

Special Issue: Citizenship and Anti-Racism Issue 1, 2023

In 2021, the Australia Talks survey reported that members of the public overwhelmingly acknowledged that racism remains a problem in our communities but stopped short in acknowledging that white supremacy was the force that guarded and enacted racist practice, politics, and discourse (Crabb, 2021). We've seen this disconnect at work in schools; in 2021, for instance, year 5 and 6 students in Sydney invoked powerful language and imagery to discuss Black Lives Matter (a potentially fruitful vector for discussing white supremacy), only for the school to go on the defensive in light of criticism from those including the state education department and the state minister for police that such discussion was inappropriate in its challenge of state and white supremacy (Chrysanthos & Baker, 2021). Elsewhere, the Senate voted in favour of rejecting critical race theory from the national curriculum in 2021 as a pre-emptive measure to exclude anti-racist thinking from curricular practice in schools.

Some of this resistance to anti-racism can be explained by way of the successful isolation of racism to interpersonal instantiations of racialized violence and exclusion, a containment no doubt exacerbated by the superficial inclusion work advocated by liberal multiculturalism and the carefully guarded proliferation of what Alana Lentin (2018) calls "not racism" that blunts meaningful anti-racism work. The former – liberal multiculturalism – has long been how schools have comfortably broached discussions of racism, trading in its logics of individual acceptance and good behaviour to the exclusion of less naïve critical work (Banks, 2004; Watkins & Noble, 2019). The effects of this are deeply challenging, given the mitigation of meaningful anti-racist work and the potential reproduction of what Banks (2017) calls "failed citizenship" in the school and broader community. There, remains then, problems with how we discuss racism.

As citizenship scholars and educators, our answer to the problems of racism noted above and their (lack of) consideration in schools likely involves an element of civic work and participation. Frustratingly, however, citizenship often has to contend with school and institutional climates that are resistant to critical work (see earlier Sydney and Senate example) and/or citizenship work has to contend with its own epistemic and conceptual shortcomings that make anti-racist citizenship a challenging prospect (Merry, 2020; Sabzalian, 2019; Smith, 2022). Herein remains a critical problem for citizenship education: the negotiation of school and community contexts that may dull critical citizenship work in favour of more tepid "personally responsible" civic work, the consequence of which is a potential foreclosing on citizenship action as a vector for meaningful anti-racist work (which, as noted above, is already subject to foreclosures). There exists, thus, an echoing of the problem with challenging racism: institutional structures and epistemological limitations that might prefer simpler, reductive and potentially acritical renditions of civic and anti-racist action. Yet, we know that citizenship work is possible, particularly in its critical form, supporting the creation of activist citizens who challenge systemic issues and their regulatory power and influence over lived experiences (Heggart, 2020). Indeed, scholars have highlighted how citizenship educational practice and theory can help to support learners as they work to foster inclusions and resistances to dominant homogenizing narratives (Lash, 2021; Starkey, 2021).

The two preceding paragraphs may read as fatalistic (with some space for optimism). However, the recognition of these challenges opens up a new (required) space for consideration:

How do we successfully marry anti-racist and citizenship work together to bolster more critical explorations that can support the contention of racism and the activism needed for citizenship?

It is this central question that guides this special issue where contributors are asked to speak to the "wicked problem" of racism (Came & Griffith, 2018) and the place of citizenship theory and practice in supporting activist responses to racism.

Potential Themes and Prompts

- Pedagogical and conceptual approaches to contending specific forms of racism through citizenship;
- Intersectional theorisations and empirical work exploring the relationships between gender, race, social class, ability, and other forms of identification with citizenship;
- Critical interpretations and extensions of multicultural citizenship in support of anti-racism;
- Historical work that explores citizenship actions against racism in support of contemporary struggles;
- Explorations of “anti-citizenship” as anti-racist approach to citizenship (Busey & Dowie-Chin, 2021);
- Anti-nationalist and/or anti-colonial considerations of citizenship;
- Empirical studies that explore the tensions and/or possibilities for an anti-racist focused citizenship.

Abstract Submissions

- Abstracts should be 250 words, plus references.
- They should include the names and affiliations of the author(s).
- These are due by December 1, 2022
- Please submit them as Word documents to seaa@sev.asn.au, with “Citizenship and Anti-Racism CFP” in the subject line

Timeline

- Abstract Submissions Due (250 words plus references): December 1, 2022
- Successful authors advised: January 15, 2023
- Final articles due: March 1, 2023
- Publication Date: April-May, 2023

Final Chapters

Final chapters are expected to be between 5,000 – 8,000 words. They will be published in a special issue of The Social Educator.

References

- Banks, J. (2004). Approaches to multicultural curriculum reform. In J. Banks & C. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (pp. 242–264). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Banks, J. (2017). Failed citizenship and transformative civic education. *Educational Researcher*, 46(7), 366–377.
- Busey, C., & Dowie-Chin, T. (2021). The making of global Black anti-citizen/citizenship: Situating BlackCrit in global citizenship research and theory. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 49(2), 153–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2020.1869632>
- Came, H., & Griffith, D. (2018). Tackling racism as a “wicked” public health problem: Enabling allies in anti-racism praxis. *Social Science & Medicine*, 199, 181–188.
- Chrysanthos, N., & Baker, J. (2021, April 21). How pictures of BLM posters on a classroom ceiling ignited a media storm. *The Sydney Morning Herald*. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/how-pictures-of-blm-posters-on-a-classroom-ceiling-ignited-a-media-storm-20210421-p5712c.html>
- Crabb, A. (2021, May 31). Australia Talks shows we agree there’s a lot of racism here, but less than half say white supremacy is ingrained in our society. *ABC News*. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-05-31/annabel-crabb-analysis-racism-australia-talks/100172288>
- Heggart, K. (2020). *Activist Citizenship Education: A Framework for Creating Justice Citizens*. Springer Nature.
- Lash, C. (2021). Multicultural citizenship education as resistance: Student political development in an anti-immigrant national climate. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 105, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103405>
- Lentin, A. (2018). Beyond denial: ‘Not racism’ as racist violence. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 32(4), 400–414. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2018.1480309>
- Merry, M. (2020). Can schools teach citizenship? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 41(1), 124–138.
- Sabzalian, L. (2019). The tensions between Indigenous sovereignty and multicultural citizenship education: Toward an anticolonial approach to civic education. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 47(3), 311–346.
- Smith, B. (2022). Effecting anti-racism in citizenship: Challenges, possibilities, and a necessary re-consideration. *The Social Educator*, 40(1), 3–15.
- Starkey, H. (2021). Classroom counternarratives as transformative multicultural citizenship education. *Multicultural Education Review*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2005615X.2021.1964266>
- Watkins, M., & Noble, G. (2019). Lazy multiculturalism: Cultural essentialism and the persistence of the Multicultural Day in Australian schools. *Ethnography and Education*, 14(3), 295–310.