 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)
>
> ‘Respect others so that we can be respected’ (P5 – Focus group interview on compiling a

book on South Africa)

The first five quotations are slogans, which I interpret more as requests, because considering that they are slogans written for peers and people in the environment, it seems that the learners were asking for all people, including children, to be treated as citizens in a valuable, thus in a respectful way. This request also included that children had to respect other citizens. The sixth anecdote may indicate the learner's understanding of the mutual characteristics of respect. This anecdote seems to indicate reasoning on an advanced cognitive level as well as the relationship between cognitive and moral development (Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998:380-381). From this evidence I conclude that learners seemingly acknowledged the value of respect in terms of citizenship in democratic South Africa.

It is evident from the data that learners' moral awareness informed their social responsibilities and that it was in most instances impossible to distinguish decisively between moral and social responsibilities as expressed by the participating learners of my case study. According to Gordon and Brown (2000:527) social responsibility culminates in social action, which children can learn and apply to make unfair things fair. The participating learners of my case study not only showed social responsibility and a desire for social action towards the sick, the elderly and the poor in their local community, but also expressed the notion of compassion to vulnerable people in their local community. I elaborate on their feelings of compassion in Theme 2, Category 2 (4.3.2.2).

The citizen's rights and responsibilities are inextricably linked in a reciprocal relationship (Hine, 2004:5), a relationship on which the participating learners of my case study particularly remarked. Thirty-five participating learners of my case study made contributions to the instrument on *Children's rights and responsibilities* during a lively class discussion in Class 4. During this session many learners indicated that they knew certain rights together with the corresponding responsibilities, for example:

‘We have the right to live in a home’ (P30, P39, P49)

‘We have the responsibility to clean our rooms’ (P34, P43, P46)

‘We have the right to go to school’ (P1, P3, P4)

We have the responsibility to go to school’ (P28, P29, P36)

‘We have the right to a clean country’ (P23, P50)

‘We have the responsibility to keep the country clean’ (P50, P58)

The participating learners of my case study seem to be informed on their rights as well as their corresponding responsibilities, which may indicate an internalisation of the concept of consequence related to rights and responsibilities.

In Theme 1, the learners identified themselves as important child citizens living in South Africa in various ways. In Theme 2, I provide evidence of the learners' expressions as child citizens living in the local community.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Learners living as child citizens in the local community[3]

Citizenship is about being a member of the state and a member of the local community; about belonging and feeling secure in the community (Green, 2005:viii). Citizenship is about the relationship between an individual as a member of the community and other members or groups in the community. In the local community, citizens experience first-hand the 'mechanisms' of democracy. Local democracy means people can make choices about representatives to see to the specific needs of the local community and its people. On the other hand, local people who know about their area are more inclined to get involved and participate in the democratic processes, which include holding the local government accountable for decisions made (Rushforth, 2004:30-31).

As child citizens the participating learners of my case study expressed an awareness of democratic principles and processes. They expressed their democratic right to be critical, to hold the government accountable for their seeming lack of 'social security' and to participate in the democratic dispensation on local level. The learners expressed feelings of concern and fear about living in their local community. Furthermore, they expressed pertinent feelings of compassion for all the vulnerable people they encountered in their local community. As child citizens they were aware that certain services were pertinent to enable them as child citizens to contribute to the democratic dispensation of South Africa. Against this background, I offer the nine-year-old learners' expressions of themselves as child citizens living in the local community, which emerged as the following categories: 'Children should play [in the local community] without being afraid of being hurt or killed'; 'I don't want people to cry in our country'; and 'We [children] need services to build the country'. I commence with the first category.

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[3] The yellow circle represents this theme and the related categories (see Figure 1: Citizenship Context Diagram in **Addendum 11**).

4.3.2.1 'Children should play in [the local community] without being afraid of being hurt or killed'

Citizens of a democracy are entitled to have freedom and security of person, where they live, work, and where their children go to school. To secure personal freedom is the responsibility of the national government of a nation-state. The national government has to serve the people by protecting these rights on all levels such as on the local community level (Rushforth, 2004:42). In the South African context, the Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) ensures these rights, for citizens should lead productive and self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice. The learners of my case study clearly expressed their experiences about living in their local community or neighbourhood. Learners of Class 4 talked about the unsafe conditions in their neighbourhood like theft, the killing of people and the abuse of children (see transcriptions of class discussions in **Addendum 8**). Although a few learners mentioned domestic violence I only included learners' concerns about violence in the context of the democratic dispensation of South Africa. During a Focus group interview, learners of Class 3 commented on living in the inner-city neighbourhood and their concerns.

Interviewer: 'What would you tell the leaders of South Africa about living here?'

Participant 1: 'Children should play without being afraid of being hurt or killed'.

Participant 6: 'Stop crime because we will all die'.

Interviewer: 'What message do you have for other children in your neighbourhood?'

Participant 1: 'Don't waste food – out there are street kids'.

Interviewer: 'How would you help the street kids?'

Participant 5: 'Give them job and places to stay, to build their lives up again to be something in life'.

Interviewer to Participant 5: 'You live in a house in … [another neighbourhood of the City of Pretoria]? What can you tell us about your neighbourhood?'

Participant 5: 'We are not allowed to walk in the streets on Fridays and during the weekend. We are not allowed to walk in the streets at night. People drink and fight in the streets'.

The comments made by the participating learners of this focus group interview give the impression that it is unsafe to live in this specific inner-city neighbourhood and according to Participant 6, crime seemed to be the cause of it with seemingly devastating consequences. The participating learners were critical about living in their local community and expressed negative instances about living there. They expressed their informed apprehension about crime occurring in their community. The nine-year-old learners of my case study seemingly exercised their democratic right to hold government accountable for the circumstances of their neighbourhood. The use of the plural **we** by Participant 6 may indicate a feeling of commonality which in terms of citizenship, confirms the learners' feelings of a collective identity. Further evidence about unsafe living conditions from data revealed by one of the learners (P5 – Class 3) in the focus group interview, who lived in a house in a suburb of the city and not in the inner-city area as most of the participating learners of my case study, also confirmed the general concern about crime in South Africa, irrespective of a specific geographical location. The expressions of fear made by the participants of this interview could be interpreted against the high rate of crime reported in South Africa (Keppler, 2006).

The reply of Participant 1 to the second question of the interviewer during the preceding interview, also exhibits the critical stance of participating learners about the homeless children living in the streets of their local community, whom they labelled *street kids*. The learners referred to homeless children when participating in seven of the nine instruments (see Table 4.2), which revealed their comprehension of this issue. Many learners felt empathy for these children and a compassionate desire to help them in a practical and positive way (see Participant 5 of the above interview transcription). I report on the expressions of the participating learners of my case study related to the homeless children again in the second category of Theme 2 (4.3.2.2).

A further exposition of the participating learners' critical concerns about their local community is encapsulated in some of their drawings. Many drawings done by learners about their neighbourhood were about people shooting each other or people engaged in criminal acts. Most of these drawings were done in black and white, in contrast with other colourful drawings about their experiences of the democratic dispensation of South Africa, which I interpret as a reflection of the grim picture learners portrayed of their local community (see examples of drawings in **Addendum 8**). The expressions of the learners through these drawings seem to visually confirm learners' negative verbal messages about their neighbourhood.

Despite the negative expressions about their local community, most of the learners referred to their relationships with other members of their local community in a positive way. In the next category I report on the learner's expressions about these social relationships as an important aspect of citizenship.

4.3.2.2 'I don't want people to cry in our country'

Compassion is the personal identification with people's feelings, thoughts and experiences and a desire to help people in distress. Schiller and Bryant (1998:10) state, 'through compassion we recognise our own humanity in others'. 'Compassion and active imagination' are notions explored by Nussbaum (2001:426) and extended by Waghid (2005) in the context of South Africa. Waghid (2005) argues that the notion of compassion and 'active imagination' could have the potential to extend the dimensions of democratic citizenship, for compassion encompasses values of commitment and public participation and 'imaginative action'. Both Nussbaum (2001) and Waghid (2005) emphasise that compassion and 'imaginative action' are to be instilled in citizens through democratic citizenship education on all levels. Osler (2005:12-13) agrees that feeling and practice related to the well-being of other citizens, are components of citizenship and citizenship education.

Participating learners of my case study expressed their feelings about children and people in their local community and in this context, also indicated their attitude about their roles when partaking in different instruments such as *Letters written to Madiba*, *If I were Mr. Mbeki…*, Focus group interviews and slogans for posters meant for peers (see Table 4.2).

'I don't want people to cry in our country' (P60 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)
'Madiba, tell people to stop raping small children like us' (P35 – Class 4 - *Letters to Madiba*)

'Help my mother to have a job' (P40 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)
'Help my cousin to find a job' (P41 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

'Madiba, please help poor children to get free education' (P64 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)
'Give money to the poor, open a children's home, help a poor school, help the deaf and the blind children' (P7 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*)

'I would help the poor people who stay by the street and affected by HIV/AIDS. Don't want to see them dying. Give them homes and food and money and work. I would like to see all pensioners in this world to be taken care of and be given the right place to stay' (P35 – Class 2 – *If I were Mr. Mbeki…*)

'Help the people from the street and let them build their lives over again. Give them jobs in the residential offices' (P1 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)

'We [children] want to help' (P8 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

'When I have money I give to the street kids who don't have and who is eating from the dustbin' (P25 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

These expressions may indicate the mind-set of the participating learners as child citizens about thoughts and practices related to compassion. Participating learners expressed wide-reaching social awareness through feelings of compassion for immediate family and other vulnerable people in the local community like deaf people, people with HIV/AIDS, the homeless children and poor people. As child citizens the learners not only shared compassion for people in need, but they also constructed advice for active participation in social affairs. They offered help, although in an imaginative way. It may seem that the participating learners have internalized the democratic value of *ubuntu* or human dignity; a value core to the South African democracy. *Ubuntu* has a particularly important place in our value system for it derives from African civilisation: 'I am human because you are human' (Ministry of Education, 2001:16).

Learners' expressions about living in the local community not only dealt with their relationship(s) with members of the local community but also included experiences about the services offered in the local community. I report on this issue, as the provision and access of services to citizens are aspects of citizenship.

4.3.2.3 ‘We [children] need services to build the country’

In a democracy, government provides services to citizens on all levels (national as well as district level), such as police, libraries and schools. The provision of services on local level has to be based on democratic values and principles adapted for the particular local circumstances. Democratic values refer to values such as equity, social justice, an open society and respect. Democratic principles include citizens making choices through participation, debate and discussion on the one hand and local government acting accountable to their citizens about their governing decisions (Ministry of Education, 2001:5; Rushforth, 2004:30-31). Therefore, the concepts of communication and participation are related to local government and citizenship. Expressions of the nine-year-old learners about the services offered to them in their communities emerged from the data. Data from the instrument *What I like and don't like about South Africa,* completed by participants of Class 1, revealed their positive attitudes about different services in their immediate life world:

> ‘I like the hospital’ (P4, P39)
>
> ‘I like the tap in our flat’ (P13),
>
> ‘I like to drink water from the tap’ (P16)
>
> ‘I like going to the park’ (P26).

The expressions made by the participating learners of my case study revealed their gratitude for services, which may indicate an understanding of the various systems of government and an awareness of the citizens' role of appreciation towards government; not only to be critical. They seem to be committed to communication and participation as child citizens in their local community. However, many learners expressed critique for the services offered to them in their local community such as services offered by police and traffic officers. As a result of the high crime rate I previously documented, learners articulated advice to the police about strategies to combat crime. This in itself is further evidence of the learners' expressed commitment to participate in the well being (specifically safety and protection) of the local community. In *Letters to Madiba* learners wrote:

> ‘Madiba, employ more traffic cops at night and in the morning’ (P29 – Class 4)
>
> ‘Please make the cops work harder in the night’ (P33 – Class 4)
>
> ‘Put lots of traffic cops on the streets’ (P45 – Class 4)
>
> ‘We [children] need more police to help us build the country’ (P7 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

The learners explicitly expressed ideas and feelings about education and going to school as a service provided to them in their local community as a means to ‘build South Africa’ (P7 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*). I have analysed this aspect as a distinct category since citizenship education is a means to facilitate the notion of citizenship to young children (Holden & Clough, 2000; Ministry of Education, 2001). I elaborate on education as a local service provided to the participating learners of my case study in the next category:

4.3.2.4 ‘Education and learning will bring more people together’

Citizenship education, also referred to as ‘education for participation’ (Holden & Clough, 2000:14) or ‘education for democracy’ (Steyn, De Klerk & Du Plessis, 2006), involves reflecting on democratic values, assisting the learners to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for taking action and ultimately provide opportunities for them to become involved as active citizens. In addition, citizenship education aims to educate learners for meaningful participation in society indicating education for ‘good citizenship’ as well as education for ‘the market place’ (Ministry of Education, 2001:10). According to Holden and Clough (2000:14), such education is endorsed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 12 and 13 (1989) where children are given the right to seek and impart information, to express their thoughts and feelings, to have them listened to, and to participate in making choices and decisions affecting them. Democratic values form a base from which children can acquire the skill of decision-making, which includes considering the influence of their decisions on others and the execution of their decisions. In the context of South Africa the participating learners of my case study have been facilitated the framework of democratic values underpinning the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), already dealt with in Chapter 2 of this study. Education in South Africa is seen as the means to assist citizens to adopt moral values spontaneously, which will bring a change of consciousness and take learners to a higher level of moral judgement (Ministry of Education, 2001:10).

Although the literature on citizenship education emphasises the crucial role of the teacher in children's construction of citizenship (Harwood, 2000; Voiels, 2000; Ross, 2005), I have excluded expressions made by the participating learners of my case study on the actions teachers should take in assisting them in this matter for my study did not focus on the teachers' role or on their perspectives on citizenship education. The majority of participating learners articulated an abundance of expressions about education and attending school when responding to the instrument *What I like and don't like about South Africa.*

‘I like education’ (P4, P5, P27)

‘I like school’ (P23, P48)

‘I like my school’ (P47, P49)

Participating learners of my case study seemed to feel positive about going to school and therefore they seemed to appreciate being educated. In many of the drawings made by the learners, learners focused on the teacher writing on the chalkboard (see examples of drawings in **Addendum 8**). In addition to the messages of these drawings, participating learners expressed their attitudes about their teachers in *Letters to Madiba* and in *Slogans for posters meant for peers.*

‘Thank you for giving us a wonderful teacher’ (P66 – Class 4 – *Letters*)
‘Children respect teachers’ (P26, P35 – Class 3 – *Slogans*)
‘Children love your teachers’ (P36, P37 – Class 3 – *Slogans*)

These expressions may indicate the significance of the role of the teacher in their lives and maybe implicitly the role teachers play in citizenship education. As already mentioned I did not pursue the role of the teacher as an aspect of citizenship education further in my study.

However, a few learners held negative views about attending school.

‘Other children are bully children for their money’ (P12 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

‘Madiba, tell them to stop hitting the small ones’ (P4 – Class 3 – Small focus group interview with Mandela's mask)

‘I don't like another child say you smell bad and teasing you because of your own language’ (P7 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

‘Stop bullying because of your language’ (P6 – Class 3 - Focus group interview on *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

‘Stop bullying when you talk in your own language’ (P46 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

Participating learners of my case study seemed to be subjected to the practice of bullying and intolerance at school, which they experienced in a negative way. Although I acknowledge these negative expressions to substantiate the following interpretation, it is not my intention to further elaborate on bullying. In the light of the preceding evidence, I interpret that nine-year-old learners are exposed to negative actions, which may influence their view of citizenship.

An added view of the participating learners about education was related to the right of a child to be educated and their responsibility to participate in the education process. Education is a right confirmed by the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Article 29 (1) of the Constitution states: ‘Everyone has the right – to basic education… .’ The learners had much to say about education in terms of their rights as child citizens:

‘We have the right to be educated’ (P32, P35 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘We have the right to go to school’ (P1, P3, P4 - Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘We have the right to a good education’ (P3 – Class 3 – Small focus group interview)

‘We have the right to free education’ (P1 – Class 3 – *If I were the president…*)

‘Help the street kids with education, they have the right to go to school because when they are big they must work ‘ (P56 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘We [children] have the responsibility to go to school’ (P28, P29, P36 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘My responsibility is to go to school and do my work hard’ (P30 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘It is my responsibility to listen to my teachers and principal’ (P47 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

These expressions may indicate that the participating learners not only regarded education as their right but also as important, especially when relating education with the world of work. In the context of citizenship education it is significant that nine-year-old learners already have the vision of meaningful participation in society and the insight into the interdependence of productivity and responsibility. Supplementary to the learners' rights to education, learners seem to be opinionated about ‘good’ education as their right, indicating possibly the best tuition. The expression about ‘free’ education may indicate the learners' insight that the economic position of children may influence their right to basic education. The learner's request for free education is relevant since Mrs. Naledi Pandor, the Minister of Education, announced a system for ‘no-fee education’ in all nine provinces in South Africa (Pandor, DoE Media Statement: No-Fee Schools 2007/22/11). The participating learners seem to express their desire for participation in the making of choices and decisions regarding the education offered to them on the local level of government. The expressions about learners' responsibilities may indicate the participating learners' commitment to participate in a positive way in the democratic processes, not only for themselves but also for other children, for instance the street kids.

In addition to learners' expressions about education, many learners formulated the relationship between education, children's learning experiences and the role of television (TV) as mass media. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) encourages the mass media to disseminate information and material of ‘social and cultural benefit’ to the child (Article 17) and for the preparation of the child for ‘responsible life in a free society’ (Article 29). Rushforth (2004) regards knowledge about mass media and its influence on citizens, especially the power of television, as part of ‘Citizenship Studies’. During the Focus group interview, participating learners expressed concerns about the influence of television on their learning.

> ‘on TV please no adult viewing during day time and weekends. I believe we are learning what we see. Children must have more learning things on TV and not naked people and rude things. TV has a big influence on us, there is too many violence and adult viewing’ (P1 – Class 3)
>
> ‘No adult TV’ (P2 – Class 3)

Participating learners revealed their insight on the influence television may have on their education. According to them certain programmes had a negative influence on children, especially ‘adult viewing’. The learners seem to prefer programmes with educational content. According to their framework of values such as Respect, they were indicating their desire to be treated as a special group of citizens, namely as child citizens with a preference for 'child-centred' television programmes. In the context of citizenship the learners revealed evidence of being democrats in an open society. The learners' expressions are indicative that they were able to process information critically and intelligently; these are criteria for being a responsible citizen. The learners' responses emphasize their acceptance of a culture of dialogue and participation concerning their own education.

Regarding television and its influence on children, participating learners referred to the role of Government, who should care ‘what children watch on TV’ (P1, P3 – Class 3 – Focus group interviews). Accountability in the education system means all stakeholders involved in education, including school governing bodies, the mass media like television and the educational authorities are accountable to the broader community and to the citizens of democratic society (Ministry of Education, 2001:18). During a Focus group interview each of the learners had to put on a mask of former President Nelson Mandela and then had to act in his role. The interviewer and the other members of the small focus group then asked 'Mandela' questions, which he had to answer. In the next transcription of this interview session, Participant 3 acted as Mr. Nelson Mandela and the research assistant as interviewer.

Interviewer	‘Mr. Mandela, what kind of person do you want the children to be?’
'Mr. Mandela'	‘…not play the stuff on TV; children follow it because they play the bad things in the morning … they do not play education stuff no more.’
Learner from group	’Mr. Mandela, can you change the TV; make learning shows?’
'Mr. Mandela'	‘Yes, more educational stuff, learning more people – **learning will bring more people together.**’
Interviewer	‘Mr. Mandela, what programmes would you like children to watch?’
'Mr. Mandela'	‘Put more education not violence. Help the **governing body** to put more education on TV especially on Saturdays.’

The nine-year-old learners of my case study seemingly revealed understandings that Government and local authority are both responsible and accountable for educating child citizens, especially through the medium of television. The nine-year-old learner (Participant 3), acting as Mr. Mandela, displayed mature cognitive thinking when expressing that education and learning would bring unity in the diverse South African society. This expression may indicate an insight into the value of accountability. Accountability entails that all citizens are responsible for the advancement or to 'build up’ our nation through education and that we are all responsible too, to others in our society, for our individual behaviour, whether as administrators, political leaders, learners or the TV as mass media.

Learners expressed their feelings of being part of the local community, which revealed their relationship with the democratic dispensation of South Africa as child citizens. In the next theme, Theme 3, I report on the learners of my case study and their experiences of the democratic dispensation of South Africa.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Learners living as child citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa[4]

The ‘new’ democratic dispensation of South Africa was formed in 1994 with the first general and democratic elections. The participating learners of my case study were born in the year of the establishment of the new democracy. Together with other citizens, it was foreseen that they ‘must share a common recognition of the fact that all of us stands to gain from the transformation of South Africa into a non-racial… and prosperous country…’ (Mr. Thabo Mbeki in Ministry of Education, 2001:76). One of the aims of the national curriculum is to prepare the youth for ‘participation as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities’. The basic premise of the national curriculum is the Constitution (1996) and it promotes a vision of: ‘A prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice (Department of Education, 2002c:1). It is against this background that I interpreted the participating learners' experiences about living in the democratic dispensation of South Africa. Categories of this theme crystallized as feelings of patriotism for South Africa (‘South Africa is my best world’), experiences and understandings about the South African democracy (‘We [South Africa] are a free democracy’) and comprehension of diversity and unity (‘We [South Africa] are called the rainbow nation’).

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[4] Theme 3 and related categories, are visually depicted as the green circle in the Citizenship Context Diagram (see Figure 1 in **Addendum 11**).

The participating learners of my case study expressed feelings of patriotism for South Africa, which culminated in feelings of a common citizenship and a sense of a national identity. As child citizens living in democratic South Africa, they expressed accountability for the advancement of South Africa by participating in the democratic processes. They regarded South Africa as a free democracy, thus seemingly reflecting insight of the democratic values of equality and an open society where the diverse populace of South Africa is unified in the South African democracy. The learners articulated definite opinions about their experiences of living in the democratic dispensation of South Africa as child citizens on which I elaborate in the next sections.

4.3.3.1 ‘South Africa is my best world’

Citizenship is about patriotism and about feelings of belonging and loyalty. These feelings culminate in an expression of national identity depending on the degree to which the citizen identifies with the nation-state (Osler, 2005:12-13). In the context of South Africa, a democracy where ‘a people pitted against each other brought into the unifying streams of democracy and nation building’ (Ministry of Education, 2001), was envisaged at the Saamtrek (Afrikaans for pulling together in one direction) conference in 2001. During this conference President Thabo Mbeki called for ‘The New Patriotism’, a sense of unity in the quest for a common South African destiny, a new identity where individuals are comfortable with both a local or cultural identity as well as a national identity (Ministry of Education, 2001). This 'new' patriotism stems from pride and the values of people who call themselves a nation. From these values stem tolerance and acceptance, equality and democracy, dialogue, negotiation and conflict resolution that make South Africans a unique people. Pride is an ingredient of a healthy society and the consequences of all the values contained in the Constitution (1996) (Asmal in Ministry of Education, 2001:76). One of the sixteen educational strategies envisaged to instil the 'new' patriotism is: 'Nurturing the new patriotism, or affirming our common citizenship' (Ministry of Education, 2001:76).

Accordingly, I present expressions of the participating learners of my case on the new patriotism by reporting on their feelings for South Africa, which emerged in different contexts through different instruments, for example *Children's rights and responsibilities, What I like and don't like about South Africa* and *If I were Mr. Mbeki…* and the Focus group interviews (see Table 4.2).

'South Africa is my best world' (P1 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)

'I like my country South Africa' (P50 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

'I love South Africa' (P7, P13, P46 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

'I love our country South Africa' (P8, P16 and P5 – Class 3 – Focus group interview on slogans for posters meant for peers)

'Our country is a beautiful place' (P8 - Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*)

'South Africa, our country is a very, very, very, very [4 times] beautiful place' (P21 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*)

'I am proud of this country' (P28 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

'I love my flag' (P8, P10 - Class 2 – *The South African Flag*)

'I feel proud of South Africa and the flag because I am part of it' (P14, P28 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*)

'Everybody loves the flag because it belongs to South Africa' (P3, P4, P5, P16, P21, P24 – Class 2 - *The South African Flag*)

'I love the flag. It is important and pretty, the colours mean something to us, so that's why

> we call the flag, the flag of the rainbow nation' (P12 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*)
>
> 'I love the flag, it shows people coming together and because South Africa is a free democracy' (P15 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*)

As child citizens, participating learners expressed feelings of patriotism in abundance through expressions of pride, love, loyalty and appreciation for South Africa. It appears that learners felt that they belonged to South Africa as affirmed by Participant 1 of Class 3 when she said: 'South Africa is my best world' during a small focus group interview and discussion about South Africa. Through the symbolism of the new and colourful national flag learners indicated a sense of nationhood and a national identity. It appears that the 'new patriotism' has been nurtured, for the nine-year-old learners showed evidence of accepting a common citizenship. The last anecdote of the preceding evidence shows Participant 15 thinking in a mature way by relating feelings of patriotism with what South Africa stands for: a democratic dispensation for all its citizens.

In addition to their expressions of patriotism, participating learners of my case study expressed their accountability or responsibility to South Africa in a wide-ranging sense as one learner said: 'The flag is dutyfull' [sic] (P35 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*). In a broader context, accountability can be interpreted as the responsibility (duty) of each citizen for the advancement of the South African democracy. Accountability is a democratic value identified by the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy and acknowledged as the core of patriotism (Ministry of Education, 2001:17-18, 77). In *Slogans for posters meant for peers* various learners of Class 3 expressed their accountability for South Africa and requested their peers to adhere to this accountability as well.

> 'Children look after our country because our children would like to see [it] too' (P6)
>
> 'Children keep country beautiful place' (P5, P6, P7, P11, P18, P27, P34)

In the context of citizenship, the learners gave the impression that they felt accountable for South Africa in a participative way with both a vision of the future and of sustainability. This may indicate that the nine-year-old learners felt prepared for this extensive responsibility.

I relate learners' expressions about patriotism to their views about democracy. Although the concepts of democracy and patriotism are interrelated in many ways such as democratic values, learners' expressions about democracy clearly emerged as a distinctive category on which I report subsequently.

4.3.3.2 'We [South Africa] are a free democracy'

At this stage I want to recall my working definition of democracy as described in Chapter 1 of this study. The two 'kinds of democracy' that are deeply rooted in the South African tradition, are the **liberal** and the **social** democracy. Liberal democracy is rooted in liberalism and social democracy in socialism. Historically speaking, liberal democracy evolved from individualism with its distinctive feature of freedom (specifically personal freedom), while social democracy, on the other hand, developed from socialism with its distinctive feature of equality (Steyn, De Klerk & Du Plessis, 2006:5). According to Steyn *et al.* (2006:5), freedom and equality ought to be indisputably balanced in what they call a 'true democracy'.

Despite the dawn of democracy in 1994, one has to note that South Africa only has a limited democratic tradition and culture. The high level of violence, the lack of tolerance, the limited mutual respect and understanding of different groups for each other are still part of our daily life. A democratic culture can only be successfully established on the precondition that the hearts and minds of South Africans are won over to the case for a true democracy (Steyn *et al.*, 2006:2) where the rights of the individual as well as the well-being of the group counts. A sovereign, democratic state was foreseen at the Saamtrek conference in 2001, with the vision of democratic values binding the people of South Africa to 'compel transformation' (Ministry of Education, 2001:12). These values were foreseen as the discipline and the basis of government and all national institutions; the basic premises for the national ethos, the moral and the ethical direction which the nation has identified for its future (Mahomed in Ministry of Education, 2001:11). The Constitution entrenches these values and is therefore a 'call to action' to all South Africans to build a just and free democratic society in which the potential of each person is freed (Ministry of Education, 2001:11).

Against this background I analyzed the learners' expressions about their experiences of the South African democracy and related concepts in diverse contexts. Their expressions emerged in two focus areas, namely their conception about the values related to democracy and their knowledge about democratic processes. Many learners knew that former president Nelson Mandela (Madiba) 'fought for democracy' (P20 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*) and that they were free to speak their rights (see transcriptions of class discussions in **Addendum 8**). Participating learners also expressed their understandings of democratic values, mostly through *Letters to Madiba* and the discussions in the Small focus group interviews.

'He [Mandela] made this country a democratic South Africa'. The verbatim interpretation of this statement by the learner was that 'we [children] can go to any school we want and live in any area' (P1 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)

'We [South Africa] are a free democracy' (P15 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*)

'Thank you for children's the freedom' (P40 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

'Thank you for making us [children] free and for making rights for children and that the country could have rights' (P43 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

'We are glad that you made 10 years of freedom' (P61, P70 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

The relationship between freedom and democracy is notably expressed by Participant 15 of Class 2 as 'We [South Africa] are a **free democracy**', seemingly emphasizing a liberal kind of democracy. In the light of this expression as well as the other preceding expressions, I propose that the participating nine-year-old learners appears have internalised the implication of abstract concepts related to democracy such as freedom, freedom of choice, freedom and rights. Reference to rights may include the learners' understanding of the democratic value of equality and an open society. In the context of citizenship, equality may refer to the participating learners' wish to be equal to other groups in society and therefore to be listened to. Concerning the value of an open society the learners may indicate awareness that they have the freedom and the constitutional right to play a part (and not only to observe) in the South African democracy as free citizens, free to talk, free to express themselves and free to have their own opinion.

Learners' expressions about democracy not only revealed their capacity to describe defining characteristics of democracy but also revealed their accountability to adhere to these values. I conclude this section by stating that the nine-year-old participating learners of my case study seemed to recognize the balance between freedom and equality, according to Steyn *et al.* (2006:5) a characteristic of 'true democracy'. The learners also related the concepts of freedom, democracy and rights to former President Nelson Mandela, giving him the icon status as representation of peace – a status he already held on national and international level (Ministry of Education, 2001:8; Rushforth, 2004:88).

Two learners (P38 of Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba* and P17 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*) indicated that they were immigrants and expressed negative feelings towards the South African democracy. I therefore excluded their contributions and only used data from the other learners as child citizens of the South African democracy and their contributions about the democracy.

In relation to the participating learners' knowledge about democracy, I refer to Mayesky (2006:479-483) who states that 9-12-year-old children can learn about complicated concepts and processes of democracy like peace and disagreement. Martin (2003:3) depicts knowledge about democratic processes as a feature of citizenship. Rushforth (2004) describes the working mechanisms of local and national government within a democracy as part of citizenship studies. Crick (in Hine, 2004) refers to the knowledge and skills related to citizenship education as political literacy and Mellor *et al.* (2002:11) as civic knowledge. I report on the learners' contribution to the instrument *The South African Flag* where learners of Class 3 were asked to interpret the colours of the flag by writing sentences about it. From the learners' contributions it was evident that the red colour in the flag symbolised specific meanings.

> ‘Red means blood and freedom’ (P49, P50, P53, P70)
>
> ‘Red means past and all the people that died’ (P31, P41, P46)
>
> ‘I like the flag, the red means people fought for freedom, so now we got freedom for this day, today, our tomorrow, us together as one nation no more war’ (P43)

Expressions by the participating learners of my case study seem to confirm my understanding that learners related the concepts of democracy and freedom with the symbolism of the new South African flag and vice versa. They seem to understand the historical background of the negotiated settlement that lead to the peaceful establishment of the South African democracy where people from different pasts and positions in the society negotiated this settlement. The learners in addition seemed to have developed a historical consciousness through an informed awareness of our past.

Further ideas about democratic processes emerged from the data where learners completed the instruments *If I were the president I would be…*, the Focus group interview on a letter to Madiba and *Letters to Madiba.*

> ‘I want to be a president who is a good one. May all the people support me’ (P1 – Class 3 – *If I were the president I would be…*)
>
> ‘Thabo Mbeki is a good president of this country … he takes responsibility for everybody and may all support him’ (P21 – Class 2 – *If I were the president I would be …*)
>
> ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I would do everything that everyone can vote for me’ (P4 – Class2 - *If I were the president I would be…*)
>
> ‘Dear Madiba, thank you for teaching me about democracy and hiding your [my] vote’ (P3 – Class 3 – Focus group interview on a letter to Madiba)
>
> ‘When I grow up I will always vote for ANC [African National Congress]’ (P25 – Class3 – *Letters to Madiba*)

Participating learners knew that in a democracy people’s support is important and that your vote is secret as expressed as ‘hiding your [my] vote’ by Participant 3 of Class 3. However, from the excerpts it was also clear that learners simplified the complicated process of political parties promoting their ideals in order to gain the support of the voting public. This may be an indication of the learners' lack of knowledge about democratic processes.

However, participating learners knew about democratic processes like negotiation (talking together) as well as the responsibility of citizens for paying for services delivered, an aspect Osler (2005) associated with the legal status of a citizen. During a Focus group interview my field-worker acted as interviewer and facilitator when asking the participants to contribute to a letter, which she was writing on their behalf to former President Nelson Mandela (Madiba). Learners requested Madiba to act as follows:

> ‘Madiba, let all the people come together and talk’ (P1 – Class 3)
>
> ‘Madiba, tell people to have a meeting and tell them [the people] to pay bills for lights’ (P2 – Class 3).

From the contributions of the participating learners it was evident that the learners expressed a sense of the democratic culture, which emphasised communication and participation as promoted by the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001) and the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002c). It is evident from the above two sets of evidence that the learners related the political leaders in the persons of the former president, Mr. Nelson Mandela and the current president, Mr. Thabo Mbeki to the democratic processes, indicating their understanding of the role of the political leader in the South African democracy. The learners voiced strong ideas about leadership in the South African context as well as opinions about the characteristics of a leader and the associated accountability. To my mind, the participating learners were seemingly holding the two leaders as symbols of power, accountable for the advancement of the nation.

Against this background, I employed a drama technique to verify the learners' interests, their knowledge and skills about matters of a more political nature. The learners acted as citizens asking former President Nelson Mandela questions, which revealed some understandings of the learners' political literacy (see video of drama technique in **Addendum 8**). I used the hot chair drama technique to involve learners interactively and in direct dialogue with the former president. Although I expected this technique to disclose more knowledge and insight of the learners about politics, it only revealed some degree of learners' understandings about voting, the abolishment of apartheid, unity and their sense of belonging to South Africa. Learners revealed very little factual knowledge about politics and the structure and functions of local government, how democracy works, elections and canvassing for support as described by Martin (2003:2) and Rushforth (2004). What was evident from the drama technique was the learners' high social awareness. The fact that learners thought ‘Robert Mugabe, President Botha or George Bush’ had put Mr. Nelson Mandela in jail (see the following transcription of the drama technique) indicated on the one hand their lack of factual knowledge but on the other hand could be interpreted as modest interest in ‘historical interpretation’ (Department of Education – Learning Area: Social Sciences, 2002c:131).

Mr. Nelson Mandela (Madiba) in the hot chair

Aim:
Two students, Retha and Jaco, assisted with this drama technique. Jaco, with a mask of Mr. Nelson Mandela's face, role-played Mr. Mandela and Retha acted as the mediator/negotiator between Mr. Mandela and the learners. The intention was to create the atmosphere for the learners to act as citizens.

The idea was that the learners could question Mr. Mandela on the current political situation in South Africa with the aim that, through this process, learners would reveal their experiences as citizens.

Scenario:
Learners of Class 3 were sitting in the hall of the school, waiting quietly and in anticipation for what was about to happen. The video camera was in position, ready for action.

Action:
Retha: *Good afternoon, children. I have brought you a surprise!*

She walked out of the hall and came back with Jaco, wearing the mask of Mr. Mandela and dressed in black. He walked slowly up to a chair where he sat down, facing the learners.

A few learners: *It's fake! Fake Mandela!*

Retha: *Welcome Mr. Mandela!*

Learner: *How did you become a president?*

Madiba: *Democracy.*

Learner: *Apartheid* …Another learner: *Celebrating 10 years…*

Retha: *What happened?*

Learner 1: *Voting for South Africa.*

Learner 2: *They voted for him.*

Learner 3: *…class vote… Your vote is a secret.*

Madiba: *Yes. Why must it be a secret?*

Learner: *I say I vote for the president and there is a person next to me and he wants to vote for the same person.*

Learner 2: *...because he want to copy your vote.*

Madiba: *Do you vote for class leaders? Why is a vote a secret?*

Learners from the group: *Why do…, You can vote for someone…, When… the president is the real person who must be the president? Thabo Mbeki…*

Retha: *Why is a vote a secret?*

Learners from the group: *Intimidation, force, threaten, freedom.*

Learner 1 to Madiba: *Why were you in jail?*

Learner 2: *Because he wants the whites and blacks to come together.*
Learner 3: *Who put him in jail?*

Learners from the group: *Robert Mugabe, President Botha, George Bush.*

Madiba: *Do you like SA?*

(Silence from the group)

Retha: *Why do you like SA?*

Learners from the group: *It's a nice country, not one colour of people, different colour people, I like South Africa because I was born here, because it is our country, I was born in SA, it's a beautiful country, nature, rainbow nation.*
But we don't like bad things like smoking, lying, stealing, raping, killing.

Madiba: *How will you change these bad things?*

Learners from the group: *Don't sell drugs, crime, stop cutting trees. I know why they make Thabo Mbeki the president because Mandela was too old.*

Learner to Madiba: *How many years were you President?*

Madiba: *Only two years.*

Madiba: *Can the children make this country a better place?*

Learners from the group: (Learners all replied and individual voices could not be distinguished)

Madiba: *You must make the small changes.*

Learners from the group: *Pollution stop, pick up paper, look after the country, people who hate should love each other … respect each other.*

Learners, participating in the drama technique, indicated limited political knowledge, although they acknowledged the value of respect as already explored as a democratic value in Theme 1 (4.3.1.3). Respect seemed not only to govern the relationship of the learners as citizens with each other and with other citizens, but also directed the learners' views on equality and diversity. In the following section I elaborate on the aspect of equality and diversity as core concepts of citizenship.

4.3.3.3 'We [South Africans] are called the rainbow nation'

This category is about equality and diversity with the main issue at hand: How do people live together in a multicultural society or nation state? Davies and Rey (2000:183-184) refer to this issue as a question of different identities and that the concepts of 'intercultural and intercultural education' could affirm understanding between individuals with different identities related, for example, to race and culture. The concept 'intercultural' affirms the reality of interactions and interdependence as well as ensuring that these interactions contribute to mutual respect and the formation of cohesive communities rather than accentuating relations of domination and attitudes of exclusion and rejection. Intercultural education relates closely to certain models of education for citizenship where the importance of different identities is seen against the embracing practices of human rights, participatory democracy and equality. According to Davies and Rey (2000:184) this approach is vital for citizenship. While there is evidence of apathy amongst young people concerning politics, there is at the same time a climate of intolerance, aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism which expresses itself through violence against people of immigrant origin and minority groups (Council of Europe in Davies & Rey, 2000:184).

The ideal of a South African rainbow nation was publicised since 1994 with the establishment of democratic South Africa. It was propagated that for the diverse South Africa to establish the ideal of the rainbow nation, South Africans needed to build a united nation-state and democratic dispensation based on the democratic values such as social justice and equity as well as equality as entrenched in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The vision of the democratic South Africa, as described by the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001), is as follows: 'moulding a people from diverse origins, cultural practices, languages into one within a framework, democratic of character …that can mediate conflicts without oppression and injustices'. These ideals were protected in laws related to education such as the National Education Policy Act (1996) that aims to protect and advance South Africa's cultures and languages (Ministry of Education, 2001).

The Constitution, Article 9 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) states: 'everyone is equal before the law' and may not be discriminated against on the basis of 'race, gender, sex …ethnic or social origin, colour, …age, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth'. The concepts of diversity, inclusivity and age which are related to the 'Equality Clause' (Ministry of Education, 2001) of the Constitution, is significant to my study, because the 'Equality Clause' substantiates my argument that child citizens are to be treated as equal citizens in the South African society. The values of tolerance and respect for others stem from the 'Equality Clause', and are not only a South African concern but also an international one. On international level the Human Rights Act (1998) banned all unfair discrimination and stereotyping related to gender, religion and disability. In this context Martin Luther King (in Rushforth, 2004:14-16) said: 'I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged according to the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.' In the context of Australia, Mellor *et al.* (2002:7, 12) refers to equality as social cohesion since the overcoming of individual and institutionalized racism is one of the biggest challenges of the reconciliation process in the Australian society (Woods in Mellor *et al.*, 2002:7). Participating learners of my case study expressed opinions on various aspects related to equality and diversity in the democratic dispensation of South Africa.

'We [South Africa] have a lot of different people' (P18, P25 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

'I like different languages' (P10 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

'I like the flag, blacks and whites and more cultures' (P43 – Class 3 – *The South African Flag*)

'I like the flag because it has different colours and different colours of cultures' (P52 – Class 3 – *The South African Flag*)

'I like the flag because it has many cultures and a rainbow nation' (P61 – Class 3 – *The South African Flag*)

The participating learners seem to have an understanding of the concepts of different identities uniting as a nation. The learners mentioned the fact that they lived in a country with people, different in various ways. They indicated insight into the linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity of the South African population. The learners' understanding of diversity and unity is confirmed by their knowledge and understanding of the symbolism of the South African flag. Learners seemingly understood the symbolism of the flag: the unique central design of the 'V' at the flag post comes together in the centre of the flag, extending further, as a single horizontal band to the outer edge of the fly. This symbol can be seen as representing the interlinking or convergence of diverse elements in South African society, which take the road ahead in unison (Department of Education, 2001c).

A learner (P25 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*) made a drawing with different faces, each face a different colour, similar to the colours of the South African flag, which symbolises the different cultures in South Africa forming a unity. Another drawing showed people (presented in different colours) holding hands together and smiling (see examples of drawings in **Addendum 8**). Apart from the above evidence of learners' conception of a South African unity, is the evidence gained from the learners in Class 4 when they sang the national anthem. The learners requested to sing the national anthem of South Africa. I observed the joy on their faces while singing all the verses of the national anthem and when I asked them at the end of the song for the reason why they stood on attention a learner responded 'for the love and togetherness (P16 – Class 4 – Transcriptions of class discussion). It was evident in the sentences about *The South African Flag* that learners not only related the concepts of equality and diversity to unity but also the concepts of diversity and unity to democracy.

'I love the flag, it shows people come together' (P21 – Class 2)

'Black and White together and more cultures. Us together as one nation, no more war. Thank you for this **special unity**' (P43 – Class 3)

'I love the flag, it shows people coming together and because it is a democracy' (P15 – Class 2)

'I love my flag because it has many cultures and a rainbow nation' (P61 – Class 3)

Not only did participating learners indicate their acknowledgement of diversity and an understanding of the interrelatedness of diversity and the 'special unity' in the democratic dispensation of South Africa, but it appears that they were committed on a personal level to the democratic value of equality and the practice of non-discrimination. Learners expressed an attitude of acceptance and tolerance towards people with different identities when participating in the Focus group interviews.

'I promise to not fight or judge someone of their culture and not to hate people but to love them' (P2 – Class 3 – Focus group interview on a letter to Madiba)

'Accept foreign people but South Africans must be given first privilege for work' (P1 – Class

3 – Focus group interview on a book about South Africa)

‘Racism should come to an end from white people as well as black people. Everyone should be given a chance in life no matter what your skin colour … your pink or blue, poor or rich’ (P1 – Focus group interview on a book about South Africa)

During the Focus group interview on how to write a book about South Africa Participant one of Class 3, revealed conditional acceptance towards people from another country: that they don't overpower the job market, a sensitive issue in the South African society (Moodley & Adam, 2004). The last of the preceding anecdotes contributed by Participant 1, may indicate that learners experienced racism, although they have been facilitated the democratic value of equality, which they indicated as an accepted value. It seems that Participant 1 understood that racism is a threat to unity in South Africa. The rationale for giving the preceding expressions of learners was to illustrate that the nine-year-old learners gave the impression that they had accepted the abstract democratic value of equality, which encompasses tolerance and respect for other with diverse identities, viz. core components of citizenship.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Learners’ desire for change in securing their future[5]

Citizenship entails educating children as future citizens. The basic precept of citizenship education is seen as one way to prepare young learners to enhance their own personal growth and to contribute to the society in which they live, especially in societies where transformations are taking place (Mellor *et al.*, 2002:8; Wilde, 2005). Citizenship education should involve assisting children to participate in school and community at a variety of levels. In preparation for participation, children need particular skills and a values-based framework. This may require those concerned with citizenship and citizenship education to rethink their conceptualisation of childhood, so that children are acknowledged as citizens and trust is placed in their evolving competence (Holden & Clough, 2000). Such education would facilitate the active citizens to keep themselves informed about civic issues like problems and conflicts facing all citizens and to form their own opinions. The future citizens will understand their own rights and take their responsibilities seriously. Their decisions and actions will be tempered by a moral concern for social justice and the dignity of human kind. They will keep asking critical questions of those in power and persist that their views are listened to. They will demand that those in power are accountable to those that put them there. As Rushforth (2004:113) states: ‘it is up to the active citizens to create the future all of us want to see.’

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[5] This theme is visually depicted as the blue circle in the Citizen Context Diagram (see Figure 1 in **Addendum 11**), which I linked to the pink blocks to visualize learners' expressions about the future related to change. From a two-dimensional view (see Figure 1) the blue circle can be seen as a thin outer ring for the few direct expressions made by the learners on the future. From a three-dimensional view the blue circle (see Figure 2 in **Addendum 11**) can be regarded as a large circle, foundational to all other circles of the Citizen Context Diagram (see Figure 1), signifying the immensity of the future stretching ahead of the nine-year old learners as citizens.

The learners' expressions about their desire for change in securing their futures crystallised in two related categories: ‘‘If I were Mr. Mbeki, I would make a better nation’, which entails child citizens being active in working for change and ‘We [children] are the future’, which deals with child citizens being active in working for the future.

The learners who shared their experiences recognised the notion of change in their lives as well as in the context of South Africa. They were critical as to the change they promoted in their local community, which was mostly related to social change. To enhance the desired change they were committed to participate themselves and held the leaders accountable for implementing change. The learners also showed mature thinking in relating change to their futures and their own accountability for sustaining South Africa as their country. However, I recognised a feeling of powerlessness in the learners' expressions for their aspirations to participate was only expressed in an imaginative way. Although the concepts of change and future are integrated, I attempt to present each category as an entity by submitting relevant evidence in the following sections.

4.3.4.1 ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki, I would make a better nation’[6]

Civics and citizenship are related to change. According to Mellor *et al.* (2002:8) and De Villiers (2005), the life of the future citizen would be characterized by profound changes, changes at the core of peoples' existence. Mellor *et al.* (2002:8) refers to the social and economic transformation citizens of the future will be faced with. This would seem to call for citizens who are active and committed in participating in all of society's processes and for citizenship education that can play a role in preparing young citizens for this future and its challenges. This category is about the participating learners' expressions on the desire for change in relation to their future.

In data from all instruments the notion of **change** emerged, related to diverse contexts. The expressions by the participating learners of my case study about change have to be seen against the background of the learners' discontent with conditions within the 'new' democratic dispensation of South Africa. As already reported in this chapter, learners disliked the violence and crime they seemed to have experienced and the neglect of vulnerable people in their local community. Learners related change to different aspects and levels of their lives. According to Zuern (2001:5), a formal national transition, for example South Africa's transition from an oppressive government to a non-racial democracy, does not simply lead to local level change, a situation the learners had been reporting.

Expressions about change seem to be integrated with the learners' expressions about their need to participate in bringing about change. John (2000:9) describes this desire of young children as ‘being active in working for change’. For individuals to bring about change in a democracy, they have to participate in democratic processes like voting or becoming an elected representative (Rushforth, 2004:34). Price quotes Beyer (2001:49), who asserted that criticism of current realities and participation in the recreation of our worlds are a central part of citizenship and democratic life. Although the nine-year-old learners are too young to participate in political processes like voting or being elected as a representative, they needed to understand the knowledge of these processes as part of their empowerment as citizens. In the context of South Africa, a developmental outcome envisaged by the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002c:6) is a learner who will be able to participate as a responsible citizen in the democracy.

In seeking to understand the significance of the learners' accounts on change and their participative role, I report on their expressions related to these aspects of citizenship. The frequent use of the word ‘change’ by the learners was revealed mostly by the data from the instruments concerning the two leaders: the completion of the sentence *If I were Mr. Mbeki…* and *Letters to Madiba* (see Table 4.2). However, learners used the word change in an imaginative way and through the persons of Mr. Mbeki and Mr. Mandela. When completing the instrument *If I were Mr. Mbeki…* learners of Class 2 acted in role play and wrote the following:

> ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the community’ (P9)
>
> ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the country’ (P34)

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[6] The concept change is presented as pink blocks, framed blue to visually depict the relationship between future and change - see the Citizenship Context Diagram - Figure 1 in **Addendum 11**.

> 'If I were Mr. Mbeki I would make a better nation' (P7 – Class 3)
>
> **'**If I were Mr. Mbeki I would, will change the world' (P30)
>
> 'If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the world into a better place' (P17)

In *Letters to Madiba* learners of Class 3 and 4 expressed their requirements for change in the subsequent anecdotes:

> 'Madiba, can you make some changes around South Africa, stop people fighting, killing, stop abuse, help people who live in the streets looking for jobs, with no money to buy food for their children' (P47, P37, P34 – Class 3)
>
> 'Madiba, change people that are stealing, raping children, abusing children, killing people' (P34 – Class 4)
>
> 'Madiba, I want you to change our country' (P64 – Class 3)
>
> 'Madiba, I wish everything could change' (P67 – Class 4)
>
> 'Madiba, I want you to change the world' (P52 – Class 3)

It appears that the participating learners of my case study hoped for change not only on a local but also on a national and global level. Wanting to 'change the world' may indicate the learners' perception of themselves as global citizens. Global citizenship is a concept related to citizenship and has recently been discussed by many writers in the field of citizenship (Ackers & Stalford, 2004; Ortloff, 2005). Osler (2005:3) proposed the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship, especially in societies with a multicultural and multi-ethnic character. Goodman (2007) refers to international citizenship. Smith and Armstrong (2003) see the world as a global village with different nationalities and ages of which one-fifth of the villagers are nine years of age. Although global citizenship is an important component of citizenship the learners only expressed ideas on global citizenship in relation to the concept of change.

In addition, from the expressions learners gave in the preceding anecdotes, it appears that the participating learners held the two leaders, Mr. Mbeki and Mr. Mandela, as symbols of power, responsible and accountable for change, especially for undesirable circumstances to which the learners referred repeatedly. The leaders were seemingly held accountable to the electorate that put them in those positions. This may indicate the learners' knowledge and understanding of the relationship between leaders, as symbols of power and their responsibility to the ordinary citizenry in a democracy.

The learners' conceptualisation of change related mostly to social change as supposed to personal change or 'progress'; or any other type of change they could have focused on. Social change is seen as the transformation of social relations and dynamics in a given community (Collins & O'Brien, 2003:327). John (2000:9) stated that young children have a strong sense of social justice. The nine-year-old learners' expressions about social change were evident when they asked Mr. Mbeki and Mr. Mandela to assist in bringing about change. Learners not only commented on the different changes they wanted Mr. Mbeki to perform, but also indicated how they would implement these changes if they were in his shoes. When doing the instrument *If I were Mr. Mbeki…* learners of Class 2 suggested the following:

> ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I will change, give people money’ (P23, P2, P4, P9, P10, P13, P41)
>
> ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I will change the country, help the people that live in the street that don't have money and food’ (P34)
>
> ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the world and give food and money’ (P38)
>
> ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the streets and the crime…’ (P39)
>
> ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I will take care of South Africa, I will change the rules and give people money and will make sure our country is safe’ (P36)

Most of the changes these learners suggested and the rectification of the social problems (as given in all the preceding anecdotes) may be related to social change concerning vulnerable people and people threatening the security of the local community. Concerning the last scenario, Participant 36 saw the democratic value of the rule of law as the solution for securing a safe community. In most of the learners' recommendations for implementing change, the word ‘money’ was used, accentuating learners' insight into the relationship between social and economic transformation.

Although learners expressed a need to participate in the desired changes, their expressions demonstrated a sense of powerlessness in relation to their ability to initiate and achieve change. I relate this assumption to the absence in their expressions of themselves as citizens participating in the construction of change in the civic domain. Learners did not report on direct involvement in decision-making processes at school and in the community. Learners only reported on their urge for changing negative circumstances and experiences influencing their lives. This may indicate that although the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002c:6) prescribes participation of responsible citizens, it is still only an idea and not a practical application in the life-experiences of these learners.

With the expression 'If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the future' (P6 – Class 2), this participant related the concepts 'change' and 'future', signifying the learners' perception of the importance of a changing future for the nine-year-old learners as citizens. In the subsequent section I report on the learners' perceptions and statements about the future.

4.3.4.2 'We [children] are the future'

Children are concerned about the future (Holden & Clough, 2000:21). Learners expressed a desire for a better future secured by a changed society. They articulated a future vision of a happy and peaceful life, a vision where they would participate actively in making the world a better place. De Villiers (2005:11) refers to 'the future as a point in time to be reached, a forthcoming reality that is changing' and that there are 'one day' perceptions of the future: tomorrow, next week, next year or the next generation OR a perception of the future as an imminent 'now' reality.

The participating learners of my case study did not share many explicit expressions about the future and the few expressions about the future emerged in the instruments: *Letters to Madiba, If I were Mr. Mbeki* and the Focus group interviews (see Table 4.2). The analysis of the data may signify the learners' awareness of the future related to many spheres of their lives and their perceptions of the role former President Nelson Mandela and President Thabo Mbeki should have in their futures. Learners saw a future where the leaders would 'take care of all the people' (P17 – Class 2 – *If I were Mr. Mbeki….*) and where 'all the children will be loved' (P55 – *Letters to Madiba*). In this category I deal with the learners' expressions of being active in working for their futures, futures where children are important citizens.

According to the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001:1), young South Africans are being educated as the citizenship of tomorrow in classrooms throughout the country. They are being prepared for the common destiny of the South Africa to be, a future

South Africa based on the Constitution (Act No 108 of 1996) (Ministry of Education, 2001:1). The Constitution expresses the nation's social values and its expectations of the roles, rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic South Africa. The Bill of Rights (Republic of South Africa, 1996) places paramount value on equal opportunity, human dignity, life, freedom and security of persons. The National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002c:4-6) builds on the vision and values of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and envisages 'the kind of learner' that will not only develop his or her full potential as a citizen of democratic South Africa but who will also participate in society as a critical and active citizen. Against this background, a participating learner articulated the following:

> 'We [children] must look after our country because our children [meaning their own children] would like to see [it] too' (P6 – Class 3 - *Slogan for a poster meant for peers*)

This participating learner seems to be aware of his future role and responsibility as citizen of South Africa. He expressed an acknowledgement of the importance of the sustainability of South Africa for future generations and his accountability toward it.

As future citizens, the learners were future-orientated and expressed a desire to participate in securing their futures, futures in which they wished to experience a content life, shared with other citizens. In relation to the learners' awareness of their potential as role players in their own futures, a learner (P1) of Class 3 said in the Focus group interviews, during two different sessions:

> 'We [children] are the future and I believe that we as the youth can make a difference in the future'

The participating learner expressed a belief in themselves as child citizens, a minority but important group of the South Africa populace, with a desire for change in securing their future. They are aware of the power of their voices, voices claiming participation, a decisive aspect of citizenship. Learners associated their future visions with their feelings of patriotism for South Africa. Many learners expressed their willingness to contribute to ensure South Africa's future.

> ‘I will love this country. Promise to never throw paper and pollution … and I will be faithful for the rest of my life’ (P22 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*)

The impression I gained from the participating learners' preceding expressions is that they were willing to be active citizens, committed to participate in their futures and with an overwhelming patriotism towards South Africa. The learners' expressions about the future seemed to indicate that they perceived the future as both ‘one day’ and ‘now’ reality (De Villiers, 2005:11), which indicates evaluation, thus mature thinking for nine-year-old learners (Morrison, 2006:284). It seemed that the participating learners shared the vision of the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) and were willing to become the ‘envisaged learner’ as already described in this study.

4.4 Concluding remarks on main findings

Data from the nine-year-old learners who participated in my case study, revealed an abundance of life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation of South Africa. Exploring these experiences and understandings enlightened me on the learners' understandings of citizenship and their democratic identities. They presented themselves as citizens who:

- were intensely patriotic and identified passionately with the South African democracy, the flag and its symbolism; thus expressing a national and South African identification
- demonstrated fairly high social awareness
- understood abstract concepts related to democracy and citizenship such as: the rights and responsibilities of a citizen, diversity of cultures within which the unity of South Africa is manifested, and democratic processes like voting to some extent
- internalised the democratic values such as democracy, social justice, equality, *ubuntu* (human dignity), accountability, the rule of Law and respect
- were critical in terms of the lack of social security. They declared dissatisfaction with their unsafe neighbourhood, including what they perceived as social injustices
- held the political leaders liable for enforcing the law and rectifying social injustices
- perceived the future as both ‘one day’ and ‘now’
- advocated for change, especially social change in securing their futures

The voices of the nine-year-old participating learners of my case study revealed themselves as committed to be the active and responsible citizen. However, the learners expressed their participation in the democratic dispensation of South Africa only in an imaginative way and as a future vision. Irrespective of the learners' dedication to democracy and their desire to participate in ensuring a sustainable future life in the South African democracy, they were seemingly excluded from the current democratic processes.

I presented the empirical data grouped around four themes in this chapter. The four themes and relevant categories represented the major life-experiences of the learners as: nine-year-old citizens, citizens of the local community, citizens of democratic South Africa and citizens in need for a changed society which will secure their futures. I closely explored and examined the four themes in order to come to a profound understanding on how the learners' experiences and understandings of democratic practices shaped their understandings of citizenship and their democratic identities, on which I elaborate in depth in Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, I present an account on how the learners' acquired understandings of citizenship and democratic identities could extend generally held current conceptions of citizenship education. I offer interpretative commentary by exploring the findings against the background of the selected theoretical framework and related literature.

CHAPTER 5

SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE INQUIRY:

Enhanced understandings of the voices of the participating children

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5 I explore the significance of my findings and highlight their implications. I explore the findings in the context of the conceptual framework relevant to citizenship and citizenship education offered in Chapter 2. I base the discussion on the key constructs that were consolidated from the participating learners' life experiences and understandings as child citizens of the democratic dispensation of South Africa. The findings were as follows: the learners were intensely patriotic and identified passionately with the South African democracy, the flag and its symbolism, thus expressing a national and South African identification. They demonstrated fairly high social awareness, understood abstract concepts related to democracy and citizenship such as the rights and responsibilities of a citizen, diversity of cultures within which the unity of South Africa is manifested, and democratic processes like voting to some extent. The learners internalised the democratic values such as democracy, social justice, equality, *ubuntu* (human dignity), accountability, the rule of law and respect. They were critical in terms of the lack of social security. They declared dissatisfaction with their unsafe neighbourhood, including what they perceived as social injustices, held the political leaders responsible for enforcing the law and rectifying social injustices, perceived the future as both 'one day' and 'now' and advocated for change, especially social change in securing their futures. Therefore, I conclude that the participating learners revealed themselves as active and responsible citizens. However, the learners expressed their participation in the democratic dispensation of South Africa only in an imaginative way and as a future vision.

From insights gained from the learners' life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation as disclosed above, I attempt to answer the following research questions in this chapter:

- How do learners perceive their democratic identities?
- How do learners understand their citizenship?
- How can the acquired understandings and identities extend generally held current conceptions of citizenship education?

In the next section I elaborate on answering the research questions by stating the relevant findings from Chapter 4, to support my endeavour in answering the questions as stated above. In addition, I indicate similar research findings as a methodology of offering literature control in an integrated manner. I also indicate how the theories related to key concepts as described in Chapter 2, are associated with my findings. Resulting from this, I also explain what possible contributions to theory, policy and curriculum my findings may have.

5.2 Implications of the findings for the inquiry

The kind of learner that is envisaged by the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002c:4-6) is one that has accepted the values of social justice, life, equity, democracy and human dignity (*ubuntu*). The internalisation of the democratic values is required for personal development and to participate in society as a critical and active citizen, to ensure that a national South African identity is built in sustaining the 'new' democracy and a still fragile civil society (Moodley & Adam, 2004). The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001:6-7) adds to the expectations set by the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) by stating that the young South Africans have to become effective, productive and responsible citizens with the ability to act in the interests of society and democracy. This has to be achieved through the teaching of citizenship education through knowledge, skills and values (Department of Education, 2002c). The approach to teaching these components as foundational to citizenship education correlates with similar approaches to citizenship education in the international domain (Osler & Starkey, 2005b:3; Smith, 2005:3).

The national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) is clear on its expectation of the future South African citizens: what they should know and be able to do. Against this background I explored the data generated by this research project and the following questions emerged: How could the learner's life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation inform their understandings of their democratic identity and their citizenship? What do the findings mean in terms of the expectations for the future citizen? What are the implications of the findings for this inquiry? How best to sustain a critical and active citizen who will identify with the ideals of democracy? Put another way: How might we better understand citizenship and the identification of young learners with democracy? How can their acquired understandings and identities extend current conceptions of citizenship education?

5.2.1 Democratic identity

Learners' understandings of their life experiences as child citizens revealed their perceptions of their democratic identity. The nine-year-old learners of this research project were conscious of their identity and status as citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa. Their understandings of their democratic identity emerged explicitly and implicitly in all the themes that became evident:

- Learners' identification as child citizens
- Learners' criticism of living as child citizens in the local community
- Learners' appreciation for living as child citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa and
- Learners' desire for change in securing their future.

The Learners articulated a common identity with democratic South Africa, a 'notion of South-Africanness' as described in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001). However, learners did not use the concept democracy often except for linking democracy with the concept of freedom, with the person of Mr. Nelson Mandela and with the South African flag.

> 'I like 10 years of democracy' (P5 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)
>
> 'Dear Mister Mandela, Thank you for teaching me about democracy' (P3 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)
>
> 'Mr. Mandela, thank you for ten years of freedom' (P61 - Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)
>
> 'He [Mr. Nelson Mandela] made the country a democratic South Africa' (P5 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)

‘I love the flag because it is a democracy country’ (P15 - Class 2 - *The South African Flag*)

I explored the learners' expressions of their democratic identity against the conceptual framework constructed by Banks (2004 – see Chapter 2 Figure 2.1). Castles (2004:17) also identifies three levels of identification in a democracy, which aligns with Banks' framework: cultural or local, national and global. In the context of the diverse South African society, some learners expressed their awareness of a cultural identity. Their cultural identification was related to their identification with their family and their school. When participating in the instrument *What I like and don’t like about South Africa,* a learner said: ‘I like my Pedi culture’ (P19 – Class 1); another learner made a drawing of herself and her mother in Indian attire (P36 – Class 1) (see **Addendum 8b**); and a learner articulated appreciation for his/her school: ‘I like my school’ (P49 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*).

In the context of their cultural or local identity, many learners did not seem to identify entirely with their local community or neighbourhood for they reported overwhelmingly on negative experiences related to crime, violence and an apparent lack of services, especially in securing their safety. Their feelings of vulnerability possibly signify a sense of defencelessness, causing their seeming lack of local identification. The learners' apparent lack of identification with the local community is in contrast with research conducted by Osler and Starkey (2005a) who established that ten-year-old children in the city of Leicester identified more with their local community than with their national community. I propose that the perceived lack of cultural or local identification may affect the learners' democratic and national identity negatively at a later stage of their lives; my statement is affirmed by Osler's (2005) argument that if people do not access services on the basis of equality, they may feel excluded and the sense of belonging and national identity, which is a prerequisite for participative citizenship, may be missing.

The nine-year-old learners' expressions pertaining to their democratic identity emerged in abundance and in various ways on the national level. Most learners identified themselves as South African citizens living in democratic South Africa. Learners encapsulated their feelings of belonging to South Africa as:

> 'I am proudly South African' (P11 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*)[7]
>
> 'South Africa is my best world' (P1 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)

In addition a learner referred to South Africa as:

> 'a democratic South Africa' (P5 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)

Many learners identified with the democratic ideal of uniting a diverse population into one nation as learners of Class 3 said when participating in *Letters to Madiba*:

> 'Mister Mandela fight for freedom so that all kinds of colour can come together' (P10 – Class 3)
>
> '…thank you for making white and black united' (P13 – Class 3)

Similarly, in the activity *What I like and don't like about South Africa,* learners of Class 1 said:

> 'I like my country because it has different people' (P46)
>
> 'I like different people' (a heading for a drawing about Indian and Black persons – P25)

In this regard, expressions about unity and diversity were also present in numerous expressions when the learners of Class 2 participated in the instrument about *The South African Flag.* Learners related the symbolism of the flag to the idea of the 'rainbow nation' (P5, P20, P30, P40, P41). In *What I like and don't like about South Africa* Participant One (P1) made a drawing of different people standing around the flag, symbolising the diversity and unity in the South African society. The learners' understanding of diverse cultures must be seen against the socio-political change in the post-apartheid South African society where prejudice, often in the form of racism, still exists. The learners' acknowledging that citizens have to find ways in living together in harmony may be related to the learning outcomes included in the Life Orientation Learning Area of the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) (see **Addendum 3**), which may imply that the participating learners, being nine-years-old, have developed socially so as to encourage the acceptance of diversity and the commitment of democratic values such as tolerance.

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[7] This expression could be related to the 'Made in South Africa' slogan, which is used in the media as part of a brand name and promotion of South African products.

In contrast with the democratic identification expressed by most of the learners, one learner wrote: ‘I don't like democracy because I am black and don't come from South Africa’. This expression could perhaps be interpreted as a feeling of alienation articulated by immigrants as reported by Moodley and Adam (2004) in the South African context and by Dimitrios, Yiannis and Dimitris (2005) in the Greek context. This observation verifies the statement that feelings of belonging and therefore identification are important aspect of citizenship (Osler, 2005:12-13). This observation may also imply that citizenship education, through the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c), has nourished this feeling in most of the learners, especially those who expressed a shared loyalty to the South African nation-state.

The data revealed limited evidence of global identification, which Castles (2004:17) describes as a component of citizenship. One learner expressed an awareness of global identification as follows:

> ‘We need TV to see what is happening in the world like war in Iraq, when it happens in South Africa we must know what to do. I don't want war. When it is they brake people's houses and in the end you don't have anything’ (P67 – Class 4 - *Letters to Madiba*)

A few learners articulated ideas about the global world, which may be linked to the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c). The national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) aims to: ‘encourage[s] amongst all learners an awareness … of world views within which the unity of South Africa is manifested’. In the Learning Area Social Sciences, included in the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) (see **Addendum 3**), learners gain the opportunity to learn about people of interest in South Africa and the wider world. These learning experiences may have promoted global identification and citizenship. However, I did not find any evidence of learners' knowledge about people from the wider world or related activities e.g. writing letters to children in other countries or learners’ involvement in a project on helping children in other parts of the world. Reasons for the absence of expressions about global identification or global citizenship may be a lack of the learners' knowledge about this concept, a lack of participation in matters related to this concept or the fact that my instruments were not designed to focus on this specific aspect.

Savage and Armstrong (2004:17) argue for an accent on global awareness as a means of teaching that diversity should be welcomed and not feared given the increasing diversity of nation-states like

America [and South Africa] and the increasing interdependence of all the world's people. According to Rushforth (2004), global citizenship entails knowing about your role in the wider world and how politics and decisions made on global level affect you. Aspects of global interest that could also be relevant to the South African context are keeping peace, promoting democracy, promoting human rights and protecting the environment. Rushforth (2004:88-89) suggests the study of case studies like the lives of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King to broaden learners' perspectives of global citizenship. Gandhi, though born in India, made a significant contribution to South African struggle politics in the almost two decades he spent in the country. Together with Nelson Mandela, he provides South Africans with a unique role model to enhance citizenship and a national identification. Except for Mr. Nelson Mandela, learners could study the lives of other South African who have acted as ambassadors for South Africa such as the Olympic medal winners, or an identified person in their local community who serves the community, like a policewoman, or an institution that provides care for the street children or homeless children. Through research such persons could be identified and included in textbooks employed for citizenship education.

Related to the learners' democratic identification, is the emergence of patriotism in the fourth theme: Learners' appreciation for living in the democratic dispensation of South Africa and the subsequent category: ‘South Africa is my best world’. Learners articulated an overwhelmingly patriotism when participating enthusiastically in the instrument *The South African Flag*. They identified with the symbolism of the flag and through the flag they expressed in abundance their sense of belonging to, their loyalty to and their love for South Africa.

> ‘I will do everything for the country that needs to be done’ (P1 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*)

Osler (2005) and Green (2005) describe this sense of belonging, loyalty and being proud of one’s country as feeling, an aspect of citizenship and a precondition for citizens to become active in the context of a democracy. As nine-year-olds, the learners of my case study therefore demonstrated the potential to become active citizens.

Banks (2004) states that in order for the democracy to function, citizens have to identify with the democratic ideals. A loss of democratic identification may affect the democratic society as a whole (Ministry of Education, 2001). This concern does not seem to relate to participants of my case study, as they have expressed national consciousness by identifying with the concept of being a citizen in the South African democracy based on national loyalty and a sense of belonging. The perception of national identity expressed by the participating learners of my case study aligns with children's understanding and perception of national identity in a comparative study by researchers from eight European countries on e.g. what the children (some primary school children) understood about their own nation and Europe (Kuščer & Prosen, 2005:9-24). Most of these young children had a strong sense of their own national identity. Similarly, participating 14-year-old children from the IEA Civic Education Study in Australia demonstrated some very positive attitudes towards their country and expressed patriotism, but not unquestioningly so (Mellor *et al.*, 2002:133). The given examples may imply that young learners seem to have intense patriotic feelings, which may imply that younger children could easily be exploited to identify blindly with unquestioning allegiance to and acceptance of their country's policies and practices.

The feelings of patriotism expressed by the participating learners of my case study have to be balanced with the development of a critical mind in order to equip these learners as future citizens to deal with the challenges to democracy (Kennedy & Mellor, 2005) and to prevent undemocratic behaviour Eaton (2002:47). In the subsequent sections I elaborate on the learners' understandings of their citizenship, which might have been influenced by the learners' democratic identity.

5.2.2 Understandings of citizenship

The participating nine-year-old learners revealed understandings of their citizenship, an abstract concept which can be viewed from various perspectives. Different perspectives exist regarding the notion of 'citizenship'. Osler (2005) states that citizenship comprises status, feelings, and practice. According to the Crick Report (Department for Education and Employment, 1988) citizenship has three dimensions: social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy. Mellor *et al.* (2002) focused in the report about the Australian Students' Knowledge and Beliefs as part of the IEA Civic Education Study of fourteen-year-old learners, on civic knowledge, civic engagement and civic attitudes. The South African national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) aims to educate citizenship through knowledge, skills and values (see Chapter 2.3.1). This stance relates to the views on citizenship and citizenship education already studied in Chapters 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 and thus employed in this study. To enable me to understand the learners' perceptions of their citizenship, I report on the nine-year-old learners' expressions pertaining their values, skills (primarily associated with active participation) and their knowledge related to citizenship.

5.2.2.1 Values related to citizenship

Most learners expressed a strong awareness of morality and moral responsibility based on the democratic values. Pertaining moral responsibilities, learners related their awareness of moral obligations to values such as respect, social justice, equality and the rule of law concerning themselves and other people. Learners' moral awareness informed their social responsibilities, which can also be related to the values of social justice and equity, equality, *ubuntu* (human dignity) and accountability (Ministry of Education, 2001). These values were identified and promoted as democratic values by the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001). Learners showed an overwhelming social awareness through expressions of compassion for all people, especially vulnerable people in their local community. They were concerned about a diverse group of people like the street kids and homeless people as well as individuals like their family members and friends. Their empathy for the people living in the streets of their neighbourhood 'eating from the dustbin' (P3 - Class 3 – Focus group interview) reflected the learners' responsibility 'not to wasting food and water' (P31 - Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*) and a willingness to 'share' (P6 – Class 3 – Focus group interview).

Respect and responsibility were the most frequent expressed values. Learners articulated respect for children and for different groups of people in *Slogans written for posters meant for peers* as: 'respect children' (P33), 'respect teachers' (P26), 'respect older people' (P28) and 'respect people' (P31, P36). According to Nieuwenhuis (2003:33) respect is foundational to the consideration of minority interest, the maintenance of human life and the protection of the weak, which can be related to the learners' strong social awareness and their consciousness that they as children form a minority group in society.

Related to the learners' expressions about the value of respect and their social awareness regarding family members and other vulnerable people, was the phrase 'appreciate what you have' (P2, P19, P24, P28, P37 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*). To 'appreciate what you have' indicates a person who is not being selfish or greedy. This expression was also written, as a slogan for posters meant for peers by learners of Class 3 (P19, P23, P24, P28, P37, P38). To appreciate what you have may be one way of showing gratitude especially when feeling compassion for people who have less than you, or it may be a way in which adults patronize children to silence them so that they do not raise their point of view. The question emerges: did the learners appreciate what they have as a form of gratitude or were they patronized? If so, this attitude is against the vision of the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c:4, 5), which aims to educate a critical citizen.

Learners of Class 3 repeatedly articulated the expression ‘have responsibility’ when writing *Slogans made for posters meant for peers* (P14, P17, P22, P23, P24, P37, P38). Responsibility as a value involves being trustworthy and dependable, being someone others can count on and to be accountable for actions (Schiller & Bryant, 1998:135). In the context of citizenship the learners of my case study seemed to have mostly internalized the value of responsibility. To participate as a responsible citizen in the life of local, national and global communities is a developmental outcome, which the national curriculum envisages for learners (Department of Education, 2002c:4). However, only four learners reported on their responsibility to do chores at home (P7, P16, P17, P19 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*). Grusec (1997) argues that children with regular responsibility for household chores showed greater sensitivity for other people and might make good citizens.

Against this background and the learners' expressions on moral and social responsibilities I argue as follows: The nine-year-old participating learners of my case study seem to have internalized some of the values, also called social values, articulated by the *Constitution* (Republic of South Africa, 1996), promoted by both the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001) and the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c). However, the learners abundantly reported on children living on the streets (termed street children) of their neighbourhood. They perceived this situation as social injustice, an attitude related to the value of ‘social equity’ in a diverse society (Kymlicka, 2004). They also reported on crime and violence affecting their everyday lives, which left them with feelings of powerlessness. Learners experienced this as a contradictory situation in the sense that they knew their rights as citizens (Gomes & Hofisso, 2003), but did not experience the application of these rights. Living in this conflicting situation may have a future negative effect on these learners' identity as citizens of the South African democracy.

With reference to street children, child abandonment, as a worldwide occurrence, has increased dramatically (Williams & Fromberg, 1992; Le Roux, 1996) as is the case with the neighbourhood of the participating learners of my case study. The Ithumaleng shelter, operating in Sunnyside, receives up to six abandoned children a day. Many others are taken into other shelters in the city (*Tshwane children pay the price…*, 2007)

Regarding the participating learners' experiences of crime, violence and unsafe living conditions affecting their everyday lives, a cross-cultural research report corroborates these experiences. In the overview of the research results, Smith (2005:7) states that the children from the South African sample wished to be protected against dangers like rape and criminal violence, while the dangers of violence were salient amongst youth of Palestine. Smith (2005) argues that it is interpersonal violence in a society with a high rate of crime that is a concern for the South African children. Children need to live and experience 'citizenship' in their daily lives (Hine, 2004:40; Dewey in Mac Naughton & Williams, 2004; Alexander, 2002), which seems to be nearly impossible for the learners of my case study who in fact expressed criticism on the quality of the life they live as child citizens in their local community.

Furthermore, the learners wanted to engage in dialogue about the situation of vulnerable people and they expressed the desire to act and to help them. They also wanted to become engaged in their own safety situation by offering advice to the police and people of authority, as a learner stated:

> ‘We must advice political leaders to stop crime and violence in South Africa’ (P37 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters made for peers*).

Waghid quotes Kymlicka (2005:331), who promotes values of commitment and public participation as part of citizenship. Osler (2005:12-13) also agrees that practice is a component of citizenship and that children need to be exposed to participation in the civic context. Waghid (2005) furthers this argument by stating that the notion of compassion and active imagination (placing yourself in the position of another) could have the potential to extend the dimensions of democratic citizenship in South Africa. Therefore, the learners of my case study, who gave evidence of internalizing the democratic value of compassion, have the potential to become a caring, just and participative citizenry in democratic South Africa.

5.2.2.2 Participation related to citizenship

In the context of my study I deal with skills to develop participation as one of the most important skills of citizenship. In addition to the preceding paragraphs, the learners articulated a commitment to participate in local, national and future matters concerning themselves. This desire may be seen as an outlet for their moral and social responsibilities related to their social awareness. In acting according to these responsibilities many learners claimed not only their own rights but also the rights of vulnerable people. The nine-year-old learners expressed an understanding of human rights and their commitment to applying these rights as active participants in their local community and in the broader context of the South African democratic dispensation. This finding is significant for this study, as Osler (2005:13) states that citizenship is underpinned by universal human rights as included in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

However, what seemed lacking from the database were opportunities for the learners to put human rights to practice, thus to participate in the democratic dispensation. In their discussions about people living in their area, learners often brought up issues of safety, which may be a factor for the lack of opportunities for community involvement. The unsafe area may influence the learners' future commitment to community involvement negatively. Additionally, their perceptions of the inability of the authorities to protect them by dealing with the problems in their area could also lead to negative attitudes about community involvement.

I share the view that participation and engagement in civic society are crucial skills needed for citizenship. Crick (Department for Education and Employment, 1998), Green (2005:viii) and Holden and Clough (2000) distinguish community involvement as a component of citizenship. Mellor *et al.* (2002) refers to action in the civic sphere. Waghid (2005) associates active participation with responsible citizenship in a democracy. Citizenship is also about the skill of working productively and interactively together (Savage & Armstrong, 2004:16). It seems that the nine-year-old learners feel a sense of duty to collaborate with others in their society, a characteristic of a ‘good citizen’ and a central characteristic of life in a democracy (Robles De Melendez, Beck, & Fletcher, 2000). Learners expressed understanding of this skill by making statements using the plural form:

> ‘We children want to help our country’ (P2 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)
>
> ‘We are called the rainbow nation’ (P41 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag)*

An apparent 'silence' related to the more 'conventional citizenship' (Mellor *et al.*, 2002:130) is the learners' commitment to vote one day. By introducing learners to this participative and democratic process as a civic or social responsibility learners may gain interest in procedures and politics of government and gain knowledge that voting can empower citizens.

In the light of the preceding statements I argue as follows: Learners might feel more empowered as citizens if they participated and engaged in community issues related to them. If learners are not afforded the opportunity to practice their moral and social responsibilities through community involvement at a young age when they are compassionate and eager to do so, will they be interested in becoming involved at a later stage in their lives?

In the following section I discuss knowledge related to citizenship or political literacy as the third dimension of citizenship, a concept referred to as democratic education by (Gomes & Hofisso, 2003:56) and social skills by Martorella and Beal (2002).

5.2.2.3 Knowledge related to citizenship

The participating nine-year-old learners of my case study revealed insight about different components of knowledge related to citizenship. They expressed insight into the unique balance of rights and responsibilities in a democracy. Many learners articulated a right with a corresponding responsibility, an interdependent relationship acknowledged by the Constitution, Article 3 (South Africa, 1996). For example learners claimed their right to citizenship (P14 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*) and acknowledged their responsibility to care for South Africa. A learner said:

> ‘I will take care of country’ (P2 – Class 2 – *If I were Mbeki …*)

Osler (2005:12-13) states the importance of the balance of rights and responsibilities in a democracy, a balance the nine-year-old learners seemed to have. Rights and responsibilities are included in the national curriculum as constitutional rights (Department of Education, 2002c). Savage and Armstrong (2004) included rights and responsibilities as part of Citizenship Education. Apart from knowledge about rights and responsibilities, evidence of limited historical knowledge emerged from the data. A small number of learners knew about ‘ten years of freedom’ (P43 – Class 3 – *South African Flag*) and the abolishment of apartheid (P13 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*). On the topic of the establishment of the South African democracy they mostly thanked Mr. Nelson Mandela for his contribution in ‘changing apartheid’ (P34, P31 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*) without any reference to other role players involved in that process. Historical knowledge and understanding together with the skill of historical interpretation, are included in the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c), yet the learners showed little evidence thereof. This may imply that the effective facilitation of these outcomes has to be examined.

Rushforth (2004) includes key issues of political literacy in her book *Citizenship Studies* like: how local government works, the power of local authority, how democracy works, the power of peoples' protest, how laws are made, the influence of media, etc. Mellor *et al.* (2002:126) argues for 'deep learning', which includes knowledge about key constructs underpinning democratic governance. Kennedy and Mellor (in Wilde, 2005:53) argue that a sound knowledge base relating to democratic values is necessary for the learner to sustain them when those values are under attack. The seeming lack of knowledge related to citizenship revealed by the nine-year-old learners, is significant for this study. If the envisaged learner is expected to be critical it is imperative that the learner has to be informed on concepts and issues related to citizenship and that the facilitation of the required knowledge occur in a constructive, interactive and contextualised way.

Many learners of Class 4, when writing *Letters to Madiba,* linked the concept of democracy with the person of Mr. Nelson Mandela. Learners revealed affection for the role he played in ‘giving us freedom’ (P40), ‘giving children rights’ (P47, P49). It seemed that much of the learners' political literacy centred on the figure of Mr. Nelson Mandela. The learners identified characteristics of Mr. Nelson Mandela, which they expressed as important values. In expressions of learners of Class 3 when writing *Letters to Madiba* his influence on the learners was apparent to the extent of icon status. Learners wrote: ‘You are a superstar’ (P2 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*), ‘You are the father of South Africa’ (P9), ‘You are like a grandfather to me and a role model’ (P39) and ‘Madiba will be my president for ever, I love Madiba’ (P25 – Class 43 - *Letters to Madiba*). The significance of the learners' affection for Mr. Mandela for this study is the confirmation that young children need role models who live the democratic values. They need a role model and a leader who according to them is *truthful, compassionate, friendly, approachable* and *accountable*.

With regard to the democratic value of accountability or responsibility, leaders of a democracy should be accountable to the people who put them there and be receptive to the public opinion (Rushforth, 2004:113), thus being role models for all children learning to become the responsible citizen according to the identified criteria. Jeffreys (2006) argues that South Africa needs accountable leaders and the spirit of Mr. Nelson Mandela to secure our democracy for the generations to come. Put another way: practice what you preach! Citizenship cannot only be taught to children, they have to experience it (Dewey in Mac Naughton & Williams, 2004; Alexander, 2002). Children learn citizenship by observing the leaders and adults who prescribe the noble but abstract democratic values to them (Alexander, 2002). This may imply an acknowledgement that the nine-year-old learners of my case study are citizens in their own right, activists for some of the democratic values such as social justice, tolerance and responsibility.

5.2.3 The future citizen of South Africa

How then do learners see their future in democratic South Africa and their role as future citizens? What can be done to assist the nine-year-old learners as future citizens?

Learners expressed definite ideas about themselves and other people as future citizens in South Africa. Concerning **themselves**, learners expressed the following: 'learn from the children' (P2 – Class 3 – *If you were the president*), 'respect children' (P33 – Class 3 – *Slogans written for posters meant for peers*); and acknowledged: 'children have rights' (P54 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*). Additionally, children 'should play without being afraid of being hurt or killed' (P1 – Class 3 – Focus group interview), be 'happy' (P5 – Class 1 – *What I like about South Africa and don't like*) and live in a 'clean and safe neighbourhood' (P10, P20, P13 – Class 1 – *What I like about South Africa and don't like*). As children they expressed the desire to 'stop poverty, crime and racism' (P1 – Class 3 – Focus group interviews), 'make more schools and more education' (P1 – Class 2 – *If I were Mr. Mbeki …*), 'help our country South Africa' (P2 – Class 3 – Focus group interviews), 'advice our leaders …to make a better nation' (P7 – Class 3 – *If I were the president …*). What can the adult citizen learn from these children? Learners expressed the desire to participate as active and significant citizens in securing the future for them and for other citizens (ideas related to responsible citizenship and expanded by Holden and Clough (2000), Waghid (2005) and Revell (2005). These relationships have already been discussed in Chapter 2).

Concerning ideas about the future of other citizens in the democratic dispensation a learner said: 'I don't want people to cry in our country' (P60 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba).* Learners wished for 'all live in peace' (P19 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*) because 'all of us fits into the South African flag' (P23 – Class2 – *The South African Flag*). During a Focus group interview the interviewer asked the learners of Class 3 to give a message to the people of South Africa and they said the following: ‘People in South Africa must come together and talk and be friends, love each other, play and have fun together’ (P1), ‘pick up papers’ (P2) and ‘make the country a better place’ (P3). The participating learners set the example for citizens caring not only for themselves but also for other people in living peacefully together as one nation. The learners demonstrated their commitment to justice and equity, necessary values and ideals for the enhancement of a democracy (Kymlicka, 2004; Banks, 2004).

Concerning change, they related change to the following: ‘better jobs and better lives for everyone’ (P1 – Class 3 – Focus group interviews). The learners' requests for change emerged strongly when learners of Class 2 participated in the instrument *If I were Mr. Mbeki….* The following learners said that if they were Mr. Mbeki they would: ‘change the community’ (P9), ‘change the streets, and the crime and the people’ (P39), ‘change the country’ (P34), ‘change the world’ (P17) and ‘change the future’ (P6). One learner integrated the concepts of leadership, power, the nation and change when he/she said: ‘If I were the president I would make a better nation’ (P7 – Class 3)

The significance of the preceding anecdotes is that the nine-year-old learners wanted to be involved in securing their own as well as other people's future as citizens living in South Africa. Their demonstration of relating change to active participation can be associated with statements made by Wood (2005). Wood argues that children have to be assisted in skills to make choices and decisions but before executing them, they have to think about the possible influence(s) of their choices on other people. Their desire for change in transforming an unequal society relates to the theory of postcolonialism (Viruru, 2005) and transforming society (Mac Naughton, 2003), where the child is seen as part of society. According to this theory: only if citizens become active and participate critically in the democracy, will they be able to transform society, to create the future they want to see (Mac Naughton, 2005). In relation to the participating learners of my case study, their perception of themselves as desiring change aligns with a research study conducted by CiCe members from eight European countries, focusing on how children perceive themselves and others, which established that most participants saw themselves as active citizens in the future: they wanted a future society in which there would be greater social justice (Ross, Papoulia-Tzelepi & Hegstrup, 2005:x).

An involved citizenry is necessary for the South African democracy; a citizenry critically involved is of paramount importance for the democracy to rise above the euphoria of the 'rainbow nation' (Jansen, 2006). Jansen's comment has to be interpreted against the findings of this study, which indicated that the learners had internalized the social values of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), they expressed their patriotism and identified with democratic South Africa. However, they expressed modest skills of inquiry and higher-level thinking although they revealed signs of this capacity. To facilitate critical involvement in young learners current conceptions of citizenship education have to be extended by researchers, policy makers and educators.

5.2.4 Extending generally held current conceptions of citizenship education

As citizens of South Africa, the participating nine-year-old learners of my case regarded education as an important component for preparing future citizens for the South African democracy. Learners articulated their vision for citizenship education, their insight as to the possible implementation thereof and their views on the responsible authorities for education. During a Focus group interview Participant One (P1) of Class 3 expressed her view on the importance of educating the youth:

> 'I believe that we as the youth can make a difference in the future if we are feed the right brain food from an early age. I believe we are learning what we see.'

Learners seemed to see education as an important means to unite the different and diverse people and communities of South Africa. From the learners' expressions it was evident that, except for 'going to school' (P31 - Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*), they saw television as a possible medium to enhance education. During a Focus group interview learners from Class 3 suggested the following:

> 'The SABC TV must put on learning shows' (P5)
>
> 'More learning things on TV, not naked people and rude things' (P3)
>
> 'Put more education and not violence on TV' (P3)

Additional to the access to education learners wanted on television, they also expressed their views for education to reach all children by means of free education. When participating in the instrument *If you were the president*, a learner wrote: 'I want to give all children free education' (P1 – Class 3).

In writing a *Letter to Madiba* a learner asked him to: '…poor children to get free education' (P64) According to the nine-year-old learners political leaders like Mr. Nelson Mandela and Mr. Thabo Mbeki, the government and the governing bodies of schools were responsible for education.

> 'Mr. Mandela take care for education on TV' (P9 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)
>
> 'Mr. Mbeki … more schools and more education' (P1 – Class – *If I were Mr. Mbeki …*)
>
> 'Help the governing body to put more education on TV on Saturdays' (P3 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)
>
> 'Government must support education' (P9 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)

The significance of the preceding anecdotes for citizenship education seems to be that citizenship education and the extension of the learners' democratic identities may be promoted through education, especially education directed at this age group through the medium of television.

The data from the learners extended my expectations of what I thought a nine-year-old child is capable of thinking, feeling, and constructing in terms of expressions through language and drawings in the context of citizenship. My observation correlates with what the postcolonial theorists argue: that the young child of seven to eight years old is capable of engaging in much deeper levels of meaning than the developmental theories proclaim (Tobin in Viruru, 2005). I compared the learners' expressions about their democratic identity and their understandings of the democratic dispensation of South Africa as citizens, to theories related to young children and citizenship, especially in the domains of their cognitive, moral and social development. It seemed that the learners of my case study excelled in many instances compared to statements made by scholars in the domain of citizenship (Holden & Clough, 2000; Banks, 2005) and scholars promoting the 'developmental stages of the young child' such as Piaget and Kohlberg.

Although the participating learners were only nine years old, they expressed critical thinking about abstract concepts concerning education and values and education and democracy. Nieuwenhuis (2003:28) defines values as 'abstract internalized conceptions'. Holden and Clough (2000) report that in general, adults view abstract concepts related to politics as too complicated for young learners to grasp. On the contrary, the participating learners of my case study demonstrated abstract thinking about social injustices and recommendation for improvement, a line of thinking that relates to and may exceed the expectations stated by developmental theorists like Piaget (in Gordon & Brown, 2000:138), who indicated that the child in the age group 6-12 years can understand other points of view in real situations as well as values to a certain extent. Postcolonial theorists' views (Viruru, 2005) of the young child correlate with my observation of the learners' mature level of thinking in the context of citizenship.

Learners expressed a moral responsibility to themselves and to people different from them. In relation to a learner's request for making South Africa a 'better place' a learner asked Mr. Mbeki 'to make more rules' (P3 – Class 3 – Focus group interviews). Their expressions revealed their sense of personal responsibility, indicating their understandings of what appropriate democratic behaviour is. Their acknowledgement of the normative ethics on establishing the moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct in their community indicated that the nine-year-old learners seem to have understandings of the highest level of moral development according to Kohlberg (in Hine, 2004:19).

5.3 Conclusion

Expressions of the nine-year-old learners of my case study revealed perceptions of their citizenship, which included understandings of their democratic identity as child citizens in the social context of democratic South Africa. Learning about a democratic identity is concerned with values. The learners expressed an awareness of morality and moral responsibility, understanding that diverse cultures have to live together in harmony and acknowledging the importance of the values of respect and responsibility.

A skill related to citizenship, which the learners articulated, was to participate as active citizens in securing a better future by changing the reality towards action for social justice and equity. From the learners' expressions it was evident that education for citizenship does not consist of a static body of knowledge that can only be transferred to children (Mellor *et al.*, 2002:11*)*; instead, learners indicated that they wanted to experience citizenship and that television could be a medium to promote citizenship and historical knowledge of which learners expressed limited evidence.

The learners' expressions about their social world relates to the theory of postcolonialism (Mac Naughton, 2003:70-92). In accordance to postcolonialism, the learners revealed their own understandings of their specific cultural and social world. They expressed the desire for change to secure a social just and equal future world, thus relating to a *transforming position* on early childhood education (Mac Naughton, 2003). In the subsequent chapter I offer a synthesis of the inquiry.

CHAPTER 6

SYNTHESIS OF THE INQUIRY:

Children's voices enlightening further understanding of citizenship and citizenship education

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6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6 I present a synthesis of the research project by reflecting on the significance and implications of the study as presented in Chapter 5. Through synthesis I offer my contribution to research in the domain of early childhood education. As a result of my findings, I relate my contribution to the unit of analysis, the concepts and theories studied and employed in this inquiry. When discussing my contribution, I refer to the perceived limitations of the study. In addition, I recommend new lines of inquiry associated with citizenship and citizenship education of the young child and indicate suggestions for theory, practice and policy. The chapter concludes with a review of the message of the nine-year-old learners as child citizens and the way forward for citizenship and citizenship education concerning the young child in the South African context.

6.2 Synoptic overview of the inquiry

My study focused on one case study as the unit of analysis: the nine-year-old learners of a primary school in an inner-city suburb in South Africa. In Chapter 4 I presented the nine-year-old participating learners' voices in order to understand how the nine-year-old learners, born in the first year of democracy, experience the democratic dispensation in South Africa as citizens. Insights gained from the learners' life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation as disclosed in Chapter 4, assisted in answering the subsequent research questions:

- How do learners perceive their democratic identities?
- How do learners understand their citizenship?
- How can the acquired understandings and identities extend generally held current conceptions of citizenship education?

The reason for this particular methodology in constructing the research questions is underpinned by research reports regarding citizenship and citizenship education, asserting that in order to find creative ways of supporting children's growing understanding and enactment of citizenship, it is necessary to proceed from children's experience of living (Smith, 2005:2; Sayer, 2005).

The exploratory nature of the research questions required a particular line of inquiry, which directed my research in the qualitative research domain as it entailed field research involving the young learners in and beyond the classroom situation. In order to understand what the field research entailed, I studied literature describing the complexities related to social research with young children (Morrow & Richards, 1996). Consequently, I adhered to ethical issues related to the young learners of my case study, especially related to my data collection methods and instruments since children are more vulnerable than adults in terms of ethical issues (Andrasik, Powers & McGrath, 2005). From the commencement of the study, I intended to present the voices of the young learners as they expressed themselves. I therefore used multiple and convergent instruments assisting the data collection process to ensure valid and reliable data for heightening inferences (Cole, Martin & Dennis, 2004). I outlined this mainly qualitative methodology, the justification thereof and the description of the various instruments used for data collection in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 1, I constructed the rationale explaining that, apart from my personal interest in citizenship education related to young learners, I presented their voice as marginalized group of citizens within the South African population, a voice not often heard in research publications (Osler & Starkey, 2005b). The voices of the nine-year-old learners were studied against the background of issues related to citizenship and citizenship education in the South African context. I could only find evidence of a few empirical studies related to the South African context concerning citizenship and citizenship education concerning young children. The lack of empirical research signified a void in the research domain concerning citizenship issues and the young child, especially in the South African context. It also illuminates the rationale of this study in the sense that children are important stakeholders in education and the democratic society, yet are rarely given opportunities to contribute. In order to locate citizenship education in South Africa and its characteristics within the international context, I offered an historical overview of citizenship education as it was understood and practiced in different ways over the centuries. The information gained through this overview highlighted the fact that citizenship education is a contested issue in most democracies and the overview guided me to undertake a study into current issues related to citizenship education in established and 'new' democracies, like South Africa. This information shed light on the issues related to citizenship education in contemporary South Africa. I presented various perspectives on citizenship and citizenship education (Crick in Department for Education and Employment, 1998; Osler, 2005; Mellor *et al.*, 2002; Kymlicka, 2004) in order to understand the contextualisation of these concepts in the South African milieu to enable me to understand the voices of the participating learners of my case study.

Given this theoretical background to citizenship education, I focused on citizenship education and young children by describing the international and the local focus. On international level, education for citizenship associated with young children is acknowledged as crucial for the maintenance of the skills, understandings and knowledge presupposed in the democratic structures of society. According to my interpretation, citizenship education on local level is perceived as a priority to enhance nation-building through advocating the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), especially commencing with the very young child (Ministry of Education, 2001). I consulted numerous sources to enlighten the political and social circumstances influencing citizenship education in contemporary South Africa in Chapter 2. This was done in an attempt to come to a more complex understanding of the learners' experiences as citizens against the background of the democratic dispensation of South Africa, which informed me regarding the learners' understandings of their citizenship and their democratic identity.

In Chapter 2, I also reviewed empirical studies focused on citizenship education. The results of this endeavour revealed research studies on citizenship education in general and mostly focused on the theoretical aspects thereof such as what constitutes the knowledge base of citizenship education, the skills necessary to act as an active and participative citizen and the values fundamental to citizenship education. However, only a few studies focused on aspects of citizenship related to the young child. One such study was the IEA internationally conducted research project, which focused on the experiences of fourteen-year-old children as citizens with the main focus on how they gained civic knowledge and attitudes (Mellor *et al.*, 2002:12). Although I found the results of this study informative and useful, the age group differed from that of my unit of analysis and therefore the methodology applied in the IEA study was not applicable to the nine-year-old learners of my case. The limitation from this study and other existing studies indicated that no standardized instrumentation existed for exploring young children's understandings of citizenship, which motivated me in designing creative instruments in collecting data revealing the learners' unique voices, in the process minimalizing the chance that learners could copy my or any other adult's presumed ideas.

From the literature review it was evident that diverse theories, related to core concepts focused on the young child as well as theories related to citizenship and the facilitation of citizenship, were applicable to the life experiences of the learners as citizens. The theory of postcolonialism (Viruru, 2005) and the theory of transforming society as described by Mac Naughton (2003) and Freire (2005) proved to be most relevant for my research project. These theories assisted me in analyzing the data and understanding the constructions of the participating learners' life experiences as citizens and how they perceived their democratic identities. The theories also helped me in understanding issues about educating young learners for citizenship in contemporary South Africa. Having given this background I then presented a conceptual framework (see Figure 2.2 of Chapter 2) to illuminate all relevant concepts and the relationships between them.

An account of my data collection process commenced in Chapter 3 with a description of two pilot studies in which I interviewed nine-year-old children. The two studies informed me about the ability of the participants to answer questions on the notion of citizenship, as well as on possible instruments I could use. The pilot studies furthermore indicated that there could be no single explanatory factor influencing children's understandings of citizenship and the developing of a democratic identity, and that I needed many participants to get a reliable indication of their perceptions of citizenship. Therefore, I chose the nine-year-old learners of an inner-city school as the unit of analysis as the school reflected the diverse population of South Africa. Furthermore, I decided to use various data collection methods to ensure validity and reliability of the data through triangulation.

With the help of a co-researcher, I then implemented multiple instruments to assist data collection with the aim of accumulate learners' voices about their life experiences as citizens. Some of the instruments were designed in advance, but others were developed while discussing citizenship issues with the learners through open-ended questions and probes during interview sessions. This recursive nature of data collection, as influenced by the interpretive paradigm, proved to reveal an abundance of valuable data, which informed the research questions. An additional source of rich data was the drawings made by learners when participating in the instruments. The focus group interviews conducted with five learners from one class proved fruitful in revealing rich data and when analyzing this set of data, I realized that it verified data from the group interviews.

As an interpretivist, I had no definitive assumptions of the experiences of the nine-year-old learners as citizens living in democratic South Africa, except the experiences I gained from the pilot studies, and information I gleaned from the literature on citizenship related to young children, especially the information on the envisaged learner in the South African context (Department of Education, 2002c). Tentative underlying assumptions were that nine-year-old learners do have a voice about the political world in which they live. Another assumption I cautiously deliberated was that the political community and its everyday practices of discourse and communication provide a context for the developing civic consciousness of learners to transform reality towards action for social justice and equity in a democracy. These assumptions are aligned with postcolonial theorists who found that seven- to nine-year-old children could engage in deeper levels of meaning (Tobin in Viruru, 2005; Mac Naughton, 2005) such as the notion of citizenship. Evidence to support the postcolonial theory comes from Holden (2000), who states that young children are normally interested in 'big' issues and desire social justice. John (2000) argues that young children can play a role in shaping societies in which they live, especially in working towards equity and social justice. The learners' expressions about bringing change to a better and safer environment, correlates to the transforming position on early childhood education (Mac Naughton, 2003). The theories guided me in constructing the data collection instruments as well as my interpretation of the data. I learned that children construct their own understandings of their social world and that children can and want to make a contribution to a more democratic society.

Therefore, I executed an inductive data analysis in Chapter 4 and applied constructivist grounded theory analysis. The application of the constructivist grounded theory analysis revealed the Citizen Context Diagram (see **Addendum 11**) representing four themes and relevant categories. Each of the themes was explored and interpreted in my attempt to understand the learners' experiences as citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa. This interpretation revealed not only what the learners experienced as citizens but also how they gained experiences and understandings about citizenship. When interpreting the learners' expressions on each theme I related my interpretations to the South African context and the intention of citizenship education as an integrated component of the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c). Although the four themes from the data were discussed as separate entities, their interrelatedness offered further illumination of the learners' expressions about their experiences as citizens of democratic South Africa.

In Chapter 5, I provided the significance of my findings, which I accumulated inductively and deductively from the learners' life experiences as citizens of the democratic dispensation of South Africa. My findings culminated in my insight into the learners' perceptions of their democratic identity and understandings of their citizenship. As a further implication of the findings of the inquiry, I extended my personal and hopefully others' current conceptions of citizenship education. When discussing the various findings I distinguished the implications of the findings for theory, policy and curriculum.

As component of Chapter 6, I gave this synoptic overview of my inquiry where I elaborated on my research endeavours described in each chapter of my research project. I also offered my contributions and recommendations for enhancing citizenship education related to the participating learners of my case study, to policy and curriculum issues. In addition, I acknowledged constraints pertinent to this study. I suggested ideas for further research concerning voids that emerged from the data: children's construction of their understandings of citizenship in different contexts of South Africa, the role of the teacher and the facilitation of citizenship at school, including the content of textbooks and policy issues regarding citizenship and citizenship education. Chapter 6 concludes with an epilogue where I expressed my final insights and understandings of the participating learner's life experiences as child citizens of the democratic dispensation of South Africa. Finally, the inquiry has not ‘uncovered ultimate truth’ (Seale, 1999; Cohen *et al*., 2000:3), but has provided an enhanced understanding of the life world of the nine-year-old learners of my case as citizens of the democratic dispensation of South Africa.

6.3 Contribution of the inquiry

In this section I present the contribution of this study based on the presentation of the significance and implications of the inquiry as offered in Chapter 5. In addition, I discuss my contribution related to the existing perceptions of childhood. In my attempt to understand the experiences of the nine-year-old learners of the democratic dispensation of South Africa as citizens, I expressed my views on researching young children and early childhood. I positioned my stance with that of the postcolonial theory (Viruru, 2005). This theory is situated within the new sociology of childhood and has to be studied in contrast to the developmentalism of the nineteenth century (Farrell, 2005:4-6). Farrell (2005) states that within the developmental frame, the child was seen as an incomplete version of the adult and, by virtue of the child's developmental level, was often short of the requisite capacity, for example to consent to participation in research and in the ability of self-expression. Against this background, I saw the nine-year-old learners as competent participants in their everyday worlds and capable of participation in or withdrawal from research. In addition, I perceived the learners as child-citizens and not subjects in the democratic dispensation. As a result of my perspective the learners expressed experiences and understandings about abstract concepts, for example citizenship and democracy and morality, exceeding the levels promoted by developmentalists. This research position allowed the learners to express their views of a political nature not often revealed as research results although stated as their right in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) as ‘children's rights to express their views on all matters that affect them’.

This study may be especially relevant in the South African context as there is limited research available, a fact already reported on in Chapter 2. The study has contributed to the knowledge base of citizenship in the sense that I employed the liberal conception of citizenship (rights and responsibilities of a citizen) as well as the communitarian concept of citizenship (the practice of citizenship through active participation, extended to compassion and imaginative action). In addition I used the idea that citizenship has to encompass feelings of belonging and democratic values in a balanced way. This study substantiates the balance Kennedy and Mellor (2005:53) report between a 'democracy of the mind' (understanding basic democratic processes) and a 'democracy of the heart' (values) because values that are not underpinned by knowledge would not sustain child citizens when those values are under attack. From the expressions of the learners of my case study, it seems that they identified with the democratic South Africa and are committed to the democratic values; however, they revealed limited knowledge about democratic processes. Therefore, I propose that the ideal of nation-building be balanced with the ideal of equipping learners with the needed knowledge and skills to participate in democratic processes to sustain and defend the democracy by identifying and acting on potential threats to the South African democracy.

Concerning citizenship education, this study confirms the theories of Dewey and Alexander, who argue for citizenship education through a school that is a living example of active citizenship with an ethos of responsible participation by teachers and parents. That ethos, in return, can best thrive in a society that promotes such schools, schools that are democratic in policy and practice. Apart from my findings that citizenship is integrated in the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) I did not research the roles of the teachers, parents and policy makers in the construction of the learners' citizenship. This brings me to reflect on the possible constraints as described in Chapter 1 of this study and the identification of the main limitation of this study. I felt the need to understand the teachers' point of view, the parents' interests and beliefs and the ideology of policy makers to come to an inclusive understanding of my research focus. Since I chose a case study and understanding was my primary mode of inquiry, I actually gained insights beyond imagination.

An additional contribution of this study might be regarding the data collection methodology and the data analysis process. Researchers in the field of early childhood education might find the instruments I employed to mediate self-expression of the learners, of value. The employment of the constructivist grounded theory analysis may help researchers when working with texts like drawings, sentences, slogans and letters. The Hot chair drama technique may also assist researchers in obtaining authentic data from young children, especially on researching abstract concepts.

Finally, this study contributes to enhancing the construction of citizenship in the context of the nine-year-old participating learners of my case study; related to theory and content. The following recommendations are given as guidelines:

- Secure the safety of the learners, as safety is their inalienable right according to the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

- Ensure that they experience in their everyday life the practical implementation of democratic values such as social justice and equity, equality, ubuntu, non-racism, the rule of law and respect as articulated by the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and promoted by the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001). Learners also have to experience political leaders who are accountable and adhere to the democratic values. If this does not happen the young learners of my case study may lose faith in everything democracy stands for and they may become apathetic towards democracy, its institutions and its processes.

- Acknowledge the young learners as an 'ever-present segment' (Cohen, 2005:221) of the South African population and not only as 'future adults', as Alparone (2001) suggests. Include them as participants in the democratic processes at school level by investigating Dewey's theory of building a learning community (in Mac Naughton & Williams, 2004:225-238) and Alexander's (2002) citizenship schools where learners can construct in a holistic, cross-disciplinary way (Mac Naughton, 2003:40-52) the status, feeling and practices as components of citizenship (Osler, 2005:12-13). Alexander (2002) described a citizenship school, which is based on the new British curriculum, revised with a complete focus on citizenship, as the National Curriculum for Citizenship.

- Enhance participation or engagement related to citizenship in the school, such as voting for peer representatives (Davies, 2005) developed a model on a Youth Parliament for South Africa. Learners could vote after an information session and making an informed decision. This procedure may assist them in experiencing the consequences of making choices. If the learners have the opportunity to participate in a school project focused on delivering support for people in need, their participation and socialisation skills may be enhanced. The implementation of democratic processes at school level could help the learners to realize the benefits of being engaged in democratic processes (Kennedy & Mellor, 2005:53) and contextualise citizenship education, a point of criticism for Moodley and Adam (2004:172).

- Teachers need to contextualise citizenship by acknowledging that their learners are members of the postmodern era and need to be treated accordingly. They must be sensitive to the experiences of their learners, regarding their civic context. They need to know what the issues in society are that influence the lives of their learners and their understanding of their citizenship and align their content accordingly (Holden & Clough, 2000).

- The content learners need to know, entails the major concepts underpinning democratic governance, democratic processes, the composition and dimensions of the South African society (both past and present) and the challenges facing contemporary South Africa in a globalized world. Kennedy and Mellor (2005:53) argue for a sound knowledge base and understanding. The introduction of global citizenship may ensure a broader vision and understanding of citizenship and a perception of South Africa's position in Africa and in the rest of the world.

- Allow for diverse ways of knowing and thinking as the postcolonial theorists promote, and do not underestimate the young learners' capabilities for engaging in deeper levels of understanding. Learners have to be exposed to skills needed to be a critical, active participant by using content that is contextualised and raises issues of social justice and equity. Interpretive skills will assist learners in understanding the world around them, responding to it and feeling empowered to influence it. The results of this study suggest that the nine-year-old learners feel disempowered and therefore need to be exposed to dialogue and to explore the world in different ways. Learners need, for example, to experience the skill of discourse, the skill of criticizing a process or a system constructively. Learners need to be involved in debating 'real life' problems concerning them, thus problems or issues relevant to their specific context, like the street children, poverty and crime, which the learners experience every day. Embrace the learners' desire to contribute to change and see this as an opportunity to facilitate the necessary values, attitudes, knowledge and skills they need to engage in change. Take cognizance of the transforming society theory that promotes the belief that educators and children can work together to create a better world. In relation to this research, this could imply a citizenry that is willing and capable to sustain and defend the democracy.

6.4 Recommendations for further research

As a result, my study revealed opinions and information expressed by the learners on their experiences as citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa, which may be noteworthy for further research by policy makers in the political and educational arena. Four areas of citizenship and citizenship education, which emerged from the data as fundamental challenges for the future, need to be explored. Firstly, continuing research as to how other nine-year-old learners in different contexts of South Africa experience the democratic dispensation of South Africa. A comparative perspective may bring new light to the understandings of citizenship of young children and dimensions that influence their understandings of citizenship. Secondly, the role of teachers as civic educators has to be studied and thirdly researchers need to look at the facilitation of citizenship education, including the content, the foundational underpinnings (theory and concepts) and the teaching methods, beyond what is prescribed by the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002c). Fourthly, research needs to scrutinize policy issues and the agenda policy makers have regarding citizenship and citizenship education in South Africa. I made suggestions for future research throughout the research project but provide suggestions as critical questions, grouped according to the following themes:

Theme 1: Young learners' construction of citizenship in a variety of contexts

- How would nine-year-old learners in different contexts of South Africa perceive citizenship and democratic identity? What would a true South African citizenship look like?
- Could there be common factors influencing the construction of citizenship?
- In a diverse cultural society, what are the core values a learner (as a citizen) must hold that would sustain a democracy?
- How could participation be made more authentic for learners in exercising democratic skills?
- How do young learners construct their moral consciousness?
- How could parents contribute to the citizenship of their children in a democracy and specifically in the South African democracy?

Theme 2: Teachers as civic educators

- What are the possible understandings of teachers concerning citizenship?
- What are the possible understandings of teachers about the characteristics needed to be a role model for young child citizens?
- What could possible content to educate teachers in citizenship education be?
- What can South African training institutions learn from other nation-states regarding the training of teachers for citizenship education?

Theme 3: Citizenship education

- What is the knowledge base necessary for young learners to engage in citizenship and understand democracy?

- What possible teaching strategies and techniques could be implemented to enhance learners' experiences of democratic practices?
- What possible teaching approaches could enhance learners' mastery of the necessary skills like participation, to act responsibly as citizens in sustaining democracy?
- How could the teaching of critical thinking and problem solving related to citizenship in a diverse democracy be enhanced?
- How could the national curriculum accommodate social cohesion, inclusion and trust, as these are the constructs related to democracies with diverse cultural populations?

Theme 4: Policy regarding citizenship and citizenship education

- What possible threats to the South African democracy can be identified? This could inform educational policy to guide citizenship education.
- How could policy ensure a comprehensive citizenship for young children, receptive to their special political circumstances?

6.5 Epilogue

In this chapter, I presented my interpretation of the findings representing the key concepts and theories of the life experiences and understandings of the nine-year-participating learners of my case study as citizens in a democratic South Africa. My interpretation of their experiences guided me to findings about their understandings of their citizenship and their democratic identity. My inquiry is consequently based on the interpretation of the learners' expressions, aligned to my epistemological perspective, which declares that this inquiry revealed understandings of a reality as only one of the many realities on citizenship education and the young child. As an interpretivist, I acknowledge the complexity of doing research with young children as well as the complexity of citizenship and citizenship education. I admit the multiplicity of causal factors influencing being a young citizen in a democracy.

I explored the voices of young learners not often explored in research projects of a political nature on national and international level. The nine-year-old learners stated that they were not listened to and that they had no report on any participatory system in decision-making at school or at community level. However, they articulated their expectations for a future South Africa and what their role as citizens could be to inspire change. John (2000:46) describes children as a marginalized group, yet significant actors in the shaping and creation of societies in which they live. Mellor *et al.* (2002:136) believe that young people are our most precious resource and that we need to take notice of how they experience and respond to situations in their life world. They are not passive recipients of knowledge but have well developed ideas, which adults most of the time do not expect of them. Holden (2000) adds to this argument by reasoning that before teaching young children about citizenship, we have to understand their life experiences.

The nine-year-old learners' life experiences as citizens as well as our understandings about citizenship education have to be explored in the context of contemporary South Africa. The South African democracy was founded in 1994 and this historical event brought South Africans together in hope for a common destiny. The establishment of the new and negotiated democracy was looked upon nationally and internationally as an example of 'the global benchmark for dialogue, for crafting a condition of freedom and equality from a conflict that seemed fatally irreconcilable' (Ministry of Education, 2001:9). Since then much has happened in all spheres of the South African society and after twelve years of democracy we as South Africans have to ask ourselves how are we going to sustain the 'still fragile' democracy as described in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001:6).

South Africa has a new challenge to confront, a challenge for a unity of purpose, creating bonds where before there were fractures and easing the tensions of past conflicts. One way of confronting the new challenge is, as Jeffreys (2006) puts it: 'we as South Africans have to say *never again* [referring to the apartheid era] and move on in sustaining the democracy for future generations with a spirit of determination, humility and forgiveness'. Another way of confronting the new challenge is what Jansen (2006) describes as 'a critical voice coming from all sections of the diverse South African population against events that hold a threat to the democracy' and what he calls 'populism based on race that threatens the South African democracy'. The threat of populist pressure to democracy is not unique to South Africa. Linton (2001) refers to the hindrance of populist pressure on the public accountability of government in Britain. If South Africa wishes to be a unique and exceptional example of an African democracy, values such as the promotion of its people have to be elevated above corruption, propaganda and oppression. According to Jansen we as South Africans have to define the character of our democracy and accordingly our future.

Against this background and the time frame of contemporary South Africa, I explored the findings of the data. Learners' expressions revealed their consciousness of the context in which they were living. One learner commenced her letter to Madiba with: ‘Dear Mister Mandela, I was born in 1994, when you were released from jail’. When this study commenced, civic or citizenship education had just been introduced through a new revision of a transformational curriculum. Consequently, being nine years of age, the participating learners had been exposed to this curriculum for two years. However, I acknowledge that they would have gained the full effect of the civic education initiative at a later stage of their school career. Regardless of their age, the nine-year-old learners expressed ideas about the abstract concepts related to democracy and citizenship that exceeded my expectations, based on personal experience and literature on young children and their abilities.

The Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) expresses the nation's social values and its expectations of the roles, rights and responsibilities of a citizen in democratic South Africa. The national curriculum was based on the innovative and negotiated Constitution. The Bill of Rights, included in the Constitution, places paramount value on equality, human dignity, life, and freedom and security of persons. These and other rights to freedom of religion, belief, and expression, exist side-by-side with socio-economic rights, which can be related to the right of each person to freedom from poverty, homelessness, poor health and hunger. Through teaching and learning a vision was promoted for: ‘A prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice’ (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

The national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) describes the expectations for the future South African citizens: the expected citizen, who will be able to enhance the democracy aligned with other researchers in the field of citizenship and citizenship education who writes about the what, why and how of citizenship and citizenship education related to the young child (De Melendez, Beck & Fletcher, 2000; Savage & Armstrong, 2004). To theorize about the future citizen and how this citizen should cope with the social and political realities of a nation-state and live the core values on which just and peaceful democratic societies are built, is the straightforward component of citizenship. However, when it comes to the implementation of citizenship, especially concerning the young child, citizenship becomes a contested concept and education for citizenship becomes a potential site for debate and controversy. Supplementary to the problem of theory and practice, learners themselves have a voice concerning citizenship. The nine-year-old participating learners of my case study revealed themselves as the active and responsible citizen. However, the learners expressed their participation in the democratic dispensation of South Africa only in an imaginative way and as a future vision. Irrespective of the learners' commitment to democracy and their desire to participate in ensuring a sustainable future life in the South African democracy, they were seemingly excluded from the current democratic processes.

There seems to be a contradiction in what the infused human rights, social justice and conceptions of democratic citizenship aimed to do in an attempt to prepare the youth for active and responsible citizenship. In reality the reported experiences of the democratic dispensation reported on by the participating learners of my case study that contradicts the founding principle of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), which is common citizenship and the equal enjoyment of a range of citizen rights. Vally (2005:31) already reported the discrepancy between the existing normative framework of the South African society and the promise of a democratic citizenship and the actual realization of this promise.

During the time of curriculum reform the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001) was published, promoting ten democratic values, also called social values, foundational to the Constitution as guidelines for citizenship education. The national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) introduced citizenship education, not as a separate subject, but as an integrated component of the curriculum. The national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c:4, 6) 'aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. It seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate, and multi-skilled, compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen'. The curriculum further attempts to uphold a democratic vision of the society and the citizens that should emerge from the school system should be able to 'participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities' (Department of Education, 2002c).

The nine-year-old learners revealed through their life experiences of the democratic dispensation of South Africa as citizens, very positive attitudes towards South Africa and towards life in general, in contrast with what their local neighbourhood offered them. At the age of nine, they revealed most of the attributes of the envisaged learner as described by the national curriculum. They expressed notions of national belonging and a democratic identity as well as a moral and ethical character. The learners revealed a perception of community of all South Africans bounded and loyal to the Constitution and the democratic values underpinning the Constitution (1996). The learners' vision of a 'new' South Africa, where each citizen with his/her individual, local identity will form a common South African community, is a vision all people in South Africa can share. However, the learners expressed their inability to participate in the democratic dispensation of South Africa as a result of marginalization. They wanted to be active participants in bringing social change on the local and national levels of the South African democracy.

To participate in securing their future will empower the nine-year-old learners of my case study for they have future expectations, as articulated by a learner: ‘I believe that we as the youth can make a difference in the future…’ (P1 – Class 3 – Focus group interviews). Additional to participation, the learners also need to be exposed to ‘sophisticated and critical thinking skills’ (Savage & Armstrong, 2004). The learners of my case study have revealed the capacity to engage with abstract concepts; and the enhancement of higher-order cognitive skills will assist them in understanding the world around them and their roles as citizens in an increasingly interdependent and diverse world. These skills will assist them in approaching challenging problems from multiple perspectives and in mastering basic principles that can be applied to situations well beyond the context in which they are educated.

The preparation of South African citizens, especially the young learners, is a priority for the future. Regarding the implementation of citizenship education in the South African context, a continued debate is needed about what kind of democracy we want for the future and the related values, knowledge and skills that will be needed by young citizens to understand democracy in order to sustain it. Not only are deliberations necessary regarding understanding and sustaining the democracy but also the education of the future citizens to identify threats to democracy and how to defend it. There have been promising beginnings on citizenship education in South Africa during the earlier years of the implementation of the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) but much remains to be done. This study contributes to the growing indigenous knowledge base in this field.

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